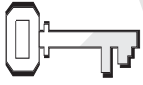


Ready or Not . . .



References

Matthew 25:1-13;
Christ's Object Lessons,
pp. 405-421



Memory Verse

"Therefore keep watch,
because you do not
know the day or
the hour" (Matthew 25:13, NIV).



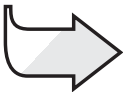
Objectives

The children will:

Know that
some people in God's
family will be ready when Jesus
comes, and some will not.

Feel a desire to be ready
for Jesus' coming at all times.

Respond by inviting Jesus
to make Himself first in their lives.



The Message

People in God's family
can always be ready
for Jesus to come.

Monthly Theme

We are members of God's family.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Ten bridesmaids take their lamps and go to meet the bridegroom. The bridegroom is late. All of the young women fall asleep. They awake when they hear that the bridegroom is coming. As they all prepare their lamps to be bright for the wedding procession, five discover that they haven't enough oil. While they hurry to buy more, the bridegroom comes and takes those who are prepared to the wedding. The other five bridesmaids miss the wedding because they are not prepared.

This is a story about community.

Jesus' illustration shows us that not all of God's earthly family choose to be prepared when He comes to take us to be part of the heavenly family. Each of us has a responsibility for our own readiness. We do this by keeping our relationship strong with Jesus through Bible study and prayer.

Teacher Enrichment

"All early lamps are of clay. . . . The earliest lamps were merely bowls, the brim of which was pinched at one point. Into the channel thus formed a wick or flax was inserted that conducted the olive or animal oil to the flame. . . .

"Lamps were kept burning day and night in ancient times, for the lamps served not only to give light but also to keep fire at hand" (*The SDA Bible Dictionary*, pp. 656, 657).

"A wedding was a great occasion. The whole village turned out to accompany the couple to their new home, and they went by the longest possible road, in order that they might receive the glad good wishes of as many as possible. The Rabbis agreed that a man might even abandon the study of the law to share in the joy of a wedding feast.

"One of the great things to do if you could at a middle class wedding in Palestine was to catch the bridal party napping. So the bridegroom comes unexpectedly, and sometimes in the middle of the night; it is true that he is required by public opinion to send a man along the street to shout; 'behold the bridegroom is coming!' but that may happen at any time; so the bridal party have to be ready to go out into the street at any time to meet him. . . . Other important points are that no one is allowed on the streets after dark without a lighted lamp, and also that when the bridegroom

has once arrived, and the door has been shut, late-comers are not admitted" (*The Gospel of Matthew*, Barclay, Westminster Press, 1975).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 9.

Program Overview

Lesson Section

Minutes

Activities

Materials Needed

Welcome

ongoing

Greet students at door;
hear pleased/troubled

none

1

Readiness Options

up to 10

A. Ticket Choices
B. Tasty Choices
C. Ready to Go?

tickets (see activity), tables and chairs, paper and crayons
pitchers, water with salt, red food coloring, clear beverage, small paper cups
suitcase, assorted items for a trip

Any Time

Prayer and Praise*

up to 10

Fellowship
Songbook
Mission
Offering
Prayer

Sing for Joy
Children's Mission
shoebox used last week
colored paper strips, pencils, tape or stapler

2

Bible Lesson

up to 20

Experiencing the Story

Memory Verse

Bible Study

oil lamp, 10 candles or flashlights, 5 bottles of oil or 5 batteries, 5 empty bottles of oil or 5 dead flashlight batteries, Bible-times costumes
copies of lamp on page 149, scissors, markers
Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

up to 15

Is Your Passport Ready?

passport, paper, markers

4

Sharing the Lesson

up to 15

Lamps to Light the Way

construction paper, markers, scissors, lamp reproductions (see page 149)

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they're pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- tickets (see activity)
- tables and chairs
- paper and crayons

A. Ticket Choices

Prepare in advance enough tickets for the class. Half of the tickets should have red smiley faces and half should have no smiley faces.

