

Proper 27A: Parable of the wise and foolish virgins

Matthew 25:1-13 A Story about Ten Girls

The kingdom of heaven is like what happened one night when ten girls took their oil lamps and went to a wedding to meet the groom.^[a] 2 Five of the girls were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps, but no extra oil. 4 The ones who were wise took along extra oil for their lamps.

5 The groom was late arriving, and the girls became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 Then in the middle of the night someone shouted, "Here's the groom! Come to meet him!"

7 When the girls got up and started getting their lamps ready, 8 the foolish ones said to the others, "Let us have some of your oil! Our lamps are going out."

9 The girls who were wise answered, "There's not enough oil for all of us! Go and buy some for yourselves."

10 While the foolish girls were on their way to get some oil, the groom arrived. The girls who were ready went into the wedding, and the doors were closed. 11 Later the other girls returned and shouted, "Sir, sir! Open the door for us!"

12 But the groom replied, "I don't even know you!"

13 So, my disciples, always be ready! You don't know the day or the time when all this will happen.

Storyteller (picks up the Parable Box): I wonder what this is?

It is the colour gold. Something inside must be precious like gold. Perhaps there is a parable inside. Parables are even more precious than gold.

It is closed. *Knock on the lid.* It has a lid. Perhaps there is a parable inside. Parables are closed; they need to be opened up so we can see what is in them.

The box looks like a present. Parables were given to us long ago as presents. Even if you don't know what a parable is, the parable is already yours. Shall we open it? Let's look inside.

Jesus said,

Put the ten girls up in a row on the flannelboard, leaving about 15 inches on the left-most edge of the board clear. The kingdom of heaven is like what happened one night when ten girls took their oil lamps and went to a wedding to meet the groom. *Put the banquet-room (folded into thirds both ways so as to be small enough that the doors will completely cover it) up on the left side of the board, and put the big double doors over it.*

Put the ten lamps out, one beside each girl. Five of the girls were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps, but no extra oil.

Put oil flasks next to the lamps of the last five girls. The ones who were wise took along extra oil for their lamps.

The groom was late arriving, and the girls became drowsy and fell asleep. Then in the middle of the night someone shouted, "Here's the groom! Come to meet him!"

Replace the flames on the foolish girls' lamps with the small flickering flames. When the girls got up and started getting their lamps ready, the foolish ones said to the others, "Let us have

Story Materials

- Flannelboard
- Parable Box, containing
 - ten girls
 - 10 lamps
 - 5 oil flasks
 - 10 small lamp-flames
 - 5 dying lamp-flames
 - 5 bright well-trimmed lamp-flames
- bridegroom
- Rectangle of light-coloured flannelette for the banquet room

some of your oil! Our lamps are going out.”

Put bigger flames on the wise girl's lamps. The girls who were wise answered, “There’s not enough oil for all of us! Go and buy some for yourselves.” *Remove the foolish girls and their lamps.*

Put the groom figure onto the board. While the foolish girls were on their way to get some oil, the groom arrived.

Take the doors off the board, and open out the white rectangle to create a bright broad space on the side of the board. Move the groom and the remaining 5 girls onto the flannelette. Put their lamps across the top of the left half of the board. The girls who were ready went into the wedding, and the doors were closed. *Put up the doors between the right and left halves of the board, instead of putting them back over the white space where they were before.*

Put the foolish girls back up on the right in the dark. Later the other girls returned and shouted, “Sir, sir! Open the door for us!” But the groom replied, “I don’t even know you!”

So, Jesus said, always be ready! You don’t know the day or the time when all this will happen.