

**THIRTY-SECOND  
SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME  
YEAR A**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

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.

**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.

**FIRST READING: *Wisdom 6:12-16***

*This is a reading from the book of Wisdom.*

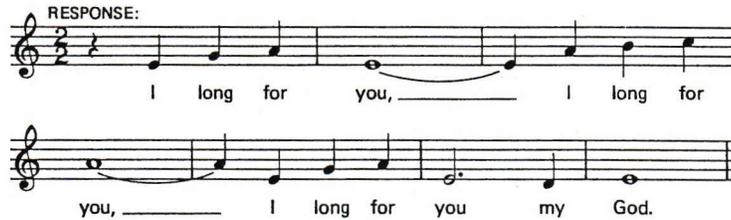
Wisdom is wonderful and everlasting.  
Anyone who wants to have wisdom  
will find her if they love her and look for her.  
Wisdom is always ready to help anyone  
who wants her.

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.

*The Word of the Lord.*

**RESPONSE: *Psalm 63***

RESPONSE:



I long for you, I long for you, I long for you my God.

VERSES:



1. O God you are my God, I  
2. O God you are my God, you're  
to Response  
1. give you thanks and praise your name.  
2. all I need to guide my way.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**



Al - ways be read - y for you do not know when the  
Lord will come. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, when the  
dim. Lord will come, when the Lord will come, when the Lord will come, when the  
(Fine)  
Lord will come.

GOSPEL: *Matthew 25:1-13*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

One day Jesus told his disciples this parable:

“This is what the reign of God is like.

One evening there was a wedding,  
and ten bridesmaids came to wait  
for the bride and bridegroom.

Now five of these bridesmaids were very silly.

They brought their lamps  
but didn't bring enough oil to keep them burning.

The other five were very wise.

They brought enough oil to last all night long.

“The groom was late,  
and so all ten bridesmaids fell asleep.  
But at midnight, someone shouted,

‘Wake up! The bridegroom is here!  
Come out to meet him!’

“The bridesmaids woke up and got their lamps ready.  
The five foolish ones said to the others,

‘Give us some of your oil  
because our lamps are going out.’

“But the wise bridesmaids said,

‘We can't give you any  
because there won't be enough  
for our lamps and yours, too.  
But hurry, go into town and buy some.’

“While the foolish bridesmaids were gone,  
the bridegroom came,  
and everyone went into the wedding feast.  
When the five foolish bridesmaids came back,  
they couldn't get in  
because the door was already locked.

[“They called in, ‘Open the door for us!’  
But the bridegroom said,

‘No, I don't know you!’”]

Then Jesus said,

“Always be ready,  
for you do not know when the Lord will come!”

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

[ ] Reader may omit text that appears in brackets.

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 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.

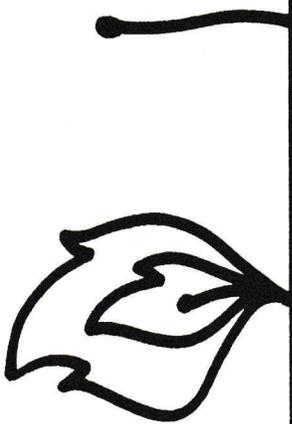
#### ACTIVITY

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

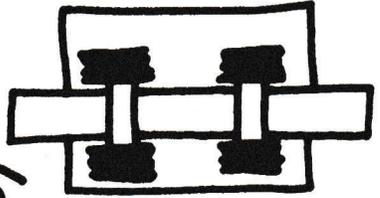
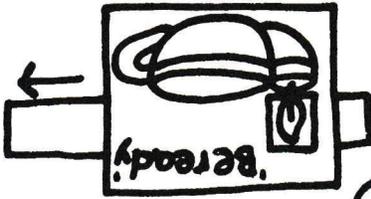
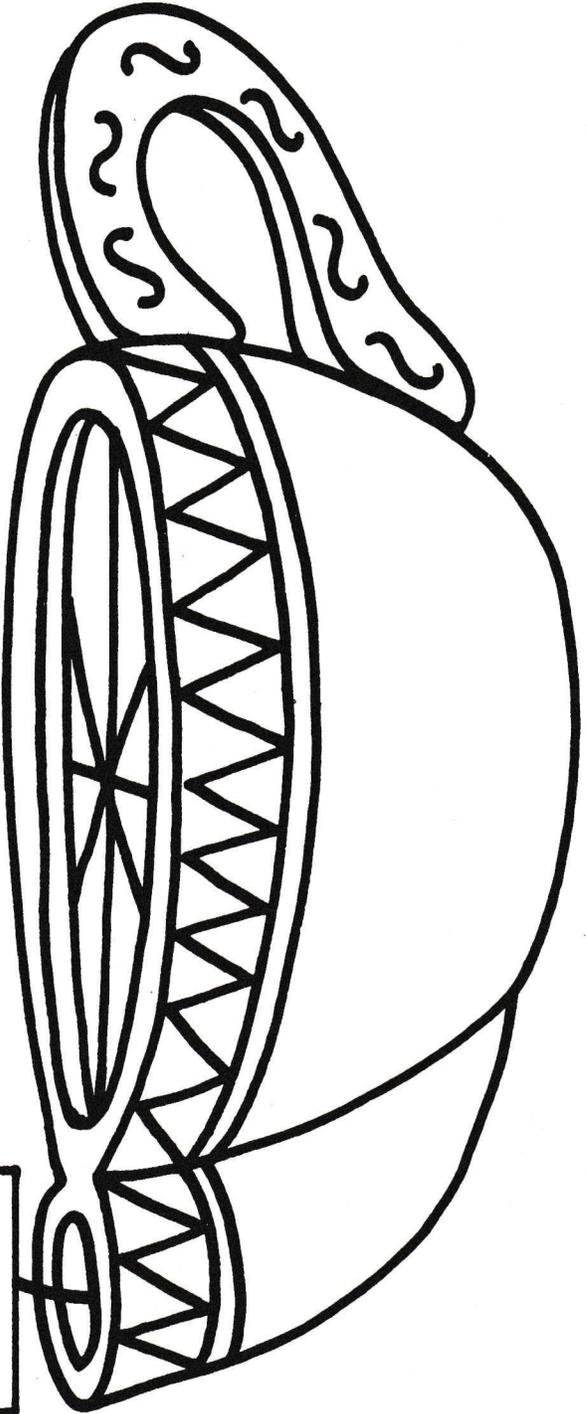
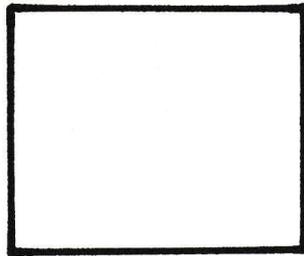
#### CREED

