

Open the leaflets and pass out crayons.

Let's tear and do the square!

1. Help kids plan a surprise party for a friend. Think of someone you would like to surprise with a birthday party. Draw a present *they* would love.
2. **What will you need to be ready for the party? Make a list.** Help kids come up with everything needed: food, a way to eat the food, invitations, decorations, favors, game ideas, and so on. Price is no object.
3. Ask kids to describe their party.
4. **Did you remember to make a plan for where you'll wait to surprise your friend? How will you make sure your friend shows up at the right time?** Talk about the importance of building relationships by being together.
5. **If you want a relationship with God, you need to prepare for that time too. What can you include on your "to-do" list for showing up to spend time with God?** Praying, reading the Bible, asking questions and listening to responses, participating in worship, finding the good in others, and so much more prepare us for encounters with God.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Jesus reminded us to "keep awake." Keep looking for God's love everywhere and sharing that love with others. You think about how you'll get ready for a sleepover with a friend. How can you anticipate what you need to spend time with God? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return to the leaflet panels.

Invite kids to draw something they bring when staying with a friend. While they draw, talk about ways they can spend time with God when they are with friends.

Send kids out.

Form a circle and hold hands. This time when they send a squeeze around the circle, ask them to silently name one way they spend time with God while they pass the squeeze to the next child.

Pray together: **Lord, help us to be prepared to act as your disciples whenever and wherever we get the chance.**

Thank kids for their ideas about how to make time for God. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.

Ten Bridesmaids

PREPARE • LECTIONARY 32
SEASON AFTER PENTECOST • YEAR A

MATTHEW 25:1-13

Grades
3-4



32

What is happening in this story?

This is the first of three parables in Matthew 25, drawing a parallel between a common experience in life and the reign of God, in this case, a wedding. Individuals are given things to do in order to prepare for the return of Jesus and/or the bringing about of the kingdom of God. Are they prepared (or on the road to righteousness) or unprepared (road to unrighteousness)? Christians are called to active discipleship, always prepared for Christ's return. Through Jesus' death and resurrection we are all welcomed into God's family and into the kingdom. While the story about the five bridesmaids being left behind could be jarring, it makes sense to be looking at these ways that Jesus is telling us to be ready.

Why does this story matter for kids?

Some kids may have participated in weddings as flower girls or ring bearers with a specific role: carry the ring on a fancy pillow, drop flower petals while walking down the aisle. While the term *bridesmaid* is the same used today, the role in the first century was different. The bridesmaids in the story were given a specific task. Some were better prepared for this task than others.

What is the lectionary connection?

This parable happens during the end of the Season after Pentecost, also known as Ordinary Time. It is a great way to emphasize that we need to be prepared at *all* times! We are not just waiting for Jesus during Advent or Lent, but each and every day!

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids are very familiar with the concept of getting ready—for school, a meal, a game, going to bed, or the next grade. Getting ready for Jesus' return is less familiar. Jesus tells us to prepare by actively following God's way.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Country map
- Flashlight
- Dot stickers

WHIRL SUPPLIES

• WHIRL NRSV BIBLES

• DVD

• WALL CHART

• LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Bring a map of your country. Invite kids to place dot stickers showing places they've been and talk about those places. Who's been the farthest? Why were they there? What did they do?

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

Point out today's date, church season, color, and icon. **Oil lamps were common in Jesus' time. People carried them from place to place. Just like flashlights go out if the battery dies, these lamps quit burning when the oil runs out.** Ask each kid to draw a flame in today's wedge.

Form a circle and hold hands. **Send a gentle squeeze around the circle.** Each kid squeezes their right hand the moment they feel their left hand squeezed. **Be ready!**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

If the electricity goes out, your lights won't work. What would you try to find first if that happened? Help kids if they get stuck. They might say a source of light, or maybe they'll say it's their mom. **Write or draw what you would look for. Do you usually know where that is, or would you have to look for it every time?**

Do you know if it's working right now?

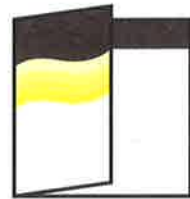
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Raise your hand if you've gone camping before. What do you like or dislike about it? Today we're going to join our friends on a church camping trip. Pay attention to their camping motto.

View Episode 9, "Crash Tractor," on the Whirl Year A Fall, Grades 3-6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video.

- **Why was Gabe unprepared?**
- **When have you missed important information by not listening?**
- **What was the camping motto? What does that mean?**
- **What can we do to *prepare* to live as Christians?**



Pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and help kids find Matthew 25:1-13.

Do the Preview Activity together on page 1146 and compare responses.

