

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 27
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 12:38-44

Background: During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

The season of Ordinary Time continues for two more Sundays. The Gospel brings us back to noticing what we are being called to do. Clearly it is not to put on a big show or call attention to ourselves. Beware of those whose actions are not compatible with their talk! And perhaps it's not about the size of the contribution, but the depth of the gratitude.

Theme: Gratitude and Giving

Before Class: You will need copies of the “money” below so each child has at least one, markers or crayons, coins (enough for each child to have two or three), and a small box with a cover and a slit in the top large enough for the “coins” to be inserted or a basket. Cut out the money if you think that will make it easier for the children to use.

Beginning: As the children gather, give each of them a few coins and tell them to hold on to them tight. Tell the children we have a story today about a woman who did not have a lot of money, but who knew she loved God and was glad for the things she did have.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God for all the wonderful things you make for us. Help us to remember the good things you put in our lives and help us to share what we have with others. Amen.

The Story: Mark 12:38-44 Jesus was sitting in the Temple – their church. As people came in, they put money in a box – money that would buy things for poor people. Some people came in wearing fancy clothes and made a big fuss about ALL the money they were putting in the box. Then a little old woman came in. Jesus knew that she did not have a lot of money – in fact, she only had a few coins left. She tiptoed up to the box, and when she thought no one was looking, she quickly dropped in the few coins she owned. Then she tip-toed away. Jesus noticed.

Activity: Tell the children that when we come to church we get to put money in the plate that they pass around. We put money in because we are grateful. Ask the children if they know what “grateful” means. (Noticing the things that God has given us and saying thanks to God.)

Give each of the children a few coins and take one or two for yourself. Tell the children we are going to think about things we are "grateful" for and drop our coins in the little box as we name the things. You could begin, dropping a coin in the box and naming something for which you are grateful. Then invite the children, one by one, to put coins in the box naming those thing for which they are grateful.

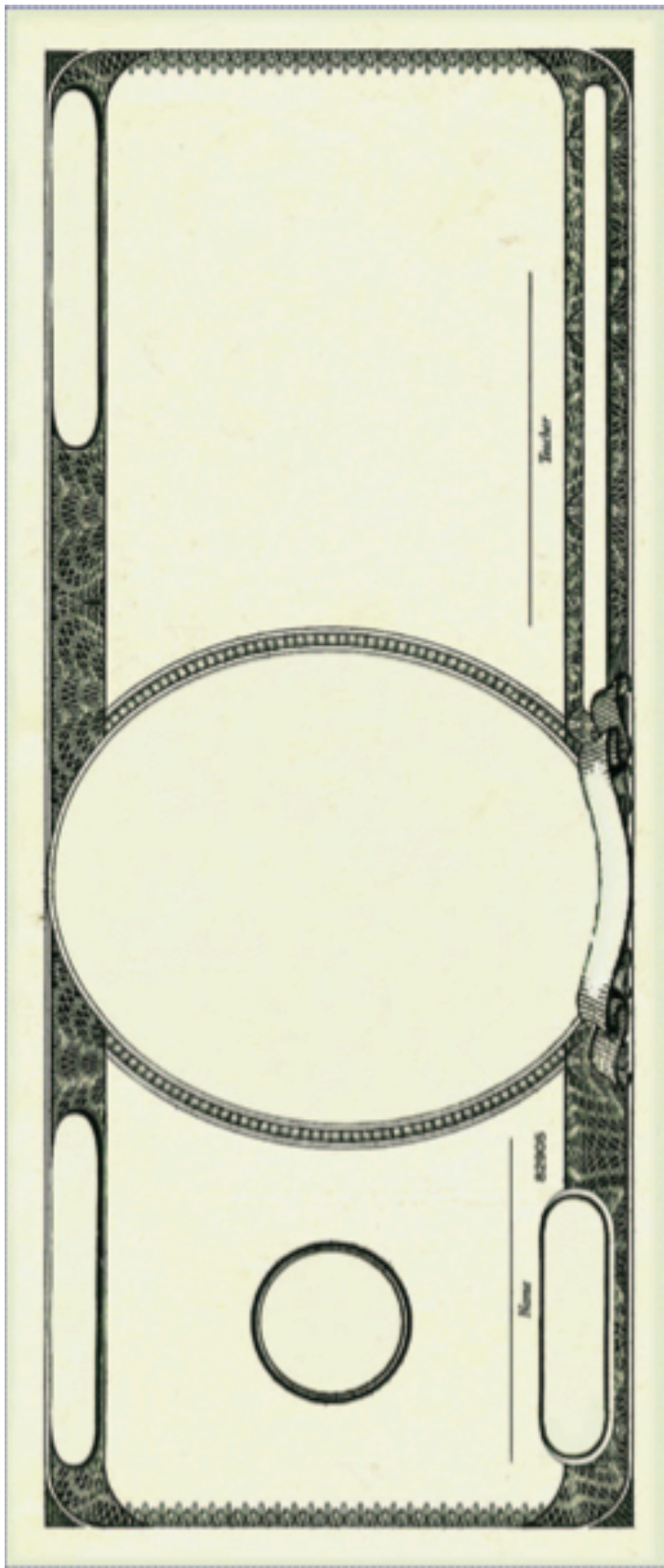
Activity: Make copies of the "money" that is below. Give a sheet to each child. Have them cut out each of the bills and then decorate the bills to represent those things for which they are grateful or those things that God has given them to share.

