

# Liturgy of the Word for Children

## Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

*\*\*Please Note: All scripture readings must be read from the Children's Lectionary\*\**

### Opening Prayer:

Lord God, you speak to us in our hearts  
and one day will call us to live with you forever.  
Do not let us be deaf to your voice  
nor let your final call take us by surprise.  
With your help, may we keep on praying every day.  
And, guided by your Holy Spirit,  
may we learn how to choose  
the right things to do and avoid the bad.  
We make this prayer to you through Jesus, Your Son,  
who lives with you, forever and ever. Amen.

### First Reading: Wisdom 6:12-16

Wisdom is wonderful and everlasting. Anyone who wants to have wisdom will find her if they love her and look for her. Wisdom is always ready to help anyone who wants her. People who have wisdom know what is good and right. They are free from worry. Wisdom will lead their thoughts to what is good, and she will guide them in all that they do.

### Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:1-13

(This reading is to be used for personal study. It should not be read in liturgy.)

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

### The Bridesmaids Who Missed the Wedding: Gospel Reflection

This is the story of ten bridesmaids who waited for the groom to come. They waited so long, they almost fell asleep. They had to keep their oil lamps lit, for it was getting very dark. Five bridesmaids had brought extra oil for their lamps -- they were ready! The other five ran out of oil and had to go out and buy more.

Guess what happened while they were gone? The groom came, the wedding began, and the five foolish bridesmaids missed the whole thing.

Being ready is very important. You have to get ready in the morning or you will be late for school. You have to study hard for your test so you will get a good mark.

Jesus wants you to be ready for him and for his Father. The best way to be ready is to stay close to Jesus. Say your prayers, go to Mass, and do good things for others.

**What If...: Gospel Reflection**

Today's gospel tells us to be prepared. Imagine someone in your family was getting married. WHAT IF a member of the wedding party had failed to buy a wedding present until the last minute, got stuck in traffic, and missed the wedding? A wedding is a great event. People need to plan and be ready for it.

WHAT IF your neighbors were going to have a baby but did nothing to get ready? Can you imagine the scene when they came home with the infant to find no crib, no diapers, nothing - no place for the baby to sleep, nothing for the baby to wear? That would be a foolish thing to do indeed.

WHAT IF you were going to have a big English test next week that would count as half your grade for the whole year? You decide to take this test without studying at all. How many answers do you think you would get right? What do you think your grade would be?

WHAT IF the morning sky is dark and overcast, and the weather forecaster calls for intermittent showers and thunderstorms throughout the day? You fail to take an umbrella with you, knowing you have to walk several blocks from the bus stop to your house at the end of the day. Whom can you blame if you get all wet?

Meeting Jesus is the most important thing that will ever happen to any of us. Are you ready for such a great event?

**Ready to Meet Jesus: Discussion Questions**

Someday each of us will meet our Lord. This week, talk about what you can do to be ready. The following questions might help get you started.

Do you do have a special time for group prayer, either with family members or with classmates?

Do you make it a habit to try to help at least one person at least once a day?

Do you belong to a Bible study group? You don't have to be an expert in Scripture to do this. Just take turns reading aloud, and then discuss what has been read in the context of what it means to you. You can choose one book of the Bible and go through it from beginning to end.

Do you have a special time each day to be alone with God? Just sit quietly and let God talk to you.

**Prayers of the Faithful:** Allow a few moments for the children to offer prayers aloud for their special intentions. Ask them to end with "Let us pray to the Lord". All respond, "Lord, Hear our Prayer".

**Apostle's Creed:** You may end the Liturgy of the Word by reciting the Creed as a group if there is time.

## FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The focus of both readings is wisdom. It is common in the Old Testament to find wisdom as an expression of God. Here in this reading, we see wisdom praised as the gift which lasts forever. As the presence of God, she is available to all who seek her. She guides their ways to the good.

The Gospel takes this poetic text and puts it into a tangible parable. The focus of the parable is seen in the last line, "Always be ready, for you do not know at what hour the Lord is coming." From the first reading and the parable, we know that being ready comes from wisdom.

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Ask the children what they heard.

- What is the story about?
- When did it take place?
- Who was there?
- What were they doing?
- What time did the bridegroom come?