When we read, you'll hear about oil lamps. It took a long time for the thick wick to soak up the oil from the dish, but then they burned a long time. But you had to plan ahead.

Read Matthew 25:1-13 in this creative way together: If possible, turn off the lights. Let kids take turns holding a flashlight for you while you read slowly. They can turn off the flashlight from time to time to see if you're *prepared* to finish the verse you're reading without light.



Ask these questions after you read the story.

- **Is anything at your house always *ready to go*?** (Backpacks, shopping bags, car books or games, beach bag, first aid kit, and so on.)
- **What have you missed out on because you weren't there when something happened?**
- **Jesus told this story to remind people to be ready for God at all times. Who helps you to be ready to see God in your life?**
- **I wonder why the five bridesmaids with the oil didn't share with the other bridesmaids.**

BIBLE BIT

This is the first of three parables Jesus told about his second coming. This one emphasizes the need to be ready for his return at all times.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Watch for the many opportunities Gabe's friends missed out on by not helping him. Think about why they didn't help.

OUR CHURCH

Kids may be blissfully unaware of how your church prepares for worship—sermons are written; choirs/bands practice; bulletins are written, printed, and folded. What else?

TODAY'S READINGS Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 • Amos 5:18-24 • 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Matthew 25:1-13

Ten Bridesmaids

LECTIONARY 32
MATTHEW 25:1-13



Ten Bridesmaids

LECTIONARY 32 • PREPARE
SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Grades
3-4

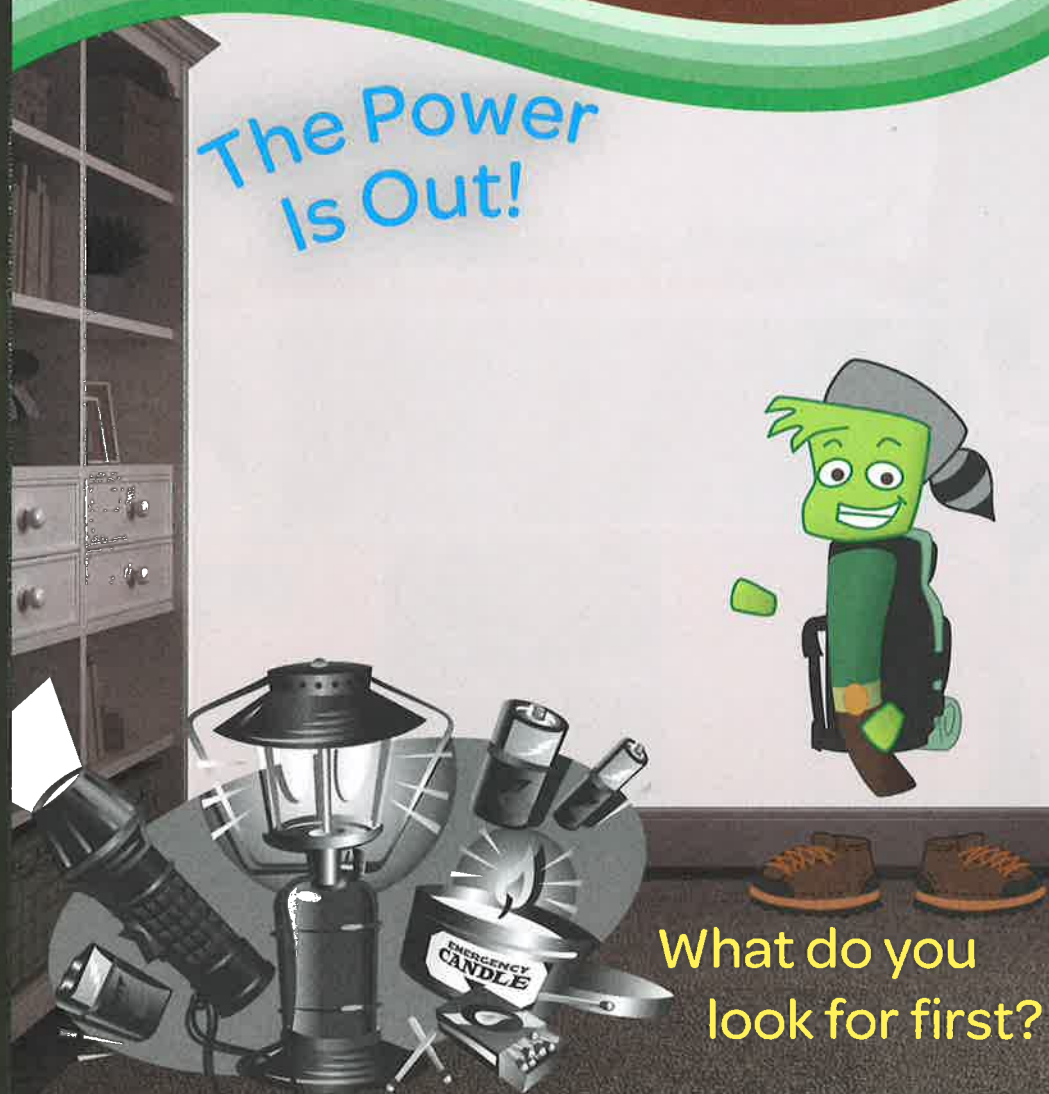


32

The Power
Is Out!



