

# Jesus Notices a Widow's Giving

Mark 12:41-44



### Worship Theme:




Wholehearted giving pleases God.

### Weaving Faith Into Life:




Children will give to God with a worshipful heart.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p><b>1</b> Let's Praise God! (about 25 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Sing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Jesus Is All the World to Me" (track 9)</li> <li>• "To God Be the Glory" (track 16)</li> <li>• "Sing Unto the Lord" (track 8)</li> <li>• "Children of God" (track 7)</li> </ul>	<p><b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>Songs From FaithWeaver</i></p> <p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> 1 marker and 1 candy per child, CD player, large sheet of newsprint, tape, marker</p> 

## Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p><b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! (about 25 minutes)</p>	<p><b>* A Widow's Gift</b> Experience the story with different senses.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bible, two metal bowls, several pennies per child</p>
	<p><b>Happy Giving</b> Compare happy birthdays to grouchy birthdays to learn about cheerful giving.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Gift bag, 2 treats per child</p>
	<p><b>Something for God</b> Make and give gifts to God to practice giving cheerfully to God.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> 1 paper lunch bag and self-stick bow per child, markers, stickers, large bowl</p>

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(about 25 minutes)</i>	<b>* Grab the Riches</b> Play a game in which they try to grab money from a jar.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Jar, coins
	<b>Less Than a Penny</b> Read Mark 12:41-44, and talk about how a tiny gift pleased Jesus.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bibles, 1 penny per child
	<b>* How Much to Give?</b> Talk about how to spend pretend money to consider how they can give cheerfully in their lives.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> 1 pen, 1 scissors, several photocopies of "Play Money" (p. 54), and several envelopes per 2 children; large sheet of newsprint or poster board; marker; tape

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>3</b> Let's Pray! <i>(about 10 minutes)</i>	<b>The Offering</b> Offer their gifts to God.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Offering bowls, pencils, "Play Money" from the "How Much to Give?" activity
	<b>"Praise the Lord"</b> Sing a song offering to God.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>Songs From FaithWeaver:</i> "Praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6) (track 11) <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> CD player
	<b>Closing Prayer</b> Take turns saying a closing prayer.	

\* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2.

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

# Jesus Notices a Widow's Giving

Mark 12:41-44

At the beginning of this passage, Jesus does a peculiar thing: He sits down to watch people making their offerings. What was he thinking? These were freewill offerings, not the Temple tax required by Jewish law. Why did Jesus want to see what people were giving? We don't know all the reasons, but one was apparently to teach his disciples a lesson. Jesus had talked about money earlier, explaining the need to pay taxes and to give to God. Now he was ready to teach a visual lesson.

While Jesus—and presumably some of his disciples—sat watching, numerous rich people gave large amounts of money. The disciples, who were from the lower economic classes, were probably amazed at some of the fortunes offered by these wealthy Jews. They may not have even noticed the poor widow who dropped her two coins into the treasury box. These were the smallest coins in the Roman Empire. It took 40 of these to make up a day's wages. In terms of today's wages, they would have been worth no more than a couple of dollars each. Yet Jesus knew how big the widow's gift was.

As a symbol of their marriage, Jewish women in Jesus' day wore headpieces on which coins were sewn. Wealthy women displayed a number of large coins; poorer women displayed smaller coins. This woman may have given the last two coins from that headpiece to God. Wherever the coins came from, she gave all she had.

Some Christians today might consider the widow's giving foolish—she didn't have to give both coins; she didn't have to give even one coin. After all, she needed that money just to stay alive. But that kind of thinking is precisely what Jesus

was teaching against. If we give only part of what we have—of what we are—to Jesus, we're holding back. Jesus wants all of us. He wants us to give him all we have and all we are and to trust him for the results.

Which of the givers in this passage are you more like? Who are your class members more like? As you explore this passage, challenge people to examine what they're giving to God. Are they giving just a small portion of their time, money, talents, and commitment to God? Is God getting the leftovers after they've taken care of all their wants? Or are people giving as the poor widow gave, risking all they have on God? The widow's choice is not an easy one, but it is one that honors God.

## Devotion for Leaders

Jesus isn't impressed by outward displays of wealth—he sees straight into the heart at the inward wealth of faith, commitment, generosity, and trust. He knows the *real you*.

