

LESSON 10

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

OBJECTIVES

1. To remind students about the importance of being responsible for our own spirituality.
2. To understand the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and spiritually prepared for the Lord's Second Coming.
3. To understand what it means to stay alert and watchful.

MEMORY VERSE

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

(Matthew 25:13)

PRAYER

1. We thank God for gathering us here so that we can worship and learn more about His words.
2. Lord, please help us to be wise in all that we do.
3. Today, we'll learn about the Lord's Second Coming. Please grant us the wisdom and strength to be prepared for your second coming.
4. May God help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings to our lives.



Overview

1. **The Parable of the Ten Virgins** (Mt 25:1-13)
 - The Wise and the Foolish
 - The Second Coming of Christ
2. **Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs**—The Lord's Second Coming
3. **Life Application**
 - Being Responsible for My Spirituality
 - Fill Me, Holy Spirit
4. **Activity**—Oil Jar



Background Knowledge for Teachers

The Ten Virgins

In Jesus' time, it was a custom among the Jews for the bridegroom to come at night to the bride's house, where her virgins—sometimes translated as bridesmaids—attended her. When the bridegroom's approach was announced, these women went outside with lamps to light his way into the house for the feast and celebration.

The Bridegroom

In the Bible, the image of a wedding is often used to portray the coming of the Lord (see Isa 62:5; Mt 22:1–14). Alongside the custom of bridesmaids lighting his way, there would also be an announcement of the bridegroom's approach to the bride's house. The weddings usually began in the evening and the lamps would be lit by sunset. In the parable, midnight was an unusual time for his approach, and definitely later than the ten virgins would have expected to wait.

Vessels

The vessels mentioned in the parable were just containers for storing extra oil. They were most likely made of clay.

Lamps

The oil lamps used by the Jews in Jesus' day were called Herodian lamps, named after King Herod. These lamps enabled people to bring light with them wherever they went. The lamp's body was made of clay shaped on a potter's wheel, while the handle was fashioned by hand before being attached. The spout, or nozzle, inside which a wick of flax fibers or a rush stem was placed, was made from a mold. The lamp would be filled with olive oil, and the wick, after absorbing the oil, would be lit.

Oil

Olives are first soaked in water to clean them and to get rid of their bitterness. They are then crushed to extract their oil. Olive oil, produced throughout the Mediterranean region, had multiple uses back in those times: it was eaten as a food or condiment, made into cooking oil, placed on wounds, used in cosmetics and soaps, and, of course, made into fuel for lamps.



Reaching Out to Your Students

It's important for the students to understand, as early as possible, that they must be responsible for their own faith and spirituality. Most likely, at this age, they are brought to church and services by their parents or guardians. But, it's important that your students understand that no one is able to share their spirituality (the oil) with others. Their faith must be their own. Thus, the responsibility for having oil in our personal lamps is up to each of us. No one else can fill it for us.

The wise virgins in this parable were not mean or selfish when they refused give oil to the foolish ones. In a spiritual sense, the oil in the parable represents the Holy Spirit. It represents the kind of oil needed by all of us to light up the darkness and illuminate the way. This kind of oil cannot be shared. It is accumulated by living righteously, loving those around us, loving God, and above all, following God's word as closely as can be done. The greatest challenge is that as your students grow older, learn to be independent, and make their own decisions, will they be able to strengthen their faith and pursue God?



Opener

5 Minutes

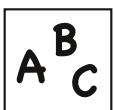
Pretend that we are going on a trip. What would we need to do to prepare? What should we take with us for the trip? Try to think of one thing that you will bring along.

[Write on the board, "For our trip, we're going to take..." and list your own item first. Then, go around the room and continue adding the items each student names. You may circle around the room an additional one or two more times, if you'd like.]

What a long list! And there are probably so many more things that we could add to it. For any trip we take, we have to spend time packing. If I told you that we were going to go on this trip today, after church, you'd probably protest and ask to go home and pack first. This is because you want to prepare yourselves.

Preparation is very important for many things in our lives. What are some things we might need to prepare ourselves for in our everyday lives, besides going on a trip? [Allow students to give you ideas. Some examples might be tests at school, projects, meals, or family outings.]

Well, we've certainly named a lot of things in our daily lives that require preparation. Did you know that our spiritual lives are no different? Everything we do, spiritually, also requires preparation, just like preparing for a meal or a trip.