#### 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.



'Be Ready'



# Thirty-second Sunday of the Year

## Focus

A Bible open at today's Gospel next to an oil-burner or lamp (if possible) or a scented candle.

## Introduction

At the time when Jesus lived there was no electricity. When darkness fell, people relied on clay lamps filled with oil to provide them with light. If you were unprepared to top up the lamp with oil, then once the oil ran out you were left in the darkness and unable to see. Today Jesus tells a story about the importance of being prepared!

## Gloria

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 9.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew (25:1-13)

Jesus told a parable about the kingdom of heaven: 'Ten bridesmaids were getting ready for a wedding, and together they went to greet the bridegroom, although 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 bridegroom and the five bridesmaids had already gone into the wedding hall. When they knocked on the door and asked to be let in, the bridegroom sent them away saying, "Leave here, because I do not know you!"'

Then Jesus said, 'So keep watch and stay alert, for no one knows the day or time.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Reflection

*What names do we give to a man and woman getting married?*

The woman is called the bride, and the man is called a bridegroom.

*What seems unusual about the wedding we heard about in today's parable?*

No one seemed to know when exactly to expect the bridegroom to arrive! Most wedding invitations give a time, date and place for the wedding celebration to take place, but in today's story everyone simply had to wait for the bridegroom's unpredictable arrival.

*How did the wise bridesmaids keep themselves ready for the bridegroom's unexpected arrival?*

They realised that he could come at any time – it might

be night or day. They were expected to act as his welcoming party and show him into the hall where the wedding celebration would take place. In case he eventually arrived when darkness had fallen, they brought extra oil for their lamps so that they would still be able to light the way for him.

*What did the foolish bridesmaids forget to do?*

They didn't plan for the unexpected, and weren't prepared for the bridegroom to arrive so late. They had no extra oil for their lamps, and had to dash off in the darkness to try and buy some.

*What was Jesus trying to make his followers understand with this parable?*

Jesus used this story to illustrate how his followers (Christians) should keep themselves prepared to greet him whenever he returns at the end of time. Only our heavenly Father knows when that might be, so Jesus wanted us to be prepared and not be caught unaware like the foolish bridesmaids. By staying watchful and keeping 'our lamps ready', we will be ready to welcome Christ whatever hour of the day or night he might come. This means trying to live each day in the loving way that Jesus showed us.

## Activity

Give each child an activity sheet to complete and colour.

## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

We bring to God's love  
the Christian family gathered here  
and throughout the world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring to God's love  
the homeless, the poor and the unloved.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring to God's love  
those who need to be healed in mind or body.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring to God's love  
all who have died and now rest in everlasting peace.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening,  
in the silence of our hearts  
let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

*Silence*

Loving Father,  
listen to the prayers of your children  
and answer them according to your will.  
Keep us close to your love,  
and ever ready to greet Christ when he returns in glory.  
We ask this in the name of Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Fit the rhyming words on the lines to finish the story

OIL LOW SO WAIT SLEEP WOE  
SPOIL KNOW GO LATE GREET GO

Ten bridesmaids took their lamps to \_\_\_\_\_

They hoped the groom would not be \_\_\_\_\_

Five were wise and brought more \_\_\_\_\_

The wedding plans they would not \_\_\_\_\_

As it grew late the lamps burned \_\_\_\_\_

When he would come they did not \_\_\_\_\_

'Get up, girls, do not \_\_\_\_\_

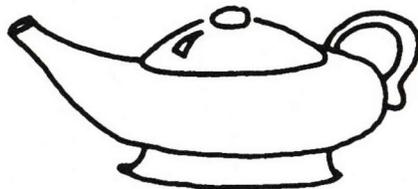
At last the groom is here to \_\_\_\_\_ !'

The foolish five cried out with \_\_\_\_\_

'Our lamps are out, we cannot \_\_\_\_\_ !'

The wise girls filled their lamps and \_\_\_\_\_

to the wedding they could \_\_\_\_\_ !



Jesus told a  
story about ten bridesmaids  
and their lamps

Match each bridesmaid with a lamp