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** What does Jesus see in your heart? Are you fully entrusting your needs, wants, and future to God? What are you holding back? Grab a penny, and hold it as you pray about areas of your life that you need to give over to God. Then give that penny in your church offering as a symbol to God of your commitment.

## Why We Worship for Leaders

We worship a generous God. God gives us life. God gives us the air we breathe, the food we eat, the clothes we wear. God gives us families to love and purposes to fulfill. God gives us intelligence, humor, joy, peace, and rest. God gave us his Son, and he gives us salvation. What can we do in return for such a God?

It seems only fitting that we would offer gifts in return to a God who gives us everything we have and provides for our every need. But too often giving to God feels like an obligation rather than a joyous privilege. When you stop to consider the matter, God deserves our gifts of money, love, and commitment. Use today's worship session to help children understand that their joyful, cheerful, wholehearted giving pleases and honors our generous God.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

**Let's Praise God!**—Tape a large piece of newsprint to a wall. Draw a large gift shape on it.

**Grab the Riches**—You'll need a jar with an opening that's just large enough for a child's hand. A quart-size Mason jar with a narrow mouth works well. Put several dollars worth of coins inside the jar. If you don't have a lot of coins at home, use Hershey's Kisses chocolates.

**How Much to Give?**—

- Make photocopies of the "Play Money" handout (p. 54). You'll need several handouts for every two to three children.
- Write these words in large letters on a sheet of newsprint or poster board: *food, house, God, movies, video games, candy, going to Disneyland, car*, and tape it to the wall.

**Preschool Activities**—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

## 1 Let's Praise God!

Play the *Songs From FaithWeaver, Spring 2012* CD as children arrive. Greet kids by name, and say to each one, "Hello! Welcome to children's church."

When you've welcomed everyone, begin the session.

**Say** **Hello, everyone! Welcome to children's church. Let's get things started by singing a praise song to Jesus.**

Sing "Jesus Is All the World to Me."

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Ask** • **What do we mean when we say that Jesus is all the world to us?**

(He is everything to us; Jesus is the most wonderful thing in our lives.)



Track 9

## ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

**Say** Jesus is more important than anything else there is. And we have Jesus in our lives because of God. Jesus is God’s gift to us. Today we’re going to talk about gifts. Think about all the gifts you’ve ever received.

- Ask**
- **What gifts are your favorites?** (Video games; sports cards; remote-controlled cars.)
  - **How do you feel about the people who give you gifts—especially the really good gifts?** (I like them a lot; they’re my favorite people.)
  - **When someone has given you a good gift, do you ever feel like giving that person a good gift in return? Why or why not?** (No, because they usually give me gifts for my birthday; yes, I want to give them a thank-you gift.)

**Say** Let’s get in the gift-giving mood. I’m going to give everyone some candy. Take one piece. Then we’ll stand, greet each other, and give each other our candies. Make sure you greet several people. Give each person you meet a candy.

Distribute the candy. Then have kids stand to greet each other by giving away their candy and saying, “Hello. This gift is for you.” Each time kids greet someone, they’ll give away candy and receive candy. Have each child greet at least four or five people.

**Say** Giving gifts is fun. God has given us many gifts. The Bible tells us that every good and perfect gift we have is from God. God enjoys giving good things to us. Today we’re going to talk about giving gifts back to God. We give gifts to God for lots of reasons.

- Ask**
- **What kinds of gifts do we give to God?** (We give God our gifts of worship; we give God our money.)
  - **Why do we give gifts to God?** (God deserves our gifts; it’s one way we worship God; it’s a way to thank God for everything we have.)

**Say** Right now, let’s give God the gift of our praise. The Bible says praise is one of the gifts we can give to God. Let’s praise God by giving him glory for all the things he’s done for us.

Sing “To God Be the Glory.”



Track 16

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Say** Now let’s sing “Sing Unto the Lord.” While we’re singing, think about how your words are a gift to God.

Sing “Sing Unto the Lord.”



Track 8

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Say** Many times we think gifts are things that we buy, wrap with pretty paper, and give on special occasions. But there are all kinds of gifts. There are gifts of kindness and gifts of time or love. A gift can be anything you give to a person because you

**admire or love that person. Let's think of all the gifts we can give to God. Think of a small picture or a word that you can write to represent a gift you can give to God.**

Have kids come forward to write or draw their "gifts" on the large gift shape you taped to a wall before children's church. Allow several minutes for kids to write or draw.

**Ask** • **How does it feel to give gifts to God?** (I feel like I'm pleasing God; it makes me feel good to give to God; I enjoy giving to God.)

