



Wise & Foolish Virgins

Level C

Ages 11-14

Matthew 25:1-13

Lesson Focus: Getting my heart ready for heaven

Reading Summary: Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to five wise and five foolish virgins who took lamps and went to meet a bridegroom. The wise virgins were prepared with extra oil for their lamps, but the foolish virgins were not. The bridegroom was delayed. While they waited, the virgins slept. When the bridegroom came, the foolish virgins begged the wise ones for more oil, but they told them to go and buy it at the market in case there was not enough oil for them all. While the foolish virgins were gone, the bridegroom came. He and the wise virgins went in to the wedding. The door was shut. When the foolish virgins returned, they could not go in.

Lesson 3		Materials Supplied	Materials Needed
1. Welcome Warm-up Activity (2-3 minutes)	Activity and Discussion	Be Prepared directions p. 2	sheets of paper or rulers for students to drop
2. Focus on the Word Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	Read the Word and Talk About It	see <i>Reading Summary</i> above discussion guide p. 2	Bible or copy of Matthew 25:1-13; <i>optional</i> : a jar or bottle of oil, lamp or candle
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Make design an invitation for the spiritual wedding that conjoins a person with the Lord	An Invitation to Heaven directions p. 3 <i>You Are Invited Instructions</i> p. 5 <i>Invitation Templates</i> pp. 6-7	paper for printing; nice pens, e.g. gold or silver pens or thin markers
	Game students play a version of musical chairs to learn about ways they can prepare for a life-time journey to heaven	Pack Your Bags! directions pp. 3-4 <i>Game Directions for Pack Your Bags!</i> p. 8 <i>Suitcase</i> p. 9 <i>Thoughts and Deeds Cards</i> pp. 10-21	open space, device for playing music, a chair for each student, paper cutter or scissors, stapler
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 minutes)	Take the Message Home introduce the <i>Take Home Cards</i>	Ready to Go! p. 22	

1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

Be Prepared

Supplies needed: light weight objects about 12” (30cm) long, such as ruler or piece of paper, for one student to drop from chest height and another student to catch

Divide students into pairs. One person in the pair will hold the object at chest height and drop it at some point without warning. The second person crouches in front of the student, preparing to catch the object whenever it is dropped. Make sure each student has a chance to both drop and catch the object.

1. How did not knowing when you would have to catch [the object] affect your ability to catch it?
2. Do you like surprises, or do you prefer to know what’s going to happen?
3. What kinds of things can we expect to happen?
4. What kinds of things are surprises that we have no control over?

2. Focus on the Word

Read: Matthew 25:1-13

Ten virgins took lamps and went to meet a bridegroom. Who does the bridegroom in this story represent? The Lord God Jesus Christ, who is sometimes called the “Bridegroom and Husband of the church.”

Remember that parables hold a deeper spiritual message. What might “meeting the Bridegroom” mean in our own lives? Passing over into spiritual life, meeting our “Maker”, being welcomed by Him into heaven.

Who do the virgins represent? People who make the Lord part of their lives.

The wise and foolish virgins both had lamps. What was the difference between them? The wise had enough oil to keep their lamps lit; the foolish did not have enough oil.

Optional: show a jar of oil, or light a lamp or a candle.

Everyone who learns what the Word teaches has spiritual light. They can know what actions are good and what actions are evil. This gives them the power to avoid what is evil and lead good lives. But true ideas from the Lord’s Word only *keep on shining* in us if we *love* them. This is what the oil represents—love in our hearts for what is good and for our neighbors.

What is love? Encourage brainstorming.

Listen to what Paul, an early Christian believer, said about love: “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” (See 1 Corinthians 13:4-8) How is this picture of love similar or different from your own picture?

The foolish virgins let their lamps burn while they slept, but then had no oil left when the bridegroom came. In the same way, people who do what is right only to look good and not because they really love the Lord, cannot live in heaven after death.

