

OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH · FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The Last Sunday of the Church Year

Middle School · 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

Most collects follow a five-part pattern: the **address** (the One to whom we pray), the **reason** (what God has done or promised), the **petition** (what we ask), the **purpose** (what we hope will result), and the **ending** (the closing that names the Trinity).

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.

1. Mark each part of the collect. Which part is missing?

***Answer:** Address: "Lord God, heavenly Father." Petition: "send forth Your Son, we pray, to lead home His bride, the Church." Purpose: "that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast." Ending: "through Jesus Christ, our Lord..." The reason is missing.*

2. The collect calls the Church Christ's "bride." What does that picture say about how Christ regards His Church?

***Answer:** He loves her, gave Himself for her, and is coming to take her home (Ephesians 5:25-27). The Church is the bride He will bring to the feast.*

3. The collect asks the Father to "send forth" the Son. What are we asking for when we pray that?

***Answer:** For the Last Day to come. It is one of the Church's oldest prayers: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).*

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

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. All ten slept (v. 5). What, then, made the difference between the wise and the foolish?

***Answer:** Not staying awake, since no one did, but being prepared with oil for a longer wait than expected.*

2. Why couldn't the wise share their oil (v. 9)? Were they being selfish?

Answer: No. Some things cannot be borrowed. No one can believe for someone else; each person needs his or her own faith.

3. What does "I do not know you" (v. 12) mean?

Answer: The Bridegroom does not recognize them as His. They had lamps, the outward form, but no oil, the faith that belongs to Him.

4. Jesus says, "Watch therefore" (v. 13). How do we watch, if even the wise fell asleep?

Answer: By being prepared: staying in the Word and Sacraments that keep faith alive, not by anxious sleeplessness.

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

1. Find at least two places where the collect's words appear in the Gospel. Explain each one.

Answer: "Send forth Your Son" matches the midnight cry, "Here is the bridegroom!" (v. 6). "Lead home His bride" matches those who "went in with him" (v. 10). "Eternal wedding feast" matches "the marriage feast" (v. 10). "Finally enter" matches the door that is then shut (v. 10), which is why we pray to be among those inside. Any two, well explained, are enough.

2. Today's Epistle says, "But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day... So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6). How does Paul turn the warning into comfort?

Answer: Believers are children of the day, so the Last Day will not spring on them like a trap. The call to keep awake comes to people who already belong to the light.

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.

Cross-reference. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Revelation 19:9)

1. Luther says God will "give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ." How does the collect's phrase "all the company of the redeemed" say the same thing?

Answer: Eternal life is not private. All believers enter together, as one bride.

2. Compare Matthew 25:10 with Revelation 19:9. What is the "marriage feast"?

Answer: The marriage supper of the Lamb: eternal life with Christ. The feast in the parable is heaven itself.

3. The foolish virgins had lamps but no oil. How does the Third Article explain where the "oil" of faith comes from?

Answer: The Holy Spirit calls, enlightens, and keeps us in the true faith through the Gospel. We cannot supply our own oil.

Parent note: the question they may ask. "How can I know I'm ready?" Readiness is not a feeling or a record of good behavior. It is faith in Christ, kept alive by the Spirit through the Word and Sacraments. One who is baptized, hears the Word, and receives the Supper

is not left to guess.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

1. Write a short collect of your own for this day. Use all five parts.

Answer: *Answers will vary. Example: "Lord Jesus, You are the Bridegroom who comes at midnight. Keep our lamps burning with faith, that we may be ready to go in with You to the feast; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."*

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

2. 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.*