

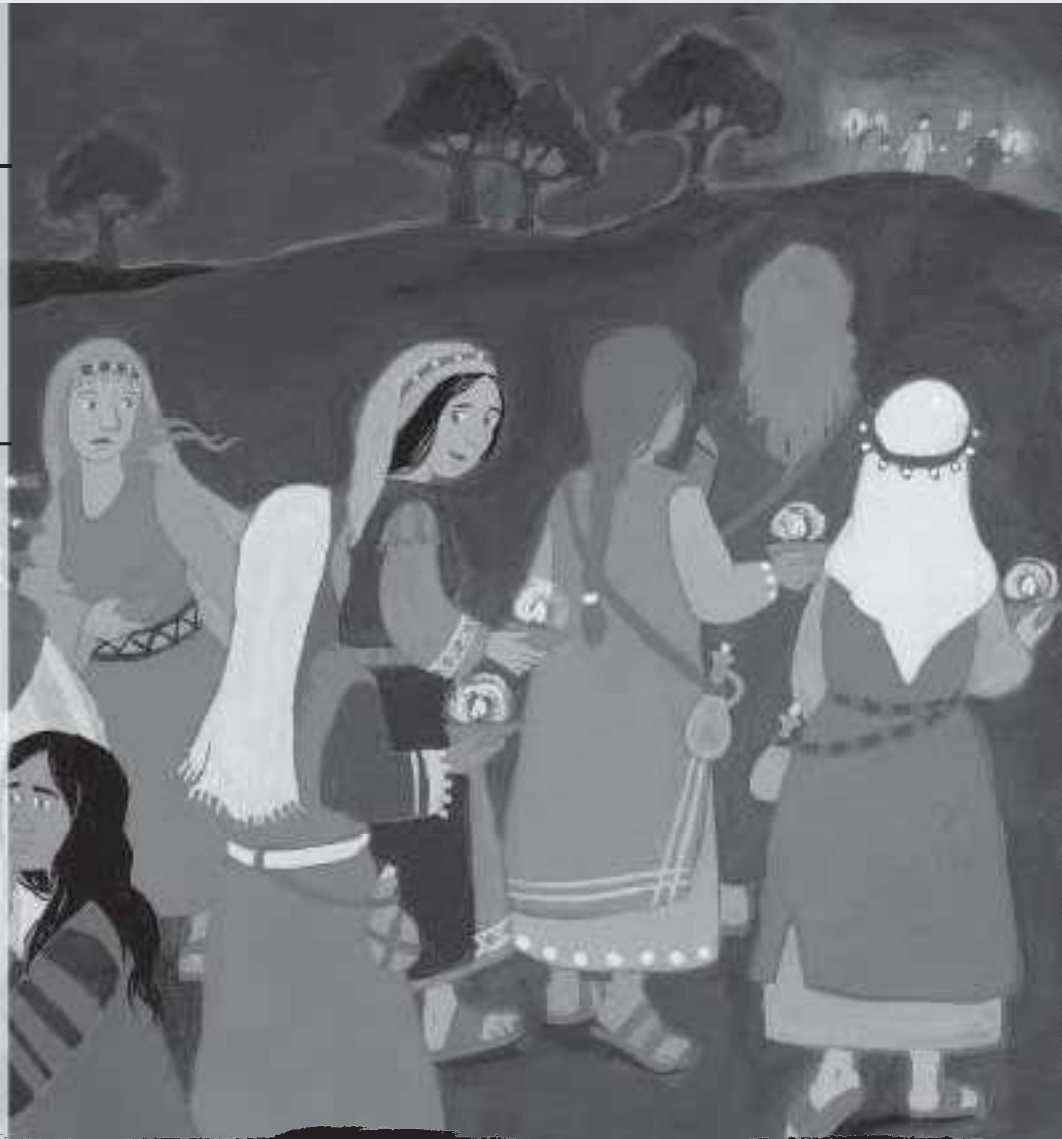
JESUS COUNSELS US TO BE WATCHFUL WHILE ANTICIPATING HIS COMING

Objective

The children learn how to make use of the time in order to be prepared for Christ's return.

Contents

- The parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13).
- Our preparation for Jesus Christ's return.



Lesson Plan

Lead-In

Workbook, Exercise 1

Discussion

The children read the message in exercise 1.

Afterwards discuss with them how Tim will probably react.

- During the course of the morning, he thinks repeatedly and gladly about the afternoon.
- After school, he hurries home as quickly as possible.
- He completes his homework quickly.
- He prepares a game which he would like to play with Felix.
- Whenever the door bell rings, he runs expectantly to the door.
- Since he has to wait longer than he thought, he becomes quite sullen.
- etc.

Implementation

Discussion

Discuss with the children that, for many people, it is not easy to wait for someone for a longer period of time. Even if one looks forward to the encounter, the joyful anticipation can easily turn into impatience and anger.

Teacher's Presentation

The Lord Jesus told his disciples the parable of the ten virgins which deals with waiting for an important event. The parable is based on an old custom.

On the evening prior to the wedding, friends of the bride waited for the bridegroom at a certain spot. When he came, they went together to call for the bride, and went to the wedding feast at the bridegroom's home. Although the bridesmaids knew the bridegroom would have to come that evening, they did not know the exact time. To find their way in the dark, they took small oil lamps with them which did not burn very long. That is why it was important to take along a vessel filled with additional oil.

Workbook, Exercise 2

The children learn the contents of the parable by filling in the blank spaces with the help of the Bible text.

Workbook, Text

Finally, the entire Bible text is read aloud to consolidate the children's understanding.

Discussion

Elaborate on the following with the children:

- In this parable, the bridegroom is the Lord Jesus, who has promised to return.
- The ten virgins represent those who await the Lord Jesus.
- Falling asleep is the danger that can arise while waiting.
- At the end of the Bible text we learn what Jesus wanted to convey with this parable: *"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."*

Question Prompt

Why is it so important for us to stay awake?

No one knows the exact time of Christ's return. The longer the wait, the greater the danger of becoming tired in faith.

Question Prompt

How does tiredness manifest itself in our life of faith?

One

- prays less,
- experiences no real joy in the divine services any more,
- hardly thinks about the day of the Lord and does not prepare oneself for it,
- does not use the time, focused on the great event, but fills it with other things,
- etc.

When the call came, "The bridegroom comes!", the foolish virgins realized that their lamps had gone out. They lacked something important, namely, oil. They had not paid attention to remedying their lack of oil in good time.

The oil in the parable represents the Spirit which stimulates our faith. The Holy Spirit reveals God's word through which our faith is strengthened. Additional qualities, such as love and hope in anticipation of the Lord Jesus' return, grow out of faith.

Question Prompt

The wise virgin had made provisions in good time.

How can we act wisely today?

We make use of the time until the Lord's return. This we are able to do by

- absorbing God's word,
- translating it into action, not putting it off until later,
- not waiting a long time to forgive and become reconciled again following an argument,
- helping along in God's work,
- fostering fellowship with other children of God,
- etc.

Conclusion

Workbook, Exercise 3

The children work on exercise 3.

Discussion

Afterwards discuss with them that our prayers are also part of making proper use of the time. We pray for

- steadfastness and faithfulness,
- joyful anticipation of Jesus Christ's return,
- the ability to differentiate between what is important and that which is unimportant,
- the shortening of the time,
- etc.

Notes
