



Cycle A

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings & Background

This Sunday's Readings



First Reading *Wisdom 6:12-16*

Wisdom will come to those who seek it.

Responsorial Psalm : *Psalm 63:2,3-4,5-6,7-8*

Our souls are thirsting for God.

Second Reading : *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

(shorter form: *1 Thessalonians 4:13-14*)

God will raise all those who have died.

Gospel Reading *Matthew 25:1-13*

Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, teaching his disciples the importance of being prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Background on the Gospel Reading

In this week's Gospel, ***Jesus talks about what it means to be prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.***

This week's reading ***follows a series of warnings and predictions by Jesus about the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus wants his disciples to understand that the exact day and time cannot be predicted. He teaches the disciples that they must remain vigilant so that they will not be caught unprepared.***

When thinking about the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, ***it is important to consider the first-century wedding traditions of Palestine.***

Scholars tell us that it was the custom of the day for young maidens—friends and family members of the bride—to meet the bridegroom when he came to bring his bride to her new home.

As with many of Jesus' parables, several levels of interpretation are possible.

In last week's Gospel, we heard Jesus warn against following the example of the Pharisees and scribes. If read in the context of early Christianity's struggle to define itself against Pharisaic Judaism, ***this parable is a continuing critique of Judaism.***

It suggests that the Jewish leaders were like the foolish virgins, unprepared to meet Jesus, the bridegroom of Israel.

In the chapter preceding this parable, however, ***Jesus warns about the destruction of Jerusalem, the tribulation of the end times, and the coming of the Son of Man.***

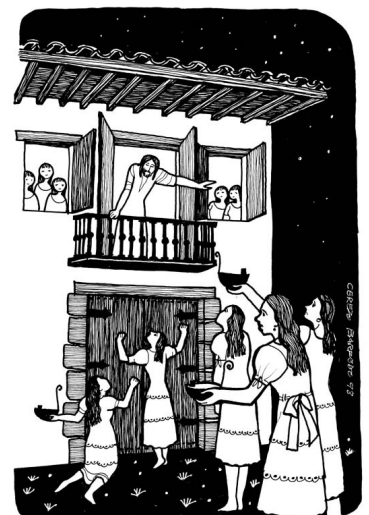
When read in this context, today's ***parable is a warning to the Christian community to remain vigilant and prepared to receive Jesus, the Son of Man who will return at the end of time.***

This interpretation is supported by the reference to the delay of the bridegroom. The Christian community for whom Matthew wrote this ***Gospel was coming to terms with the realization that the promise of Jesus' return would not be fulfilled within their lifetimes.***

The question remains for us to ask ourselves,

Are we ready to receive Jesus?

Will we be prepared to receive him?





Cycle A

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

Gospel Reading *Matthew 25:1-13*

Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, teaching his disciples the importance of being prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Young children need adults' help to ensure that they are prepared for most activities. As adults, we must also take the lead and set the example when teaching the ***importance of preparing ourselves to receive Jesus when he comes again.***

Materials Needed

- A basket
- A box or backpack
- Items for a first-aid kit
- Small items that would not be found in a first-aid kit

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Prepare a basket with enough items so that each child may choose one thing. Include many items that would be found in a well-prepared first-aid kit. Also include some items that would not usually be found in a first-aid kit.
2. Tell the children that you are going on a camping trip and that you need them to help you pack a first-aid kit. Supply a box or backpack to hold the items. Have each child choose an item from the basket and say whether it should be part of the kit and why. When all the items have been selected and discussed, explain to the children that this kit will help you be prepared if you become hurt or injured.
3. ***The Gospel today talks about the importance of being prepared to receive Jesus.***
4. Read aloud today's Gospel, Matthew 25:1-13.
5. ***Who was prepared to meet the bridegroom when he arrived?*** (the wise virgins)
What happened to those who were unprepared? (They were not able to attend the wedding feast.)
6. ***This Gospel reminds us that we must be prepared to receive Jesus.***
We prepare to receive Jesus by praying every day, by learning what God wants us to do, and by obeying him. If we do these things, Jesus will come to us and take us to be with him in heaven forever.
7. Conclude in prayer together for God's help in preparing to receive Jesus.
8. ***Pray together the Lord's Prayer or the Act of Hope.***

Act of Hope

***O my God, relying on your infinite mercy and promises,
I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace,
and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.
Amen.***



Cycle A

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)

Gospel Reading *Matthew 25:1-13*

Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, teaching his disciples the importance of being prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Older children are beginning to ***appreciate the importance of being prepared for particular events*** and activities. We can also teach them about the importance of ***preparing ourselves to receive Jesus when he comes again.***

