

Big Al LIVE™ – Special Occasions

As is true for Big Al's first three DVDs (*Big Al LIVE!™: "Gospel Values for Children"*), this DVD offers ten different sections plus bonus features. Each section focuses on a different special occasion or season, and includes a short Scripture reading, a reflection from Father Joe, a discussion with Big Al, and a prayer.

The messages in this DVD series were written for people of all ages to explore and share together. These DVDs are excellent for beginning a parish meeting, parent programs of any kind, intergenerational faith gatherings, or for children to watch by themselves. They are ideal for children's Liturgy of the Word, conversations between parents and children, religious education classes, or for many other intergenerational gatherings.

For each presentation, there are several discussion questions for you to choose from. While most of the questions work well with any age group, you may select or adjust the material according to the age-level of the participants.

Each DVD includes a "play all" feature. However, for parish and school purposes, the presentations are not meant to be watched in one sitting. Each topic, or special occasion, can be explored one at a time to open our hearts and stir our thoughts for further reflection.

This DVD also contains several bonus features, including bloopers and Big Al's theme song, "God Lives in You and Me."

May God bless ALL our efforts to help his children live well the precious days that have been given them!

4-1 Does your Baptism matter? (Baptism)

Scripture: Matthew 28:19

Running time: 7:52

Summary:

To Jesus, the day we were baptized is one of the most important days of all. On that day, as members of God's family, we were committed to the way of Jesus forever!

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about the day of your own Baptism?
2. How does your Baptism matter now?
3. Who helps you live the promise—and commitment—of Baptism?

4-2 How big is your list? (Advent)

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1, 4-5, 11

Running time: 7:27

Summary:

During Advent we are invited to join in the dream that God has for us. Sometimes, however, we get so caught up in our preparations for Christmas that we completely miss the gift of Advent!

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What did Big Al learn about Christmas lists? Do you agree?
2. What is one way that you live Advent that helps your heart get ready?
3. If you could make one wish for the world, for what would YOU wish?

4-3 Why do we have Christmas? (Christmas)

Scripture: Luke 2:1, 3-7

Running time: 7:27

Summary:

The miracle of Christmas is beautiful beyond words. The all powerful God—who made the whole world and all that is in it—became one of us. Jesus was born of Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. Every Christmas light is to remind us of the true light. Every Christmas carol, Christmas gift, and Christmas tree is to remind us of the greatest gift of all: Jesus.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What is one of your favorite Christmas memories?
2. What are some of your favorite family traditions at Christmas?
3. Why does Christmas matter?

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from Big Al?
2. Why are hidden Easter eggs a symbol of Easter?
3. What is one of the more surprising places you've ever found a blessing?

4-7 What is the best food you've ever had? (Eucharist)

Scripture: John 6:35

Running time: 5:30

Summary:

Jesus gives us the Mass—the Eucharist—to help us be like him. At Mass, Jesus is the food, because the bread and wine become his Body and Blood. This food is the best food of all: this food is love. We call it Communion. When we're old enough, we are able to receive our First Communion, and then to receive this food EVERY Sunday to help us be like Jesus.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite "healthy" food ... and why is it important to eat healthy foods?
2. What is good about Sunday Mass?
3. Finish this sentence: "When I think about taking Communion, I ..."

4-8 What is a mother for? (Mother's Day)

Scripture: John 15:12-13

Running time: 5:33

Summary:

A mother's job is a hard job. Like Jesus, a truly loving mother gives her life away for others. We can learn a lot about what God is like from watching a truly loving mother.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about God from watching a loving mother?
2. What are some of the best qualities that your mom has?
3. What do you think is hard about being a mother?

4-4 What does God do when we say we're sorry? (Reconciliation)

Scripture: Luke 15:22-24

Running time: 7:12

Summary:

God is so amazing that when we are sorry for what we've done wrong—and for the good we've failed to do—he gives us the chance to begin again. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we experience the forgiveness of God and the grace of a new beginning.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Is it hard for you to say, "I'm sorry"? Why or why not?
2. Describe a time when you could tell that you were forgiven by someone.
3. Why is God so forgiving?

