

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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