Give every student a ticket when they enter the room (do not give them a choice of tickets). Direct the children with the red smiley face tickets to a table with paper and crayons and tell them to draw a picture of a lamp. Direct the children with the plain tickets to a table with nothing on it. Tell them to sit quietly until the children at the other table have finished their work. Let the children sit at the tables for a few minutes. Then have them return to their seats.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How did it feel sitting at the table with nothing to do? What was the reason you did not get to go to the table with the coloring sheets? Did you wish you had a choice? In this activity you didn't have a choice, but in real life you do have a choice in staying prepared for Jesus' coming. And that brings me to our message today:**



PEOPLE IN GOD'S FAMILY CAN ALWAYS BE READY FOR JESUS TO COME.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- three clear pitchers
- water
- salt
- red food coloring
- clear beverage (7-Up, Sprite, etc.)
- small paper cups for everyone

B. Tasty Choices

Beforehand, prepare one pitcher with water and salt, another with water and red food coloring mixed in, and the third with the clear beverage.

Ask the children to come to the table and choose a drink. They may choose only one kind of drink.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Why did you pick the drink you did? Were you disappointed with your choice? Why or why not? In real life we also make choices. One of the most important choices is to be ready when Jesus comes. And that brings me to our message for today:**



PEOPLE IN GOD'S FAMILY CAN ALWAYS BE READY FOR JESUS TO COME.

Say that with me.

C. Ready to Go?

Place in the suitcase assorted items such as a toothbrush, socks, pajamas, swim-suit, travel alarm clock, etc., that are appropriate to pack for a trip to a faraway country. Also mix in some inappropriate items such as a crystal vase, work gloves, empty egg carton, etc. Say: **Please help me pack my suitcase for my trip to (you name the place). When I call your name, come up and choose one item you think I will need and place it in my suitcase.**

You Need:

- suitcase
- assorted items for a trip

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Do you think I'm ready for my trip now? Why? When Jesus comes, we will take a wonderful trip. How can we prepare for our trip to heaven? Our message tells us . . .**



PEOPLE IN GOD'S FAMILY CAN ALWAYS BE READY FOR JESUS TO COME.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any Time



Fellowship

Report the children's joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Give a special warm greeting to visitors and introduce each by name. Acknowledge birthdays or special events.



Suggested Songs

- "Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 133)
- "Give Me Oil in My Lamp" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 132)
- "This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 134)
- "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 139)



Mission

Use *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Continue to use the decorated shoebox to collect the offering. Remind the children that their offering goes to help their community, the family of God, around the world.

You Need:

- decorated shoebox used last week



Prayer

Have the children add more links to the prayer chain. Have the children write prayers of thanksgiving and answers to prayers on the strips. Choose a child to pray and let an adult end with another prayer.

You Need:

- colored paper strips
- pencils
- tape or stapler

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- oil lamp
- ten candles or flashlights
- five small bottles of oil or five flashlight batteries
- five empty bottles or five flashlight batteries that don't work
- Bible-times costumes

Characters: ten bridesmaids, bridegroom, wedding party, all in Bible-times costumes

Props: large oil lamp

Setting the Scene

Give the ten bridesmaids each a candle (unlit) or flashlight to hold to represent the lamps in the story. If using candles, give five of the children each a small jar of oil. If using flashlights, five should have extra batteries. The other five should receive empty jars or batteries that do not work. The remainder of the class may form the bridal procession. To begin, have the bridesmaids stand before the group.

Introduce the story by saying: **Who has been to a wedding? What kinds of things are done beforehand to prepare for the wedding?** Allow responses. Say: **Usually there is a lot of preparation to make a wedding special. Today our Bible story is about five bridesmaids who came prepared for delays in a wedding and five who did not.**

Read or tell the story.

"I wish he'd hurry up and come!" yawns a young woman. "We've been waiting here for hours."

"I'm sure it won't be much longer," encourages another girl. "Maybe we should just sit down and rest a while." *[Bridesmaids sit down.]*

The ten girls sit down and try to get comfortable. The wedding party is supposed to pass this way. They have been looking forward to joining in and walking

with the other guests to the wedding feast. But none of them had expected that it would be such a long wait.