Vocabulary

virgin: a person who has never had a physical union with another person
bridegroom: the groom, or a man on his wedding day



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

Today we're going to learn about the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and about how some of them prepared themselves, while the others did not. Let's open our Bibles to Matthew 25.

Let's begin our story by reading verses 1-4. In Jewish weddings, the bridegroom would approach the bride's house in the evening. When he approached, there would be a great announcement, and the bridesmaids would light the way for him. In biblical times, since they had no electricity, they had to use oil lamps made of clay. They would light them just after sunset and wait. Since the lamps required fuel, they would also carry vessels, which contained additional oil for the lamps.

In the verses we just read, five of the virgins were wise and carried vessels with extra oil, while the other five were foolish and did not. Why do you think they needed extra oil? (In case they need to be outside longer than expected.)

Let's continue to read verses 5-9. The bridegroom finally arrived, but at a much, much later hour than expected! Normally, he would have arrived in the evening, but in this parable, he arrived well after midnight. Since it was so late, the virgins fell asleep while they waited, and didn't awaken until he was finally announced.

When they awoke, the virgins prepared their lamps by trimming the wicks. Do you know why they had to do this? Just like regular candles today, their lamps had a wick, but instead of string it was made of flax fibers or rushes. Once these were soaked in the oil, they would burn when lit. But after being lit for a while, the wick would turn black, and the light wouldn't be as bright. So in order to make it bright again, they had to blow out the candle, trim off the burnt part, add more oil to the lamp, and then re-light the wick.

In the parable, though, the five foolish virgins had no extra oil to add to their lamps. This meant that their lights would go out before the bridegroom approached! How would they light his way with no light? So they asked the other five for extra oil, but they refused, because if they shared their oil, then that meant their own lamps would also go out, and none of them would be able to light his way!

Let's finish the story and read verses 10-13. While the foolish virgins were buying oil, the bridegroom finally arrived, and those who were ready to greet him went with him into the house to enjoy the wedding banquet. But those who were unprepared and had to go buy oil were

locked out of the house.

The Lord's Second Coming

Let's examine this parable closely and study what it means. First of all, what is the parable talking about? In verse 1, Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom." This parable is supposed to be a teaching about Jesus' Second Coming, which we learned about last week. Does anyone remember the purpose of Jesus' Second Coming? (To gather His elect, destroy the world, judge mankind, and to welcome us into our eternal home.)

Now that we know what the parable is about, we can see what each element represents.

- The bridegroom represents Jesus Christ.
- The ten virgins represent the believers of the church.
- The oil represents the Holy Spirit.
- The marriage represents Jesus taking His believers into heaven.
- The lamp represents us, the chosen vessels of God.

At first glance, we can see that all the ten virgins appear to be the same:

- All were invited to the banquet and were planning to attend.
- All had gone out to wait for the bridegroom.
- All of them had their lamps with them.
- All of them wanted to see the bridegroom and attend the banquet.
- All were in the right place at the right time for the right reason.
- All had their lamps lit while waiting.
- All fell asleep while waiting for the bridegroom, and then were awakened by the midnight cry.
- All ten virgins got up to prepare their lamps.

Despite all of these similarities, five made it to the banquet and five did not. What was the difference? The five wise virgins had extra oil. That's correct, five of them had extra oil, and five did not. This means that five of them had prepared themselves for the possibility that the bridegroom would be late, while the other five did not bother.

FOR TEACHERS

Hand out the Bible Discovery worksheet to the students, and have them fill it out at this point.

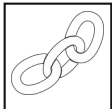
Do you think it was mean of the wise virgins to refuse to share their oil? Why or why not?

It might seem a little bit mean to us. If they had shared their oil, perhaps they all could have made it. On the other hand, if they shared their oil, it is also very likely that none of them would have made it. They were looking out for themselves, because they had waited so long for the bridegroom to come and did not want to be locked out of the banquet.

In the same way the lamps of the virgins lit the streets, we, the vessels of God, are lamps that light the world with God's Word. Our oil, or fuel, is the Holy Spirit, and as

God's chosen vessels, we each need to fill ourselves with it. This kind of fuel is impossible to share with others. Everyone needs to fill their own lamps, and unless we prepare ourselves, we will be locked out of the kingdom of God.