4-5 Why give up something for Lent? (Lent)

Scripture: Luke 12:33

Running time: 6:34

Summary:

Each Lent we are invited to extra prayer, sacrifice, and care for the poor. The things we "give up" during Lent are meant to open our hearts more to that which truly gives life.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Why do we "give up things" or make other sacrifices during Lent?
2. Describe a time when a sacrifice helped you be a better person.
3. What would be a good sacrifice for you *this* year?

4-6 Are you good at finding Easter eggs? (Easter)

Scripture: Matthew 28:5-7

Running time: 7:10

Summary:

Through the incredible gift of Easter, we see that God has hidden new life in the most amazing places. Perhaps it would be good if—in addition to Easter-EGG hunts—we also had "EASTER hunts." Where is Easter this year? When we look, we might be surprised to find some of the surprising places that God has hidden love, even in suffering and death!

4-9 Is your dad holding on or letting go? (Father's Day)

Scripture: John 20:20-22

Running time: 5:44

Summary:

A loving dad both holds us and also sets us free, in that we see something of what God is like. As we honor our fathers, we remember what they teach us of God.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about God from watching a loving father?
2. What are some of the best qualities that your dad has?
3. What do you think is hard about being a father?

4-10 Who are you? (Halloween)

Scripture: 1 John 3:1

Running time: 5:39

Summary:

Halloween is the night before the great feast of All Saints. We remember that underneath the masks we sometimes wear, we are EACH beloved children of God, called to be saints.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. If you were to dress like a saint for Halloween, what saint might you choose, and why?
2. Under all your masks, who are you?
3. When your favorite saints pray for you, what do you think they pray for?

Big Al
LIVE!
Special Occasions

Big Al LIVE – Gospel Values for Children

Volume 1

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1-1 *What names have you been called?*

Scripture: Mark 9:7

Running time: 5:55

Summary:

Sometimes people call us names... names that hurt. Sometimes people called Jesus names too. But when Jesus was baptized, God, the Father, called Jesus

a name that must have meant so much to him. God called Jesus "Beloved." God has a special name for us as well!

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What names have you been called? Describe any of them that still hurt that are appropriate to share with the group.
2. Is there a loving name that anyone has called you that you are grateful for?
3. What are four words that God might use to describe you?

1-2 What good are broken things?

Scripture: John 20:20b-21

Running time: 5:41

Summary:

Many things get broken in life. Marriages break up, and our bodies break down. Toys and other things break apart, and sometimes our hearts break too. But God's promise is that broken things can hold life again.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. If a broken crayon can still draw, what good could a person who is sick, sad or injured do?
2. What good are broken things? Describe a blessing you've found to be helpful at a tough or broken time in your life.
3. Describe something difficult that happened to you or your family. Describe any good that came out of this difficult situation.

1-3 Is Jesus YOUR shepherd?

Scripture: John 10:11, 14

Running time: 4:34

Summary:

Sheep need the help of a shepherd to guide and lead them. Jesus said that we are like sheep. We need help, too. If we learn to listen to his voice and are willing to follow where he leads, Jesus will be our shepherd.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Is Jesus YOUR shepherd? How do you recognize when he is leading you?
2. Name some people through whom God shepherds you. Describe what you receive from them.
3. How would you describe what God is like to someone who does not know God?

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. How big is YOUR family? What did you learn from Big Al?
2. Who in Jesus' family is hard for you to love?
3. If you could say two things to the leaders of the world, what would you say to them?

1-7 Who will take your hand?

Scripture: Matthew 28:20

Running time: 5:23

Summary:

Sometimes life feels dark and scary. We can't see where we are going and we feel alone. But we are not alone, because Jesus promised to be with us always. We won't feel his hand in ours, but we can trust that he is there.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time when your world felt dark and scary. Did anyone take your hand? How did they do that?
2. Name someone who has trusted you enough to put their hand in yours. Why would your hand be good for someone to put theirs in?
3. Who will take your hand? If you were scared or sad today, who would you turn to first?

