

Jared had been looking forward to this day. His cousin, Ben Hur, was getting married and it was sometime today – no-one knew exactly when. He had finished building his new house last week. His uncle had given his seal of approval, so it was all systems go. There was the smell of much cooking throughout the village. Everyone loved an excuse to enjoy a community meal together. Everyone pitched in and did their bit. All they ever knew about the time of the wedding was it would be after midday. No one ever planned the actual time because part of the game was to see if you could catch someone out not being ready.

So the village people simply knew the day. And it was a village celebration so normally everyone participated. They prepared food. They had their Sabbath clothes ready because that was their best clothes. The last wedding had been really late at night. It had caught a number of people out.

And part of the routine once the procession started, was to try and weave the most circuitous route you could from the bride-groom's house to the bride's house. Never in a direct line. Never a quick walk over to pick up the bride. All part of the wedding ceremony culture.

Jared was hungry but he did not want to spoil his appetite for the coming feast. He walked around the village with an eager eye to see who looked prepared and who seemed to be putting off their planning. Over there he saw Deborah and a group of friends filling their oil lamps and making sure the wicks were easily available to light. Nothing worse than a smoking lamp.

He was intrigued to go past Tirzah's home and see her sitting outside in the sun of the late morning with some friends. All with eyes closed, relaxing. He thought they must have been really well organised, to have time to do that. Jared shrugged his shoulders and kept wandering.

The afternoon dragged on. The shadows lengthened. The sun set. And still no movement from Ben Hur's house. Jared waited patiently because he knew Ben Hur really loved Miriam and was simply waiting because it was part of the game. Then he heard it. The music had started up. The flutes were playing. This was it.

Jared grabbed his own lamp that had been ready all day and joined in the growing throng of people. It was dark now and the lamps showed the progress of the laughing, singing procession as it wound around the village roads in almost random fashion it seemed. As they passed Deborah's home – she and a group of friends came running out with their lamps. Excited. Prepared and ready.

But as they wound past Tirzah's home, Jared realised that Tirzah and her friends, who had all seemed to sleep the day away – were rushing around in a panic. He heard the loud yelling. "Who has the oil?" "Where are the wicks?" "Hey! Leave my oil alone! I need that. It won't be enough anyway so don't steal my oil!" "What are we going to do? It is too late to buy any oil now. The event of the year and we are going to not enjoy it! Where is Tirzah? Oh, it's all her fault!"

Jared wondered to himself why they had not got ready? They knew it was today. They had been given plenty of time to prepare. They knew what had to be done.

That was when the story that Jesus had just told, about a village wedding with some people not being ready, began to make so much sense. Jared realised Jesus had captured something that happened in almost every village every wedding. People got lazy. People just did not bother. Some got busy doing other things. But whatever the excuse – they missed out on the event of the year in the village.

Jared knew that what Jesus had shared was so true. It was better to be ready. He did not want to miss out on Jesus coming either. This was the event of a lifetime. Not just his lifetime. But the event of all history. He knew he needed to prepare for Jesus' return. He determined he would be ready for that. Whenever it was going to be.

10 Bridesmaids

Sabbath

Have you ever been to a wedding? Write or draw about it.

Wedding's when Jesus was on earth were very different. Instead of the bride walking down the aisle, the bridegroom would come through the town to meet the bridesmaids!

Sunday

Jesus told many stories to teach about heaven. This is one.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and waited for the bridegroom. Now five of the bridesmaids were wise enough to take along extra oil; but the other five foolishly didn't. When the bridegroom was delayed, they all fell asleep.

At midnight there was a shout, "The bridegroom is coming!"



All the bridesmaids checked their lamps. The five foolish ones were out of oil and asked the others for some, but they replied, "We have just enough for ourselves, maybe you can buy some."

But while they were gone, the bridegroom came, and the wedding party went into the wedding feast, and the door was locked.

When the five foolish bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, "Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!"

But he called back, "I don't know you!"

Jesus finished by saying, "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of My return."

Jesus shared this object lesson. He said, "A faithful servant will do his work, even when the master is away. When the master returns, he will be rewarded. But if, instead, the servant beats the other servants, and spends his time partying and drinking, when the master arrives unexpectedly, he will severely punish the unfaithful servant. Unlike someone who does wrong in ignorance, they will be lightly punished.

"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Luke 12:48 NLT

Friday

Why did Jesus say we must always be ready?
Matthew 25:13^{NLT}

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How can we be ready? We need to have a growing, personal relationship with God. And to do this we need to spend time with God.

