

The Arrival at the Harbour

The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Discussion

Ask the children to pretend they planning a birthday for their friend. Discuss what they will need to do, e.g. order a cake, invite people, book a restaurant, otherwise the party won’t happen.

Discuss how the parable explains how we must prepare ourselves spiritually, especially during this holy week. Discuss how we can do this? Saying the rosary daily, praying the stations of the cross daily, meditating with a bible verse and more.

Plan something with the family to do during passion week that will bring you all closer to God and strengthen you spiritually. Set a time for it so that everyone knows this is a time for prayer and commit to it.

Discuss with the children the parable and how the foolish virgins did not prepare themselves and did not enter the banquet but the wise virgins had prepared themselves and entered the banquet with their bridegroom. Jesus is our bride groom, we prepare ourselves for him.

The Rite explained

In Maronite tradition, the night of Hosanna Sunday, we gather outside the church to begin the rite of the Arrival at the harbour. This Liturgy reminds us that the 'ark' which is the Church, is arriving safely from our Lenten journey at the Harbour of Salvation which is Christ himself. (refer to icon)

The church gathers outside a closed church. The priests and clergy pray and chant, 5 Women are selected to hold lanterns or candles (representing the 5 wise virgins). The priest then knocks on the church door three times before it is opened for the faithful (prepared brides) to enter.

We invite you to light any 5 candles you may have, get the children involved and they can represent the 5 wise virgins, knock on your front door and enter your domestic church.

Activity for Holy Week

Here is a great activity to teach the children the importance of strengthening our spiritual life.

Things you will need

- A toy boat, cardboard or paper boat, or something that represents a boat
- A blue cloth representing the ocean
- 6 or more 'Treasures' these can be glass drops, buttons, coins or anything you want to use.
- A dedicated space for the children to create this on a table

Set up a table, with a blue cloth, treasures on either side of the cloth and the boat in the middle. Encourage the children to strengthen their spiritual connection with God and when they do they are able to move the boat to one side of the table and collect a treasure. By the time we reach Easter the children will have a boat full of treasure. Explain that when we began this activity, the boat was empty and after passion week