



Bible Heroes

Parable of the 10 Bridesmaids

Teachers Story notes

Essential Teachers notes:

This story is very simple but the more you know about the culture of Jewish weddings the easier it is to understand the odd reaction of the groom at the end. The wedding, started with a betrothal, usually years before. The woman would remain at her father house and the groom would be expected to prepare a place to live for his new wife, this could mean literally building a new house. Once everything was ready the groom would set out for his bride, usually mid week. The grooms party would collect the bride from her father's house where the physical part of the marriage would take place, often while the guests partied outside the door. The whole wedding would then make a procession to the grooms house, this was often done at night and special torches and lamps would be made. The celebration would continue for days after and the crowd may have been pretty huge. So imagine the groom, slightly tipsy, finding a group of girls arriving after the doors been locked. Why should he let them in? if they are friends they have shunned the main event, if not then they are interlopers hoping for a few days of free food and wine.

Tell this story or a similar one of your choice from a favourite bible translation or story book. This version is supplied for inspiration, feel free to omit or embellish to give it your personal voice.

Main Passage : Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus's friends asked what the end of time would be like. Jesus knew that only the father had all the details, but he wanted his friends to have just a glimpse and so he started to tell many parables to try and give them some ideas.

"There were 10 bridesmaids" said Jesus, he saw the disciples sigh, they knew they wouldn't get a straight answer. "These bridesmaids were waiting with the bride for the wedding" he continued

"They could be waiting a long time!" shouted a voice and the other disciples chuckled. It was true. The groom could be collecting the guests for the party that would follow him collecting the bride. Sometimes the bride and her friends would wait hours for the groom to arrive with the party.

"5 of these bridesmaids were wise and bought extra oil for their wedding lamps, but the other 5 did not. The night got late and in the warm room the girls started to fall asleep."

The men were laughing out loud now, all those girls in their fancy clothes falling asleep on the rugs. While the groom was enjoying the time with his friends and family a little too much!

"In the middle of the night the sound of the shofar horn woke the girls. The groom was banging on the door asking to be let in. Quickly they got up, straightened their clothes and trimmed their lamps.

The foolish bridesmaids had burnt almost all their oil and begged those who were prepared to share their extra. The wise bridesmaids knew that was a bad idea. They would not have enough oil to last all night if they gave it away now.

The foolish bridesmaids left to find more oil and when they returned to the brides house there was nobody there.

The party had danced their way across the town to the grooms house to continue the celebration. As the last person from the large crowd had reached the door they had locked it shut behind him.

When the foolish bridesmaids came to the party the groom sent them away, they were too late, the door was locked already."

Jesus was telling his friends to be prepared because they would not be told the time the end would come

Today's heroes are the wise bridesmaids because they shows us the gift of preparation

