Preschool–Grade 6

The Ten Virgins

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus is coming again, and readiness can't be borrowed or put off. Get ready now, and stay ready.
Bible passage: Matthew 24:42–44 and 25:1–13. Students read them out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." *Matthew 25:13 (KJV)* and "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." *Matthew 24:44 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Matthew 24:3 and 24:42–25:13. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Last Minute or Ready? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Students hold up fingers from 1 (fine to do at the last minute) to 5 (you have to be ready ahead of time). 1) Packing a snack for a trip. 2) Studying for a big test. 3) Learning your part for a church program. 4) Saying sorry to a friend you hurt. 5) Getting right with God. Ask: *Which ones can't be done at the last minute? Why?* Say: "Jesus told a story about ten people who all looked ready, until the moment came."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Matthew 24:42–44. Jesus was on the mount of Olives, answering His disciples' question about the sign of His coming (24:3). Old words: **goodman of the house** (24:43): the man who owns the house; **suffered his house to be broken up**: let his house be broken into.

Read out loud: Matthew 25:1–13. Students take turns, a verse or two each. Old words in this passage:

- **likened** (25:1): compared; **virgins**: young women who were not married yet; **bridegroom**: the man getting married
- **vessels** (25:4): jars or containers
- **tarried** (25:5): took a long time; **slumbered**: got drowsy
- **trimmed their lamps** (25:7): got them ready to burn; **gone out** (25:8): stopped burning
- **marriage** (25:10): the wedding
- **Verily** (25:12): truly; **watch** (25:13): stay awake and ready

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Talk it through. At the start, all ten looked the same: lamps, waiting for the bridegroom (25:1). The difference was hidden until midnight: five had oil and five did not (25:3–4). All ten slept (25:5), so being ready was not about staying awake. It was about what they had done before the cry came. The wise could not hand over their readiness (25:9), and those who went to buy at the last minute missed the door (25:10). **Son of man** is what Jesus called Himself, and He said no one knows the day or the hour He will come (25:13).

A warm warning. Jesus didn't tell this to scare His disciples; He told it so they would be ready. Peter wrote that the Lord "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9, KJV). **Longsuffering** means patient. The waiting is God giving people time to get ready.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. All ten had lamps and all ten were waiting (25:1). What does that say about how being ready can look from the outside?
2. All ten slept (25:5). If sleeping wasn't the problem, what was?
3. Why couldn't the wise share their oil (25:9)? What can't anyone else do for you?
4. "They that were ready went in" (25:10). What does living ready look like for you right now, at school and at home?
5. Jesus said we don't know the day or the hour (25:13; 24:44). Why is that a reason to get ready now and not later?
6. Read 2 Peter 3:9. How does it change the story to know God is patient and wants everyone ready?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **watch** means stay awake and ready; **ye** means you; **wherein** means when; **cometh** means comes; **in such an hour as ye think not** means at a time you don't expect. Matthew 24:44 tells us to be ready; Matthew 25:13 tells us why: we don't know when.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Matthew 25:13 this week; keep working on Matthew 24:44 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Being ready for Jesus starts with obeying the gospel. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where in my life am I "looking ready" on the outside but putting off what matters?
2. What is one thing I want to get right with God now, not later?
3. Write a short prayer asking Jesus to help you live ready for Him every day.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: each morning, pray, "Jesus, help me be ready for You today," and do one thing that shows it.

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, thank You that You are coming again, and that You are patient with us. We don't want to put off getting ready. Help us obey You now and stay ready every day. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks when Jesus will come, or is afraid: be honest and gentle. No one knows the day or the hour (Matthew 25:13), so we don't guess dates. Jesus promised, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3, KJV), and the Lord is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). Offer to pray with the student.

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