

One truth shared: Jesus invites you and clothes you for his eternal party in heaven.

For many are invited, but few are chosen.

Matthew 22:14

A Story of Insane Rejection

Are there some invitations you would prefer to ignore? You might not want to accept the invitation to your great aunt's birthday party when your friends are planning to hang out that night. You might not want to accept the invitation to the wedding where you'll hardly know anyone.

On the other hand, there are some invitations you'd *never* reject: an invitation to meet your favorite band backstage or an invitation to the Super Bowl. There are some invitations we accept and some we reject.

In Matthew 22, Jesus tells a story about a king who threw a big wedding reception for his son. He invited all the people you would expect, but all of them rejected the invitation. In fact, they even killed the servants who brought them the invitations. It was an insane rejection!

Naturally, the king was enraged and sent his army to deliver justice and put those men to death. Then the king had his servants go out into the street and invite anyone and everyone into the wedding reception. They invited those you'd expect to be at a royal wedding and those you wouldn't expect to be there in a million years.

Jesus says this story illustrates the kingdom of heaven. He has sent out invitations far and wide through the message of the gospel for people to trust in him as their Savior. This trust in Jesus, worked in us by the Holy Spirit, serves as one's ticket into the heavenly banquet that he has prepared for us. It would be insane to reject this invitation, but some people do. Don't reject Jesus' invitation.

There's one more wrinkle to Jesus' story about the wedding banquet. After all the guests came in from the street, a man was found who wasn't wearing any wedding clothes. He hadn't come prepared for the wedding, so he was thrown out.

You, too, need to make sure you have the right clothes to get into the heavenly banquet. Thankfully, Jesus gives you the clothes you need. He has clothed you in his robes of righteousness. He has made you perfect through his death on the cross. Should anything happen to you today, know that you have everything you need to join in the heavenly party!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to cherish the invitation to your heavenly banquet which you have extended to me through the message of the gospel. Thank you for clothing me in Jesus' righteousness that I might be worthy to enter heaven. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year A – Proper 23

Tell Us a Story

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A Story of Insane Rejection

***Starting the Discussion:** This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

If you could get an invitation to any party or event in the world, what would you choose and why?

***Connecting:** This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- Who receives God's invitation to heaven?
- How is this invitation extended?

***Digging In:** Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Read Matthew 22:1-14. Let's identify the characters in the parable. Who is the king? (*Father*) Who is the son? (*Jesus*) Who are the unworthy invitees? (*Those who reject the gospel*) Who are the ones who end up attending? (*Those who trust the gospel*) Who is the one without wedding clothes? (*Those who still try to rely on their own works*)
- What would lead someone to reject God's invitation?
- Can we choose to accept God's invitation without the Holy Spirit working faith in our heart?
- When did God provide you with the necessary wedding clothes to attend his heavenly banquet? See Galatians 3:27.
- What is the sad reality we see in Matthew 22:14?
- How are we to be like the servants the king sent out into the street to invite people to the banquet?

***Conclusion:** Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

- It's easy to treat our faith as unimportant. How can we continue to cherish the invitation God has extended to us throughout our lives?
- Dream for a moment: What are you most excited to experience at God's heavenly banquet?