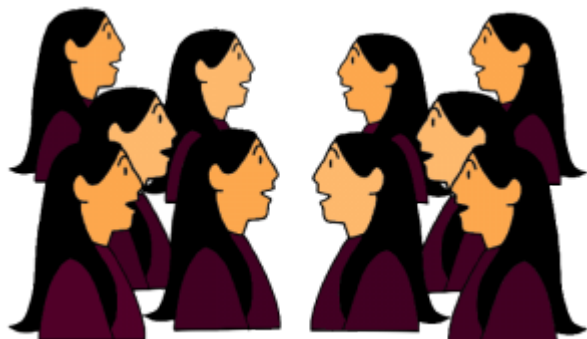


Parable of Ten Bridesmaids

Scripture Reference: [Matthew 25:1-13](#)



Suggested Emphasis: When Jesus returns to the earth, our lives should show that we are ready to go to heaven with him.



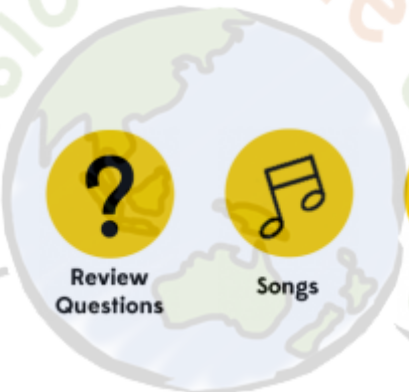
Background Study



Story Introduction



Telling the Story



Review Questions

Songs



Learning Activities



Other Online Resources

Story Overview:

The custom of the day was for the bridesmaids to have their lamps ready as they waited with the bride for the bridegroom to come and escort them all to the wedding ceremony. When the bridegroom came to get them, five of the bridesmaids lit their lamps and were ready to go. The other five did not bring extra oil and so their lamps were out. Since they were not ready they were not allowed to attend the wedding.

Background Study:

Are you ready for the second coming of Jesus? Some of the children might well ask you questions about the second coming. Although the emphasis today is on our preparedness and not the events surrounding Jesus' return, be ready to give a straight biblical answer to any question. Here are some scriptures to be familiar with:

- [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)
- [1 Corinthians 15:12-26, 50-57](#)

Jewish weddings in the first century often took place at the end of the harvest time. It was often a big gathering of people. There was usually lots of food and drink, music and dancing. Guests wore special clothes ([Matthew 22:11-12](#)).

The bride and her close friends would wait at her family home until the groom came and got her to take her to the place that would be their home. No one but the groom's father knew the exact time that the groom would come. The "bridesmaids" had to plan ahead and be ready with their lamps whenever the bridegroom finally came.

When the groom arrived at the bride's house he would ask to see her. When she came out he would lift her veil and proclaim his joy at seeing her. This joyful beginning would follow the whole wedding procession through the streets and on to the feast.

The lamps most commonly used in the first century were small, about the size a hand. Lamps were made from clay and were like shallow, covered dishes with two holes in the top. Olive oil was poured through the larger of the holes and a wick was placed in the smaller. Special care was taken to keep the wick trimmed. If it burned down too low then it would smoke and finally go out.

Five of the girls in today's parable did not plan ahead for the wedding. They should have known that it might take a while for the bridegroom to come. This was the normal wedding procedure.

The wise girls had come prepared. They brought extra jars of oil with them. They were ready for the groom's arrival.

The foolish girls had to go and find oil while the rest of the wedding party proceeded to the feast. Once the feast began, the groom's family closed and locked the gate (probably to keep out strangers and uninvited guests). Once the foolish girls arrived, they were not allowed in.

Jesus concludes his parable by explaining its meaning ([verse 13](#)). None of us know the hour when Jesus will come. We should be wise and always be ready for that time.



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Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring a suitcase to class today along with items you might use if going on a holiday. Ask the children where they have been for holidays or what kind of trips they have been on. Discuss the fact that before they left they had to pack some things to prepare for the trip. Show them some of the items that they might pack to get ready for a trip (actually pack the bag together). You might have warm clothes or an umbrella to prepare for the weather. "Before we could go on a trip we needed to be prepared. Jesus once told a parable about some girls that were supposed to be prepared for something. Let's read about these girls."

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The Story:

The bible says that Jesus died on the cross and then he came back alive again. After that he went up to heaven to be with God. Before he went up to heaven he said that someday he would come back again. He would come back to the earth and get all of the people who loved and obeyed him. He would take them back with him so they could

live in heaven too.

So Jesus will come back someday and take us to heaven. When do you think that will happen? Could it be today? Could it be tomorrow? Could it be 20 years from now? No one can answer that question. No one knows when Jesus will come back to the earth.

No one knows when Jesus is coming back but there is something we do know. Jesus said to get ready. How do we get ready for Jesus to come back? We get ready for Jesus by obeying God and by loving him. Are you ready?

In the bible we read about a time when Jesus was teaching people to get ready for when he comes back. To help them understand about getting ready, he told a parable. A parable is a story that helps people to understand something very important. Here is the parable:

Once there was a big wedding. The wedding was so big that there were 10 bridesmaids. The bridesmaids all helped the bride get ready for the wedding. Weddings back then started at night. Everyone knew that sometimes during the night the groom would come to the bride's house and call out for her. The bridesmaids would hold up their oil lamps so that the bride and groom could see each other. The groom would be so happy to see his beautiful bride!

Everyone would keep holding up their lamps so that everyone could walk down the streets all the way to the groom's house. Then there would be dancing and eating and lots of fun celebration of the wedding.

In Jesus' parable he told what happened when the 10 bridesmaids helped the bride get ready for the wedding. Five of the bridesmaids were wise. They knew that sometimes the groom would wait a long time before he came to get the bride. So the wise bridesmaids brought extra oil for their lamps. They wanted to be ready even if the groom came very late in the night.

The five other bridesmaids were foolish. They did not think about bringing extra oil.

After the bridesmaids got the bride ready they waited and waited for the groom to come. They kept their lamps lit so they would be ready when he came. As time went by the bride and all of the bridesmaids got sleepy and fell asleep.

Then someone shouted "Here's the bridegroom, come outside and meet him!"

The bride and all of the bridesmaids woke up. They fixed their lamps to make them nice and bright. The five foolish girls noticed that their lamps had run out of oil and had burned out. They asked the wise girls for oil but there was enough for them to have some too.

The foolish girls had to go and try to find more oil for the lamps. They did not get to go out with the bride to meet the bridegroom. They did not get to walk down the streets to the wedding feast with all of their friends. They were too busy trying to find oil.

When the wise bridesmaids and everyone else arrived at the groom's house they went inside and began the celebrations. The groom shut the door and locked it so no strangers could get inside. When the foolish bridesmaids came to the door they were not allowed in. The groom didn't even know who they were!

This parable explains how it will be when Jesus comes again. We do not know the day or the time when Jesus will come back. We should always love God and obey him so we will be ready whenever he comes. We want to be ready to go with Jesus to heaven. Are you ready?

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion. [Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

Video: [081 - Ten Virgins Parable](#) from [GNPI](#) on [Vimeo](#).

A slideshow and set of illustrations can be downloaded directly from [Free Bible Images](#). Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson. [top](#)

Review Questions:

1. In the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids, how many of the bridesmaids were all ready for the wedding? 5
2. In the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids, what happened to the foolish bridesmaids' lamps? Their lamps ran out of oil and they had not brought extra oil.
3. How can we be ready for Jesus when he comes back to the earth? By obeying and loving God

Song Suggestions:

- [This Little Light of Mine Song](#)
- [Give Me Oil in My Lamp Song](#)
- Possible songs out of a church hymnal might be "There's a Great Day Coming" or "In the Morning of Joy" or any song which mentions the second coming of Christ.
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Make a bible-times lamp. Use pictures from bible encyclopaedias or commentaries for patterns. If you have the opportunity to buy clay from a craft shop then look for one that can be baked. Read the instructions on the packaging to see if the baked clay is capable of holding liquid and withstanding heat. If so then use olive oil and cotton cloth wicks to finish the lamp. Another alternative is to make lamps from salt dough. These will only be for visual effect. Once oil is poured on hardened salt dough the dough will probably go soft and soggy.
- A fun way to do review today is to light ten candles. When a child answers the question correctly, they blow the candle out.
- Draw simple pictures of lamps on the chalk/white board. Write behaviours/attitudes on the lamps. Make some good and some bad. Examples might be: help other people, go to church, hate someone, swear, etc. If possible, provide a red chalk or whiteboard marker. Let the children take turns going up to the board and drawing a flame on the kinds of behaviours that show we are ready when Christ comes back for us. This activity can also be done on paper using crayons or markers.
- Older children can look up wedding customs in bible encyclopedias or commentaries.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids" printables to print on A4 size paper](#)
[Click here for "Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids" to print on Letter size paper \(USA\)](#)
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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and worksheets that cover both the parable of the 10 bridesmaids and the parable of the talents \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page and worksheets about parables in general \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Visual Aid- Flames appear on the lamps using a "Magic Window" \(bibleclasscreations.blogspot.co.nz\)](#)
- [Online activities and games \(gardenofpraise.com\)](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/jesus-parables-teachings/>
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