Preschool–Grade 6

The Widow's Offering

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: God doesn't measure our giving by the amount but by what it costs us and how much of us is in it. He wants all of us.
Bible passage: Mark 12:28–44. Students read Mark 12:28–34 and 12:38–44 out loud themselves, then Luke 21:1–4.
Memory verse: "And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:" *Mark 12:43 (KJV)* and "For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." *Mark 12:44 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Mark 12:28–44 and Luke 21:1–4. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: What Did It Cost? (5–10 minutes)

Read each gift. Students hold up fingers from 1 (cost nothing) to 5 (cost a lot) for how much the gift really cost the giver. 1) A rich man gives $100 to a food bank. 2) A boy gives his only snack to a hungry friend. 3) A girl gives up her Saturday to help an older neighbor. 4) Someone gives away old clothes they don't wear anymore. 5) A student gives up a game she loves to spend time with her little brother. Ask: *Is the biggest gift always the one that cost the most?* Say: "Jesus once watched people giving, and He called His disciples over to tell them which gift was more. His answer may surprise you."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Mark 12:28–34. A scribe asked Jesus which commandment was first. Old words in this passage:

- **Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord** (12:29): there is one God
- **thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all…** (12:30): with every part of you, holding nothing back
- **burnt offerings and sacrifices** (12:33): gifts burned on the altar to worship God

Read out loud: Mark 12:38–40. Jesus warned about scribes who loved to look important and "devour widows' houses," which means they took what poor widows had.

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Read out loud: Mark 12:41–44. Old words in this passage:

- **over against the treasury** (12:41): across from the place where people gave money to God; **beheld**: watched
- **cast** (12:41): put or threw in
- **mites** (12:42): tiny coins, among the smallest there were; **farthing**: a small coin worth two mites
- **Verily** (12:43): truly
- **abundance** (12:44): more than enough, what was left over; **want**: need, poverty
- **all her living** (12:44): everything she had to live on

Read out loud: Luke 21:1–4. Luke tells the same story. **Penury** (21:4) means poverty. **The offerings of God** means the gifts given to God.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. In Mark 12:30 Jesus said to love God with *all* your heart, soul, mind and strength. A few verses later, a widow gives *all* her living (12:44). How does her gift show what that commandment looks like?
2. Right before this, Jesus warned about leaders who "devour widows' houses" (12:40). Why do you think Mark puts these two stories side by side?
3. Jesus said she cast in "more" than all the rich (12:43). By what measure was her gift more?
4. Jesus sat and watched how people gave (12:41). Does it change anything to know He sees what you give and why?
5. What is your "two mites," something small that would still cost you to give to God?
6. Giving "of abundance" is giving from what's left over. Where in your life do you give God your leftovers instead of your best?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **verily** means truly; **cast** means put in; **abundance** means more than enough; **want** means need; **all her living** means everything she had to live on. Mark 12:43 says what Jesus saw; Mark 12:44 says why her gift was more.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Mark 12:43 this week; keep working on Mark 12:44 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "The widow gave all she had. Jesus gave more: 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich' (2 Corinthians 8:9, KJV). God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)." *Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.*

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What do I give God from my leftovers: leftover time, leftover attention, leftover effort?
2. What is one "two mites" gift I could give God this week that would really cost me something?
3. Write a short prayer asking God to help you love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: give God your first and best, not your leftovers: start each day with prayer before anything else.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You see every gift and every heart. Thank You that Jesus gave Himself for us. We don't want to give You our leftovers. Help us love You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks whether God wants all our money: read Mark 12:30 and 12:44 together and let the verses speak: God wants all of us, our whole heart. Encourage students to ask their parents and pastor about giving. Never pressure a child about money.

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