



the visual **faith** project

A Visual Faith Experience **On Watch for God's Next Steps**

By Dr. Dick Hardel

Theme: On Watch for God's Next Steps (Luke 12:35-40)

Intended Audience

It is best to do Visual Faith Exercises within small groups of four or five because it gives more opportunity for all the members of the group to participate. If you have more people for your experience, divide them into two or more small groups. Intergenerational groups and ethnic diversity are always most helpful because of the variety of their experiences.

Outcome of Experience

Participants will learn from each other of the problems and potential disasters of procrastinating in preparation for a major milestone like a wedding. They will learn from their discussions of the images they have chosen what Jesus meant by warning us to “be ready” for God’s next steps in our lives.

Introduce Experience

In the Navy of the USA the term “On Watch” affects the entire crew of the ship. The persons “On Watch” are alert, awake, and prepared to spot and handle any interruption or interference with the direction of the charted course of the ship or safety of the crew. All can rest well through the night because those “On Watch” are prepared and ready for action. In this Scripture text Jesus tells us that we are all to be “On Watch” for God’s next steps in the plan of salvation.

Image Selection

Instruct the participants to think about the preparations that individuals, couples, and families do to be ready for a major milestone celebration (wedding, graduation, employment, military advancement, etc.) As they think of those occasions also ask them to think of what procrastinating such preparation might look like. Invite the participants to choose two images that show good preparation for a milestone event or some of the dangers of procrastination and being unprepared.



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Facilitator Questions To Guide Group Discussion

1. Do the image(s) that you selected connect to an experience that you have had or seen? Tell us about the good preparation or the dangers of procrastination.
2. How long in advance did the preparation for this milestone begin and what were some of the feelings you had or that were expressed by others while waiting for the preparation for the event and the event to happen?
3. What emotions might be underlying in a person's choice to procrastinate?
4. How does not being prepared for an event affect others who are connected to the milestone event or celebration?
5. What are some values you have learned from your experience of a well planned and prepared event or an event that was poorly planned and people were not prepared?
6. Who has been the person in your family who is most prepared for events and also encourages other to be well prepared?

Scripture (Luke 12:35-40)

35 "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; 36 be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. 37 Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. 38 If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. 39 "But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

Image Selection

Give each participant a copy of this Scripture text. Ask one person to read this text aloud. Invite the participants to look carefully at this text and then go to the tables with the variety of images to select two images that depict a major faith milestone for which you are waiting for God's next steps in your life or connect to your emotions while you wait for God to act.

Image Packs

We recommend Assorted Set B (set of 100 printed images) for use with this experience or other images that you may already have. You can find Assorted Set B at: <https://vibrantfaith.org/shop/visualfaithcards>



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On Watch for God's Next Steps continued...

Questions to Connect Chosen Image with Scriptures

1. How do the images you have chosen connect to your emotions as you wait for God to act?
2. How might the first images you selected connect also with this Scripture?
3. What is the next step of God for which you have been and are waiting?
4. How have you been prepared and stay prepared for God's next step?
5. How might God be acting in your life to sustain and strengthen your faith as you wait?
6. What is something you have learned from this Scripture and visual faith experience concerning being prepared for God's next steps in your life?
7. What do you believe about the unexpected return of the Son of Man, Jesus?

Application

- Traditionally, the Church has used the Advent Season to focus on being prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus. Are you aware of any customs or rituals in home or congregation that remind us to be prepared for Christ coming as King?
- What questions do you have concerning the Second Coming of Jesus?
- To whom could you go to discuss your questions and concerns about the Second Coming of Jesus?
- What support, resources, or spiritual disciplines do you need to be prepared for God's next steps in your life?

Prayer

As the facilitator, create a holy space for the individuals and group to engage in prayer. Gather the members of the small group(s) around a picture or symbol of Christ the King. Give each participant a copy of the following litany prayer about being prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus. Together share the litany based on Luke 21:25-28:

Litany of Being Prepared (L = Leader; R= Response)

L: There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars.

R: But we lift up our heads for we are prepared for our King!

L: The nations will be confused.

R: But we lift up our heads for we are prepared for our King!

L: People will faint from fear and threatening of what is coming upon the world.

R: But we lift up our heads for we are prepared for our King!

L: For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

R: But we lift up our heads for we are prepared for our King!

L: They will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and glory.

R: But we lift up our heads for we are prepared for our King!

L: Now when these things begin to take place, raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

R: This is Jesus, the King of Glory, and we thank God we are prepared!