Earlier in the evening five of the girls had thought it would be a good idea to take along some extra oil because the bridegroom might be late. So they filled the extra oil containers people in those days carried with them when they carried their lamps at night. If the bridegroom was delayed, they could refill their lamps and have light to carry during the wedding procession.

But the other five young women thought to themselves, *It won't be long before the bridegroom comes and invites us to join the wedding party.* So they didn't put any extra oil in their containers. Their lamps were full when they left home. They thought that would be enough.

So five of the girls took containers with extra oil, and five carried empty containers. *[Have all ten girls hold up their bottles of oil or extra batteries and smile.]*

[Turn off the lights.] Now it is getting late, and there is no sign of the bridegroom yet. The girls talk and laugh together as they watch for the wedding party. One by one they nod, yawn, and fall asleep. *[Bridesmaids close their eyes, lie down.]*

After a time, a call wakes them up! *[Rest of the class stands and walks single-file through the classroom. Child in front shouts:]* "Make way for the wedding party. Come and join us. Make way for the wedding party."

[The girls turn on their flashlights or hold up their candles.] Quickly the girls pick up their lamps and stand up.

"Hurry! We must add oil to our lamps or we will miss the wedding," cries one. *[Girls all check their bottles of oil or flashlight batteries.]*

The five girls who have extra oil

quickly use it all to fill their lamps. But the five who have no extra oil realize they have no way to keep their lamps from going out. *[The five without oil or whose batteries don't work turn off their lights.]* What can they do?

"Give us some of your extra oil!" they beg.

But the five girls who had brought extra oil say, "We wish we could give you some, but we have used it all to fill our lamps! Go quickly, maybe you can buy oil somewhere!" *[Five girls without oil or batteries run to other side of room.]*

The five girls who need oil hurry off into the night. Their friends join the wedding party, and go to the wedding feast. *[Five girls with oil or batteries join the wedding procession and go to the opposite side of the room.]*

It isn't easy to find anyone who is willing to sell oil in the middle of the night. By the time the unprepared girls find someone to help them, it is very late. When they finally reach the wedding, the door is closed and locked.

"Let us in! Please, let us in!" they beg, knocking loudly. *[Girls knock on "door" and beg to be let in.]* The bridegroom himself comes to the door. *["Bridegroom" comes to front of group and shrugs shoulders.]* "I'm sorry, but I don't know you," he says. "My friends all came in with me." *[The "bridegroom" turns away.]*

And the five young women who were not prepared turned away. *[The five girls go to the opposite wall.]*

Like the girls waiting for the bridegroom, when Jesus comes we will not be able to rely on the choices of another person. Each one of us has to choose to say "Yes!" to His invitation and then stay ready for His coming.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

Who does the bridegroom in the story represent? (Jesus) **Who was ready**

when the bridegroom came? (five young women with extra oil) **Whom do they represent?** (people who will be ready when Jesus comes)

Why didn't the five girls with oil share? (Because they had used all their oil to fill their own lamps.) **No one else can be prepared for us when Jesus comes. WE make the final decision to do right . . . or wrong. The choice to be ready . . . or not . . . is ours.**

Whom do the five without oil represent? (those who will not be ready when Jesus comes) **Which group do you want to be in? How can we be prepared to go with Jesus when He comes?**

Our message tells us that



PEOPLE IN GOD'S FAMILY CAN ALWAYS BE READY FOR JESUS TO COME.

Memory Verse

Before Sabbath, duplicate the lamp pattern on page 149, one for each child. On half of the lamps write the memory verse. Leave the others blank.

In Sabbath School, distribute the lamps randomly, alternating between those with the memory verse and those without it.

Say: **In our story today we learned about being ready when Jesus comes.**

Who knows when that will happen?

Allow thoughtful responses, then say:

Our memory verse tells us the answer.

Look at your lamp and you will see.

Children with blank lamps will respond accordingly. Say to them: **Find a partner, someone whose lamp has our text on it, and read it together.**

Allow time. Then distribute markers to children who have the blank lamps and have them write the verse on it. Have partners work together to review the verse, then have the class hold their lamps high and say the verse together.

