

Stop, Look, And Listen - Watching for Jesus

This lesson will help the children understand what it means to watch for the coming of the Lord. They will also learn that only our Father in Heaven knows when, but we are all responsible to keep faithful and alert until that day comes.

by Kristy Thornton

TOPICS

Alert, Following Jesus, Preparedness

AS KIDS ARRIVE (12 minutes)

Clay Clock (Activity)

Start by making a large circle out of play dough (about 12 inches in diameter) and place it in the center of the table. Have plenty of extra play dough in different colors ready for the children. Write the number 1 through 12 on the board. As the kids arrive, give them each a number from one to 12. Explain that they will be working together to make a clock by forming the numbers out of play dough. Have the children refer to the numbers on the board if they do not know what their number looks like.

If you have less than 12 kids, assign a second number to those that finish early. If you have more than 12 kids, then you can start with two large circles and have two teams.

Once the children finished forming their numbers, have them place them on the circle where they think they should go, according to a clock. When complete, discuss with the children the different uses we have for a clock.

BIBLE VERSE (5 minutes)

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." Matthew 24:42 NIV

Repeat this scripture three times as a class. As you say the verse, put up two hands like holding binoculars looking for Jesus.

BIBLE STORY (15 minutes)

Gather the children around you in preparation for story time. After the introduction, read the story about the day and the hour is unknown right from the Bible. If possible, use a Children's Bible so it will be easier for the kids to understand.

Introduction:

Last time we learned about waiting for Jesus to return. Today's Bible story is going to teach us what to do while we are waiting. We are going to learn what to do with our eyes.

Read Mark 13:32-37 (The Day and Hour is Unknown)

Discussion Questions:

1. When is the Lord coming back to earth? (*No one knows.*)
2. Do the angels know? (*No.*)
3. Does Jesus the Son know? (*No, not even Jesus.*)
4. Who will know the day and hour when the Lord comes back? (*Only the Father in Heaven.*)
5. What are we supposed to do while we wait? (*Be on guard, be alert, and keep watch.*)
6. What do you think to be on guard and to be alert means? (*To trust and obey Jesus and not fall prey to the enemies schemes. Also, to be awake and not grow tired of living for God.*)
7. Watching is very important because Jesus tells us twice in these verses to watch. What do you think it means to keep watch? (*Keep watch means to be looking towards Jesus every day of our life until the day He returns. Not only with our eyes, but also with our mind.*)
8. What are some ways we can keep careful watch? (*By hearing God's Word, believing in Him, being obedient to Jesus, loving others, praying, etc.*)

FUN TIME (10 minutes)

Keeping Alert (Game) [page 3-4](#)

ALTERNATE FUN TIME (15 minutes)

Sky Watch Hour (Craft) [page 5](#)

Stop, Look, And Listen - Watching for Jesus

CLOSING ACTIVITY (5-10 minutes)

Watching and Praying (Activity) [page 6](#)

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KEEPING ALERT

Children see the difference between keeping alert while watching for the Lord and being unprepared for His return. By Kristy Thornton

TOPICS:

Alert, Following Jesus, Preparedness

MATERIALS:

Jesus and thief signs [page 7](#)
Yarn, Hole punch

DURATION:

Approximately 10 minutes



PREPARATION:

Before class, print a copy of the sign sheet and cut out the Jesus and thief signs. Punch holes on opposite ends of each sign and string yarn through with enough room to go over the children's foreheads like a crown. Or if you prefer, you can have the children wear the signs as a necklace.

WHAT YOU WILL DO:

Read Matthew 24:42-44 aloud to the class. Then, select one person to be Jesus and one person to be a thief. Put the appropriate sign over each person's forehead and have them stand at the front of the room. Next, have the children still sitting put their heads down and bury their faces into their arms. Finally, turn off the lights.

Jesus and the thief will walk around the room and lightly tap the top of only one person's head. After tapping a head, they must go back to the front of the room, making sure they do not say a word about whose head they touched. Once Jesus and the thief are back at the front of the room, turn the lights back on. Then, have only the kids who had their head's tapped stand up. Then they will guess who they think touched them, Jesus or the thief.

If a child guesses correctly, he or she will take the sign from the person who touched him or her and exchange places for the next round. If a child guesses incorrectly, he or she must sit back down and wait for the next round. Repeat this a few more times. Then, for the last round, keep the lights on and let the children keep their eyes open as they watch to see who taps their head.

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

(After reading Matthew 24:42-44) We are going to play a game called Keeping Alert. At first, it will not be easy. Everyone must close your eyes and put your heads down on your arms. No one is keeping watch. There is no peeking. You are pretending to be in your house and sound asleep.

I am going to pick someone to be a thief. The thief will come and lightly tap the top of one of your heads when you don't expect it. I will also pick someone to be Jesus. Jesus will also come and lightly tap one of your heads. This person will pretend to be Jesus coming back at a time when no one is ready or watching for His return. The lights are out and everyone is asleep.

(Before the last round) Now, we are going to play one last time. However, this time we will all be ready by having our lights on and our eyes open. We will all be alert and watching for Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

1. Was it easier to know who touched your head with the lights on or off? Why? *(Allow for discussion.)*
2. Was it easier to watch for Jesus with your eyes open or closed? *(Allow for discussion.)*

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This was just a fun game. We all know that sleeping is important to stay healthy. When Jesus tells us to keep watch and be ready, He doesn't mean never to sleep. Instead, He wants us to be prepared for His return by making Him the center of our life, and not let the enemy distract us.