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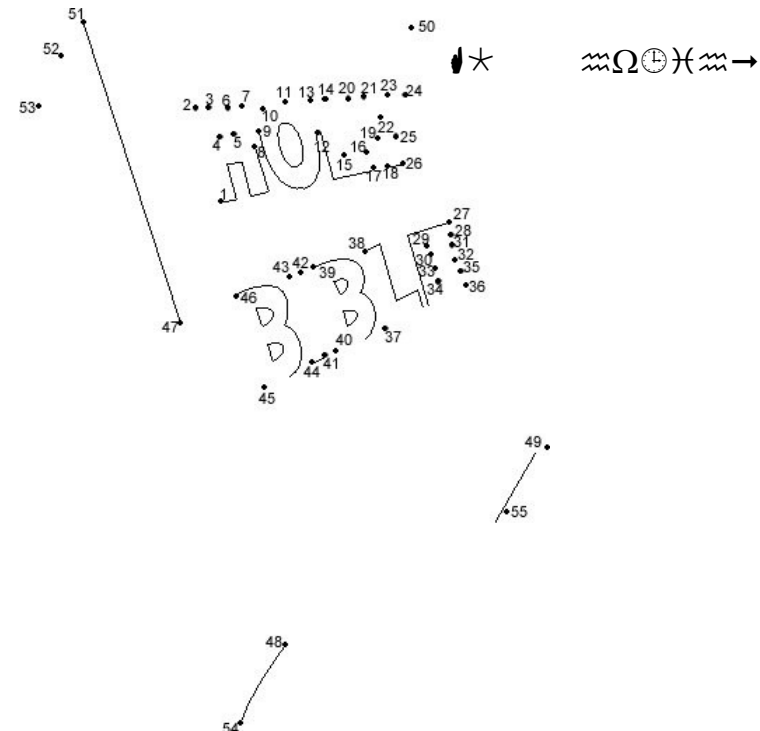
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Thursday

What lessons can we learn from the object lesson of the faithful and unfaithful servants? Reread the object lesson Jesus told Luke 12:42-48. Draw lines from the left column to what they can represent in the right column.

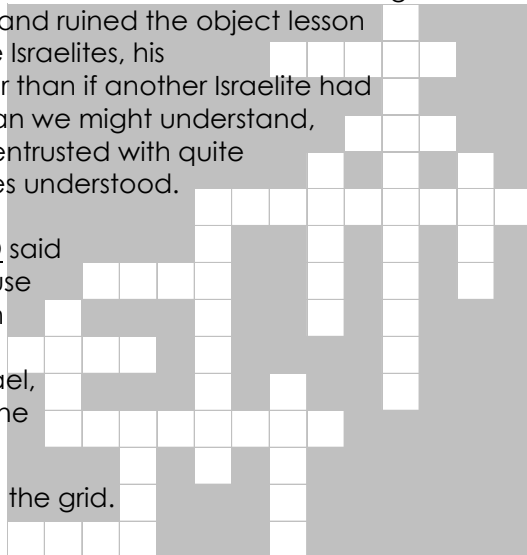
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|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| • The Master | • People who don't know God. |
| • The Master's return. | • Jesus |
| • A faithful servant | • The final death |
| • The reward | • Someone who works for God. |
| • The unfaithful servant | • The second coming |
| • The ignorant | • Those who know what is right, but do wrong. |
| • The punishment | • Heaven |

Luke 12:48^{NLT} says, "'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

Do you remember when Moses struck the rock after God told him to speak to it? Moses was the leader, of the Israelites. Moses had the privilege of hearing God speak to him personally, and received the Ten Commandments, directly from the hand of God. Because of his entrusted position where all the Israelites looked to him for guidance, when Moses lost his temper and ruined the object lesson God was trying to teach the Israelites, his punishment was also greater than if another Israelite had lost their temper; greater than we might understand, because we haven't been entrusted with quite the same position. But Moses understood.

Numbers 20:12^{NLT}, "The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not trust Me enough to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!'"

Fit the underlined words into the grid.



Monday

What was Jesus trying to teach? Jesus finished by saying, "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of My return."



The bridesmaids are the Christians, waiting for Jesus, who is the Bridegroom, to come. And John wrote in the last book of the Bible, Revelation 19:9, that Jesus' return will be like a wedding feast.