**Say** **God is pleased when we give to him cheerfully and wholeheartedly. God wants us to enjoy giving him gifts. We are God's children. When we wholeheartedly give a gift to God, we show him that we love him. We show God that we care about and honor him. Right now let's give God the gift of ourselves. Let's tell God that we belong to him. Let's sing this song as a prayer to God.**

Sing "Children of God."

Lyrics are in the back of this book.



**Track 7**



Check out the *FaithWeaver Worship DVD* included with your KidsOwn Worship

Kit! Use these segments to help you lead worship with your children each week.

## 2 Let's Learn the Point!

### *Preschool Activities, pages 49-50*

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (\*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

### *Elementary Activities*

#### *\* Grab the Riches*

**Say** **Today we're going to play Grab the Riches. I need a few volunteers to help play this game.**

Choose three or four older children to help you play this game.

**Say** **I have a jar of money that I'd really love to give away. One of you lucky kids might be the one to take home the prize. Listen carefully while I tell you the rules. Each of you will have a chance to reach in and grab the riches. You'll grab a big handful of coins and pull the coins out of the jar. Remember that you *do* get to keep the coins you pull out of the jar. Each person gets only one chance. Ready?**

Invite kids to reach inside the jar, grab as big a handful of coins as they can, and then try to pull their hands out of the jar. They won't be able to get their hands out of the jars when they're holding large handfuls of coins.

When each contestant has had one turn, thank the contestants, and have them return to their seats.

### **Ask**

- **Why was it hard to win this game?** (I couldn't get any money; I couldn't get my hand out of the jar.)
- **How was this game like being stingy with your money?** (We get stuck when we try to hold onto our money; when we're selfish, we have trouble giving some of our money away just like we had trouble taking it out of the jar.)
- **Why is it wrong to try to keep all of your money to yourself?** (It doesn't really belong to us; it's God's money in the first place; we should share.)
- **What does God want us to do with our money?** (He wants us to give it to him; he wants us to use it wisely.)
- **Who should we give money to?** (The church; people in need; missionaries.)
- **Does God want us to give all our money to him?** (No, we need some to live; yes, it all belongs to him; no, we just need to give him part of it.)
- **How do we know how much to keep for ourselves and how much to give to God?** (We're supposed to give a tenth; we should keep only what we need; we have to decide how much is best for us to give.)

### **Say**

**God doesn't want us to keep our money to ourselves. God wants us to be generous with our money. God wants us to give money cheerfully. Let's look at what some people in the Bible did with their money.**

## *Less Than a Penny*

Have the children form pairs. Pair younger children with older children. Give each child a penny. Have the children brainstorm about all the things people can do with pennies. Encourage the children to be creative and think of unusual things to do with the pennies. Kids might come up with ideas such as "collect them" or "use them as game pieces."

After giving kids a minute to talk, have volunteers share their ideas with the rest of the group.

Then have the pairs talk about what you can buy with two pennies. Have volunteers share their answers with the rest of the group.

*(continued on page 51)*

# Jesus Notices a Widow's Giving

Mark 12:41-44

## Worship Theme:



Wholehearted giving pleases God.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

**A Widow's Gift**—You'll need two metal bowls. In one bowl, put several handfuls of pennies or other coins. If you don't have a lot of pennies at your house, you can use Hershey's Kisses and pretend they're coins.

**Happy Giving**—Fill a small gift bag with treats. If you used Hershey's Kisses in "A Widow's Gift," you can use those for this activity.

**Something for God**—Set out markers, stickers, and a large bowl, as well as one paper lunch bag and self-stick bow per child.

## Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo help the children celebrate happy and grouchy birthdays in the "Happy Giving" activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



## \* A Widow's Gift

Watch carefully during this activity to make sure children don't put pennies in their mouths. Pennies can be a choking hazard for children under age 3.

Put the two bowls on the floor in front of you. Have the children gather in a circle around you. Open your Bible to Mark 12:41-44.

**Say** One day Jesus went to the Temple. He sat down where he could watch the people putting their offerings in big offering boxes. Some of the people Jesus noticed were very rich people who had lots of money. The Bible says the rich people threw lots of money into the offering box.

Let's all pretend we're rich people in the Temple. Let's pretend this bowl is the offering box. We'll use these pennies to be the offering.