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SKY WATCH HOUR

Children make a telescope they can use to pretend to watch for Jesus when He returns in the clouds.

by Kristy Thornton

TOPICS:

Alert, Following Jesus, Jesus, Preparedness

MATERIALS:

Paper towel holder for each child
Black construction paper
White crayons or chalk
Scissors
Tape or glue
Aluminum foil [page 8](#)



DURATION:

Approximately 15 minutes

PREPARATION:

Before class, gather enough paper towel holders so you can have one for each child. Wrapping paper rollers cut into smaller pieces will also work.

WHAT YOU WILL DO:

Give each child a piece of black construction paper. Have each child use a white crayon or chalk to decorate his or her piece of black construction paper with clouds. Also, have the each child pick one cloud and draw a cross in it to represent Jesus.

Next, take about two inches of aluminum foil. Roll it around one end of the paper towel holder. Tape or glue it down. Then, roll the construction paper around the holder, making sure that the clouds and the cross are visible. Tape or glue the seam and edges down. When finished, each child will have an attractive telescope. (See the visual instructions for an example of a finished craft.)

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

The Bible teaches us that we should always be watching for Jesus, because He is coming back some day. However, nobody knows when Jesus will return. Matthew 24:30-31 says, "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."

Let's do some imagining. Close your eyes and picture clouds floating in the sky. On one of those clouds is Jesus, the Son of Man. He is coming down to earth with power and glory. Wouldn't that be a wonderful sight?

We are going to make a telescope so we can pretend to watch for Jesus. Do we know when He is coming? (*No.*) No one knows except the Father in Heaven. However, we need to be alert and keep watch.

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WATCHING AND PRAYING

Children learn how to watch and pray to keep them from sinning or being tempted to disobey.

By Kristy Thornton

TOPICS:

Alert, Obedience, Prayer, Sin

MATERIALS:

None

DURATION:

Approximately 7 minutes



WHAT YOU WILL DO:

You will read Matthew 26:40-41 to the children, while having them pretend first to be asleep, and then be wide-awake and alert.

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

When Jesus was here on earth, He took some of His disciples to Gethsemane. Jesus asked them to stay there and keep watch while He went a little farther to be alone and pray. While Jesus prayed, His disciples fell asleep.

You are all going to pretend that you are one of the disciples who fell asleep. So, put your heads down with your eyes closed. (Make sure everyone is ready.) Listen to me as I read from the Bible to see what Jesus said to His disciples when He came back.

"Then he (Jesus) returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.'" (Matthew 26:40-41)

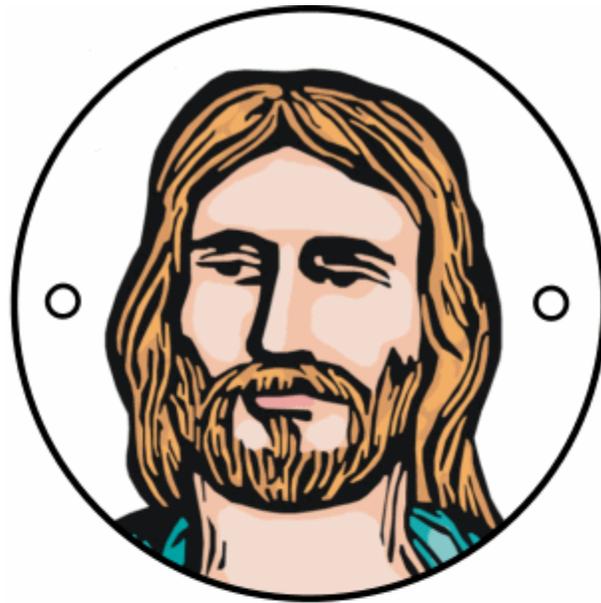
Okay, everyone wake up and stretch. Jump three times. Now turn around and sit back down.

How does everyone feel? Do you feel wide-awake and alert? *(Allow for answers.)*

Raise your hand if there was ever a time that you were so tired you just couldn't stay awake. *(Allow for a show of hands.)*

The disciples were so tired, but Jesus needed them to be awake at this time. Now, Jesus isn't telling us to stay up past our bedtime or not go to sleep. Instead, He is telling us that when we need to pray, we should be awake and alert. Jesus wants us to watch out for the enemy that is always trying to trick us and make us do bad things. That is what we call temptation. Watching and praying is the best way to avoid temptation. By praying, the Holy Spirit gives us the strength we need to say NO when we are tempted to do something bad.

Print on medium card stock, cut out each sign, and punch out holes where indicated. Signs go around the children's forehead like a crown or if you prefer can be worn as a necklace.



Sky Watch Hour Craft



1. Use a white crayon or chalk to decorate the sheet of black construction paper.



2. Roll up about two inches of aluminum foil on one end of the paper towel holder. Tape or glue down.



3. Roll the construction paper around the tube making sure the clouds and the cross are visible. Tape or glue the seam and edges down.



4. Example of finished craft.