Getting Closure: If you are going into church later, you might encourage them to put their "money" in the offering plate (getting the okay from the clergy first and letting the ushers know). If not, might the bills be put up somewhere as an offering to the church and a reminder to everyone the things for which they are grateful and what should be given to God?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for all the wonderful gifts you give to us. Thank you for your generosity to us. Help us to give to you and to others in your name. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 27
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 12:38-44

Background: During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

The season of Ordinary Time continues for two more Sundays. The Gospel brings us back to noticing what we are being called to do. Clearly it is not to put on a big show or call attention to ourselves. Beware of those whose actions are not compatible with their talk! And perhaps it's not about the size of the contribution, but the depth of the gratitude.

Theme: Gratitude and Giving

Before Class: Cut sheets of copy paper into quarters making sheets about 4 1/4 by 5 1/2. You will need three or four of the small sheets per child. Bring a stapler to class with the sheets of paper, and provide pencils. If you are going to do the "Look it Up" activity, you will need Bibles and copies of The Book of Common Prayer.

Beginning: Tell the children that today we have a story about giving to God and "gratitude." How would the children define the word "gratitude?"

Opening Prayer: Oh, God, help us to remember the good things you put in our lives and help us to share what we have with others. Amen

The Story: Mark 12:38-44. Today's passage has only two voices: the narrator and Jesus. Invite a child to volunteer to read each of the parts. (See below for script)

Reflection Questions:

- What are the "scribes" doing? (Showing off, acting like big shots, expecting special attention.)
- I wonder why Jesus says that is not good? (They are forgetting the important things: caring for the poor.)
- What does Jesus notice about the poor widow? (She made no show of her gift, and she gave all that she had)
- I wonder if Jesus wants us to give all our money to the church? (Probably not.)

- I wonder why Jesus tells this story? (To help us remember to be grateful and to give what we have to God.)

Gratitude Booklets: Give each child 3 or 4 sheets of the paper you have cut. Show them how to fold the combined sheets in half (either way – you and the children choose) and staple them together along what would be the spine. Instant booklets. Tell the children they can write **for their eyes only** things they notice for which they are grateful. (Be sure to make a booklet for yourself, also.) Tell the children one or two things you are grateful for (your child, a wildflower you saw by the side of the road, chocolate – whatever) to get them thinking. Tell them you will give them some time, now, to think about this and write things in their booklets.

Suggest they keep the booklets with them and add to them as things occur to them. Tell them they **may** share blessings they have noticed but they do not have to do so.

When they have spent the time they want to on this project, ask them what they think would be a good title for these little booklets. Ask if anyone wants to share anything they wrote, assuring them they do not have to do so.

God Has Given Me...: Make copies of the “money” that is below. Give a sheet to each child. Have them cut out each of the bills and then decorate the bills to represent those things for which they are grateful or those things that God has given them to share.