Pass the bowl of pennies and the empty bowl around the circle. Have the children take turns giving an offering by pouring the pennies into the empty bowl. The pennies will make a delightfully noisy sound.

**Ask** • Why do you think the rich people gave so much money to the Temple?

**Say** Another person was at the Temple the day Jesus was there. She was a very poor woman whose husband had died. She didn't have very

much money. In fact, she only had two small coins.

Take two coins out of the bowl of pennies. Set the rest of the pennies aside.

**Ask** • What do you think the woman did with her money?

**Say** Jesus watched the woman take both of her coins and put them into the offering box. Drop the pennies into the empty bowl. Once the woman did that, she had no more money.

Now let's pretend we're the poor woman. Let's put our gifts into the offering box.

Pass around the bowls, and have the children take turns dropping two pennies into the empty bowl. Continue until the bowls come back to you.

**Say** Jesus saw the poor woman's gift, and he said the woman's gift was better than the rich people's gifts.

**Ask** • Why do you think the woman's gift was better?

**Say** Jesus said the woman's gift was better because she gave all she had to God. The woman gave her gift cheerfully because she loved God. She didn't want to hold anything back from God. God is pleased when we give wholeheartedly. Let's talk more about how to give gifts that please God.



## Happy Giving

Have the children sit in a circle.

**Say** ▶ Let's pretend that everyone's birthday is today. First let's celebrate by singing "Happy Birthday" to everyone.

Sing "Happy Birthday."

**Ask** ▶ • What happens on your birthday?

**Say** ▶ There are all kinds of things that happen on our birthdays. Sometimes we eat cake and ice cream. Sometimes we get presents.

**Ask** ▶ • What kinds of presents do you like to get on your birthday?

**Say** ▶ Let's pretend that we're giving gifts to each other for our birthdays. Let's pass around this bag of treats and say "happy birthday" to each other.

Pass around the bag of treats, and have the group celebrate each child's "birthday" by saying, "Happy birthday, [child's name]." Have each child take one treat out of the bag before passing it on and wishing the next child a happy birthday.

**Say** ▶ It's fun to get gifts on our birthdays and at Christmas. We feel special when people give gifts to us.

Let's do some more pretending. Let's pretend that it's a grouchy birthday. Let's be grouchy and sing "Happy Birthday."

Lead children in singing "Happy Birthday" with a grouchy voice.

**Say** ▶ And now let's pretend that we're giving these gifts to each other when we'd rather keep them for ourselves.

Have the children pass around the bag of treats again. This time, though, have the children use grouchy voices to say, "I guess you can have it, but I really want it for myself."

**Ask** ▶ • Which kind of birthday is better: a happy one or a grouchy one?

• Which kind of present is better: a present people are excited to give you, or one people would rather keep for themselves?

### Extra Impact

For more fun in the "Happy Giving" activity, buy a package of party-favor noisemakers, and use them to make noise during your "birthday party."

**Say** ▶ There are lots of times when we give gifts to God. Every time we come to church, we have a chance to give an offering to God.

**Ask** ▶ • Do you think God would rather get a gift from a person happy to give or a person grouchy about giving?

• Do you think God wants us to be happy to give him gifts, or do you think God wants us to keep the gifts to ourselves?

**Say** ▶ Happy birthdays are much more fun than grouchy birthdays. It's much better to get a gift from someone who is excited to give you a present. God feels the same way. God wants us to be happy about giving presents and offerings to him. Let's make something now that we can give to God.

Let the children enjoy their treats.

### ALLERGY ALERT

Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

## Something for God

Have the children use the markers and stickers to decorate the lunch bags to look like gift bags. Give children several minutes to work. While they're working, have them think of gifts they can give to God. Mention gift ideas such as being nice to people, putting money in the offering bowl, obeying God's rules, and singing praise songs to God.

When children have finished decorating their bags, have the children sit in a circle and hold their bags in their laps.

**Say** ▶ Think of a gift you're happy to give to God. Now open up your gift bag and pretend to put your gift inside. Pause for children to respond.

**Ask** ▶ • What gifts did you decide to give to God?

**Say** ▶ Let's get our gifts ready to give to God. Help the children stick gift bows on the bags.

**Pray** ▶ God, thank you for giving us so many good gifts. We want to give gifts back to you with cheerful hearts. We know that our wholehearted, cheerful giving makes you happy. Amen.

Pass around a large bowl, and have all the children put their gifts inside and say, "This is for you, God."