This is why in verse 13, Jesus warns us, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." We absolutely must prepare ourselves by being filled with the Holy Spirit so that we can be ready for Him whenever He approaches, no matter when it is. As long as we are prepared, we can be ready to greet Him at any time, just like the five wise virgins.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

The Lord's Second Coming

Not even the angels or Jesus Himself knows when the second coming will be. It could be the next hour, the next year, or the next millennia. From the parable of the ten virgins, we learned that five of the virgins had the foresight to realize that they did not know when the bridegroom would approach, while the other five did not, and ended up running out of oil. We absolutely must prepare ourselves, and not just for the coming of the Lord—we must prepare ourselves however long it may take. This means filling ourselves with the Holy Spirit and constantly keeping our lamps burning bright for as long as it is necessary.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

1. **The ten virgins were going to attend what sort of gathering?** A wedding.
2. **Who does the bridegroom represent?** Jesus Christ.
3. **Who do the ten virgins represent?** The chosen vessels of God.
4. **Why did the virgins fall asleep?** The bridegroom came much later than expected.
5. **Where were the five foolish virgins when the bridegroom arrived?** Looking for oil to purchase.
6. **What does the oil represent?** The Holy Spirit.
7. **What must we do to prepare for the second coming of Jesus?** Fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit and keep our lamps burning until He arrives so that we can be ready to greet Him.



Life Application

10 Minutes

1. Being Responsible for My Spirituality

Objective: To learn the importance of being responsible for our own spirituality.

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #1 to the students and refer to Teacher Version for instructions.]

2. Fill Me, Holy Spirit

Objective: To understand the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and spiritually prepared for the Lord's Second Coming.

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #2 and guide the students to fill it out. First, go over the introduction with the students, and then ask them to fill in the box with the verse. Secondly, ask students to draw a line on the lamp picture and fill in the blanks. Lastly, discuss the scenarios with the students. There are no concrete answers, so ask the students to share their thoughts.]



Activity

Oil Jar

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To remind students about filling their own lamps with oil.

Materials

- Small jars and lids with the labels removed (baby food or jam jars work best), one per student
- Decorations appropriate for glass (e.g., stickers, permanent markers, glitter, glass paint, etc.)
- 1-2" piece of cotton string, or small piece of candle wick
- Masking tape
- A small piece of decorative fabric
- Fabric shears, optional
- Thin ribbon, optional
- White glue
- Olive oil

Instructions

1. Give one jar each to the students and allow them to decorate it.
2. Tape the "wick" to the top of the jar lid with a small piece of tape, making sure that the wick stands up in the center. (If your wick needs help standing up, coat it in glue and suspend the lid upside down so that it can dry in place.)
3. Cut the fabric to fit the jar lid exactly. Use fabric shears, if available, to prevent fraying. Then, cut a small hole in the center. (It helps to fold the circle in half so you can cut a little notch easily.)
4. Thread the "wick" through the hole in the fabric, and then glue the fabric onto the jar lid. Allow time for it to dry.
5. A thin ribbon can be glued around the jar lid rim for a finishing look, if desired.
6. Let everything dry thoroughly. You may need to help the students fix some final loose pieces with white glue or a glue gun.
7. Fill the jar with the olive oil.
8. Conclude the activity by reminding the students to keep their jars full of oil by always pursuing after the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. midnight
2. oil
3. fell asleep
4. looking for oil
5. The five wise virgins were unable to share their oil with the foolish virgins because there was not enough oil for all of them to share. This parable teaches us that we are responsible for our own spirituality. It is up to us to fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit.

Who Was Wise? Who Was Foolish?

Instructions: Write the following statements in the correct side of the chart below.

1. Went to find oil
2. Had extra oil in their lamps
3. Didn't have enough oil to share
4. Bridegroom didn't know them
5. Ran out of oil
6. Knocked on the door
7. Were prepared and ready for the marriage
8. Went with the bridegroom

Which Were Wise?	Which Were Foolish?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Had extra oil in their lamps</i> • <i>Didn't have enough oil to share</i> • <i>Went with the bridegroom</i> • <i>Were prepared and ready for the marriage</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Went to find oil</i> • <i>Bridegroom didn't know them</i> • <i>Ran out of oil</i> • <i>Knocked on the door</i>

Instructions: Fill in the blanks below.

1. The bridegroom represents Jesus Christ.
2. The ten virgins represent believers or people of the world.
3. The oil represents the Holy Spirit.
4. The marriage represents Jesus taking His believers to heaven.
5. The lamps represent the chosen vessels of God.

