TEXT Matthew 25:1-13

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE Revelation 16:15

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to cite the reasons why the

wise virgins were considered wise, and the foolish were deemed foolish. They will also be capable of showing why this parable prompts Christians to keep spiritually

alert.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER He that endureth to the end shall be saved. — Matthew

10:22

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh

at an hour when ye think not. — Luke 12:40

On the Alert

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The importance of this parable cannot be overemphasized. While Jesus told it to His disciples nearly 2000 years ago, it is especially timely for the days in which we live. The important message that it sets forth is the vital necessity of being prepared to meet the Lord.

The story is based on the Jewish wedding custom of that day. While it should be noted that all of the details of a parable do not necessarily conform to the truth being set forth, this one illustrates the point very clearly. It was the custom for the groom's father or his representative (Genesis 24) to make arrangements for the proposed marriage. The Holy Spirit is now seeking a bride for Christ. Quite often the bridegroom came for the bride at night—hence the need for lamps. Christ's bride is to be a light in this sin darkened world. There was no excuse for the five foolish virgins to have no oil and they were shut out of the wedding feast. Likewise when the trumpet sounds at the Lord's returning there will be no opportunity for the unprepared to get ready for His coming.

YOUR OPENER			

On the Alert

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SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Revelation 16:15

KEY VERSE: Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think

not. - Luke 12:40

There are sins which are passive by nature, but are as destructive in their ultimate consequences as those willfully and deliberately committed. The sin of neglect is one of these. We can see from this parable that the consequences of such a sin are terrible to contemplate. Let us be as spiritually vigilant as the wise virgins were. They availed themselves of every privilege, every opportunity, and every experience that came their way.

- 1. What was commendable about the attitude of both the wise and foolish virgins?
- 2. In what ways, then, did the foolish virgins fail?
- 3. What admonition was given to the foolish virgins? How did they react to this advice?

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RESPONSES

- 1. All had responded to the occasion, taking their lamps and going forth to wait for the bridegroom. This parable signifies the Rapture of the Church. Bring out in discussion that many people talk about Jesus' second coming and seem to anticipate it, but do not make the necessary preparation for that great event.
- 2. The foolish virgins knew the requirements of the occasion, that they must have a shining light in order to join the procession and go in to the marriage. Discuss with the class that none of the virgins knew when the bridegroom would come. The foolish virgins had failed to fill their vessels with oil to start with. This is why they were considered foolish.
- 3. They asked for oil from the wise virgins, but received the answer that the wise did not have enough oil for both. They were told to go to those who sold, and buy oil. They went to buy but when they returned, it was too late. Discuss with the students that it was not selfishness on the part of the wise to say they could not give of their oil, for the Spirit of God cannot be transferred from one person to another. The Spirit must come from God. Also consider that one never has more of the Spirit than he needs. Each individual needs all the Spirit that he can possibly secure in order to be ready for Jesus' coming.
- 4. The wise virgins knew the bridegroom was coming, they went forth to meet him, knowing and performing the requirements of entrance to the marriage. The point for discussion is, did not all the virgins know the requirements? They all certainly seemed to know, but the wise were the ones who were careful to fulfill every requirement for the occasion. They were virgins, which denotes purity and therefore eligibility. They knew there had to be light, so they took lamps to illuminate the way. See Psalm 119:105. They did not know how long the bridegroom would tarry, nor how long their lamps would have to burn, so they filled their vessels with oil along with the lamps. As the result of their conduct and attitude, the wise virgins were ready to go with the bridegroom into the marriage.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES					

