

# The Widow's Offering

Grades  
5-6

## APPEARANCES

MARK 12:38-44

### What's happening in this story?

Mark 12 includes a series of public arguments between Jesus and religious leaders in the temple. In this story, Jesus criticizes the scribes, describing much of what they do as for the sake of appearances. Then Jesus observes and compares the monetary contributions of many rich people with the offering of a poor widow. Both episodes follow the pattern of Jesus' teaching that "the first shall be last and the last shall be first."

### What does this story mean for kids?

What we do with everything entrusted to us says a lot about who we are and whose we are. Jesus calls us to give from the heart, trusting that God is a God of abundance. Kids surely have much less money to place in the offering plate than adults at church do. Help them know that Jesus values their small gifts highly when they give out of love for God.

### Why this theme?

The motivations for our actions are important to Jesus. The widow is praised because her offering comes from a sincere desire to please God and help others. Kids can learn from her example about giving and serving in love.

### AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids are beginning to experience a wider worldview in which they make unhealthy comparisons to others, leading to undue feelings of inferiority or superiority. Help kids center these feelings by modeling and encouraging supportive language and behavior.



### GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pencils
- Clear tape
- Colored pencils
- Scrap paper (cut into small slips)

### LESSON SUPPLIES

- Envelopes (10)
- Penny
- Circles cut from card stock (6-in. diameter, 2 per kid)
- Strips of card stock (8 in., 1 per kid)

## Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

List ten everyday items, one each on the front of ten envelopes. On slips of scrap paper, have kids write what they think each item is worth and place it in the appropriate envelope. Explore how many different values kids assign.

## Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

What comes to mind when you think of the word *appearances*? Give kids time to respond. **Appearances can be tricky. Sometimes what we see or assume to be true isn't really the way it is. Have you ever met someone who appeared to be something they were not?** Allow time for kids to share. **Appearances don't just relate to people; they relate to things too. Something that appears valuable to one person might not be valuable to another person. What is something you cherish that others might not find valuable?**

Pray together: **Dear God, you alone see true value—in us and in our relationships. Help us to look beyond appearances to see what's really important. Amen.**

## Pass out leaflets and pencils.

Have kids stand up and move to the center of the room with their leaflets and pencils. **I'll give you two options. If you choose the first option, color in that circle and move to the left side of the room. If you choose the second option, color in that circle and move to the right side of the room. Would you choose more toys or more time with friends? Being the most popular or getting the best grades? Standing out for doing the right thing or blending in with the crowd? Having a lot of friends or just a few close friends? Having to choose between two good things helps us learn what we value. How do we figure out what God values?**



## Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

It's not easy to decide an object's value, but it's even harder to know what it's worth to others. Sometimes we worry about how we look to others. Let's see how the Whirl kids handle this.

View Episode 13, "Humble Pie," on the Year Gold Winter Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What does it mean to say someone is "humble"? What do Gabe and Mimi seem to think?**
- **Why do you think Humble Pie users saw through Gabe and Ruby's ploy?**
- **Who do you think actually deserved all the up-slices?**
- **Who do you know who's humble? What makes them so?**
- **Do you think you're humble? Why or why not? Be careful—this can be tricky!**



## Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is in the book of Mark. It's in the New Testament in the Gospel and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from Mark, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1198.



When you first hear it, the two parts of this reading may not seem to go together. In this passage Jesus teaches a basic lesson then tells a story illustrating the truth or value of that lesson.

Help kids find Mark 12:38-44 and read it in this creative way together: Select two volunteers, one to read as narrator and the other to read the part of Jesus. Encourage them to read dramatically and change the tone of their voices to reflect the meaning behind the words. Give them a brief moment to prepare.

Invite kids to read what Gabe says about Mark 12:38-40.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- What kind of people are the scribes? What characteristics are they interested in?
- What do you think Jesus means when he says the scribes "will receive the greater condemnation"?
- How can the widow's two-coin offering be worth more than the rich people's large offerings?
- How did the widow feel putting two coins in after all of the large offerings? How do you feel when someone has a lot to share and you only have a little to share?
- What things do you have in "abundance"? Could you offer God everything you have? Why or why not?

## Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Appearances*. Hold up a penny. **What is this worth? Not much, right? But what if it was all you had? Then it might have greater worth, at least to you. Jesus encourages us to give generously and joyfully of ourselves. He sees value beyond monetary worth.** Tape the penny to the box by *Appearances*.



### BIBLE BIT

In many ways, this is a cautionary tale warning hearers not to compare themselves to others, as well as a prompt for us to reconsider the value of our giving.

### WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, list all the ways Gabe and Ruby faked their humility to gain the approval of people they didn't even know. What would be a better use of their time?

### OUR CHURCH

Have kids write a thank-you note to someone in the church who works hard to help it achieve its mission. Drop it in the offering plate during worship.

# RESPOND 10

**Open leaflets and pass out colored pencils, circles and strips cut from card stock, and slips of scrap paper.**

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **What is something you have that is valuable? Why is it valuable to you?**
2. **In the offering plate on the leaflet, write a few ways you can be generous with what you have. Try to think beyond money or physical objects, but those things are okay too.**
3. If kids need hints to get started, ask guiding questions. For example, “Are you an artist?” “Do you like to write poetry or stories?” “Do you like to work outside?”
4. After a few minutes, have volunteers share some of their ideas.
5. **How could these things be used for God? What would motivate you to share these gifts?**
6. **Now make a gift basket by following the instructions on the leaflet.**
7. **On the outside of your gift basket, write the name of a person or organization—it could be our church—that you could share something with. On a slip of paper, write what you can share. Place the slip in the basket.**
8. **Give the basket and humble-feed to the organization you wrote down. Let them know when you plan to give your gift.**

# LAUNCH 10

**Circle up with kids for a quick review.**

**Giving big or expensive gifts can appear to be greater than giving something small. But the size of a gift isn't really the best way to measure generosity. How do you measure generosity?** Allow time for responses.

**Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pencils.**

**In the Humble Pie frame, draw one way the person on your left has given without showing off, whether it was money, time, or talents. Ask if you're not sure. Fill in other spaces on the screen if you'd like. Give them the page and thank them for their humble service.**

**Send kids out with a blessing.**

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.