Instructions: Luke 12:35-40 teaches us some very important things about the second coming of Christ. Turn to the passage and fill in the blanks below.

- v. 35 - "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning."
- v. 36 - "You yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately."
- v. 37 - "Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching."
- v. 38 - "And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."
- v. 39 - "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into."
- v. 40 - "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Just as the servants have to always be ready for the master to appear at any time, we also have to be ready to receive Jesus when He comes again. This means that we have to **prepare** ourselves and **watch diligently** for Him. The moment we slack off and forget about Him, or decide that there are other things that we could be doing, He may appear. And, like the bridegroom did with the five foolish virgins, if He appears when we aren't ready, then we will be barred from the kingdom of heaven!

But how are we supposed to prepare ourselves? Being prepared means being diligent towards God in our daily lives, and living a life according to God's Word.

Instructions: Read the verses below and write down what kind of actions we are supposed to take in order to prepare ourselves. The first has been given as an example to help you along.

Romans 6:2: We must admit our sins and repent.

Romans 12:2: We must keep ourselves separate from the world.

Matthew 5:44: Love everyone, even our enemies.

Psalm 19:14: Be careful of our speech; speak things acceptable to God.

Being Responsible for My Spirituality

Objective: To learn the importance of being responsible for our own spirituality.

What Is Spirituality?

First of all, what exactly is "spirituality"? Our spirituality is our **connection with God**. The greater your spirituality, the deeper your connection with God. However, it isn't something that grows by itself—we have to **actively seek God in order to make it grow**. It's very easy for us to think of attending church as a formality, a custom, or even a habit. But attending services, learning about God in RE classes, and even taking part in fellowships are all things we do in order to make our spirituality grow.

Right now, you probably attend church because your parents bring you every week. But, just like the five wise virgins in the parable, we cannot rely on others. We have to fill our lamps ourselves. This means that **we must be responsible for our own spirituality**.

Read the following scenarios and Bible verses, and then write down how we can develop our spirituality.

Scenario #1

Cynthia is almost finished with her school year and she's been very busy with her final science project, tests, and her upcoming piano recital. Every day when she gets home from school, she works hard until bedtime to prepare for all those things. Before she goes to bed, she usually feels quite tired. However, she always remembers that she must spend time with God. So, before sleeping, she takes out her Bible and reads. As she reads, she also likes to take notes, especially on questions that she has about the passages. She then prays and goes to bed.

Psalm 1:2 - "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."

We can develop our spirituality by...*Meditating on God's Word and trying to keep His words in our heart.*

Scenario #2

Ethan is a very loving person and frequently has guests over his house. He often holds fellowships and Bible studies at his house, and many out-of-town guests stay at his home, too.

One of his frequent guests, Tyler, always rings the doorbell several times in a row. All of the other guests only ring it once and Ethan is there to open the door in only a few seconds. Tyler's actions make Ethan a little angry because the incessant ringing annoys him and disturbs the guests that have already arrived. However, instead of saying angry words to Tyler, Ethan waits to think about what to say and how to say it, before telling Tyler what he thinks.

Psalm 34:13 - "Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit."

We can develop our spirituality by...*Avoiding angry words, and speaking things that would please God instead.*

Scenario #3

During lunchtime at school, Kimberly would always get her books knocked off the table by Lisa. They used to be friends back in first grade, but for some reason, Lisa just didn't like Kimberly anymore. However, Kimberly never did or said anything back to Lisa whenever this happened. She simply picked up her books and continued eating her lunch.

One afternoon, after school, Kimberly saw Lisa walking home ahead of her. She kept her distance so that Lisa won't do anything to her. But then she saw Lisa trip and scratch herself on the sidewalk. Even from a distance, Kimberly could see that it really hurt, so she ran over to see if Lisa was okay. When she got there, she saw that Lisa was bleeding a little, so she washed the scratch with water from her bottle and gives Lisa a Band-Aid from her bag. Lisa couldn't believe it; she had bullied Kimberly every day at lunch, but instead of treating her like an enemy, Kimberly helped her when she was hurt.

Matthew 5:44 - "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

We can develop our spirituality by...*Being kind to those who are mean to us, and not retaliating to those who mistreat us.*

Who was wise? Who was foolish?