You will need to explain to the children that it was customary for the groom to come to the home of the bride and take her to his home where the feast was usually held. Frequently, the bridesmaids waited for the groom and accompanied him to the home of the bride and back for the feast. Everyone went in the wedding procession with lighted oil lamps. So everyone had to bring enough oil to keep their lamps burning for a long time. It should be explained that locking the doors of the house meant using wooden bars—it was not a simple chore. Once the doors were shut they weren't opened again.

Now to return to the story:

- What do you remember about the ten bridesmaids?
- Why were five of them called "wise bridesmaids"?

Help the children see the difference between knowledge and wisdom.

- What did Jesus say after he told this story?
- What does he want us to do now from this story?

# Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Thought for the day

We need to keep ourselves awake and prepared so that the Day of the Lord does not come to us as darkness rather than light.

## Readings

Wisdom 6:12-16

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

*Aim:* To know the parable of the unprepared bridesmaids and its meaning.

## Starter

As they come in, the children can make torches by fixing shiny red flames onto sticks with rubber bands or sticky tape.

## Teaching

Jesus was telling his friends about the future, and what would happen at the end of the world when he would come back in glory. He told this parable to help them understand. It's set at a wedding. If any of them have been bridesmaids or ring bearers they will remember that there's a lot of waiting around to do at weddings, and the wedding in Jesus' story was just the same. Explain how in Jesus' time, the bride and groom would go to the bridegroom's house, and then come out in the evening for the party. All the bridesmaids would wait around near the bridegroom's house until they came out, so they could light the bride and groom's way to where the wedding feast was held.

The torches they carried were like ours—sticks with flames on the top. They soaked some material in oil and tied it on to a stick before lighting it, so they needed to have spare oil with them, ready for when the oil was used up.

In Jesus' story there were ten bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom. Five had plenty of oil for their lamps and five hadn't been keeping themselves ready. When eventually the bridegroom was ready to go, the five unprepared bridesmaids panicked. "Give us some of your oil!" they said. "Ours is running out!" But the other five couldn't give their oil. If they had done that there wouldn't have been enough light from any of the lamps, so they sent the unprepared bridesmaids to buy some more oil.

By the time they got back, the bride and bridegroom had been led through the night by the lamps of the other five bridesmaids, and the whole wedding party had gone in to the feast. The five

unprepared bridesmaids weren't recognized when they hammered on the door, so they missed out on the party, all because they hadn't kept their oil supplies at the ready.

Jesus said to his hearers, "So you keep awake and keep prepared, because you don't know when the bridegroom will be returning, and if you aren't ready, you'll find yourselves shut out of the celebrations on the last day."

He was talking about the time when he will return in all the glory of God at the end of time. And we all need to keep our lamps filled up with oil ready for that.

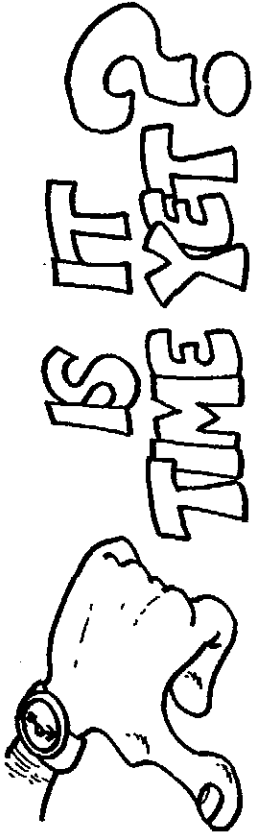
## Praying

Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning,  
give me oil in my lamp, I pray,  
give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning,  
keep me burning to the break of day.

## Activities

On the activity sheet there are instructions for making jam-jar lanterns. Each child will need a night-light, a jar, some garden wire and some string. There is also a waiting activity using a clock face.

Notes



Draw the times on the clocks

Grandma and Grandpa are coming at 7 o'clock.

But we got to the station half an hour early. What time is that?

