

Focus: Be Prepared for Jesus

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: America's 25 Favorite Bible Songs
- Book: Children's Everyday Bible
- Book and CD: 100 Bible Stories – 100 Bible Songs (CD inside book cover)

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about our one and only leader, God. We should follow God because he shows us the path that will keep peace and make us happy. Today we will talk about being prepared for Jesus.

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.

Let us pray. Thank you, God, for your son Jesus. We want to be ready for him when he comes to us. May the Holy Spirit help us make good choices so we are always ready to meet him. We pray in Jesus' name.

Song/Movement

I Will Call Upon the Lord, track: 17, from America's 25 Favorite Bible Songs

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

I will call upon the Lord
Who is worthy to be praised
So shall I be saved from my enemies

Refrain:
(Echo in parentheses)
I will call upon the Lord (I will call upon the Lord)
Who is worthy to be praised (Who is worthy to be praised)
So shall I be saved from my enemies
(So shall I be saved from my enemies)

Chorus: The Lord liveth, and
blessed be the Rock
And let the God of my salvation be
exalted
The Lord liveth, and blessed be the
Rock
And let the God of my salvation be
exalted

Repeat the Chorus 2 times

Alternate Creative Movement

Have kids form two equal lines facing each other, or a big circle. To the beat of the music have them take four steps toward each other and clap the hands of the child facing them (or their own), then take four steps back and clap their hands together. Repeat.

Memory Verse

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

Be prepared because you do not know when Jesus will come.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *Jesus told us that he will come to be with us again. But we do not the day or hour. It could be hundreds of years from now or next week. We can't wait to be ready for Jesus. We need to be ready all the time.*

Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *"Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

Read: Children's Everyday Bible, pp. 295,
The Ten Bridesmaids

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *What are the 10 bridesmaids doing in the story?*
- *What happens to the foolish bridesmaids?*
- *What happens to the bridesmaids who came prepared with oil?*
- *What does Jesus teach his listeners in this story?*

Reflection on Reading:

Today's gospel story reminds us to stay alert and be ready. Jesus tells the story of 10 bridesmaids waiting to welcome the groom to a wedding banquet. All of the women took lamps, but only five came prepared with extra oil. When the foolish bridesmaids went off to get more oil, the five others remained, and they greeted the bridegroom when he came. When the five foolish bridesmaids returned, the door was closed and they could not get into the wedding banquet.

In this parable (a story that Jesus would tell to teach his followers about the kingdom of God), the wedding banquet is like God's kingdom and the coming bridegroom represents Christ. For all listeners, the story teaches us to be prayerfully alert and ready for the Lord's coming.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Shine for Jesus:

100 Bible Stories 100 Bible Songs

Page 114. Jesus wants me for a sunbeam. Disc 2 Track 5

- Read passage and play song. Let them sing and dance to the music.
- How do we spread God's love? How do we spread the Good News of Jesus?--Being nice to others, taking care of someone who is sick etc.

Activity 2:

Rain storms, hurricanes, flooding, snow storms can cause damage and make us lose power or knock down trees. One thing that we hear over and over again is that it is very important for us to be prepared in case of an emergency. Here are a few of the things we are told that we should do to make sure we are prepared.

- BE INFORMED-Listen to the news before the storm. Knowing what to do during an emergency is an important part of being prepared.
- HAVE A PLAN-Know where the flashlights are and maybe keep one by your bed if there is bad weather when we go to bed.
- HAVE A SURVIVAL KIT-Your parents probably have an emergency kit that includes things like water, crackers and peanut butter, medicine, a first aid kit, blankets, candles, flashlights, and batteries.

These are all good things for us to remember. It is wise to be prepared, isn't it?

In today's Gospel story Jesus teaches us the importance of being prepared. In the story, ten bridesmaids took their oil lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Jesus said that five of them were foolish because they had their lamps, but they didn't bring any extra oil to put in their lamps. When it was time to go out and meet the bridegroom, they were out of oil. The other five were very wise and well-prepared. They had brought plenty of oil for their lamps. When it was time to go out and meet the bridegroom, they were ready.

In this story, the bridegroom is Jesus and you and I are the bridesmaids. The story is teaching us that one day we are going to go to meet Jesus face to face. It teaches us that we must always be prepared, because we don't know exactly when that time is coming. Do you know what we must do to be prepared? We must invite Jesus to come into our hearts. When we do that, we are ready!

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "We Believe!")

Ask: *Do we believe in God, whose love is wonderful and everlasting?*

Do we believe in Jesus, who shares with us the wisdom of God and guides us to the house of God?

Do we believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to follow Jesus and be ready when he comes?

Sending Forth

Say: One way we can be ready for Jesus is by coming to church and saying special prayers. Let's go back into church and pay very close attention to all the prayers that we are saying and say a special one to ask for help to be better followers of Jesus.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "Change My Heart O' God" track 23 from America's 25 Favorite Bible Songs while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.