You Need:

- copies of lamp on page 149
- scissors
- markers

Remind the children to keep their “lamps” full of “oil” each day by learning more about God’s Word, the Bible, and praying for His “oil,” the Holy Spirit, to fill their lives.

You may wish to sing “Give Me Oil in My Lamp” (*Sing for Joy*, No. 132).

You Need:

- Bibles

Bible Study

Form three groups. Assign one of the texts that follows to each group to read and summarize for the class. Adults assist as needed. Discuss how the messages are alike. (Watch and be ready for Jesus to come.)

Matthew 24:36-44

Mark 13:22-36

Luke 12:35-40

Debriefing

Help the children find Psalm 119:105 and have the verse read aloud. Say: **Lamps and oil were in our Bible story today. From reading this verse, what do you think the lamps represent? (the Bible) What does the oil represent? That’s right, the Bible can give us wisdom and understanding to light up our lives. The oil represents the Holy Spirit who speaks to our hearts. By staying connected with God this way, we stay ready to meet Him. Remember ...**



PEOPLE IN GOD’S FAMILY CAN ALWAYS BE READY FOR JESUS TO COME.

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- passport
- paper
- markers

Is Your Passport Ready?

Ask: **Does anyone know what a passport is? Allow responses. If you have never seen one, this is what one looks like.** (Hold up a passport.) **It has your name, address, and a picture of you. You cannot enter most countries unless you have a passport.**

Distribute the paper and markers. Ask the children to create a “Passport to Heaven” by folding the paper in half. On the cover, have them write “Passport to Heaven” and add a border design. On the inside, have them write the words “I belong to Jesus” and make a picture of themselves or write their name under the words.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **We can’t enter heaven unless we have a friendship with Jesus. What can help us have that friendship?**

All Christians choose to get ready for Jesus’ coming, but not all will stay ready. We can’t depend on others to get into heaven, just as we can’t use another person’s passport to enter another country. Each of us must keep that friendship with Jesus alive so we can be ready when Jesus comes.

Let’s say our message together:



PEOPLE IN GOD’S FAMILY CAN ALWAYS BE READY FOR JESUS TO COME.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Lamps to Light the Way

Say: **We are going to make something to give to someone in our church family before we go home today.**

Use the same lamp cutouts as used in the memory verse activity. (See page 149.) Distribute a construction paper copy to each child. Have them cut it out and write the memory verse on it. Encourage them to give it to an adult who has come to church today and say “I want to be ready when Jesus comes” as they deliver their lamp message.

Debriefing

Say: **Show me your lamps.** Affirm their efforts, then ask: **What does your lamp say? Allow responses. With whom will you share it? What will you say?**

Encourage the children to practice with a partner. Close by saying the message together. **Remember . . .**



PEOPLE IN GOD'S FAMILY CAN ALWAYS BE READY FOR JESUS TO COME.

Closing

Close with prayer, asking God to help the children always to stay ready for Jesus' coming.

You Need:

- lamp reproductions on construction paper (see page 149)
- scissors
- markers

Ready or Not . . .

References

Matthew 25:1-13;
*Christ's Object
 Lessons*,
 pp. 405-421

Memory Verse

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour" (Matthew 25:13, NIV).

The Message

People in God's family can always be ready for Jesus to come.

Have you ever had to wait a long time for something you really wanted to happen? Such as your birthday or summer vacation? Do you count the days until the excitement begins? Do you plan and dream of what it's going to be like?

In our Bible story ten young women are waiting for a wedding to begin. They have to wait a long time.

"I wish he'd hurry up and come!" yawned a young woman. "We've been waiting here for hours."

"I'm sure it won't be much longer," encouraged another girl. "Maybe we should just sit down and rest a while."

Ten young women sat down and tried to get comfortable. They knew that the wedding party was supposed to pass this way. And they wanted to join the group and walk with the other guests to the wedding. But none of them had expected that it would be such a long wait.

Earlier in the evening five of the girls had thought it would be good to take along some extra oil. They really didn't know when the bridegroom would come.

But the other five had thought, *It won't be that long before the bridegroom comes.*

So they didn't put any extra oil in the containers everyone carried at night. Their lamps were full when they left home. They were sure that would be enough.

