

Read Matthew 24.36-44

***You may like to use this material as a basis for discussion in your family.***

How good are you in getting ready for a special event or occasion? How good are you at getting ready each morning for school or work? Do you organise things the evening before? Do you get up early so that you are not rushing around in the morning? Some people are always well-organised, other people find it more difficult.

Sometimes we have to prepare things well in advance. There have been a series of Climate Change conferences in recent years where world leaders try to agree what actions they will take in order to avoid some of the problems and concerns of climate change. These plans have not been very successful. Not everyone is prepared to make the sacrifices or changes necessary to avoid disaster. They would rather have an easy life now than plan for the future. Can you think of any other examples where people have to make plans for the future?

What does Jesus want us to plan for? What does he want us to be ready for? What can we do in our lives to show that we are ready for Jesus?



Today is the start of the new Church year. Happy New Year! It is the season of Advent, when we prepare for Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Jesus. It is a time when we think and pray about what it means – that God became a human being and lived on earth, that God loves us so much that He sent his son to live among us. I am sure that you will be very busy getting ready for Christmas; buying presents, putting up decorations, and planning parties. In the midst of all of this, we need to get our hearts and minds ready to welcome Jesus and to thank God for the wonderful gift He has given us.

## Activity

- Draw or print the face of a clock. In different colours, draw on the hands for set times when things happen during the day – e.g. the time you get up, go to school/work/volunteer, have lunch, do activities, have dinner, go to bed. Some things have set times, we can prepare for them. Other things happen at unexpected times that we can't plan for.  
Add in a specific time when you can spend time with God (it could be at home, out for a walk, in the car, wherever is convenient), a little time put aside that steps you away from everything else that's going on.
- Prepare your own Advent Calendar to count off the days to Christmas, but write out a prayer for each day instead of opening some chocolate each day. You could find a suitable prayer or you could write your own.

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, in all the preparations which will take place over the next few weeks for celebrating Christmas, we pray that we may find time to spend with you. Help us to be prayerful, watchful, and full of hope so that we are ready to welcome you into our lives every day – not just at Christmas. Amen.