



S1.Lesson 25: Preparation

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies: Journal; TV or laptop to show movie clip (movie clip link is available at rfour.org/curriculum.html); 5 double-paged newspaper sheets per team (each team will be made up of 3 to 4 students), a roll of scotch tape per team; one ruler per team (to ONLY be used for measuring purposes); two chairs or two tables or two even stacks of books needed for every TWO teams; a medium-sized candy bar (being aware of peanut/nut allergies use a Kit-Kat or Twix or Milky Way type of candy bar)

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- Before we watch the movie clip, I want to give you a heads-up.
- There will be a singing goat in the video clip.
- You'll have to listen carefully to what he's singing about.

WATCH Hoodwinked Clip

ASK

- So what was the goat singing about? (being prepared)
- What different things did he use to be prepared with? (different horns)
- At the end of the clip, what kind of horn was he using? (a helicopter horn)
- What would have happened to the singing goat if he had NOT been prepared (he would have gone "splat.")

TELL

- In a moment, we're going to read a story, a parable, that Jesus tells about being prepared.
- But first, I'm going to share some background with you regarding how weddings worked at that time.
 - The custom at that time did not have a wedding ceremony, like we have now.
 - Instead, the groom would go to the bride's parent's house.
 - Together, they would return to the groom's house where all the guests would be waiting for the couple.
 - Since there were no street lights, the main duty of the bridesmaids (which was considered a great honor) was to light the way of the bridal party to the celebrations with lamps.
 - This meant that the bridesmaids would wait along the path between the bride's and groom's houses and after the groom and bride passed by, would follow them to the groom's home.

- Upon arriving to the groom's home, a long celebration would commence (sometimes as long as a whole week).
- Because a wedding was a big deal, the amount of time spent at the bride's house was indeterminate, meaning, the bridesmaids did not know when to expect the bride and groom to appear.

READ Matthew 25

1 "God's kingdom is like ten young bridesmaids who took oil lamps and went out to greet the bridegroom. 2 Five were silly and five were smart. 3 The silly bridesmaids took lamps, but no extra oil. 4 The smart bridesmaids took jars of oil to feed their lamps. 5 The bridegroom didn't show up when they expected him, and they all fell asleep. 6 "In the middle of the night someone yelled out, 'He's here! The bridegroom's here! Go out and greet him!' 7 "The ten bridesmaids got up and got their lamps ready. 8 The silly bridesmaids said to the smart ones, 'Our lamps are going out; lend us some of your oil.' 9 "They answered, 'There might not be enough to go around; go buy your own.'

10 "They did, but while they were out buying oil, the bridegroom arrived. When everyone who was there to greet him had gone into the wedding feast, the door was locked. 11 "Much later, the other bridesmaids, the silly ones, showed up and knocked on the door, saying, 'Master, we're here. Let us in.' 12 "He answered, 'Do I know you? I don't think I know you.'

ASK

- From the telling of this story, what did the bridesmaids have to do in order to get into the wedding celebration? (light the way for the bride and groom)
- Did they do what they had been invited to do (also, remember, this invitation was an honor, not just a chore)?
- What were some of the possible reasons why the 5 bridesmaids didn't bring extra oil? (distracted, didn't really care about the honor offered to them, careless)
- So when the 5 bridesmaids who didn't have extra oil returned, do you think they should've been allowed to join the party?
- Why?

TELL

- There's many different ways to interpret this story.
- Two popular interpretations are these:
 1. Jesus is coming back to earth. But we don't know when. Therefore, be prepared for his arrival.
 2. You need to follow Jesus to get into heaven.
- However, another way to interpret the story is that the celebration/party represents the Kingdom of God and in order to participate in the God's Kingdom, you follow Jesus.
- The 5 foolish bridesmaids didn't follow the bride and groom because they did not take seriously the honor of being a bridesmaid. By not being prepared for the honor that was given to them, the bridesmaids simply uninvited themselves.
- They didn't want very strongly to be part of what was happening.

- We're going to do an activity now that shows us the importance of planning and, possibly, what happens when we don't prepare.

EXPLAIN ACTIVITY: Bridge Building

- First, we need to get into 2 groups with 2 to 4 people per group -- also we need to have an even amount of groups (2, 4, or 6 groups for example).
- Now that we're in our groups, I'm handing to each group your supplies: 5 double-paged newspaper sheets and a roll of scotch tape.
- Each group's task is to build HALF of a bridge.
- I'm going to match each group with another group (this is why we needed an even amount of groups).
- The group that I matched you with is building the OTHER half of the bridge.
- Here's what you must accomplish:
- Your bridge must be at least 8 inches off the ground.
- It must connect two end points (use two chairs or tables or stacked books) that are 6 feet apart.
- The winning bridge will be the first one done that meets these requirements and can hold up one candy bar placed once for 10 seconds on each half bridge without *any* part of the bridge falling down. If the bridge does fall down, you can work to correct it. However, you only get 3 attempts. If the bridge falls down all 3 times then your team is disqualified.
- You may not tape your bridge to the chairs/tables/books.
- Even though you're racing each other, there is a time limit of ____ minutes [Note: Give the students AT LEAST 5 minutes. Somewhere between 10 to 20 is much better, but it all depends on how much class time you have].
- Any questions?

DO Bridge Building Activity

TEACHER NOTES

- Give hints if you see the groups getting stuck or running out of time. Some hints to offer:
 - The "better approach" is for the two groups to start together, preferably at the bottom and in the middle and work their way up and out.
 - The main trick for the bridge exercise is to make long thin round-section struts, by rolling the sheets and fixing it with tape. The struts can then be connected using various techniques.
 - Round struts lose virtually all their strength if flattened or bent (this is not an easy concept to see - it's much easier to understand when communicated by words).
 - It's very tempting to form big square spans, which are inherently very weak and unstable. At some point, you might want to warn the groups that are doing this.

ASK

- So what was the hardest thing about building only half of a bridge?
- Did you build your half first and then talk to the other team or did you start out working together from the start?

- After having done this activity, how would you plan to build it differently when doing it the next time around?

TELL

- So for the bridesmaids, even if this was their first time being a bridesmaid, it wasn't a new experience for them. This was as basic and normal as getting gas or ordering at a fast-food restaurant. Even if you hadn't done it before, you've seen it enough to know mostly what's involved.
- So for the 5 foolish bridesmaids - their lack of preparation showed a lack of care. They weren't paying attention because the wedding wasn't a priority for them - and therefore, they don't get to participate in the party/wedding because of their own choices.
- The same thing goes for us when we choose to follow Jesus. If we make that choice carelessly, then it's not going to mean much to us and we're not going to experience the party that is the Kingdom of God.
- But if we choose to follow Jesus and make that choice a priority in our lives, then we're going to experience many (and maybe more) of the things Jesus experienced: God's power, healing, and direction.
- Here are some simple ways we can prepare in order to follow Jesus are:
 - Continue to read and study the stories that are in the Bible.
 - Talk about these stories with others, like your parents.
 - Pray everyday: Tell God what you're worried about and what you're thankful for. And then, be still. Picture and imagine what God is saying back to you.
 - Participate in worship. Tell God what you like about God. Sing and listen to songs that remind you of God at work in you and in the world. And do this with others.

If there's time...

JOURNAL

- Because preparing is habit, the more we practice it, the better we get.
- Write down some things that you think you are good at preparing for.
- What is it that you do in order to get prepared for these things?
- How might you apply your preparation habits for this thing that you just wrote about to following Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER