

Alley Rundown—December 11th, 2022

Today's Bible Story: The Greatest Gift (Jesus Is Born) • Luke 2:1-7

Today's Key Question: What are you excited about giving?

Today's Bottom Line: Jesus is the greatest gift

Monthly Memory Verse: *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.* Luke 2:11 (NIRV)

CG: Dude Perfect Filler Videos

“Hey, everyone! Looks like you’ve been having a great morning so far. I loved seeing all of those gifts being shared, even if some of them were . . . not so great.

“In the spirit of gifts and giving, let me ask you—and be honest now—how many of you would say you enjoy *giving* gifts more than you enjoy receiving gifts? Anyone? (*notice response*) Ok, a few of you. That’s great. I mean, there’s something fun about picking out or even making a gift for someone, something that maybe they didn’t even think about for themselves, and then seeing their face when they finally open it. It is pretty cool, right? Maybe someone has done that for you?”

Tell a personal story of a time when someone gave you a gift that you were not expecting and it really surprised you (in a good way), or when you did that for somebody else. Something like the following story. Optional: Use this story as a hypothetical situation.

I remember this one Christmas when I was in sixth grade. All I wanted was a Walkman . . . think of it like a really early version of listening to music on your smart phone—except it didn’t make phone calls, take photos, connect to the internet, or anything other than play one cassette tape full of music at a time, though some could connect to radio stations. But since we didn’t have smart phones or iPods or iPads, this was it. And I wanted one, and not just any Walkman. I wanted the Sony Sport, Waterproof, bright yellow Walkman with in-ear headphones. But I never thought my parents would get it for me. Honestly, I was just hoping for a simple Walkman of my own. By now, I’m sure you know where this is going, but . . . Christmas morning, under the tree was a present with my name on it. I tore into it, and yes! My parents surprised me with the Sony Sport! I spent the rest of the day listening to all of my cassette tapes. Best. Christmas. Ever!

“But let’s get serious for a moment. As great as that Christmas was, would it have still been great if my parents had only been able to get me a simple Walkman or didn’t get me a Walkman at all? Of course, you probably only give gifts that people love! But truth be told, we don’t always get what we asked for, or sometimes we give something the person already had, and sometimes even the gifts we absolutely LOVE on Christmas morning get lost under the bed or in a closet the next month. Too often I think this happens with the BEST gift that any of us has been given—Jesus.

“We take a whole month to celebrate that Jesus came. We have holidays that help us remember that Jesus came to make a way for us to be with God forever. We think about that gift during certain times of year or maybe on Sundays when we come to church. But how can we make a habit of remembering God’s Big Give when Jesus came?

“That’s a great question! Maybe it’s one you’ve thought about before, or maybe you’ve never wondered that. And that’s okay, too. With Christmas a week away, today is a great time for us to think about questions like this. And like we say at a lot around here, when we have questions, the Bible is a great place for us to start to find some answers—especially when it comes to our questions about Jesus! Let’s head there now and unwrap some answers . . . with the help of this week’s Episode.”

CG: Lesson Video (Runtime: 13:00)

“This was the first Christmas. Jesus is God’s one and only Son, and God sent Him into this messy world to save *us*. There may be some pretty cool gifts you receive this next week, but make no mistake . . . THIS is how God gave us the GREATEST gift ever.

“Two thousand years ago, God gave the greatest gift. But now we have the opportunity in so many ways to show God’s love and share it with others. And this is not just something we do in December. Anytime we have the chance to give gifts—actual presents or acts of service or just simply showing up for people who need a listening ear—we can show God’s love to others. The birth of Jesus doesn’t just matter during the Christmas season, it matters throughout the entire year. It matters in your classroom, on the basketball court or dance studio, it matters in your home and with your friends, it even matters for people you haven’t even met yet. This is the GREATEST gift . . . all year long!”

“Today as you head to Small Group, think about this question:

SLIDE: Key Question

“**[Key Question] What are you excited about giving?** How can what you give to others reflect how much God gave to you already? How can you share the love of Jesus this Christmas and all throughout the year? These are important questions to think about, and you’ll have a chance to chat about them with your Small Group. Before we go to groups, let’s pray and thank God for sending the greatest gift ever, Jesus! Let’s pray.”

OFFERING TIME:

We are giving our offering to our friends in Mexico through an organization called Vida Nueva Ministries. Unfortunately, many families in Mexico don’t have enough money for food or education. Vida Nueva Ministries is dedicated to overcoming poverty through education. Here is a picture of one of their amazing teachers.

SLIDE: Teacher in Classroom

Vida Nueva has built an entire set of schools in the city of Piedras Negras, where kids of all backgrounds can come and learn. They also receive meals and hear about Jesus. Isn’t that great? So, if you brought an offering today, you can bring it up now!

Slide: WinterPalooza

Also, before we go to Small groups, I want to tell you about an amazing event we have coming up after you come back from Christmas break. It’s called WinterPalooza!!! On January 8th (9th too for New Lenox) we will be having a party to celebrate the New Year! We’ll have games, crafts, prizes and all kinds of FUN. So grab a postcard on your way out and make sure you tell whoever brought you that you want to be here on January 8th!!!