

The Widow's Offering

Grades
3-4

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

At this age, kids don't necessarily think of doing good things as a kind of giving. Help them understand this concept by using words like *kindness* or *loving* while talking about giving.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- White paper
- Markers
- Pencils

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Offering plate or basket

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Set out paper and markers. Ask kids to draw clothing items on *invisible* people (don't show faces, arms, legs, etc.). You'll touch on giving invisibly later in the lesson.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

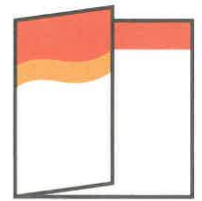
We base a lot of our judgments on the way things appear—the way things look or the way they seem to be. When have you decided something about a person based on their appearance? Allow time for kids to discuss. If a person drives a fancy car, we may think they are wealthy. If someone is frowning, we may think they are grumpy. But sometimes appearances can be deceiving.

Pray together: **Dear God, help us remember to look beyond appearances to learn about who people are on the inside. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

Help kids think about the outward image they present by what they wear. **When was the last time you wore a costume? How did you decide what it would be? What did you like about your appearance? What**

costume worn by someone else was your favorite? Ask kids to draw the last costume they wore on the leaflet's image of an easel.



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

Who do you know who uses social media? Today Gabe and Ruby are trying out a new social network called Humble Pie. Let's watch.

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **When have you wanted credit for something you did?**
- **Why do we want other people to think good things about us?**
- **What were Gabe and Ruby trying to accomplish?**
- **How was Mimi's motivation different from theirs?**
- **What motivates you to change your appearance toward others? When do you want to look your best? Smartest? Coolest? Most respectful?**



RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out pencils and markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **When have you given something away or done something nice for someone? Did you do it so that you would be praised or thanked? Because the person needed something? To surprise someone?**
2. **Have you ever done something nice for someone in secret? What did you do?**
3. **Does it matter if someone knows that you did something generous? Why or why not?**
4. **Your leaflet shows a cloak of invisibility. When might you want to wear a cloak like this?**
5. **Decorate the outside of your invisibility cloak with designs and colors of your choice.**
6. **On the inside, use a pencil to write five things you can give or do for someone this week.**
7. **Now color over the words with a marker to remind yourself to do those things invisibly.**
8. **The widow gave all she had, but she gave it with humility. She didn't ask for thanks or praise. She served God quietly. Remember, it's what you do that matters—not getting credit or praise for your good deed.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

What new thing did you learn about how we should give? Take time to hear kids' responses. **God doesn't need to be impressed by you—God already loves you. The best way to honor God with our giving is to do it out of love and gratitude for all we have received. Every time.**

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out markers.

How does your church receive and use its offering? **In the box at the top, write how our church receives money. In each of the three boxes at the bottom, write one way our church uses people's gifts of money.**

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.