

Registered Charity No 251394

November 2024



It's November and the nights are drawing in – which means that it is getting dark earlier and earlier each day. If we need to go out in the evening we are mostly lucky to have street lights to help us to see where we are going. Even if we live in the country away from the street lights, we have torches to use to light the way.

Back in the time of Jesus, there were no such things. Most of the time they would have enough light from the stars and moon, but if they wanted extra light they had to use lamps, a bit like the one in the picture.

The lamps most commonly used at that time were small, about the size of a hand. They were made from clay, like shallow, covered dishes with two holes in the top. Olive oil was poured through the larger of the holes, and a wick was placed in the smaller. Special care was taken to keep the wick trimmed. If it burned down too low, it would smoke and finally go out.



A story about lights and being prepared.

In the bible, we read about a time when Jesus was teaching people to be ready for when He comes back. He told a parable (a story) to help them understand.

Once there was a big wedding. The wedding was so big that there were ten bridesmaids who helped the bride get ready for the wedding. Weddings back then started at night. Everyone knew that sometime, during the night, the groom would come to the bride's house and call out for her. The bridesmaids would hold up their oil lamps so the bride and groom could see each other. The groom would be so happy to see his beautiful bride! Everyone would keep holding up their lamps so they could walk down the streets to the groom's house. Then there would be dancing, eating, and lots of fun celebrations at the wedding.

Five of the bridesmaids brought extra oil for their lamps. They wanted to be ready even if the groom came very late in the night, but the others were foolish and didn't think about bringing extra oil. As they waited, the bride and all the bridesmaids got sleepy and fell asleep. Then someone shouted, "Here's the bridegroom, come outside and meet him!" They all woke up and began to fix their lamps to make them nice and bright. The five foolish girls noticed that their lamps had run out of oil and had burned out. They asked the wise girls for oil, but they didn't have extra, only enough to keep their own lamps burning.

The foolish girls had to go and try to find more oil for the lamps. They did not get to go out with the bride to meet the bridegroom. They did not get to walk down the streets to the wedding feast with all of their friends. They were too busy trying to find oil.

When the wise bridesmaids and everyone else arrived at the groom's house, they went inside and began the celebrations. The groom shut the door and locked it so no strangers could get inside. The foolish bridesmaids were not allowed in when they came to the door. The groom didn't even know who they were!

This parable helps us understand what it will be like when Jesus comes again. We do not know the day or the time. We should always love God and obey Him so we will be ready whenever He comes.

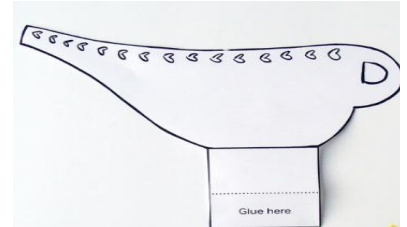
Read the story in Matthew chapter 25 verses 1-13

ACTIVITY The Bridesmaids Lamp



If you have some clay take a piece a bit smaller than a tennis ball. Mould it into the sort of shape in the picture, with a hollow centre. Pinch out a bit at one end for the handle, and at the other end with a groove in it for the wick. The wick could be a piece of string. If you don't have clay you could use play dough. Alternatively you could use card.

Cut out two oil lamp shapes for the front and back. See the flap on the bottom of one piece. This will be folded and glued onto the front shape, forming a base so that the lamp can stand upright. Glue the handles together and about half way down the front under the spout. Cut out a few flame shapes from the tissue paper and



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