



Week 3 (August 16-22): Lesson Guide

Open In Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Ask the group to recall the guidelines for discussion that we use to create a safe environment.

Ask someone to retell last week's story from Matthew 16:1-4 (religious leaders ask Jesus for a sign).

Ask someone on your team to read the Hook Question - Ask, "What is your greatest missed opportunity in your life up to this point? Why?"

Ask someone from your team to read the following background for the story:

One day, the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked Him, "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus began to teach them about the end times and his second coming. In His teachings about heaven, Jesus would often use parables to help the disciples understand. A parable is a short story illustrating a spiritual lesson.

The parable we will focus on today is Jesus' parable of the ten virgins. Before you hear this parable, there are a few things you should know. First, the word "virgins" in the story is not referring to the young ladies sexual activity, but rather that they are of marriageable age and part of the bridal party. Next, it was customary for a bridegroom and bride to be married at one location and then to be escorted by their bridal party to a second location for a feast. Before the escort, the bridegroom and bride would often take care of their legal affairs while the bridal party waited. If it was a night wedding, the bridesmaids were responsible to use lamps to light the way during the escort as soon as the bridegroom and bride were ready. Finally, in this parable, the bridegroom is Jesus.

With this information, consider Jesus' parable and how it addresses the disciples' questions about the end times...

Tell the story from Matthew 25:1-13

Rebuild the story – (Group members tell the story based on what they remember)

Read Matthew 25:1-13– (Ask the group to read these scriptures)

Discuss these questions:

- How do you relate to the "virgins" or "bridesmaids" in this story?
- What do you like about this story?
- What do you dislike about this story?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God? (remember, Jesus is God)
- How do you need to change based on this story?

Ask for a volunteer to retell the story one last time.

Ask for a volunteer to tell the story next week.

Prayer Requests (ask someone in the group to take notes so you can email the requests to the group)

Pray (don't feel the need to mention every request in prayer again, just pray for the group and send the email)



Week 3: Leadership Coaching Guide

Leading [learn to facilitate your group more effectively]

- This week, let's consider the principle behind the ground rules of allowing time for silence in group and sharing the spotlight.
- Let's be honest – silence in a group setting is often an awkward experience. In our culture, people typically try to fill every waking moment with noise and activity. To sit and be quiet (and I don't mean in front of the TV) is unusual and even strange to many of us. However, it is in the silence that the Holy Spirit often speaks.
- Many people don't know what to do with silence, so they try to fill the spaces. This may be a member on your team, or it may be you as the leader! Scratching this itch typically leads to just a few people monopolizing the entire discussion. When this happens, there are people in the group who do not have the opportunity to share. Failure to share the spotlight works against our goal of a relational environment.
- We allow time for silence in group because we believe that the Holy Spirit is our primary teacher. Our desire is to give the Lord time to speak to our hearts through the story and through the things other members of our group are saying about the story.
- We also allow time for silence because we want every member to have an equal opportunity to share – whether they have an outgoing personality or are more reserved. When there isn't enough silence, introverts often get left out of the discussion.
- If the silence is weird to one or more of your group members, try emphasizing our trust in the Holy Spirit to teach His Church as we meet together to study His Word.
- If some people consistently monopolize the conversation, first try asking the whole group to be silent if they have already shared to allow everyone an opportunity to share. If that doesn't work, you may need to have a loving conversation with an individual in your group using this document as a guide.

Shepherding [know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]

- In one-to-one discipleship meetings, the applications of silence may vary, but the principle is no less powerful...
 - I have heard many experienced disciple-makers admit that they have been doing way too much of the talking with those they disciple. It is only natural for people who are spiritually mature to want to talk about and share truth! However, monopolizing the time or filling silence with “stuff” demonstrates a lack of trust in the Holy Spirit's ability to convict and teach. Before you speak, check your heart and ask the Lord to use you in His timing.

Developing [grow as a disciple yourself]

- Do you trust the Holy Spirit to do His part? Silence can be a hard principle to practice! Especially if you are struggling to trust the Holy Spirit to work through silence.
- This week, take time to read Psalm 62 or another meaningful passage in a quiet place. When you finish, sit quietly and wait on the Lord. Commit yourself to not look at a clock, get distracted by your phone, etc. Instead, do everything you can to quiet your mind and focus on Jesus. As you do, ask him to refresh your soul.
- Psalm 62 begins, “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation.”
- As you practice waiting, remember that this was also something Jesus made a habit... “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:16).
- You cannot teach others to value what you do not value. Evaluate your heart: do you value silent times with the Lord? Do you trust the Holy Spirit to teach you as you wait quietly before Him? Do you sense His Spirit calling you into His presence even now as you read this guide? Go and be with Him as soon as you can! He will refresh your soul and His Spirit will teach you in the silence.