

The Last Sunday of the Church Year

Late Elementary · Parent Edition

For the parent: Read each part aloud and work through the questions together. Your answers are printed in blue italics, so no preparation is needed. Your child uses the Student Edition.

Step 1 Understand the Collect

A collect is a short prayer the pastor prays for the whole church. Here is today's collect:

Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth Your Son, we pray, to lead home His bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Words to know. *Bride:* a woman on her wedding day; here, the Church. *Redeemed:* bought back and set free by Jesus. *Company:* a large group gathered together. *Wedding feast:* the great meal after a wedding; here, heaven. *Virgins* (in the Gospel): young unmarried women, friends of the bride. *Bridegroom:* the man getting married; here, Jesus. *Trimmed:* made ready to burn brightly.

1. We ask the Father to send forth His _____.

Answer: Son.

2. Jesus will lead home His _____, the Church.

Answer: Bride.

3. We will enter His eternal wedding _____.

Answer: Feast.

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Matthew 25:1-13

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. **2** Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. **3** For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, **4** but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. **5** As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. **6** But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' **7** Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' **9** But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' **10** And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. **11** Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' **12** But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' **13** Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

1. How many virgins were there, and how many were wise?

Answer: Ten; five were wise (verses 1-2).

2. What did the wise bring that the foolish did not?

Answer: Flasks of oil (verse 4).

3. What happened while the bridegroom was delayed?

Answer: All of them got drowsy and fell asleep (verse 5).

4. What happened to the door after the ready ones went in?

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible. Small Catechism quotation from Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, © Concordia Publishing House.

Answer: It was shut (verse 10).

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

Say to your child: Our prayer asks the Father to send Jesus to bring His bride, the Church, home to a wedding feast that never ends. In Jesus' story, the bridegroom comes at midnight, and those who are ready go in with him. Let's find our prayer in the story.

1. The collect asks the Father to *send forth Your Son*. What was the cry at midnight?

Answer: "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him" (verse 6).

2. The collect prays that we may *enter into His eternal wedding feast*. Who went in with the bridegroom?

Answer: Those who were ready (verse 10).

3. Who is the bridegroom in Jesus' story, and who is the bride?

Answer: Jesus is the Bridegroom. His Church, all who believe in Him, is the bride.

Parent note. The oil that made the wise virgins ready is faith, and faith cannot be borrowed. Jesus keeps our lamps burning through His Word and Sacraments. In the Lord's Supper we already taste the wedding feast to come.

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Third Article. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, **and the life everlasting.** Amen. **What does this mean?** I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. **On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.** This is most certainly true.

1. What does Luther say God will give on the Last Day?

Answer: Eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

2. The collect calls heaven a wedding feast. How long will it last?

Answer: Forever. It is eternal life.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

Pray today's collect together one more time. Then ask:

1. What does Jesus do for you on the Last Day?

Answer: He will come for me, raise me from the dead, and bring me home to His wedding feast, where I will live with Him forever.