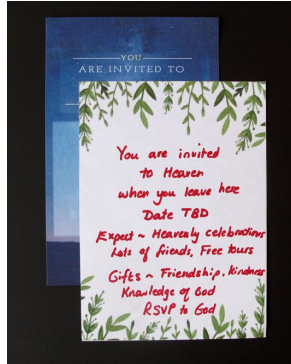
In this parable the Lord is reminding us to keep preparing for heaven—with love in our hearts—so we will be ready when our Bridegroom comes to meet us.

3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

Choice An Invitation to Heaven

The Lord invites each of us to form a relationship or enter into a covenant with Him. The Word often depicts this covenant as a wedding, at which the Lord is the Bridegroom and we (His church) are His “bride”. Encourage students to consider the Lord’s invitation to each of us, and our need to respond to His call, by creating a “wedding invitation”.



1. Have you ever been to a wedding? A wedding is often the most beautiful day of a person’s life. To recognize this, people wear special clothes, eat special food and invite family and friends.
2. Usually people receive invitations to attend a wedding. The host, often the parents of the couple getting married, send invitations to family and friends. Guests are expected to reply, letting the host know whether or not they will attend. Guests usually bring the couple gifts when they come. These gifts support the couple by surrounding them with the love of family and friends and helping them build a home.
3. The Lord invites each of us to a “wedding”. He wants us to join our life with His life so that He can give us true happiness. Each time we choose to do what He tells us in the Word we are saying “yes” to His invitation. This wedding does not take place in an instant, but happens gradually as we respond to the Lord’s call over a lifetime.
4. We are going to design an invitation for the heavenly marriage between the Lord and a person. Think of it as an invitation you might send to a friend, describing what he or she needs to do to come into a relationship with the Lord and enter heaven. Hand out copies of *You Are Invited Instructions* (p. 5). Go over the directions.
5. Distribute *Invitation Templates* (pp. 6-7) and writing supplies. Encourage students to reflect on specific things they’d like to do when they get to heaven, and the gifts they’d like to bring with them.

Materials Needed

Copies of *You Are Invited Instructions* p. 5 for students to share; enough copies of the *Invitation Templates* pp. 6-7 that all students will have some choice of templates; nice pens, e.g. gold and silver pens and thin markers

New Church Concept Practice

Unless the will and intellect, or affection and thought, or charity and faith, enter into and clothe themselves in works or deeds when possible they are like puffs of air which pass away, or like mirages which fade and vanish. Furthermore they remain for the first time in a person and become matters of life when the person puts them into practice and does them. See *Divine Love and Wisdom* 216

Choice Pack Your Bags!

Our life on earth is our preparation for entering the kingdom of heaven. In this activity, students think about what we need to “pack” for our journey to heaven and what things we will want to leave out of our spiritual suitcases.



1. Have you ever been on a trip to a place

Materials Needed

Open space, device for playing music, chair for every student, stapler, pens, copy of *Game Directions for Pack Your Bags!* p. 8, copy of *Thoughts and Deeds Cards* pp. 10-21 printed and cut apart, a copy of *Suitcase* p. 9 **for each student**

Prepare in Advance

See directions on page 8.

Pack Your Bags! *continued*

you had never been before? What did you do to get ready for the trip? (get new clothes, get things to do while you travel, pack a suitcase, etc.)