What do you
look for first?



This week's theme is PREPARE. God wants us to be prepared to experience the presence of the Spirit in our lives. Try these activities to help think about how your family can be prepared to meet God.

This week our family is praying for ...



Singalong

Learn the song "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." Sing this song together in the car as you travel this week. The words can remind you of the five bridesmaids who were prepared with oil in their lamps.

Quick Pack

Pack a backpack as if you might be asked any minute to take a trip. You don't know where you will be going or how long you will stay. What will you put in your backpack? What will you leave behind? How will these things help you prepare for an unexpected journey?

Oil Infusion

Make some scented oils to use in recipes. Search online for "DIY infused oil." These infused oils make great presents. You can attach a recipe using the oil to help the recipient "be prepared" for using it, or just keep the oils in your kitchen for at-home cooking.

Wedding Memories

Have you ever been an attendant in a wedding? A bridesmaid or a flower girl or a ring bearer or a groomsman? Find photos or videos of these events and talk about what you had to do to prepare for this special day.

DIY Lamps

Buy a small oil lamp or use candles to have firelight during mealtime. As you burn them at the table, let them remind you that, like the bridesmaids, we should always be prepared to receive the Holy Spirit.

Prepared

Have you heard the Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared"? Write down different unexpected or emergency scenarios on some index cards. Some can be zany (a herd of zebras is knocking on the front door) and others can be serious (the smoke detector starts to beep). Pick a card and in 30 seconds, describe as many ways to be prepared as you can! (You may want to review your family's emergency plan after going through all the cards.)

Family Fort

Use sheets and blankets to set up a tent in your family room. Pretend like you are camping. Turn off all the lights in your house, and only use camper's lanterns (or flashlights). How long does the oil (or batteries) in these lamps last? Is there a way to make the light last longer?



To do:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Pass out leaflets, markers, and sheets of paper.

Let's tear and do the square!

1. Prepare to make a giant game board on the floor with the kids' help. **Each of you will use your leaflet to create one spot as part of our giant game board.**
2. Have kids mark the directions they want on their leaflet. **Color one arrow to show which direction a player will move when he lands on your spot. Color one, two, or three of the boxes to show how many spaces she will move.**
3. Use kids' leaflets to create a winding game-board path across the floor. Use sheets of paper to create additional game board spaces, interspersed with the leaflet sheets. Use tape to secure the sheets to the floor.
4. Divide kids into two teams. Each team chooses one player to act as a "marker" and move along the game board.
5. Teams take turns rolling a die and answering a question about living out their faith until Jesus comes. **(Name a way to be kind at school. What is one way to serve a neighbor? Name something to pray about. Etc.)**
6. The "marker" then moves the number of spaces rolled, following the directions—if any—recorded on the space where they land.
7. Celebrate together when kids reach the end of the path. **Get ready for Jesus!**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Ten bridesmaids went to a wedding. Answer this next question with your fingers. How many bridesmaids were prepared? How many were not? Name some things we talked about during our game that help us get ready for Jesus. Allow kids to respond.

Pass out leaflet panels and cotton swabs.

Place bowls with a little cooking oil within reach of each kid. Invite kids to use cotton swabs to paint over the flame from the lamp with oil. Hang leaflets in a window or hold up to the light to see the flames "glow."

Send kids out.

Repeat the opening ritual. Each kid takes a bit of confetti from the basket. Together kids yell, **"Get ready for Jesus!"** and throw confetti.

Pray together: **Dear Jesus, help me be prepared. Remind me to act like you every day. Amen.**

Thank kids for getting ready for Jesus and for now helping you pick up the confetti. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.

Ten Bridesmaids

Grades
1-2

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AGE LEVEL TIP

Find a picture (in a book or online) of an oil lamp used in Bible times. Explain to kids how these lamps would work and what purpose they would serve.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Glue sticks
- Construction paper
- Clear tape
- Masking tape

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Play clay
- Confetti
- Basket
- Tissue paper
- Music source
- Dice
- Cotton swabs
- Cooking oil
- Shallow bowls