

Life of Christ

The Day and Time Unknown

Matthew 24:36—25:13

Younger Verse

“Stay awake and be prepared.”

Matthew 25:13

Older Verse

“Stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or hour of my return. “

Matthew 25:13

Lesson Goals

Learn that Jesus is coming back for His followers
Understand that no one knows when His return will happen
Recognize that we must be ready for Christ’s return

Welcome Time

Have you ever had a surprise visitor at your home? Did you wish you had cleaned your room and had things ready for them? Today’s lesson is about getting ready for Jesus.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

Jesus continued to teach His followers about things that were going to happen. We talked a few weeks ago about the wedding invitation. **Does anyone remember what happened when the king invited guests to his son’s wedding celebration?** (No one came.) **What did the king do?** (He invited anyone and everyone to the feast.)

Jesus wants us to know that God’s invitation is for ALL people. Whoever believes in Jesus can be saved. They can be part of God’s family.

Jesus also wants us to understand what it will be like when He returns. Jesus is in Heaven right now getting things ready for His followers. When everything is ready, He will come back and take all the believers with Him. He wants everyone to be ready! It will be an exciting and awesome event.

Does anyone know when Jesus will come back? Jesus said in Matthew 24:36 that NO ONE knows the day or time when He will return—not even the angels! Only God knows. He does say that we need to be prepared and ready for His return, because it could happen at any moment!

To explain this, Jesus told a story about 10 bridesmaids who were waiting for the bridegroom. Each bridesmaid had an oil lamp with her. As nighttime came, the bridegroom had still not come. Five of the ladies had extra oil for their lamps. They were wise. But the other five were foolish—they had not thought to bring extra oil for their lamps.

While the 10 bridesmaids waited, they fell asleep. At midnight, they heard shouts that the bridegroom was coming! The ladies got up and turned on their lamps. The five wise ladies had enough oil in their lamps, while the five foolish ones did not. So the five with no oil had to go buy some oil at a store. But while they were gone, the bridegroom came.

He took the five wise ladies with him to the marriage feast. They shut and locked the doors behind them. When the foolish ladies got back, it was too late! They could not get into the celebration.

Then Jesus said, “Stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or hour of my return.”

Jesus is giving us time to get ready. How can we be ready when He returns? We need to believe that He is the Son of God. We must ask Him to forgive us of our sins and come into our heart and life. Then we can help others to be ready, too!

Since we don’t know when Jesus will come back, we cannot put off this important decision.

Review Questions

1. Does anyone know when Jesus will come back? (No one—only God knows.)
2. In Jesus’ story, what did the 10 bridesmaids have with them? (oil lamps)
3. Why were five of the bridesmaids foolish? (They didn’t have extra oil for their lamps.)
4. How can we be ready for Jesus to return? (Asking Him into our heart; helping others to know Him)

Prayer Time

Thank God for loving us and wanting us to be in Heaven with Him. Pray that we will all be ready when Jesus returns.

Life Application

Jesus told us that when He comes back, some will be taken up with Him, while others will be left behind. Two men will be in the field, and one will be taken. Two women will be working together, and one will be taken and the other left.

Ask the students if they will be the person left behind, or the person Jesus will take with Him. Explain how we can know: those who have accepted Christ and have eternal life are ready for Christ’s return.

If there are those who haven’t accepted Christ, invite them to make the decision. Use Bible verses like John 3:16, Romans 6:23 and Romans 10:9 to help them understand what it means.

If available, play the song “People Get Ready, Jesus is Coming” performed by Crystal Lewis. This song gives a good picture of what Christ’s return will be like and what we must do to be ready.

Planning for Next Lesson
The Wise and Foolish Servants
Matthew 25:14-30

Preschool Lesson for The Day and Time Unknown

(If possible, bring a large clock with numbers the kids can see. You might want to bring a clock with hands and a digital clock. The preschoolers probably cannot tell time with the regular clock, but they can read the numbers on the digital clock.)

Ask the little ones if they know what time it is. *(First, show them the clock with hands, then the digital clock.)*

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While the 10 bridesmaids waited, they fell asleep. *(Have everyone act like they are sleeping.)* At midnight, they heard shouts that the bridegroom was coming! The ladies got up and turned on their lamps. The five wise ladies had enough oil in their lamps, while the five foolish ones did not. So the five with no oil had to go buy some oil at a store. But while they were gone, the bridegroom came.

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Then Jesus said, “Stay awake and be prepared, because you do not know the day or hour of my return.”

We can be excited about Jesus coming back! And we can be ready by asking Jesus to come into our hearts.

Pray and thank God for loving us and sending Jesus to show us He loves us. Pray that we will be ready when Jesus comes back.

Hands-on Activities for The Day and Time Unknown

Bring small jars with olive oil in each one—enough for each student. Have them decorate the jars. They can write the memory verse on construction paper and glue it on the side of the jar. Talk about how we can be ready when Jesus comes back—by asking Him into our heart.

Play the game “What time is it, Mr. Wolf?” One child is the “Wolf.” The other children ask Mr. Wolf what time it is and then take that many steps toward the wolf. When they get close to the wolf, Mr. Wolf calls out “Feeding Time!” and chases the players. Remind students that we don’t know the time when Jesus will return, so we have to be ready all the time.

Sing the song “Give Me Oil in my Lamp.” Discuss the meaning—that we must keep on working for the Lord until He returns. The “oil” is the Holy Spirit, who helps us and gives us strength.

If available, bring an oil lamp. Students may not be familiar with these. It will help them visualize the lamps in the story. Explain how they work, but be careful!