2. The most important trip any of us take is the journey to our eternal spiritual home. We spend our entire lives planning and preparing for this journey, deciding what to pack into our hearts and minds.
3. We're going to play a game about packing for heaven. See *Game Directions for Pack Your Bags!* (p. 8).
4. Once you finish the game, invite students to take turns reading positive cards from their suitcases. Which of your cards seems like the hardest thing for you to do? Which one seems easiest?
5. Does anyone have negative cards left in their suitcase? Would you be willing to read one or two? In this game, it was purely chance whether you got stuck with one of these negative cards or not. How could you get rid of things like these in real life? (be sorry, work on not doing them again, etc.)
6. What happens if you leave this world with negative things in your "suitcase"? Do these things stop you from going to heaven? (No!) Right after death we wake up in the world of spirits, where we are led to see ourselves clearly. People who do not know about the Lord and heaven will be taught about it. People who have mostly loved the Lord and tried to do what's right but still have negative thoughts and feelings will have to work on rejecting them in order to come into heaven. The Writings call this process "vastation". (See "Vastation" box on right.) The more we get rid of these negative things on earth, the easier it will be for us to enter heaven.
7. What happens if most of the things in someone's spiritual "suitcase" are negative? (They could still choose heaven, but the path will be challenging because they love negative things.)
8. Unlike in the game, we can *choose* to do good things that prepare us for heaven and choose to avoid or get rid of negative things that hurt us. The next time you get ready for a trip, think about what you are doing to prepare for the greatest trip of all!

New Testament Loving Others

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:34-35

New Church Concept Vastation

As a result of their own sins, people bring with them into the next life countless evils and falsities which they have accumulated. Even people who have led upright lives do so. Before these righteous people can be raised up into heaven their evils and falsities must be dispersed. This dispersing is called vastation. See *Arcana Coelestia* 698

4. Wrap It Up

Take the Message Home

Choose one or two questions to help bring the message home.

- What "oil" do we need in order to be ready to meet the Lord when we leave this world?
- What might happen when a person who has given no thought to life after death enters the world of spirits? Can he or she still go to heaven?
- Why is the Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared" a good slogan to live by?

Give *Take Home Cards* (two per page, p. 22) on "Ready to Go!" to the students as they leave and suggest they put them up where they will see them this week.



You Are Invited Instructions

The Lord invites each of us to live with Him in heaven. We do this by developing a relationship with Him through a life centered on loving and living what He teaches in His Word.

Invite a friend to heaven. Design a “wedding” invitation with details about when and where the happy event will take place. Be sure to include a list of what to bring. Use the sample below to help you.

