



# We Give in Gratitude

**Goal:** To discover that no gift is too small in God's eyes.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Mark 12:41-44

The contrasts in this story are striking. When Jesus watched people put money into the temple treasury box, he saw “many rich people” throwing in “lots of money” (v. 41). Then “one poor widow” put in “two small copper coins worth a penny.”

Jesus assured his disciples this poor widow had contributed “more than everyone who’s been putting money in the treasury.” He lifted up the one, poor widow as making a greater contribution than many rich people. Why? Because “all of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had, even what she needed to live on” (v. 44).

The greater gift in the eyes of God was from the one who, in her “hopeless poverty” contributed all she had; this was in contrast to those who lived with abundance and contributed only such a small amount—their “spare change.”

The widow knew she lived by trusting God's grace—meal to meal. So, she gratefully gave “everything she had.” Others made no such sacrifice. Today, we give in gratitude and give all we can to serve God. We rejoice that no gift is too small in the eyes of God.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

One of the first things younger children learn is about sharing—sharing toys, sharing time with a parent, taking turns. This story will help children make the connection between the act of sharing with faithful practices in response to God's love for them. The news often highlights stories of children's generosity in helping others, like the widow who was very poor. Connecting this story with the community in which you are living will be a good way to help the children consider the ways they can serve God by giving.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

This story can connect to the lives of the children you teach in several ways. Younger children can be helped to think of the ways that they can serve God by giving. Interpreting giving as helping others is a good way for them to connect with this story. Older children who have more experiences and confidence will be able to both name their own experiences with giving and think about new ways that they can serve God by sharing their time, talents, or money.

*Dear God, you have shown us generous love through your blessings.  
Help me to show the same to the children. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Supplies

Music & Melodies  
(MM) 2023-2024

Stories, Colors & More  
(SCM) i-iv, 11, 15, 24

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

## Guided Play

choice 1: quarter, dime,  
nickel, penny

choice 2: coins and  
paper money cut from  
**SCM 11a** and **11b**, offering  
plate or basket

choice 3: copies of **GN 1**

## Exploring

choice 2: coins,  
pieces of cardboard

choice 4: copies of  
**GN 2**

Most children at this age won't care that a dime is worth more than a penny. Size is more important than value.

## GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

### Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i-ii**, "Your Visual Schedule," to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii-iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

Before the session, cut coins and paper money from **SCM 11a** and **11b** for "Guided Play" choice 2.

"Exploring God's Grace" choice 2 requires more prep.

### Welcoming and Guided Play **Td**

Greet children as they arrive and say, "Grace and peace be with you." Prompt the response, "And also with you." Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers you do not know. Tell the parents/caregivers that today's story is about a poor widow who gave all she had to God. Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

1. **Play with Coins**—Have examples of coins. Invite the children to compare the coins. Invite the children to play with play dough and make coins.
2. **Offering**—Have offering plates (or baskets) from your church available so that the children can practice how to take an offering. Give them the paper coins and bills cut from **SCM 11a** and **11b** and invite them to play as if some of them are putting the money in the plates and some are collecting the offering. When the plates are full, invite them to change roles. Encourage them to think of ways they can use the money to help others. If time allows, have a conversation about what the money in church is used for and how it is collected.
3. **A Lot, a Little**—Provide copies of **GN 1** and crayons. Allow the children to color the page. After they have colored, invite them to circle the rows that have a little of an item. Have them put a check mark on the rows that have a lot of an item.

**T** *Transitions can be difficult for children. Do not force reluctant children to join a group activity. Instead, allow them to observe quietly from their own play area or to listen to a story read to them by an adult helper until they are ready to join the group.*

## Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner. Play and sing “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”—**MM 13; SCM 15**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

### Come and Hear M MS L

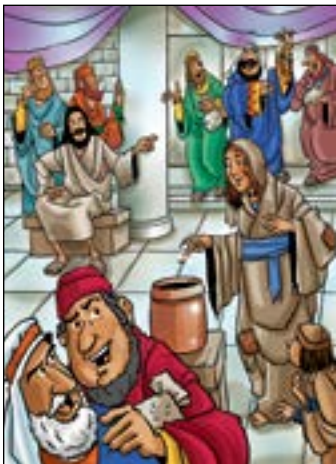
Say or sing the following song to the tune of “The Bear Went Over the Mountain” and do the motions indicated. Invite the children to join you.

Come and hear God’s story. *(walk four steps to the right)*  
 Come and hear God’s story. *(walk four steps to the left)*  
 Come and hear God’s story. *(walk four steps to the right)*  
 Sit down and fold your hands. *(fold hands in lap)*

### Hands Go Up M MS L

Invite the children to repeat after you and follow your actions:

Hands go up. *(raise hands in the air) /*  
 Hands go down. *(move hands to sides) /*  
 I can turn myself around. *(turn around in a circle) /*  
 I can stand up on one shoe. *(stand on one foot) /*  
 I can listen, so can you. *(cup right hand by right ear, then point to another) /*  
 I can sit, I’ll show you how. *(sit on the floor) /*  
 Bible time is starting now. *(point index finger to other wrist) /*



Today’s story can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).

## Hearing the Story L

Open the Bible to Mark 12 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about a poor widow who gave all she had to God.

Read **SCM 11**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Read the story again, inviting the children to act out the story with the following suggestions:

- ▼ Invite the children to “strut”! You may need to demonstrate strutting. Ask the children what would be other ways to show off bringing a big offering to the temple.
- ▼ Tell the children to pretend to carry a big offering to the offering plate or basket.
- ▼ Invite the children to pretend to be the widow bringing her offering. Ask them how they might bring two coins.

- ▼ Ask the children what kind of offering they would like to give to God to show how much they love God.

## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

### 1. Here Is My Penny L F

Invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your actions:

Oh, here is my penny, *(hold up one hand with thumb and index finger making a circle, like a coin) /*  
 my shiny new penny. *(wiggle the hand making the coin) /*  
 You give your penny; *(move the coin hand out) /*  
 then there will be two. *(hold up both hands making a coin) /*  
 If everyone here *(move both open hands outward) /*  
 gives a penny in offering, *(make a coin hand) /*  
 who knows what all of *(hold hands up questioning) /*  
 those pennies can do? *(make coin hands and wiggle both hands) /*

Oh, here is my dollar, *(grab air with index finger and thumb like holding a dollar) /*  
 my new paper dollar. *(wiggle hand holding dollar) /*  
 You give your dollar; *(move dollar hand out) /*  
 then there will be two. *(hold up both hands holding a dollar) /*  
 When everyone here *(move open hands outward) /*  
 gives a dollar in offering, *(make a dollar hand) /*  
 who knows what all of *(hold hands up questioning) /*  
 those dollars can do? *(make dollar hands and wiggle both hands) /*

But I have a penny. *(make a coin hand with one hand) /*  
 I don't have a dollar. *(make a dollar hand with other hand) /*  
 You give your dollar; *(move the dollar hand outward) /*  
 I'll give what I can. *(move the coin hand outward) /*  
 When everyone here *(move open hands outward) /*  
 gives a dollar or penny, *(move dollar and coin hands outward) /*  
 we're helping God's people *(move hands in a large circle) /*  
 again and again. *(circle hands around each other in a repetitive motion) /*

If the children are engaged and enjoying this activity, consider repeating the motion poem.

- L Following a story with many directions can be a challenge. Break down motions as needed so children have an easier time participating.



## 2. Coin Rubbings FM

Help each child tape different-sized coins to a piece of cardboard. Roll a small piece of duct tape and place it on the coins to adhere them to the cardboard.

Give the children a sheet of white paper and larger-size crayons with the paper wrappers removed. Show them how to rub a crayon over the coins to make a picture of the coins.

When the children have finished their rubbings, invite them to count the number of coins on their papers. Remind the children that the widow in the story gave her last two coins. Challenge the children to circle two coins to remind them of the widow's offering.

## 3. "I Can Give" Banner C

Remind the children that today's story told us that no gift for God is too small. The widow gave two coins to the offering box.

Tell the children that offerings are used to share God's love and God's work in the world. Ask the children to name things that they can give to share God's love or do God's work. Suggest hugs, smiles, a helping hand, offerings, and so forth.

Lay out a large sheet of mural paper. Write "I Can Give . . ." at the top of the paper. Tell the children what you are writing as you do this.

Invite the children to draw pictures of their offerings to God. When they have finished, have the children tell you about their pictures. Write what they are giving by each picture.

Explain to them that this banner will be a gift to the church and that they are sharing God's love with the other members of the congregation.

## 4. Coloring Page C

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- I wonder, "How did the people who gave big bags of silver feel?"
- I wonder, "How did the widow feel giving her two coins?"
- I wonder, "Who might help the woman now that she gave away all that she had?"

**T** *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as arm circles and bending down to pick up imaginary coins, pretending to put coins in a basket, and so forth.*

Use "wonder" questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA

Call the children together, playing and singing “God’s Love for Us Is Truly Amazing (El amor de Dios es maravilloso)”—**MM 29; SCM 24**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate and add movements to enhance the song. Ask the children what gifts they would like to give this week to share God’s love and help do God’s work.

If you would like to share a snack, now would be a good time. Pray the following echo prayer, having the children repeat after you:

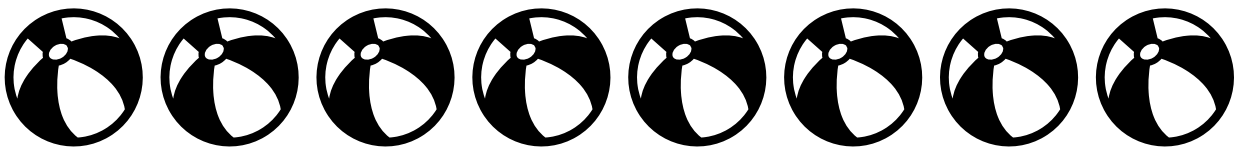
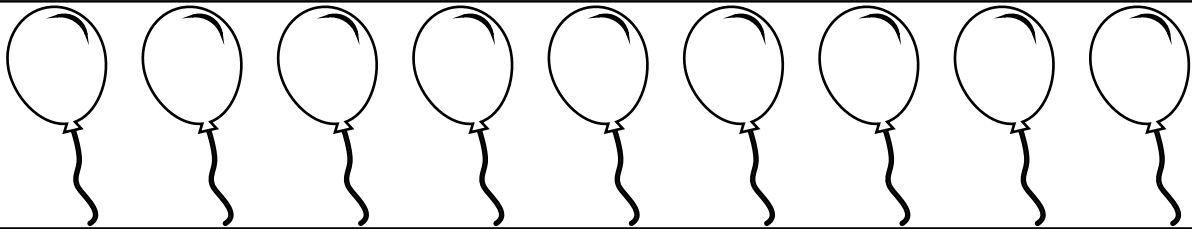
God, we give our thanks: /  
for food that fills our bellies, /  
for time with friends and family, /  
for homes where we find love. /  
We give our thanks for these. /  
Amen. /

As the children leave, give them a sending and a blessing:

*(Name)*, God loves you and your gifts! Give your gifts, big and small, to praise God and to help others. The grace of God is with you.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads). Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).







# We Give in Gratitude



A poor widow gives her all to God.