1-8 Do you stay connected to God?

Scripture: John 15:5

Running time: 5:10

Summary:

It is so important that we make time to be with God. If we don't take the time to pray, something inside of us dies. Sometimes we get distracted and can forget how much we need God.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Describe two of your favorite ways to pray.
2. On a normal day, what helps you remember God?
3. Do you stay connected to God? If so, how?

1-4 What's your note to play?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7

Running time: 6:23

Summary:

In life, we each have a note to play. That note might not seem like very much by itself. But it is important that we each play our note well, because the Holy Spirit can take the notes of each of our lives and put them all together to make something beautiful.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What note do you play? What do you like about your situation in life and what it asks of you?
2. Do you ever wish you had a different note to play? If so, what do you wish your note would be?
3. Whose notes around you help make beautiful music?

1-5 Forgive... or clobber?

Scripture: Matthew 5:44

Running time: 4:28

Summary:

Jesus tells us that when people hurt us, we must forgive. To forgive doesn't mean that we accept what has been done. It means that we ask God to help us not carry hurt and hatred in our hearts. Though we might want to clobber, to forgive sets us free and helps us to be like Jesus.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Who has forgiven you? How did they show that?
2. Who have you forgiven? What did your forgiveness look like?
3. Who do you need to forgive now? Forgive... or clobber?

1-6 How big is your family?

Scripture: Matthew 12:47-50

Running time: 6:45

Summary:

When Jesus describes his family, we find out just how big it is. The family of Jesus includes people of every race, every language, and every way of life. All whose lives are loving and true get to be part of Jesus' family, and that includes US!

1-9 Did you see him?

Scripture: Matthew 25:45

Running time: 5:38

Summary:

In this Gospel, we hear that Jesus can be upset with us. Not because of what we DO, but because of what we DON'T do. Sometimes we don't see each other. Jesus tells us we can't close our eyes to people, especially to those who are in need, or else we are not seeing HIM.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Did you see her? Who are some of the people in need whom you might not notice?
2. Who is hard for you to look at? What does it do to you to hear that God lives in THAT person or group?
3. If you wrote a recipe for caring for someone with a broken heart, what would the main ingredients be? What ingredients are important to leave out of this "recipe?"

1-10 Do you try to be cool?

Scripture: Matthew 22:37, 38

Running time: 4:38

Summary:

Sometimes we worry about being popular. Because we want to fit in, we might try to "Be cool." Joe and Big Al show us that there is no such thing as cool. Instead, there is something much more important than that!

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What is one good thing about you that most people don't know?
2. What kind of people do you choose to be your friends?
3. Do you try to be cool? When you worry about what people think of you, what are you afraid of?

Big AI LIVE – Gospel Values for Children

Volume 2

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2-1 Will you fit?

Scripture: Matthew 7:13a, 14a

Running time: 5:18

Summary:

Jesus reminds us that the path to life is through a narrow gate: the difficult way of love. If we get too filled with ourselves, we won't get through the

narrow gate to the life God wants to give us now... and the life beyond this life.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Describe someone you know who is humble.
2. In what ways are YOU tempted to be too filled with yourself? Will you fit?
3. What is something kind or helpful you've done without being noticed or rewarded? How does that make you feel now?

2-2 Is it okay to cry?

Scripture: John 11:35-36

Running time: 5:07

Summary:

When something sad happens, or someone we love dies, it is okay to cry. Jesus cried when his friend Lazarus died. Our peace comes from knowing there is a life beyond this life... and that love is forever!

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Is it okay to cry? What did you learn from Big AI?
2. If you were to write a prescription for someone with a broken heart, what would you prescribe?
3. If you could say anything you wanted to a loved who has died, what would you say?

2-3 How brightly does your light shine?

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16

Running time: 5:46

Summary:

At Baptism, we were each given the light of Jesus. It is our job to bring that light to others, especially to those whose world feels dark or scary. In this section, Father Joe and Big AI demonstrate how the light of Jesus can shine through us when we are loving and true.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Name someone you know who glows.
2. How do you feel when you are kind and loving to someone?
3. How brightly does your light shine?