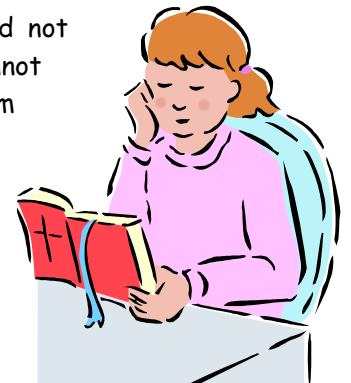
The lamps are like the Bible. Psalm 119:105^{NLT} says "Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."



The Bible is God's word, and it helps us know the safe way to go, just like a light shows you where to go in the dark. But a torch is no good without batteries, and a lamp is no good without oil. So the Bible will not save us, unless we have a personal relationship with Jesus.

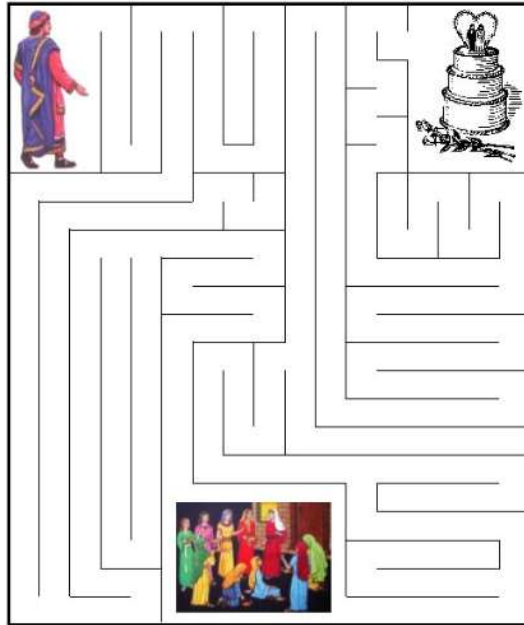
And just like the foolish bridesmaids could not borrow oil from the wise bridesmaids, we cannot borrow a relationship with Jesus from someone else. A friend might introduce you to a new friend, but you won't become true friends unless you spend time with each other.

In the end, only you can get yourself ready.



Tuesday

The bridegroom walked through town to meet the bridesmaids, and then they walked to the wedding feast.



Find these words from the story.

Bible
Bridegroom
Bridesmaids
Christians
Feast
Heaven
Holy Spirit
Jesus
Kingdom
Lamps
Marriage
Midnight
Oil
Ready
Return
Sleep

P A R A K I N G D O M B L
L E S A B O U T T H A E A
O I L S F E A S T E R C M
O N D C O M I N G P R A P
R A B R I D E S M A I D S
B L R E S A B O U T A T H
E M I D N I G H T S G E C
O N D D C O M I N G E P J
A H E A V E N R A B L E E
S A G B O U T T H E S E S
C H R I S T I A N S C O U
N D O C O M I N G P A R S
A H O L Y S P I R I T B L
E S M A B L O U E T T H E
S E C O N E D C T O M I N
G B I B L E P A U R A B L
E S A B O P U T R E A D Y
T H E S E C O N N D C O M

Wednesday

In the parable of the 10 bridesmaids, what was the only difference between the two groups?

Everyone had lamps, everyone fell asleep, everyone had some oil, but some ran out.

What was oil used for in the Bible?

1 Kings 17:12 _____

Leviticus 14:15-18 _____

Number 28:20 _____

Exodus 39:37 _____

1 Samuel 16:13 _____

As well as it's everyday uses, oil in the Bible was a symbol that someone was chosen by God. Fill in the missing words from these verses.

1 Samuel 16:13^{NLT}, "As David stood there among his brothers, _____

_____ (8 across) took the flask of olive _____ (5a) he had brought and

_____ (6a) David with the oil. And the _____ (8d)

of the _____ (9d) came _____ (3d) upon

_____ (4a) from that day on.

Acts 10:38, "And you know that _____ (7a) _____ (2)

_____ (6d) _____ (4) _____ (5)

(1a) of Nazareth with the _____ (10d)

_____ (8d) and with _____ (6)

_____ (11a)." _____ (7)

Speaking to Christians, 1 John 2:20 NIV says, "You have an anointing from the Holy One." The NLT version says, "The Holy One has given you His Spirit." We need to have God's Spirit in our lives, or another way of saying this is, 'Jesus is in my heart.' Ask God to send you His Spirit, and you won't regret it.

