

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read Matthew 25:1-13 aloud.

1. Where were these girls going?

*Most translations say "virgins," but the word also means "young ladies."
The picture is a group of bridesmaids.*

What was the difference between the wise & the foolish girls?

How did the wise girls know to be prepared?

Why didn't the foolish girls prepare?

What distracts you from preparing for the future?

2. What happened when word came that the groom was on his way to take his bride to the ceremony?

Why wouldn't the five wise girls share?

"Your lack of planning does not equal my emergency." They was not enough to share.

What happened when the girls arrived late at the wedding?

They were shut out.

How do you think they felt?

How well does a closed door fit with your picture of God?

3. What is the message of this parable?

Read verse 13. Be ready.

What event did Jesus want his followers to be ready for?

In Matt. 24-25, Jesus discusses two events – the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) and the day of judgment. Only the day of judgment would apply to us.

4. How does this parable fit with Kevin's sermon on Rev. 14?

What did Kevin describe as the five most amazing minutes of life?

5. What does it take to be prepared for that day when we stand face to face with God?

6. How does it help you to live with the end in mind?

How does it help you set priorities?

How does it help you deal with stress and disappointment?

How does it help you resist temptation?

How does it affect your relationships?

7. Silent reflection. Imagine that the events of your last week were listed on a time card. What would God say as you look back on what you accomplished "on the clock"? What would you like to say to God about the week?

Ask the group to reflect on this question silently for about five minutes.

Close the reflection time with a prayer asking God to show you the purpose he has for you at work and in life and how that can be seen in your day, every day.

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What is one thing you need to do or want to do before you face eternity?

Resources

Bible notes

We know little of ancient wedding customs, aside from anecdotes like this one. It was customary for the groom to come to the bride's home, and then the entire party would go to the site of the wedding. We do not know why the girls were not admitted to the wedding late.

Prayer ideas

Thank God for the exciting day awaiting believers, when we finally see him face to face!

Pray for your relationships to reflect the reality that life on earth is preparation for real living.

Pray for someone who is not prepared for judgment day.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

If possible, meet outdoors and light Tiki torches near your meeting site. Be sure that some of them have almost no oil.

Get two packs of jello. Make one before the meeting and stash it in the host's fridge. Bring the other to the meeting to make.

Consider kids with special diets (sugar-free jello, avoid red dye, etc.)

Warn your host that this lesson includes a kitchen project.

Who knows how to make jell-o? Let's do it.

Appoint three kid crews – hot water, stirring, cold water.

“At the end of our meeting, we'll eat our jell-o. Won't that be great?”

Read Matthew 25:1-13 aloud.

What was the difference between the wise & foolish young ladies?

Why wouldn't the wise girls share their oil? *They couldn't.*

What happened to the girls who were unprepared?

What was Jesus teaching us in this parable?

“Let's eat our jello! Oh no – it's not ready!”

Relate the unprepared jello to Matt. 25, then pull out the jello that you brought ahead of time.



April 13, 2008

LIFE Group Guide

Matthew 25 – Are we ready?

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Are we ready for the most incredible moment of our lives?**

Kevin's sermon deals with Revelation 14, the amazing day when we will stand before God. We need to live every moment with that day in view. In Matthew 25, Jesus told a parable about being ready.

We still need greeters for the youth conference Market Street Church will host at the College Hills building on April 25-26. Ask your LIFE group to consider serving a four-hour shift on Friday or Saturday.

Leadership tip: Be on the lookout for new group members. Hang out in the lobby near the welcome center, which now includes a sharp-looking LG brochure. Invite someone to join your group this month. Include a prayer for new group members at each meeting.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ The last discussion guide asked if you only had five years to live, how would you change your life. What if you only had one month to live – how would you spend your last 30 days?
- ❖ What is the most unusual situation you have seen at a wedding?
- ❖ What is on your "Bucket List" of things to do before you kick the bucket?
- ❖ Are you more of a careful planner (be prepared) or a creative responder (flexible enough to do what you need to do)? What are the strengths & weaknesses of each temperament?

Planners are more "put together," but they can be controlling worriers. Responders are more prepared to shift in order to do what is important, but they can be chaotic procrastinators. Both gifts need to be submitted to the Spirit in order to be of greatest value.