2-4 If someone starts to be mean, what does God

Scripture: Isaiah 49:14, 15

Running time: 7:26

Summary:

People sometimes do things to hurt others. Does God care? Why doesn't God stop them? During these times, what is God doing? In this presentation, Father Joe and Big AI demonstrate that while God does not cause harm, he is active during difficult times in ways that might surprise us.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from Big AI? If someone starts to be mean, what does God do? What DOESN'T God do?
2. Finish this sentence: If I were God, I would...
3. Describe a time when God wanted YOU to do something to help someone else.

2-5 What piece of the puzzle do YOU hold?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Running time: 6:48

Summary:

Some people think that they don't have any gifts that matter. But God said that EACH PERSON has been given gifts for others. The gifts of each person are important to the good of all!

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Name one or two gifts God has given you that have nothing to do with material things. What piece of the puzzle do YOU hold?
2. What do you think God sees or treasures in you?
3. Name a surprising person in whom you've found a blessing.

2-6 What language does God speak?

Scripture: John 10:3, 4

Running time: 6:27

Summary:

Jesus said that his sheep know his voice. But how could we know the voice of Jesus? Father Joe and Big AI demonstrate the great truth that God knows EVERY language, including how to speak 'You!'

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever felt God “nudge” you in any way? How would you describe that nudge?
2. If you could hear God speak out loud in words to you, what might God say to you?
3. What language does God speak? What did you learn from Big Al?

2-7 Do you like salt?

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16

Running time: 3:51

Summary:

Salt is used to help bring out the flavor of something else. When Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth,” he was telling us that our lives are meant to bring out the best in others. It’s not all about US, it’s also about helping bring out the best in others!

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Do you like salt? What is good and what is not so good about how you use salt?
2. Who brings out the best in you? Who adds flavor to your life?
3. Describe a time when you brought out the best in someone else.

2-8 Who will catch you?

Scripture: Luke 9:58

Running time: 5:34

Summary:

Sometimes, we have to leave behind places and people we are used to. It can be hard and we might feel like we are falling, or wonder if we will be okay. But we can trust that no matter what life takes from us, God will catch us in the arms of love.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What are you afraid of? What did you learn from Big Al? Who will catch you?
2. Some things can be both happy and sad at the same time. Give an example of a time when you experienced something that was both sad and happy.
3. Was there ever a time when you felt sad or lonely and someone helped you? How did they do that?

2-9 Are you able to get quiet enough?

Scripture: Matthew 6:7-8

Running time: 5:58

Summary:

There is so much noise around us and in us. One of the most important things we could ever do is to learn to be quiet. For, it is when we are most quiet, on the outside and the inside, that we are best ready to hear God.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. If God were to speak to you right now, what is one thing that God might say to you?
2. Was there ever a time when you felt that God was right there with you? Describe.
3. Are you able to get quiet enough? What helps you get quiet enough inside to truly hear?

2-10 Who is hungry tonight?

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6, 7

Running time: 4:23

Summary:

To God, EACH and EVERY person is precious. Yet sadly, some of God’s precious people will starve to death today. We are each called to do our part to help make sure that ALL God’s children have enough to eat.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. If someone visited from another planet, how would you describe the process that brings food to your table?
2. Who is hungry tonight? Why?
3. How might YOU help?



Volume 2

Big AI LIVE – Gospel Values for Children

Volume 3

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3-1 Have you ever seen a giant?

Scripture: Matthew 18:1-4

Running time: 4:49

Summary:

There are people who are great in this world ... and there are giants. But who we think is great is not always who Jesus thinks is great. In this section, Father Joe and Big AI help us see what true giants look like.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever seen a giant? Tell us about him or her.
2. Describe a time when you were scared, but still did the right thing.
3. What helps a person become a giant?

3-2 What's the most important test you'll ever take?

