

# 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: *Flicker, flicker little candle.*

#### SORRY

Close your eyes and listen to this prayer as you say '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:  
*Light up our hearts.*

#### GOSPEL (cf 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, 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.'

#### DISCUSSION

Has anyone ever been a bridesmaid at a wedding?

What did you wear and what did you do?

In the parable, who were the ten bridesmaids waiting for? – They were waiting to greet the bridegroom when he arrived, and to show him the way to the wedding hall. The bridegroom and bride are the ones who are getting married, becoming man and wife, so he is a very special person at the wedding.

Did they know when he would arrive? – They knew that he was coming, but they did not know the exact time he would arrive.

Why were the wise bridesmaids ready for his coming and the foolish bridesmaids not? – 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, and by the time they had filled their lamps, the bridegroom had already come and gone.

Jesus uses parables to give us a message. What do you think today's message is? – Jesus uses the 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, ready to say sorry when we get things wrong and to forgive others, then 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 photocopy onto thin card.

#### 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.