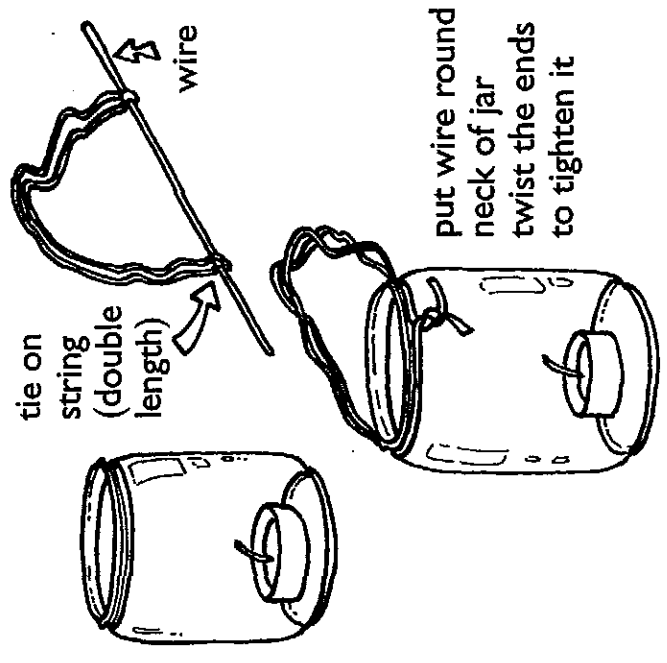
It's 5 o'clock and I'm hungry.

But dinner isn't until 6 o'clock. How long do I have to wait?

The news starts at 1 o'clock and finishes at 1.45.

How long does it go on for?

# MAKE A LANTERN



To pray this week

Give me oil in my lamp,  
keep me burning,  
give me oil in my lamp, I pray,  
give me oil in my lamp,  
keep me burning  
keep me burning to the  
break of day.

## Thirty-Second Sunday of the Year

### Be ready

#### INTRODUCTION

It is easy to be ready for something to happen when we know the day and time to expect it. Today Jesus explains that we must always be ready for his return, even though no one knows when he will be coming.

#### SIGN OF THE CROSS

#### LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and say Candle Prayer 1.

#### SORRY

Close your eyes and listen to this prayer, as you say "I'm sorry" quietly in your heart:

Jesus, open our hearts  
and make us more loving.

Help us to change our ways  
and make a fresh start.

If we have hurt you or other people  
by being unkind or selfish,  
we ask for your forgiveness.

#### GLORIA

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 2.

#### GOSPEL (MATTHEW 25:1-13)

One day Jesus told this parable: "Ten bridesmaids were getting ready for a wedding, and together they went to greet the bridegroom. They were not sure when he would come or how long they would have to wait. Five of them were sensible girls who brought flasks of oil to refill their lamps; the other girls did not.

"The bridegroom was late, and after waiting all afternoon and all evening, the bridesmaids finally fell asleep. It was already midnight when somebody cried, 'The bridegroom is coming! Quickly go and greet him!' The wise bridesmaids refilled their lamps and went to meet him, but the lamps of the foolish girls had gone out, and they had to go off to buy more oil. When they returned, the bride-

groom and the five bridesmaids had already gone into the wedding hall."

#### DISCUSSION

The ten bridesmaids were waiting to greet the bridegroom and show him the way to the wedding hall. They knew that he was coming, but they did not know the exact time he would arrive.

The five sensible girls knew that the bridegroom could arrive at any time, day or night. They brought flasks of oil for their lamps, in case the bridegroom was late and their lamps had burned low. The foolish bridesmaids did not think ahead and brought no extra oil for their lamps. When the bridegroom suddenly arrived, they were not ready to meet him. By the time they had filled their lamps, the bridegroom had already come and gone.

Jesus uses this story to tell us that we must always be ready. Like the bridesmaids, we know that Jesus will come again, but we do not know the exact day or time. The wise bridesmaids kept themselves ready so that they were not taken by surprise when the bridegroom finally arrived.

How can we keep ourselves ready for when Jesus returns? If we can live each day as well as possible and make each day our best, then we will always be ready to greet Jesus when he comes. By trying to be good and to live as Jesus taught us, we will be like the wise bridesmaids who kept their lamps burning, and be ready for Jesus when he comes.

#### ACTIVITY

Make the moving models of the lamp as shown. You may find it helpful to copy the pictures onto thin cardboard.

#### CREED

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we know that one day  
you will return,  
and we will be with you in heaven.  
Help us to make each day our best,  
so that we will always be ready  
to greet you when you come.