Scripture: Matthew 25:40

Running time: 5:28

Summary:

In school, when it comes time for a test we sometimes wish we knew the questions ahead of time. The most important test we'll ever face will come at the end of our lives when we stand before God to see whether or not we've lived a good and loving life. Jesus tells us NOW what the questions will be.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What's the most important test you'll ever take? What did you learn from Big AI?
2. Is there something you didn't do or say that you now regret? What would you do differently next time?
3. There are many sad things in the world. What is something that gives you hope?

3-3 Which direction does YOUR life point?

Scripture: Mark 9:35

Running time: 4:26

Summary:

Is your life for you? Or is your life for others? If we're not careful, our lives can point to ourselves. It can become all about ME, my happiness, what I want or like. If we want to be happy our lives need to point, as did Jesus' life, not at ourselves, but at others.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What helps you to not think about yourself all of the time?
2. Describe someone you know who lives their life for others.
3. Which direction does YOUR life point? At this time in your life, are you more selfish or less selfish than you were one year ago?

3-4 What is it that no one can take from you?

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-5, 7

Running time: 6:17

Summary:

Our goodness does not depend on superficial things like our looks, whether we make the sports team, or how popular we are. Instead, our goodness is that we ARE loved and that we CAN love. No one can take that from us.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from Big AI? What is it that no one can take from you?
2. Name someone who has believed in you.
3. Describe someone that you know who wasn't the most popular, wealthy or talented person in the world, but whose goodness you can see.

3-5 What do you want to be when you grow up?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:27-29

Running time: 6:38

Summary:

When we are young, people sometimes ask us, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" There are all kinds of ways we can live our lives. No matter what our path in life, we all have the same call. It is our call to be loving and to make this world a better place.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What do you want to be when you grow up? How do you think your life will affect the world?
2. Describe a priest or nun, or a married or single person that you admire. What do you admire about them? Could you picture yourself being a priest or a nun?
3. What are some jobs that are under-appreciated, yet still bring love and goodness to the world?

3-6 Do you ever get jealous?

Scripture: Luke 15:31, 32

Running time: 6:46

Summary:

Sometimes we get jealous. Perhaps we think that there are only so many

blessings to go around. Then, when someone else gets praised or loved, we fear there is less for us. That might be true with some things, but it is NOT true with love.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Do you ever get jealous? Why?
2. What helps you when you feel jealous? What did you learn from Big AI?
3. What would be good to do if someone were jealous of you?

3-7 What's wrong with talking about someone?

Scripture: Luke 4:18

Running time: 4:49

Summary:

If we are upset with someone, it is not okay to complain ABOUT that person to others. Our job is to speak the truth, in love, TO that person.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What's wrong with talking about someone? What did you learn from Big AI?
2. Describe a time when someone lovingly spoke a difficult truth to you.
3. What is something that you've said that you regret?

3-8 How could a burden be light?

Scripture: Matthew 11:29, 30

Running time: 6:19

Summary:

A burden is, well, a burden. But Jesus says that his burden is different. When we do the work of love that Jesus asks us, it is hard, but it is a burden that is light because we do it for love.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. How could a burden be light? What did you learn from Big AI?
2. Name someone who loves you without complaining. Describe.
3. Tell about something that you did that was hard, but that you are glad you did.

3-9 Whose lives matter?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12: 12, 26

Running time: 6:55

Summary:

The world is made up of so many different types of people. To Jesus, EACH person matters, and he wants to build something beautiful using each of us. If we start to decide that some people DON'T matter, the dream that God has for us tumbles.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from Big AI? Whose lives matter? Whose lives don't?
2. Name someone who has helped you believe that YOU mattered. How did they do that?
3. What good is someone who is unborn, someone in prison, or someone in the hospital?

3-10 When you pray, who is listening?

Scripture: Mark 1:35

Running time: 5:21

Summary:

It is so important to be with God in prayer. We need to take time and remember that we are not alone. When we stop to pray, we find that God is already there, waiting to be with us.

SHARING QUESTIONS

1. When you pray, who is listening? What helps you remember that you are not talking to yourself?
2. WHY do YOU pray?
3. Draw a picture of you and God together. Present your picture to the others.