(continued from page 48)

**Ask** • **What good are two pennies?** (You can't get anything with two pennies; they can be added to other coins to buy something; they're almost worthless.)

**Say** **Now let's look at a story from the Bible. Jesus took notice of a gift that was worth less than one cent. Let's find out why.**

Have the partners look up and read Mark 12:41-44 and then answer these questions:

- **The wealthy people gave lots of money to God. Why do you think Jesus was not as pleased with their gifts as he was with the widow's gift?** (The widow gave everything she had; the others didn't give very much compared to how much they had.)
- **Why was Jesus pleased with the widow's gift?** (She gave from her heart; she trusted God to bless her.)
- **The widow's offering was worth less than a penny. What good is an offering that small?** (It doesn't help much, but it was her heart that counted; God can use anything we give, like he used this offering to teach a lesson on giving.)
- **Do you think God cares how much we give to him? Explain.** (Yes, he wants us to give so it helps; no, he just wants us to give cheerfully and from the heart.)
- **What do you think Jesus cares most about when we give to him?** (Jesus cares about why we give; Jesus cares about our attitude when we give.)

**Say** **When Jesus watched all of the people bringing their gifts, he saw rich people throwing large offerings into the offering box. Finally he saw a very poor widow put in two tiny coins. Together the coins were worth much less than a penny. It was a tiny offering. Yet Jesus was pleased with her gift. This woman gave to God even though she was poor. God was so important to her that this woman gave all she had to God. She gave wholeheartedly. God is pleased when we give wholeheartedly.**

Have the children take their pennies home as reminders of the Bible story.

## \* *How Much to Give?*

Have kids form groups of two or three. Pair younger children with older children. Tell the groups that they're each a "family." Give each family a pen, scissors, several copies of the "Play Money" handout, and several envelopes. Have kids cut apart the play money.

**Say** **In your family, you have to decide how to spend your money. I'll give you a list of things you'll need to spend money on. Your job is to decide how much money to give to each thing on the list.**

Show the newsprint you prepared earlier.

Have “families” decide how much money to spend in each category. Have them write on each envelope the name of one thing they choose to spend money on and put the money they want to spend on that thing in the envelope.

Give kids time to make their decisions. Then have each family tell how it decided to spend its money.

**Ask** • **How did you make your decisions about spending money?**

(We talked about it; we chose things we needed first; we gave everything to God.)

• **When you came to the decision about how much to give to God, how did you make that decision?** (We thought about how we could give cheerfully to God; we decided it would be best to give it all to God.)

• **Was it hard to give money to God when there were so many other things to spend money on?** (No, because I didn’t really need most of those other things; yes, because I thought it would be cool to have those other things.)

• **Why does God want us to give him a portion of our money?** (God wants us to show that we know the money is a gift; God wants us to thank him for taking care of us.)

**Say** **We choose to spend money on things that are important to us. When we choose to give a portion of our money to God, we’re telling God that we think he’s important. God wants us to give to him cheerfully and wholeheartedly.**

## 3 **Let’s Pray!**

### *The Offering*

Give each child a pencil and at least one “dollar” of the play money from the “How Much to Give?” activity.

**Say** **Write or draw a picture on the play money of something you’d like to give to God. Then we’ll put our pictures in the offering bowls.**

Give kids a minute to work.

**Say** **Today as we give our offerings to God, think about the state of your heart. Think about whether you give cheerfully and wholeheartedly. While you wait for the offering bowl to come to you, talk to God about your attitude when you give to him. Ask God to help you be a cheerful giver. If you didn’t bring an offering today, talk with God about the gift you’d like to give to him.**

Pass the offering bowls, and have the children put their gifts and the play money into the bowls.

## *"Praise the Lord"*

**Say** Everything we have comes from God. God gives to us wholeheartedly. He's not stingy when he gives good gifts to us. Let's give our praise wholeheartedly to God as we sing this last song. It'll be a song offering to God.

Sing "Praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6).

Lyrics are in the back of this book.



**Track 11**

## *Closing Prayer*

Invite a child to close your worship session in prayer. You may find that several children are eager to pray. If so, encourage them to pray for the group.

# Play Money



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## ***Encouragement for Leaders***

Dear Lord, I thank you because someday I will get a raise and be promoted to live in heaven with you. Help me do the best job I possibly can in teaching my students so that they, too, will be able to dwell there with you someday. In Jesus' name, amen.

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