Getting Closure: If you have time, have the children share their work.

Option 1: Tell the children they may take their booklets with them and keep them in a safe place, adding to them if they choose.

Option 2:

If you are going into church later, you might encourage them to put these in the offering plate (getting the okay from the clergy first and letting the ushers know). If not, might the bills be put up somewhere as an offering to the church and a reminder to everyone the things for which they are grateful and what should be given to God?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that we have so many things to be thankful for. Thank you for your generosity to us. Help us to give to you and to others in your name. Amen.

Mark 12:38-44

Narrator: As he taught, Jesus said,

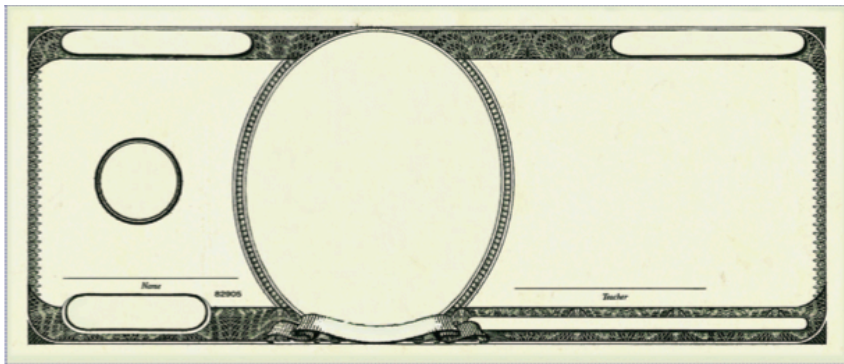
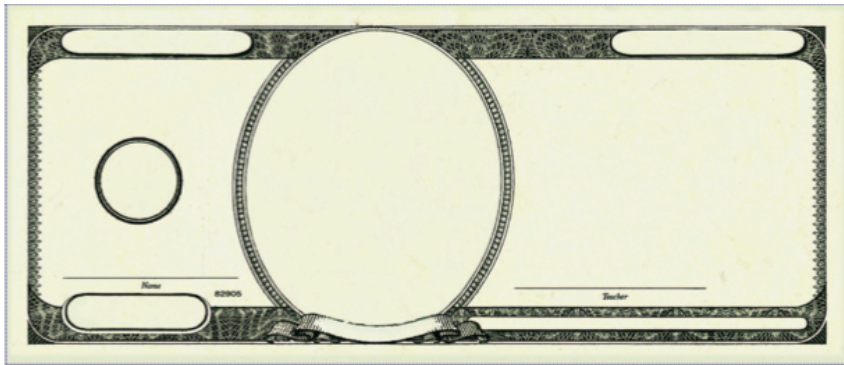
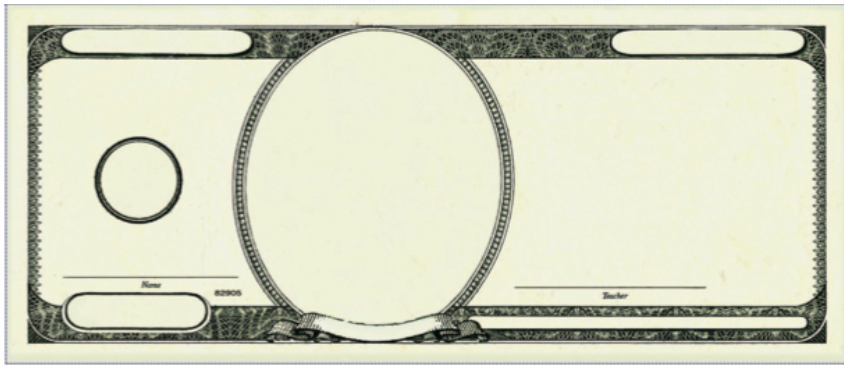
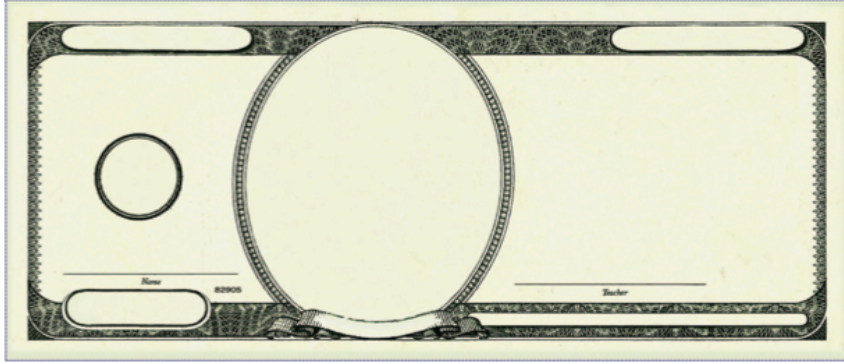
Jesus: ‘Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places,³⁹ and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets!⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.’

