

RAISING SAINTS



CHILDREN + FAMILY MINISTRY // WEEKLY GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

PALM SUNDAY / OPENING OF THE DOORS LEVEL 1: AGES 5 - 8

When you are going to school what are some things for which you have to be ready for? What happens if you are not ready on time? Look at the list and check the ones which you think are important.

- doing homework
- playing anytime I want
- studying for a test
- getting dressed for school
- going to the school bus stop

Look at the choices you checked.

- *What would happen if you did not study for a test well ahead of time?*
- *Would you be able to answer all the questions correctly and get a good grade?*
- *What if you went to bed late and could not wake up in time to get ready for school?*

Jesus told a story to his followers about a wedding feast. Weddings in Palestine during Jesus' time were a very special event, they lasted for a whole week. All the villagers came to

wish the bride and groom happiness. It was the custom that bridesmaids would keep company to the bride as she waited for her groom to arrive. Nobody knew exactly when he'd come. It could be during the day, or at night. Since the streets were not lit at night, people carried lanterns to light their way. Jesus tells his listeners that five of the bridesmaids who were wise, were well prepared and had bottles of extra oil, just in case the groom was delayed and their lamps ran out of oil. The other five were not prepared. When their lanterns ran out of oil, they asked the wise bridesmaids to give them some of their oil, but they refused, since they had only enough for themselves. The foolish, or unwise bridesmaids went into the center of town to buy more oil. Just then the groom arrived, all the guests went into the wedding feast and the doors were closed. When they came back, they could not get into the wedding feast! They knocked on the door to be let in. But the bridegroom replied and said, "I really don't know you."

This story teaches us that all boys and girls need to be always ready to meet Jesus when he comes again, just as he promised. Jesus said, "Always be attentive, and pray."

Make your choice. To which group of bridesmaids do you want to belong, the Wise ones or the Unwise ones? Write your name on the line under the five lanterns which show the Wise and the Unwise bridesmaids.



Wise Bridesmaids



Unwise Bridesmaids

My prayer plan:

I will pray every morning, before and after I eat, at school to ask God's help, and at night before I go to bed. I will thank God for all his blessings, and ask for his guardian angel to protect me.

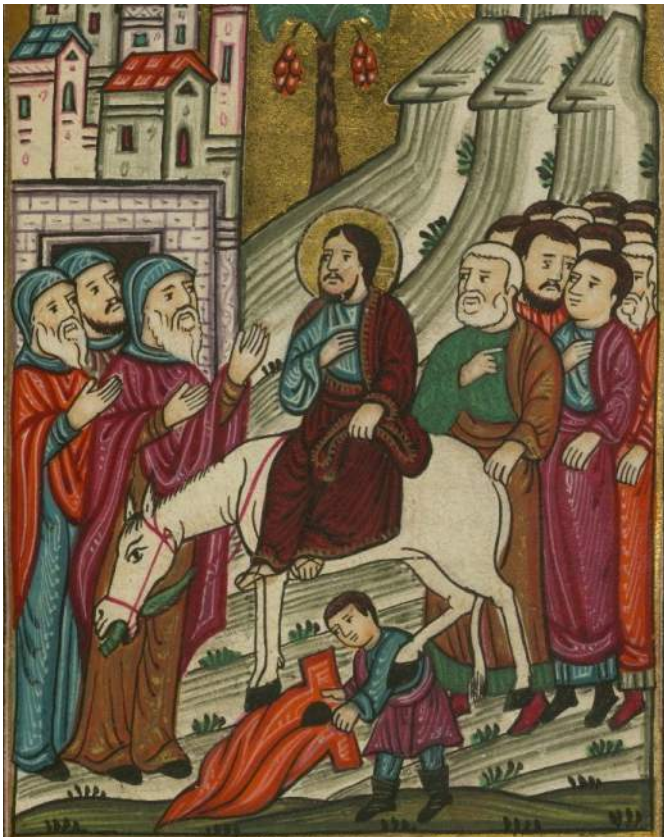
LEVEL 2: AGES 9 - 12

How does the word procrastinate sound to you? Do you know what it means? Here is the definition from the Britannica Dictionary:

- to be slow or late about doing something that should be done:
- to delay doing something until a later time or postpone it because you do not want to do it, because you are lazy, or have something more interesting to do.

Would you describe yourself as a procrastinator? If you have ever procrastinated, how has it hurt you? Have you lost out in the end? Describe.

We are looking forward to Palm Sunday on April 2nd this year, which celebrates the triumphant entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. The Gospels tells us how Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem and was received as King. The crowds greeted him with shouts of joy, but quickly abandoned him a few days later as they called for his crucifixion. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, you will witness the service of Opening the Door, called Turunpatzek in Armenian. The liturgy is rich with psalms, scripture readings and hymns all pointing to the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, his return at the Second Coming to inaugurate his eternal Kingdom, and our need to be ready at all times to greet him.



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One of the hymns which is sung during this service summarizes a parable which Jesus told his followers to emphasize the need to be always vigilant and ready for his coming.