So five of the women took extra oil. But five did not.

It was getting late. And there was no sign of the bridegroom. The young women talked and laughed together for a long time. But one by one they nodded, yawned, and fell asleep.

After a time, a call woke them up. "Make way for the wedding party! Come and join us. Make way for the wedding party! The bridegroom comes!"

Quickly the women reached for their lamps and stood up.

"Hurry! We must add oil to our lamps or we will miss the wedding," cried one.

The five girls who had extra oil quickly used it all to fill their lamps. But the five who had no extra oil just as quickly realized that they had no extra oil to keep their lamps from going out.

"Give us some of your extra oil!" they begged. "We don't want to miss the wedding!"

But the five prepared young women couldn't help them. "We wish we could give you some, but we have used all our oil to refill our lamps. We have none left. Go quickly; maybe you can buy oil somewhere!"

Five young women in need of oil hurried off into the night. Their friends joined the wedding party, and went to the wedding feast.

It wasn't easy to find anyone who was willing to sell oil in the middle of the night. By the time oil was purchased and they arrived at the wedding, the door was closed and locked.

"Let us in! Please, let us in!" they begged, knocking loudly.



The bridegroom himself came to the door. "I'm sorry, but I don't know you," he said. "My friends all came in with me." He turned away and closed the door. Five disappointed women stood outside.

Like the young women waiting for the bridegroom, we cannot rely on the choices of another person. Each one has to choose to say "Yes!" to Jesus and stay ready for His coming. We stay ready by making wise choices every day. By studying the Bible and praying. By choosing every day to be best friends with Him. And when Jesus comes, we will be ready.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- With your family, find a quiet place near a path outdoors and read and discuss your Bible lesson. What does the lamp represent? The oil?
- Show the "Passport to Heaven" you made in Sabbath School. Make a passenger list for the trip to heaven. How can you help each other to be ready? Pray that you all will be ready.
- Teach your memory verse to your family. Tell them what it means to you.

Sunday

- With your family, read and discuss Matthew 25:1-13. Who knows when Jesus is coming back? Do the angels? Does Jesus? Does God? Say your memory verse together. Ask what it means to your family.
- Look in books to discover more about lights used in Bible times. Draw a picture of one. Thank God for His "light," the Bible.

Monday

- With your family, review the Bible lesson. What does the oil represent? How do you know when this "oil" is a part of your life? Will others know? Why?
- Sing "Give Me Oil in My Lamp" before prayer. Ask God to fill your life with His Spirit.

Tuesday

- During family worship today, find and read Galatians 3:13; Titus 2:14; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Ephesians 1:5. What is the message for your family? Thank God for sacrificing His Son for us.
- If possible, look at your parents' wedding pictures. Do you see bridesmaids? If so, what are they holding in their hands?
- Count out ten of something (beans, buttons, coins, etc.) to represent the ten bridesmaids. Divide them in half. How many in each group?

Wednesday

- Read the lesson with your family again. Unscramble and write these words from the story.
orbdeimrog _____ sewi _____
diwdnge _____ ilo _____
- Review your memory verse.
- Think about ways you can remain ready for Jesus to come. Which did you do in worship today?
- Sing "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." Thank Jesus for His promise to come again. Tell Him that you want to be His friend.

Thursday

- With your family, talk about things you are responsible for at home. What happens when you forget? When you remember?
- Say your memory verse without help.
- Set a timer for a minute or less. Toss a ball or wadded paper back and forth. Whoever is holding the ball when the timer goes off is out. Repeat until one person is left. That person wins. We want to stay ready for Jesus to come because we don't know when that will be (just as you didn't know when the timer would go off!). Ask Jesus to help you always to be ready for His coming.

Friday

- Plan a Jewish wedding for sundown worship. Borrow some fancy clothes from your parents and act out the lesson story. At the end, ask Jesus to help you to be ready when He comes.
- With adult help, light a candle. Turn off the lights. Talk about how that one candle can light up the room. How can you be a light in the darkness around you?
- Sing "This Little Light of Mine" together before prayer.