Narrator: Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then Jesus called his disciples and said to them,

Jesus: ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.’

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 27
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Mark 12:38-44

Background: During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

The season of Ordinary Time continues for two more Sundays. The Gospel brings us back to noticing what we are being called to do. Clearly it is not to put on a big show or call attention to ourselves. Beware of those whose actions are not compatible with their talk! And perhaps it's not about the size of the contribution, but the depth of the gratitude.

Theme: Gratitude and Giving

Before Class: You will need copies of the bible and copies of the final sheet of this lesson for each person.

Beginning: We have the opportunity to reflect, privately, on what our financial contribution to our church means to us.

Opening Prayer: Thank you for the nudges you give us to notice our blessings. Help us to be mindful of what we have and what you have given us to share with others. Amen.

The Scripture: Mark 12:38-44 Read this passage in two sections. Ask for two volunteers – one to read verses 38-40 and after you discuss this section, have another read verses 41-44.

Read verses 38-40. Ask the group to sit for a moment and picture this setting. As they reflect silently they may reread the passage if they choose.

Reflection Questions: Mark 12:38-40

- I wonder why Jesus thinks that the fancy clothes, the places of honor and the long prayers that are the problem. (The self-importance and lack of care for those among them who are in need.)
- Do you think Jesus is saying we should not have fancy clothes? Why? Why not?
- I wonder why Jesus is condemning long prayers? Why? Why not?

Read verses 41-44. Ask the group to sit for a moment and picture this setting. As they reflect silently they may reread the passage if they choose.

Reflection Questions: Mark 12:41-44

- I wonder what image came to you as we read this passage?
- Do you think Jesus is saying that rich people should not make significant contributions? Why? Why not?
- Do you think Jesus is calling poor widows to donate their life savings to the church treasury? Why? Why not?

For private reflection

The following questions are printed on the sheet below that also has the reading. Hand these out and allow people to do some personal reflection on these questions. If there is time, you might bring them back together or gather them in small groups to allow them to share their reflections.

- If I do not believe Jesus expects me to give my entire paycheck to the church, do I have a strategy to make decision about the amount I give?
- Is the strategy based on a percentage or on an amount – or something else?
- To what extent am I comfortable with our strategy?
- And, if I am not comfortable, what could I reasonable give up in order to do more?
- And, if I am OK with where I am in giving to the church, give thanks for this place.

Getting Closure: If anyone wants to offer something they noticed, provide the opportunity for them to do so. Assure the group that no one is obligated to speak to anyone other than God about what they discovered.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for your Word and for how it works in our hearts. Be with us as we go into the world and help us to see all that we can give to you and one another. Amen.

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Class Reflection Sheet

Mark 12:38-44

38 As he taught, he said, ‘Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places,³⁹ and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets!⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.’

41 He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums.⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny.⁴³ Then he called his disciples and said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury.⁴⁴ For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.’

Personal Reflections

If I do not believe Jesus expects me to give my entire paycheck to the church, do I have a strategy to make decision about the amount I give?

Is the strategy based on a percentage or on an amount – or something else?

To what extent am I comfortable with our strategy?

And, if I am not comfortable, what could I reasonable give up in order to do more?

And, if I am OK with where I am in giving to the church, give thanks for this place.