Materials Needed

- None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. ***Let's imagine that we are planning a surprise party for a friend. How would we go about preparing for this party?***
Let's make a list of the things we would need to do to prepare. Create a list that includes items such as preparing an invitation list, setting the date and place for the party, planning the food, choosing the decorations, planning activities, and so on.
2. ***There's a lot of preparation needed for a surprise party. What would happen if the guest of honour arrived before we were ready? What would happen if the guest of honour was delayed in his or her arrival?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
3. ***Jesus talked about the importance of being prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven, using the example of a wedding feast. Let us listen carefully to what Jesus taught.***
4. Invite one or more volunteers to read aloud today's Gospel, Matthew 25:1-13.
5. ***In Jesus' time, the bridegroom traveled from his home to the home of the bride to meet the bride and bring her back to his home. The virgins in this parable were family members and friends of the bride, whose job it was to greet the bridegroom and escort him to the bride. What did they need to do to be prepared for this job?*** (They had to prepare their lamps and meet the bridegroom.)
What happened in the story? (Some of the women didn't bring enough oil for their lamps, and when the bridegroom was delayed, they were unable to meet him.)
Were these foolish virgins able to attend the wedding feast? (No, they were unable to accompany the bridegroom to the feast; they were not able to attend the feast because they arrived too late.)
6. ***Jesus concludes this parable by reminding his listeners that we must stay prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven because we do not know when the Kingdom of Heaven will come.***
What are some things that we should be doing to stay prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven? (Praying every day, learning what God wants us to do, obeying the Commandments)
7. Conclude in ***prayer together for the strength to prepare to receive the Kingdom of Heaven when it comes.***
8. Pray together the ***Prayer to the Holy Spirit*** or the Prayer of Saint Richard of Chichester.



Cycle A

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Making the Connection (Grades 7, 8, and 9)

Gospel Reading *Matthew 25:1-13*

Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, teaching his disciples the importance of being prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Young people at this age are more aware of the ***need to be prepared for routine responsibilities and activities as well as the consequences of their lack of readiness.*** Encourage them also to prepare *themselves spiritually to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Materials Needed

- None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. ***If one of your teachers told you that a comprehensive quiz would be given next week, but warned that you would not know on which day, when would you begin to study?***
Ask for a show of hands for each option:
Right away? After calculating when you think the teacher will be most likely to give the quiz? Later?
2. ***We're all different. Some of us like to get to the task at hand as soon as possible. Others are apt to put off until later what can be done right away. The parable in this Sunday's Gospel reading speaks to this subject.***
3. Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 25:1–13.
4. ***The ten virgins are young maidens who accompany the bridegroom as he brings his bride to the wedding celebration and her new home. However, the groom was late, and things took longer than expected.***
Ask: As a consequence, what happened to the five foolish virgins? (They ran out of oil for their lamps and missed the wedding feast because they had to purchase additional oil. They were not prepared.)
5. ***Jesus often refers to the Kingdom of Heaven as a banquet or wedding feast. In this parable, the bridegroom represents Jesus. It's one thing to miss a wedding reception, but it's an entirely different issue to miss the second coming of Jesus at the end of time.***
We all want to be included in the heavenly banquet. Since Jesus tells us that we don't know the time of his coming, we have to be prepared always—there's no putting off readiness.
6. ***What can we do to get ready?*** (Accept all reasonable answers, including pray, receive the sacraments, keep the commandments, be charitable, etc.)
7. ***Let's pray the Lord's Prayer together, asking our heavenly Father to help us be ready to meet Jesus when the time comes.***



Cycle A
Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time,
Family Connection

Gospel Reading

Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, teaching his disciples the importance of being prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the daily activities of family life, ***we can easily find excuses for not attending to our spiritual lives.***

If not given top priority, prayer and reading Scripture risk becoming occasional activities rather than daily practices.

In today's Gospel, ***Jesus reminds us that if we fail to give our spiritual life priority, we will find ourselves unprepared to receive Jesus.***

Daily prayer and spiritual practice keeps us ready to receive Jesus.

Gather together as a family and talk about some of the things our faith calls us to do every day and every week to keep God first in our lives.

Talk about what might happen if we don't do these things regularly.

Explain to your family that ***Jesus taught us that it is important to keep ourselves ready to receive him when he comes again.***

Tell them to listen as you read the parable that Jesus tells in today's Gospel.

Read aloud Matthew 25:1-13.

Talk with your family about why Jesus says that it is so important to remain ready to receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Pray together that your family will always keep God first in your lives so that you will all be prepared to receive Jesus when he comes.

Pray together the Act of Hope.

Act of Hope

***O my God, relying on your infinite mercy and promises,
I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace,
and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.
Amen.***