Instructions: Write the following statements in the correct side of the chart below.

1. Went to find oil
2. Had extra oil in their lamps
3. Didn't have enough oil to share
4. Bridegroom didn't know them
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Which Were Wise?	Which Were Foolish?

Instructions: Fill in the blanks below.

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2. The _____ represent believers or people of the world.
3. The oil represents the _____.
4. The _____ represents Jesus taking His believers to heaven.
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Just as the servants have to always be ready for the master to appear at any time, we also have to be ready to receive Jesus when He comes again. This means that we have to **prepare** ourselves and **watch diligently** for Him. The moment we slack off and forget about Him, or decide that there are other things that we could be doing, He may appear. And, like the bridegroom did with the five foolish virgins, if He appears when we aren't ready, then we will be barred from the kingdom of heaven!

But how are we supposed to prepare ourselves? Being prepared means being diligent towards God in our daily lives, and living a life according to God's Word.

Instructions: Read the verses below and write down what kind of actions we are supposed to take in order to prepare ourselves. The first has been given as an example to help you along.

Romans 6:2: We must admit our sins and repent.

Romans 12:2: _____

Matthew 5:44: _____

Psalms 19:14: _____



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We can develop our spirituality by _____



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Ethan is a very loving person and frequently has guests over his house. He often holds fellowships and Bible studies at his house, and many out-of-town guests stay at his home, too.

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We can develop our spirituality by _____

Fill Me, Holy Spirit

Objective: To understand the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and spiritually prepared for the Lord's Second Coming.

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

To be filled with the Spirit means to allow the Holy Spirit to control us rather than giving in to the world. When we try to live a more holy life, we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and make choices according to God's Word.

What does it mean to receive power with the Holy Spirit?

Just before Jesus went up to heaven, He said, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

Have you ever seen someone who's drunk? You immediately know they are drunk because of the characteristics they display—they can't speak properly, can't walk properly, are slow to act, and make poor decisions.

In very much the same way, it's very easy to see when someone is filled with the Holy Spirit. What kind of characteristics does this person show? Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list them below:

All of these are characteristics of a Christian. This means that in order to truly be a Christian, one must be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reflect on your level of oil. Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? How much have you prepared? Has the flame died out? Whether or not you have the Holy Spirit, think about how you are keeping up with your spirituality: Are you reading the Bible daily? Praying? Obeying your parents? Following God's words?

Draw a line in the lamp that you think shows the level of oil you have right now, and then fill in the blanks.



Time I Spend Adding Oil...

Through prayer:

_____ minutes per day

Through Bible reading:

_____ minutes per day

On the next page, read each scenario and discuss the questions that follow.

1. During prayer time, Patrick always has a hard time concentrating and staying focused. He constantly feels the urge to open his eyes and look around a little bit. During the longer prayers, he checks the clock every few minutes.

Is Patrick filled with the Holy Spirit?

What should he be doing instead?

2. Arthur just finished praying during the RE prayer at church. After heading back into his E2 classroom, he noticed that his pencil box was on the floor with everything, its contents scattered all over the floor. Roger had been sitting next to him, and he knew that he was a clumsy person. When Roger came back in, Arthur asked if he did it. Roger replied saying that it was possible that he knocked it over when he left the classroom. Arthur got angry with him, called him a "clumsy pig," and decided to push all of Roger's things onto the floor, too. They both started to argue.

Is Arthur filled with the Holy Spirit?

What should he have done instead?

3. Craig has been best friends with Philip, Randy, and Juan for over seven years. However, in recent years, his friends have changed. They like to go to parties, and their speech is littered with many inappropriate words. They often invite Craig to hang out and play video games on Saturdays. It is hard for Craig to resist, as these are his childhood friends and he enjoys their company. But, he is even closer friends with God and watchful about his spirituality. Eventually, his friends change so much it seems like he doesn't know them anymore, and they drift apart.

Is Craig filled with the Holy Spirit?

Should he have done anything different?

E2 Year 2 Book 2 Lesson 10—The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. **(Matthew 25:13)**

Fill In the Blank

1. The bridegroom arrived late, after _____.
2. The five wise virgins brought extra _____.
3. While waiting for the bridegroom to arrive, the ten virgins _____.
4. When the bridegroom arrived, the five foolish virgins were _____.

Short Answer

5. Why were the five wise virgins unable to share with the foolish ones? What does this mean for us today?