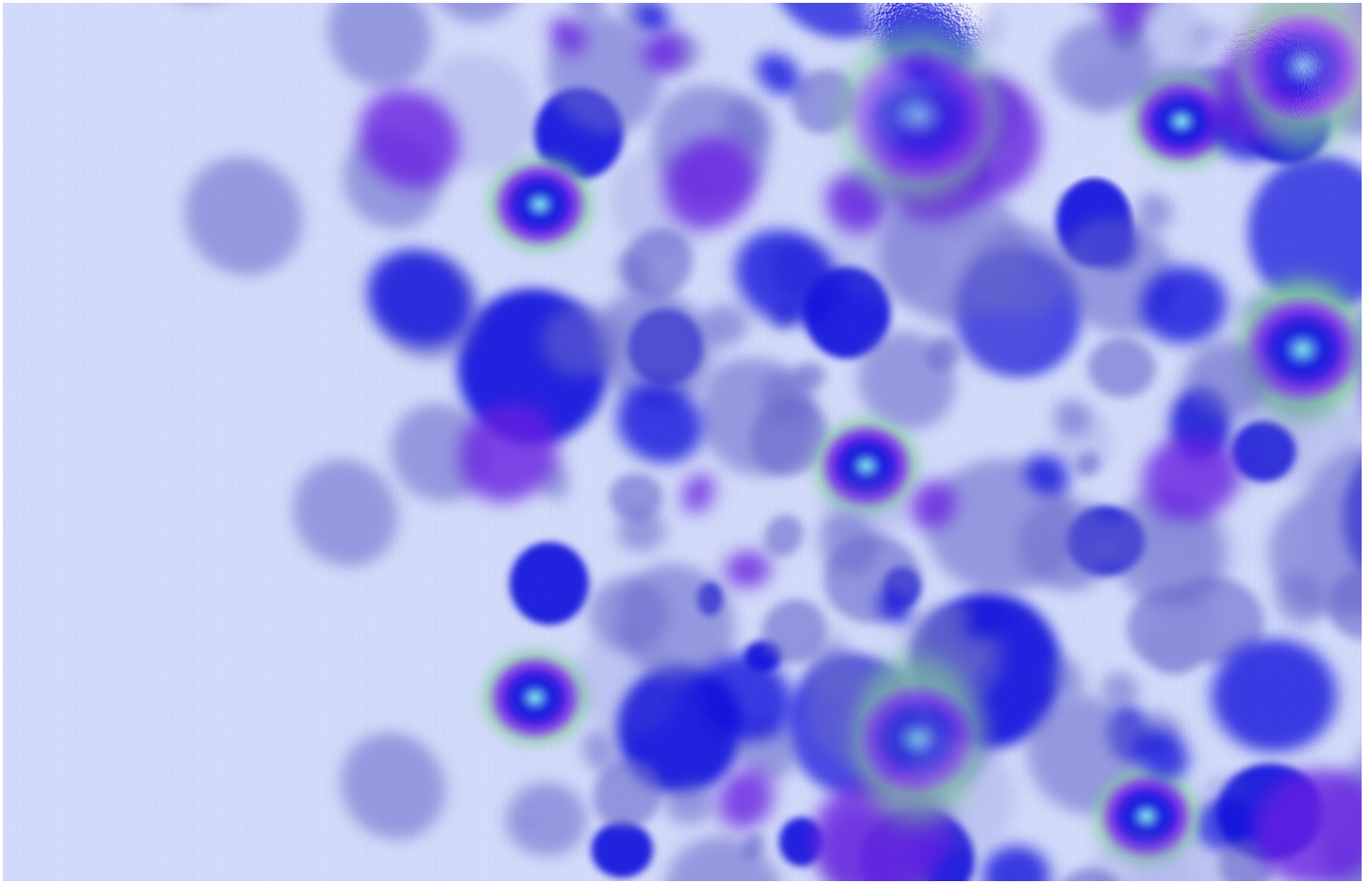
Invitation

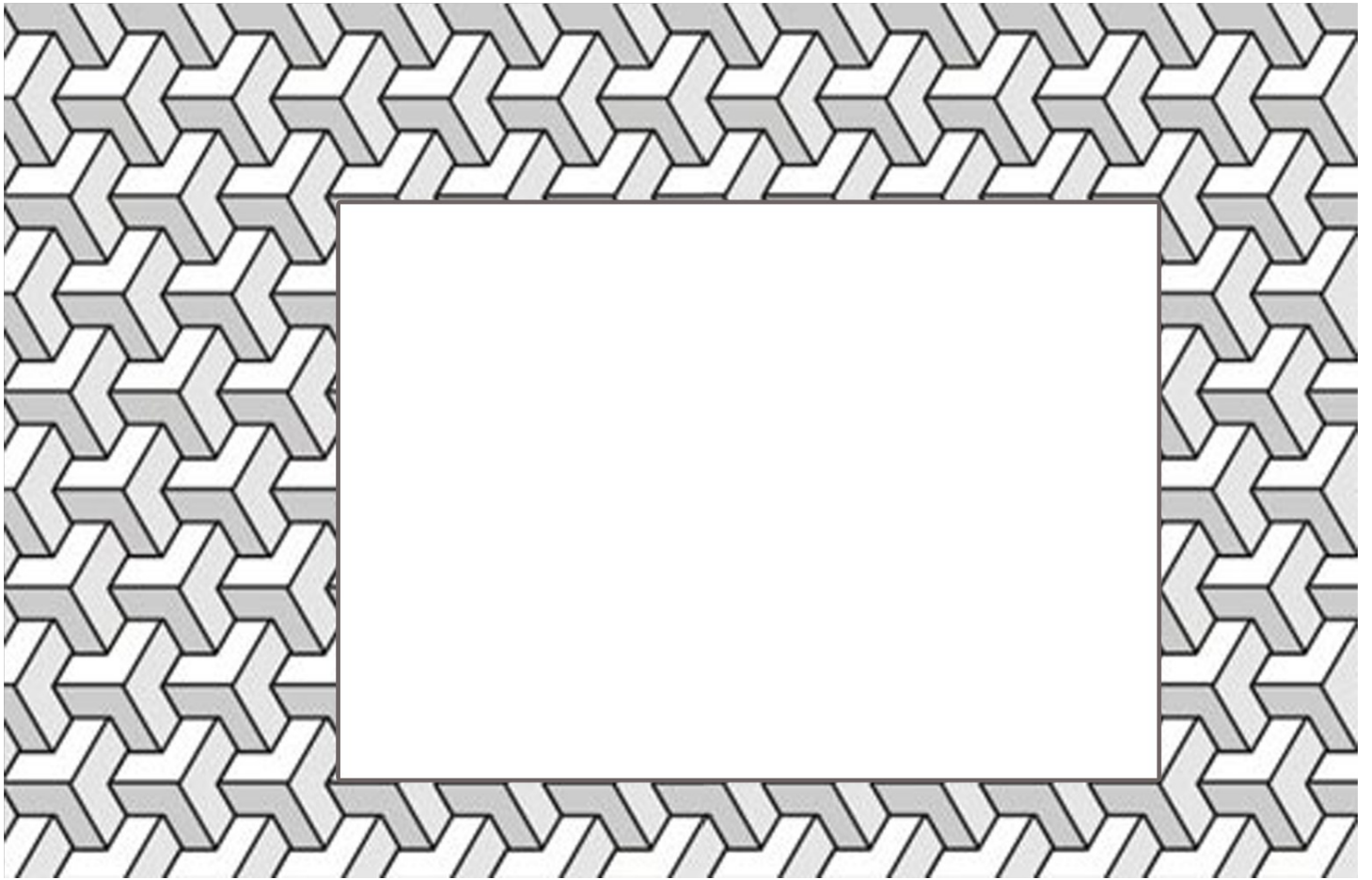
Design an invitation that includes the following:

- Host—who is inviting you?
- Request being made —what you are being invited to?
- Place—where will it happen?
- Date and time—when will it happen?
- Celebration—what to expect on your arrival?
- Gifts—what to bring with you
- RSVP—let God know whether you want to join Him!

Sample







Game Directions for Pack Your Bags!

Object:

Pack a “suitcase” of kind thoughts and deeds to take to heaven. Each student will fill a paper suitcase with positive and negative *Thoughts and Deeds Cards*. Students keep the positive cards and try to get rid of the negative ones. The goal is to finish with as few negative cards as you can, leaving mostly positive cards in the suitcase when the game ends.

This game is played similarly to musical chairs. Students walk around a line or circle of chairs in the middle of the room as music is playing and take the seat closest to them when the music stops. Unlike in the standard game, the number of players matches the number of chairs throughout the game.

Prepare Before Class:

1. Print a *Suitcase* (p. 9) for each student and one set of the *Thoughts and Deeds Cards* (pp. 10-21) for the group. Cut the *Thoughts and Deeds Cards* apart and shuffle well.
2. Find fun fast-paced music for the game and set it up on a music playing device.
3. Place a chair for each student in a line or a circle in the middle of the room. Circles of chairs should all face outwards. Lines of chairs may be set up as two back-to-back lines, or as one line with chairs facing in alternating directions (one forwards, one backwards, etc.).
4. Divide the shuffled cards into as many piles as you have students and place one pile face down under each chair.
5. Choose chair(s) to be “repenting” chairs. Mark the chair(s) with tape or a sticker so students can easily identify them. Groups with 3 or fewer students need 1 chair. Add one additional repenting chair for every 2 additional students in your group.

Prepare In Class:

Give each student a copy of the *Suitcase* (p. 9). Have them fold the page along the dotted line and staple the sides closed to create an envelope.