*The wise bridesmaids,
having prepared oil for their lanterns,
Greeted the heavenly bridegroom with
lit lanterns.*

*While the unwise bridesmaids having no oil,
Were unprepared for the coming of the
bridegroom with extinguished lanterns.*

*Therefore, may we prepare spiritual oil,
So we may enter into the bridal chamber of
the eternal bridegroom with lanterns lit.*

*You are my hope and the forgiver of my sins,
do not ignore the flow of my tears.
Have mercy on me, O Lord.*

Read this parable in Matthew 25:1-13. As you read keep in mind that weddings in Palestine during Jesus' time were a very special event, they lasted for a whole week. All the villagers came to wish the bride and groom happiness. It was the custom that bridesmaids would keep company to the bride as she waited for her groom to arrive. Nobody knew exactly when he'd come. It could be during the day, or at night. Since the streets were not lit at night, people carried lanterns to light their way.

After you've read the parable next to each verse of the hymn write the scripture verses from Matthew 25:1-13 which match in meaning.

Why does the first verse refer to the bridegroom as "heavenly"? Does Matthew 25:1 help you understand? Explain.

Now think about yourself as a follower of Jesus Christ our Lord. His invitation is to live life which is according to God's commandment, loving and being kind towards all. Are you able to succeed in that effort always, or are you a procrastinator? If there are times when you miss the mark pray the last verse of the hymn:

*You are my hope and the forgiver of my sins,
do not ignore the flow of my tears.
Have mercy on me, O Lord.*

Remain constant in praying always, giving blessing and glory to God, turning to him when you are in need, and asking for guidance in all that you do. May God bless you and help you to shout with joy on Palm Sunday "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

LEVEL 3: AGES 13 - 17

Palm Sunday celebrates the triumphant entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. The Gospels tells us how Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem and was received as King. The crowds greeted him with shouts of joy, but quickly abandoned him a few days later as they called for his crucifixion.

On this day we also have the service of the Opening of Door which is incorporated in the Vespers liturgy of Palm Sunday, celebrated at sundown. To accommodate local circumstances, in our parishes it is done at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The liturgy is rich with psalms, scripture readings and hymns all pointing to the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, his return at the Second Coming to inaugurate his eternal Kingdom, and our need to be ready at all times to greet him.

According to the Book of Directory of Feasts of the Armenian Church (Donatzooytz),, the opening of the Door should be held outside of the church's main doors, and with the opening of the doors all enter the church symbolizing the entrance of the faithful into the heavenly Jerusalem. However, unseasonable weather, and often hostile social environments have gradually forced the service to be held in the sanctuary, and instead of the opening of the church doors, the curtain of the altar, which was closed during the season of Lent symbolizing our separation from God due to our sins, is opened.

You have learned that our Orthodox Christian faith proclaims that Jesus Christ who came to us at his incarnation when he was born of the Virgin Mary, will come again to establish the Heavenly Kingdom of God. According to our Lord's own words, only God the Father knows when Jesus' second coming will be. Until such time we, his followers are to live life in anticipation of that joyous day, focusing only to live and act in God pleasing ways with everyone.

How successful have you been to behave according to God's commandments, to love everyone without discrimination, to act with justice, honesty, and compassion? To learn what each of us must do as we wait for Jesus's second coming read the parable which Jesus told his followers in Matthew 25:1-13.

As you read keep in mind that weddings in Palestine during Jesus' time were a very special event, they lasted for a whole week. All the villagers came to wish the bride and groom happiness. It was the custom that bridesmaids would keep company to the bride as she waited for her groom to arrive. Nobody knew exactly when he'd come. It could be during the day, or at night. Since the streets were not lit at night, people carried lanterns to light their way.

In your own words write what the message of this parable is all about. Which word in verse 13 expresses what one must do?



Here is a hymn which is sung during the Opening of Door service. Read the verses and next to each write the verses from Matthew 25:1-13 which refer to it.

Grant us to be vigilant O Lord,
with the wise bridesmaids,
And make radiant the lamps of
ourouls.

We fear you O Lord,
Terrified to hear the answer we
deserve, "I do not know you."

May the gates of mercy of the
heavenly bridegroom open before us,
And we enter into the bridal chamber
with the wise bridesmaids.

Levavi Chant for Great Tuesday Tone 3 Shnorhya Mez Der

Our early Christian ancestors used these words to describe the effort one must make to live always in readiness for the coming of Jesus Christ.

watchfulness attentiveness prayer

The first two words basically have similar meaning, to be aware and focus attention on how one lives. That kind of living will make one aware that they need to be connected to God who is their creator and their source of life. Prayer is conversing with the one who cares and loves you most, unconditionally. That is God our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Spend time daily, without procrastinating to speak with the Lord:

- praise him,
- present your needs to him,
- thank him,
- ask him to guide you,
- and yes, you can even complain if you need to.

Then most importantly LISTEN to hear him within your heart. You will be able to hear him if you take time to be still and quiet.

God bless you always.

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