

The Parable Of The 10 Maidens

Matthew 25:1-13

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 25:13

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A mixing bowl and ingredients for non-bake play dough:

3 cups of flour

1 cup of salt

1.5 cups plus two tablespoons of water

1 Tablespoon cooking oil

Add food coloring to desired hue

Items for setting a festive table.

As many pieces of construction paper as the number of children in your class, staplers, paper, stickers, and pens, pencils or crayons.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

This Little Light of Mine

Prepare some non-bake play-dough with your class:

3 cups of flour

1 cup of salt

1.5 cups plus two tablespoons of water

1 Tablespoon cooking oil

Add food coloring to desired hue

(You may have to double recipe depending on the size of your class.) Allow the children to help pour the ingredients and stir the dough.

Divide the dough among your students and have them form New Testament-styled oil lamps.

Explain that today's lesson is about some young women with lamps; some were wise and kept extra oil so they wouldn't run out, others were foolish and did not bring extra oil; they missed the wedding feast because their lamps had gone out.

LESSON TIME!

Jesus told us many times that He would go to heaven to be with the Father and then one day He would come back again. He also told us that His return would be swift and sudden. He warned us to remain watchful and prepared for His return.

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus taught the disciples about the events that would take place before the end of the age. In our lesson today, Jesus tells a parable using a wedding as example, so that we could understand the important truth of living a life in expectation of His return. He pointed out that we should be less concerned with knowing the exact date and more concerned with being prepared to meet Him (Matthew 24:3). **We should watch for Jesus' return.**

MATTHEW 25:1

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom."

In Jewish culture, a couple was engaged for a long time before the actual marriage, and the engagement promise was just as binding as the marriage vows. A wedding in that day had two parts. First the bridegroom and his friends would go from house to house on the way to claim the bride from her parents. Sometimes this took

place late at night, as they led their procession to the house of the bride. There she waited for him, in great expectation with her bridesmaids.

As the bridegroom approached, the bridesmaids went out with their lamps in hand to light the way into the house for the ceremony. Then the bride and groom, along with a great parade, returned to the groom's house where a feast took place, often lasting a full week.

Jesus was painting a picture in the minds of His listeners of how it would be when He returned. One day Jesus will return to take His people to heaven and we must be ready. The ten maidens went to meet the bridegroom, who represents Jesus. He is coming again, but no one knows which day or hour (Matthew 24:42).

We should watch for Jesus' return. His return will be swift and sudden. There will be no opportunity for afterthought, last-minute repentance, or bargaining. Jesus taught that the choice we have already made would determine our eternal destiny.

MATTHEW 25:2-4

"Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

"Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

"but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. "

There are two types of young women in our story: the wise and the foolish. They represent those who go to church and profess with their mouth that they are followers of Christ. Their duty and honor was to be ready for the bridegroom to arrive, just as we as believers are to be ready for the return of Jesus, who is our Bridegroom.

As Christians, we should not only believe and look for the appearing of Christ, but also love and long for His return. Many people go to church, but they don't live as though He will return soon, because they are foolish.

It was the wisdom of the wise maidens to take oil in their vessels with their lamps. Only oil in the lamp can provide the light to shine in the darkness. The oil for burning reminds us of the special oil used in the Tabernacle services (Exodus 27:21-21). These lamps continually provided light in the Holy Place, before God's testimony. Without oil, lamps are useless.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

Have your class work on setting a table for an expected dinner guest. Bring things for the table that will make it look festive and inviting. While your setting the table, explain the importance of anticipating your guest's arrival and having everything ready before he gets there.

Explain to your children that Jesus is coming back for His bride, the church, and we must be ready for Him, by living the lives He's called us to.

Optional: Arrange prior to class (a child or adult from a class next door, etc.) to have someone come into your class unexpectedly when you finish getting ready.

Many people go to church and even participate, but if they leave Jesus out of their life, they are as foolish as the five maidens who had a lamp without oil. God wants to have a relationship with us, and if we refuse the salvation He has provided in His Son Jesus or refuse to put Him first in our lives, we are as the foolish maidens.

MATTHEW 25:5-9

"But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'

"Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

"And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

"But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'"

These maidens were waiting for the bridegroom and they hoped to take part in the wedding banquet. But the groom didn't come when they expected, five of them let their lamps run out of oil and it was too late. By the time they had purchased extra oil, it was too late to join the feast because the door had been shut.

We should watch for the Lord's return and be ready. Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed at the last minute. Our relationship with Jesus must be our own. We can't rely on others to be Christians for us. God knows our heart and we are responsible for our own salvation. If we live each day as though Jesus was coming today, we would be ready, living a life of holiness, eager and ready to meet Him.

His return will be sudden and we must always be prepared. Every person shall give an account of himself or herself before God, and it is our responsibility to receive His gift of salvation and then live a life governed by Jesus. As the lamps need oil to shine, so must our heart have Jesus to be saved.

MATTHEW 25:10-12

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'

"But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'"

When the bridegroom appeared the foolish maidens were unable to light their lamps because they had no oil. "Our lamps are going out!" they cried. The wise maidens were able to light their lamps and keep them shining bright. They were able to enter the wedding feast and experience this blessing of the celebration.

The maidens who were wise and foolish were all maidens, but it was only those with the oil that were considered wise because they were prepared and able to enter into the wedding feast. It is the same with those who go to church and profess with their mouth that they are Christians. The foolish never truly repent of their sins, and they refuse to accept God's gift of salvation. Not every professing Christian will enter heaven, for some really have not trusted Jesus to save them in a sincere way. Without the Spirit of God in your life, there can be no true salvation.

Jesus will come to take His people with Him on that great day of His return. **We should watch for Jesus' return.** As a Bridegroom, He will come in great array to receive those who are His, so that they may be with Him and gaze upon His glory (John 17:24). Are you ready?

MATTHEW 25:13

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

Jesus ended this parable with a warning to watch and be alert. **We should watch for Jesus' return.** This should cause us to live in holiness, to be awake spiritually, alert to Satan's schemes that cause us to slumber and sleep. Sin can creep into our life making us numb spiritually, causing us to be ineffective as a Christian.

The time of the Lord's return is uncertain, so we must be ready for the time draws near. Be wise, prepared to meet the Lord.

Suitcase

Have your students take two pieces of construction paper and cut them in the shape of a suitcase. Let your students decorate their suitcases to resemble well-traveled bags with Jesus stickers and slogans like "One Way" and "Jesus Lives."

Staple them together with some crumpled paper between to make them look packed.

When your class has completed the activity ask them if they are ready and prepared to go on their trip with Jesus.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of salvation and commitment to live lives that are ready for His return. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.