

HERE WE COME!

As the children arrive, be busy setting things in place, either for a worship center or an activity at the table, such as a snack. Ask them to sit down and wait and you will be ready soon. When the time comes, greet them with, "It's ready! You can come now!" and begin the activity you have prepared.

SCRIPTURE WORDS AND WORSHIP

Children are often busy exploring their world, and getting ready to do something may not be at the top of their list. Parents often check, asking, "Are you ready yet?" If someone isn't ready, it may be because they are still getting ready or because they are doing something else. In several places, the scriptures remind us to be ready for something.

These scripture verses come from two disciples who were writing about what Christians should do.

BE WISE, BE READY

It is important to be prepared and ready.

STORY TALKING

What does it take to get ready or be ready in the life of a child? Use these questions to help the children talk about this aspect of their lives. Since children like to be doing something while they are talking, pass out clay and demonstrate what an oil lamp might have looked like in Jesus' time. They can play with the clay or make their own lamp to take home.

- When your parents say, "It's time to get up and get ready for church," what are the things you do to get ready?
- When it's time to eat, what do you do to get ready?
- When you're going out to play in the snow, what do you do?
- When you're going swimming, what do you do?
- When you're going to run a race, what do you do?
- When you're going to be gone from home for a week, what do you do?
- When you're going to say your prayers, what do you do?

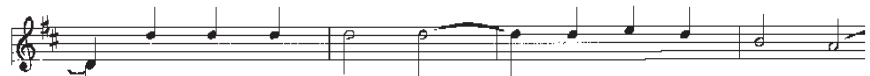
I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

As sung in Assam, India

Folk Melody



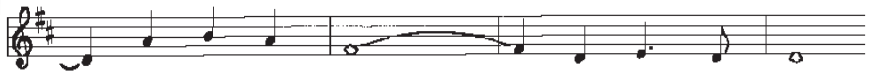
I have de - cid - ded _____ to fol - low Je - sus



_____ I have de - cid - ded _____ to fol - low Je - sus



_____ I have de - cid - ded _____ to fol - low Je - sus



_____ no turn - ing back, _____ no turn - ing back!

Scripture Words

Do good...and be ready to share.

—1 Timothy 6:18
NRSV adapted

Be ready always.

—1 Peter 3:15
NRSV adapted

UP AND AT 'EM

Dress up in hats and scarves and robes and celebrate a pretend wedding walk. Give each child a flashlight or a candle with a yellow felt flame for the lighted lamp.

SENSE-ACTIONS

Give each child a copy of the candle and holder. Have cutouts of the individual sections for the children to glue on the picture. The candle can be made from felt or shiny wrapping paper. The melting wax can be cotton balls pulled thin. The flame can be shiny paper or glitter. The holder can be felt, glitter, or shiny paper.

MOVING MUSIC

- “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”
- “Animals Get Up in the Morning” (page 39)
- “If You’re Happy” (page 41)

THERE WE GO

Ask the children to get ready for the end of class. What must they do to be ready to leave when the time comes?

LIVE AND LEARN

The scripture story about the wise and foolish bridesmaids comes from Matthew 25:1–13. Focus on the wedding and the preparation of the guests in order to be ready.

- Have you ever gone to a wedding? What was it like?
- Weddings in Bible times were exciting, too. The bride and groom each dressed up in their finest clothes. But they didn’t meet at the church.
- For a Jewish wedding in the time of Jesus, the important words would have already been said months earlier. After that ceremony, the bride would leave to go to her home and the groom would leave to go to his.
- The groom would work hard for the next several months getting a new house ready for them.
- The bride would work at home getting things for the inside of the house ready.
- When all was in place, the bride and groom would each get dressed up in their own homes and wait.
- Their friends would come first to the groom’s house to get him. They would be singing and dancing and showing how happy they were for the wedding.
- Then they would walk the groom through the streets like a parade so everyone could see their happiness. Other friends would wait along the way, so they could join in when the group passed by.
- The crowd would get bigger and bigger. By the time they arrived at the bride’s house, she would be able to hear them coming from far away.
- Next the couple would be walked to the new home the groom had been preparing. There everyone would go inside and celebrate.
- This part of the ceremony was usually held at night. There were no streetlights, so people would bring their own lamps to light the way. Lamps weren’t like ours. There was no cord or place to plug them in.

Show the children what a lamp might have looked like. The holder was usually a shallow dish made from clay. One end was pinched almost together to keep the wick from sliding down. Part of the wick extended out of the dish and the rest lay along the bottom of the dish. Olive oil was poured into the dish and was soaked up by the wick. When the end of the wick was held near a flame, the lamp would light.

- One night there was a wedding celebration. Ten young women took their lamps and went to wait along the dark street. They waited and waited. After a while they got tired of waiting for the groom and his friends to come, so they fell asleep.
- All of a sudden there was a great noise. The ten young women woke up and jumped to their feet. “He’s coming!” one shouted. “Let’s light our lamps!” another said.
- But when they went to get their lamps, all the oil was gone and the lamps had burned out. What would they do now?
- Five of the women were wise. They thought about what might happen, and they brought along extra oil for their lamps. Five of the women were foolish. They didn’t plan ahead and brought no extra oil.
- “Give me some of yours,” said one of the women to another.
- “I’m sorry, but if I do that, there won’t be enough oil to last for either of us.”
- “Then what can we do?” asked another.
- “You will have to go to the store and buy oil.”
- The five foolish women hurried off to find a store that was open. Meanwhile the groom and his friends moved on down the street. The wise women were able to go along because they were ready, but the foolish women missed out because they weren’t.



This Lighted Candle