Play:

1. Students stand in a circle around the chairs. The teacher starts the music. Students walk clockwise around the chairs. The teacher stops the music suddenly, when students aren’t expecting it.
2. When the music stops students sit in the chair nearest them, pick up a card from under the chair, read it and put it into their suitcase.
3. Students who land on a “repenting” chair may place one negative *Thoughts and Deeds Card* (with a beige background) **face-up in a separate discard pile**, and pick up a new card from the regular pile under the chair. If they have no negative cards to discard, they just pick up a card from the regular pile. If that card is negative, it may be discarded right away, but a second card cannot be picked up. Remember the goal is to get rid of negative cards that make it harder to go to heaven.
4. Take 10 turns. Students will have varying numbers of cards in their suitcases depending on the number of discards they have made.
5. Move to the discussion on p. 4.



Suitcase

Hold a door open	Bake cookies to give to someone
Smile at someone new	Give up your seat
Clean up someone's yard or garden	Send a card
Write a thank you note	Reach out to someone in need
Say "please" and "thank you"	Let someone else go first

Spread kindness	Clean the kitchen
Show compassion	Do the dishes
Pay it forward	Ask nicely
Volunteer	Donate to a good cause
Raise money for a good cause	Donate used items you no longer need

Wait for a friend	Take time to really listen
Listen with your heart	Call a grandparent
Give a flower	Respect a friend's point of view
Do a favor	Give a genuine compliment
Say you're sorry	Pray for a friend

Forgive mistakes	Ask for forgiveness
Apologize	Share a snack
Lend a pencil	Respect personal boundaries
Call a sick friend	Offer a hug
Give help when it's needed	Be there when it matters

Read the Word	Reflect on one commandment
Learn a verse from the Word	Say a verse from the Word
Pray	Say the Lord's Prayer
Sing a religious song	Display a verse from the Word
Say the 10 Commandments	Learn a religious song

Pray for help from the Lord	Pray for someone who needs help
Pray for courage to do what's right	Pray for guidance
Recite the Golden Rule	Reflect on what Jesus might do in your situation
Listen to your conscience: it's God speaking	Listen for God speaking in His Word
Pay attention to the angels with you	Read from the Word

Give thanks to God	Praise others
Acknowledge God's gifts	Praise God for His goodness
Trust in God's leading	Let God lead you
Ask for God's help	Put others first
Kneel to pray	Use the Golden Rule

Speak with respect	Respect others
Praise God	Thank God
Ask for forgiveness	Avoid doing what you know to be wrong
Express thanks to God	Put God first
Acknowledge that God is in charge	Obey what God commands

Enjoy being angry	Show hatred
Want revenge	Be selfish
Be jealous	Get enraged
Want to be the best at others' expense	Be thoughtless about others
Take what isn't yours	Disobey the commandments

Take credit for others' ideas	Take credit for what others have done
Take the Lord's name in vain	Have a bad attitude toward others
Have a bad attitude toward God	Gossip
Lie	Steal
Make fun of others	Tease others

Hang on to a grumpy mood	Cheat
Knock others down	Want to win at others' expense
Be happy that others are in trouble	Criticize others
Bend the truth	Take more than your fair share
Belittle others	Boast

Want all focus on you	Deliberately hurt others
Complain about others	Complain about your share
Take another's turn	Justify bad choices
Bully others	Push others around
Leave others out	Be rude

Ready to Go!

Read: “Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like those who wait for their master that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Luke 12:35-36,40 (excerpts)

Reflect: The parable of wise and foolish virgins is about being ready when the Lord comes. The quotation above says that we don’t know when the Lord will come, so we should try to always be ready. Someday, the Lord will call us to join Him in heaven. Our readiness for that day depends on our efforts to live a heavenly life now, on this earth.

One way we can do this is by being ready to serve others with love—to have oil in our lamps. To be ready, we can work on noticing when others need help and responding, even if we don’t feel like it.

Respond: Today, keep an eye out for opportunities to serve others. Be ready to help when those times come.

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