

**We Give in Gratitude**

(based on Mark 12:41–44)

One day, Jesus and his friends were sitting in the temple courtyard. Jesus was watching people put their gifts to God into the offering box.

Some people walked proudly up to the box with large bags of silver. They made a big show of putting their money into the box!

The people around them were impressed. “Look at all that money,” they thought. “God will be so pleased with that offering.”

A little while later, a poor woman walked up to the offering box. Her husband had died and she had no family to look after her. She did not have very much money. In fact, she only had two small coins left.

The woman loved God very much. She showed her love by giving an offering in the temple.

When she reached the offering box, she dropped her two small coins into it.

Then she bowed her head, said a short prayer to God, and went home.

Jesus noticed her offering.

“Did you see that?” Jesus asked. “This woman gave far more than all the others today.”

His friends were surprised. The woman gave only two small coins. What could God do with that? How did two small coins compare to the large bags of silver other people had given?

Jesus could see his friends were puzzled. “All those rich people have plenty of money,” he explained. “They buy what they want and give God what is left over.”

“The widow only had two small coins, and she gave it all to God. She has no money left. The woman gave more because she gave everything she had.”



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Collect coins of different denominations, some paper, and a pencil. Make rubbings of the coin images by laying paper on a coin and rubbing the pencil lightly on the paper. Give thanks to God that coins give us the ability to buy what we need.
- Use coins to show the calendar date. For example, the fifteenth of the month could be shown with fifteen pennies, three nickels, a dime and a nickel, or many other combinations. Do this every day for several days then consider donating the coins to a community cause or place them in the church offering plate. Thank God for the gift of each day.



Responding to God's Grace

- Wonder with your children what words the woman prayed as she gave her offering in the temple.
- Find out if your church takes part in Cents-Ability (formerly “Two-Cents-A-Meal”) through the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Have your family join this effort to combat hunger. Make a bank by upcycling a can with a soft plastic lid (like a coffee can). Cut a slot in the lid and decorate the can. Put the can on your family’s table. Put money in the can during every meal. For more information about Cents-Ability, go to www.presbyterianmission.org/what-cents-ability.
- Talk with your children about how you give to the church, why you give, and how it makes you feel.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Make silver dollar pancakes. Let your children mix the batter, and supervise them as they make small pancakes on the stove.
- Do an internet search for “saving, giving, spending jars” and make a set together for your child or the family to use. For family use, take a specified amount each week to use for the jars and determine together how to portion it and what it will be used for in the different categories.
- Pray this prayer:

God, thank you for recognizing my gifts to you. Help me give all I have to you. Amen.