4. What lessons are given to us in the conduct and attitude of the wise virgins?5. Who does the bridegroom represent in the parable? What does the midnight cry depict?	5. The bridegroom in the parabl Jesus. The midnight cry depicts the that precedes and announces Jecoming. This is one reason why that His people become lights in wants the Christian life to be seen Matthew 5:14-16. Often men do Bible, but they do read the lives of 2 Corinthians 3:2
6. What happened to the foolish virgins?	6. They went to buy oil for their lam gone out. They came later to know for admittance, but heard the words know you not." The door remained were left outside. Ask the class to the feelings of despair that must hearts of the foolish virgins. They opportunity but failed to meet the for entrance to the marriage.
7. What can we do to keep our "lamps" from going out?	7. The parable shows that the baseds a constant supply of oil. The of the Spirit of God. A measure of upon us when we are justified—forgs in (John 16:7-11). With our salvat are lit. But we are told to "go on ur (Hebrews 6:1). Holiness, and the comes with the baptism of the Hoessential to our Christian walk. (\$12:14 and John 14:17,18.) These eour "vessels" so we have a ready skeeps us in touch with God. This contents.
8. What thought in today's lesson do you consider most important?	keep our faith alive, and a love of remain in our hearts. We will have a citement in our lives as we watch for return. Discuss how the disciples, e wonderful experience in the Upper need for diligent prayer to maintain sure of the gift they had received. S 31. The Apostle Paul admonished continual consecration and holine know the good and acceptable and God. See Romans 12:1,2. We are "we ought to give the more earnest things which we have heard, lest a should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1)
26	8. After your students have given the to the question, summarize the lessing the importance of being ready for coming. Reemphasize that we car God's favor nor obtain His blessing of our own. There is a price to paying of our will, of ourselves, and of God—an entire and complete co
YOUR WRAP-UP	Him—if we would walk in all the lig pel that is manifested to us. Let our be the same as the wise virgins. That which they had received and we themselves to be without it. They for the bridegroom's coming. Even hour was late, they were still alert for would announce his coming.

- nps which had ck at the door of the Lord, "I shut and they try to describe have filled the had had the requirements
- burning lamp e oil is typical God's Spirit is given of all our tion our lamps nto perfection" power which oly Ghost are See Hebrews experiences fill source. Prayer ommunion will f the truth will a very real exor Jesus' soon even after their Room, felt the n the full mea-See Acts 4:23the church to ess in order to perfect will of also told that st heed to the at any time we
- neir responses son by stressor Jesus' soon nnot purchase s by any merit r: a surrenderof our plans to nsecration to tht of the Gosdetermination hey treasured ould not allow were watchful en though the for the cry that

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Why do you think Jesus told us the story of the ten virgins? Do you think this story has any effect on us? How or why?

What is an overcomer?

Why would you say that Jesus is really coming back to earth?

What are the basic requirements for being ready?

What can we do to keep our "lamps" from going out?

Verse 13 says, "Watch therefore . . ." How do we spiritually watch?

In the ANSWER story, what was the main point concerning the firemen and in what way was that story similar to the story of the ten virgins?

THINGS TO DO

Bring an empty kerosene lamp to class, then fill it and light the wick. Discuss how the oil is used up as the wick is burned. Make the point that we must remain close to our supply of "oil" too.

Each of the letters in the word WATCH can help to remind us of some of the things we should be watchful of. "W" stands for the WORD. We should watch the Word of God by reading it daily.

"A" stands for AMUSEMENTS. We should watch our amusements and not be found in a place we would not want to be found when Jesus comes.

"T" stands for TALK. We should watch our talk, and not be guilty of using words we would not want to be using when Jesus comes, or talking about someone in slanderous ways.

"C" stands for COMPANIONS. We should watch our companionships and not be found with those we would not want to be with when Jesus comes.

"H" stands for HEART. We should watch our hearts to remain an overcomer.

Why should we watch so carefully? Because Jesus could come any day.

Material needed: A kitchen timer. Set it without telling your students when it will go off. Use this to illustrate that time is running out and Jesus may come at any time.

Read all the statements. Then number them in the story sequence.

They that were ready went in with him to the
marriage.
Those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.
They all slumbered and slept.
At midnight a cry was made, "Behold, the bride
groom cometh."
The door was shut.
While they went to buy, the bridegroom came.

Answers for ANSWER

