
“Be Ready for Jesus”

Sunday School Lesson from Matthew 25:1-12, the Parable of the Ten Virgins



This parable can seem a bit strange at face value, especially as we communicate it with kids. Why are these women waiting for their groom? Why would a light need oil? And what's a virgin, anyway? The goal of communication here is to remind students how important it is to be aware of the closeness of Christ. We prepare for His eventual return at the Second Coming, and recognize we don't know when that will take place. Meanwhile, we recognize that He is present with us at all times, and we want to act accordingly, demonstrating love for one another and for Him.

Lesson focus: This lesson looks at how we eagerly await Christ's return. We have joyful anticipation for His coming, but we also want to be prepared. Students will learn what is being discussed in this parable and what it means to be wise and ready. They will also consider how to joyfully live in God's presence daily.

Passage: Matthew 25:1-13

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (variable for activity emphasis)

Materials Needed: Construction paper, scissors, decorations, glue, string, hole punch, oil, cotton balls, crayons, small cups, pipe cleaners, Bible (optional materials, depending on crafts and activities of choice).

More Teaching Ideas on this Bible Story

- You can watch a teaching demonstration of this [children's sermon](#) on our [YouTube](#)
- Don't miss the [Bible craft ideas](#) for this same passage
- See our full [Sunday School lesson on Matthew 25:1-12](#)
- Compare the [Parable of the Bridegroom lesson](#) from Mission Bible Class



Group Games and Lesson Introduction

Lesson Opening: This lesson is focused on being prepared, both for the eventual Second Coming of Christ and for His presence in our lives moment by moment. Engage students with some thoughts about being prepared.

Here are some activities to get kids thinking...(select the best ones for your audience and age group):

- Are you ready? Provide students with several scenarios, in word or picture. Each situation should involve something to prepare for. Have students discuss or write/draw how to prepare for each thing.
- What is the fuel? Talk about things that require “fuel”, whether gas, oil, food, or other things that make things go. Practice this element by seeing how fast students can rotate batteries in toys or tools.
- Prepare relay... Have students line up in two teams. Invite them to “prepare” for something in a relay mode: this could be putting on clothes, packing a bag, or another preparation routine.

Discuss with students that today’s Gospel lesson involves a parable of Jesus, meaning a story that taught a deeper lesson. In this lesson, Jesus talked about being ready. Someday Jesus will come back, and we don’t know when that will be. But we want to be prepared no matter what!

Ask: Did you know that Jesus promised us He would come back to Earth someday? When do you think this might take place?



Sunday School Lesson (Matthew 25:1-12)

Be Ready for Jesus

Bible Lesson: This parable can require some cultural/historical explanation to help it make sense. The story is brief but might not seem relevant to a more modern audience. It might also benefit students to make them part of the story, selecting ten kids (if they're present) and having them act out the parable with flashlights or lanterns. Choose whatever method of reading or describing fits your audience.

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. -Matthew 25:1-4

A little bit of explanation will help here. In the time Jesus lived, weddings consisted of a big celebration. Often, people would gather around to celebrate and welcome the bride and groom. They would line up sort of like a parade, and with lanterns guide the couple into the marriage feast. In this story, Jesus is talking about some women who were waiting to meet the couple and lead them in. But not all of the women were prepared when they went.

Ask: What are some things in our lives that we try to be prepared for? How can we make sure we're ready for things that are coming?

Continue the parable, explaining to students that someone would often announce when the bridegroom arrived, and it was the cue to let the women know they should come out with their lanterns. In this case, however, the groom might have been out of town and took his time in coming. The waiting ladies got a little tired, and fell asleep...

As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' -Matthew 25:5-9

What happened? Well, the ladies started getting sleepy, and dozed off as they waited. When they woke up, the ones who came prepared had plenty of oil to keep their lamps lit. Describe



for kids how oil was sort of like having batteries in a flashlight: it was necessary for the light to keep going. Some of the women had run out of oil, and tried to get it from the ladies who were wise and ready. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough to go around, and the unprepared ladies ran off to find extra oil. Meanwhile, though....

And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹²But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.
-Matthew 25:10-13

Here Jesus offers a conclusion and an explanation for the parable. The waiting women who had not prepared tried to make up for their preparedness mistakes, but it was too late. The groom arrived, and they missed the party!

What does this mean for us? Well, for one thing, this parable refers to one day in the future when Jesus will return. We don't know when it will be, but we need to be prepared. That means that we believe Jesus is coming back, and we trust and hope in Him. We read our Bibles, pray, and go to church, and we care for one another. And even though we don't know when Jesus will come back, living with Him in mind gives us a blessed day to day life, too. He is always with us!

Ask: Why is it important to be prepared for Jesus? How can we do that, both for His future coming and His present presence?

Close with a prayer thanking God for giving us Jesus, and asking Him to help us as we live in His presence now, and await His coming again in the future.



Sunday School Crafts

Crafts: Here are a few crafts that feature elements of the story, both literally (oil and lanterns) and spiritually (reminder to be prepared):

- “Be Prepared” decoration
- “Stained Glass” oil painting feature
- “Light my Lantern” decoration

This week’s Gospel lesson presents another parable, and one that might seem odd or confusing taken out of context. The important lesson to impart for kids is that we want to be prepared for Christ’s return, as we don’t know when it might be. Meanwhile, however, we recognize that Jesus is with us every day, and we can celebrate His presence in how we live our lives. These crafts feature components of the story: a “lamp”, an oil element, and a decorative reminder to be prepared for Jesus.

Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider... (Main Text: Matthew 25:1-13)

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. -Matthew 25:13

Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.. -Matthew 24:44

Be prepared for Jesus!

Have your “lamps lit”...Christ is coming!

Live in the presence of God every day.

Love one another.

Read your Bible; pray every day!



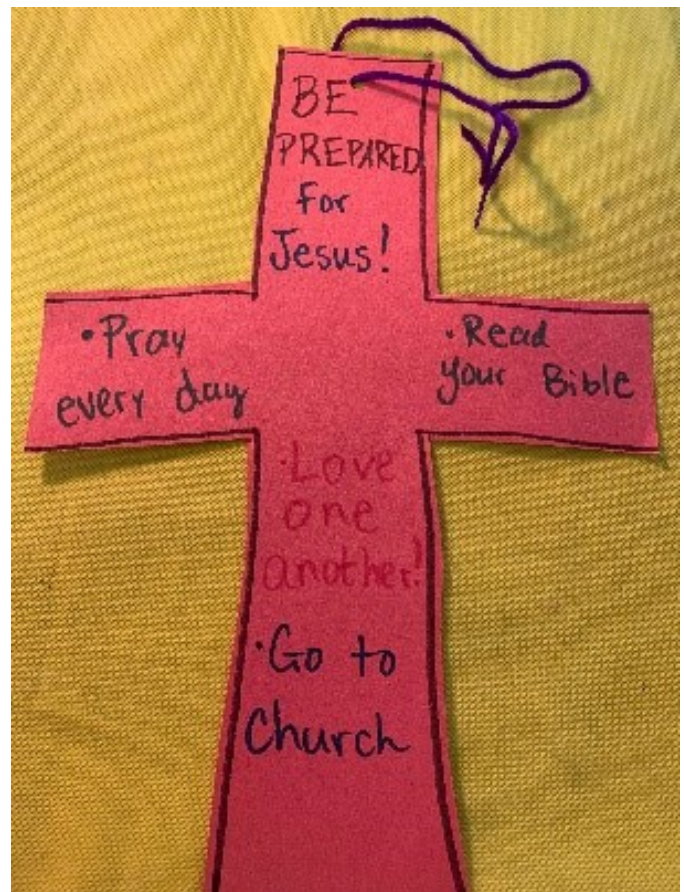
Craft one: “Preparation Decoration”

You will need:

- Construction paper or card stock
- Markers, stickers, or other decorating materials
- String, yarn, or pipe cleaner
- Hole punch
- Scissors

Procedure:

1. Decorate the paper, drawing a cross or other shape as a base.
2. Add notes and verses about how to be prepared for Christ, and add extra decorations if desired.
3. Cut out the cross or other shape.
4. Add a string or ribbon to hang as a decoration.



Craft Two: “Oil Lantern in a Cup ”

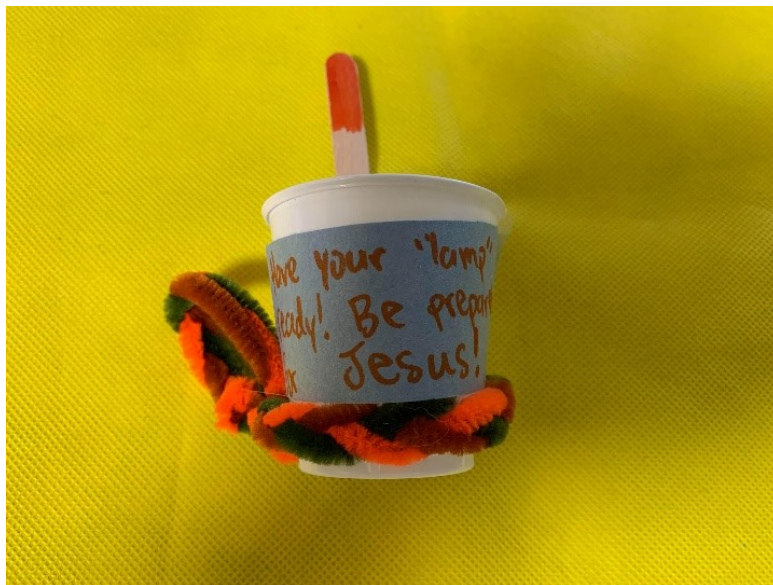
You will need:

- Paper or plastic cup
- Paper (construction) (optional)
- Popsicle sticks
- Markers or crayons
- Glue and/or tape
- Yarn or pipe cleaners (optional)
- Markers
- Scissors



Procedure:

1. Choose how you would like to decorate the cup, using paper and captions.
2. Attach notes to the cup, along with stickers or verses.
3. Add a “handle” to your lantern with a pipe cleaner or string.
4. Put a “flame” on your popsicle stick with marker or paper. Tape into the “lantern” cup.
5. Use the cup as a reminder of the parable and of the importance of being prepared for Jesus.



Craft Three: “Oil Stained Glass ”

You will need:

- Oil (vegetable or baby oil)
- Paper (construction) (optional)
- Cotton balls
- Crayons
- String or ribbon (if desired to hang)



Procedure:

1. Use crayon to create images on the construction paper, filling in all spaces.
2. Dab a cotton ball into vegetable or baby oil, and carefully swab it over the crayon drawing.
3. Add verse captions and additional decoration as desired.
4. Attach a string or ribbon to hang the “stained glass” in a window, and watch the light shine through!





This lesson was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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