



JANUARY THEME

WORK IT OUT

Stick to the Plan

BIBLE STORY

Mark 12:41-44

Pennies from Heaven | The Widow's Offering

Spark Story Bible | pg. 342-345

The Widow's Offering

BOTTOM LINE

Practice living for God

MEMORY VERSE

"Training the body has some value.

But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come."

1 Timothy 4:8, NIV

LIFE APP

Commitment | Making a plan and putting it into practice

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **COMMITMENT** and God's character, as shown through God's big story.

Key Question: How can you live for God? We sometimes think that we only practice our faith when we are at church. But when you practice living for God, you discover that whatever you do—work, play, read, sing, listen, whatever—can be a way you worship God with your life.

We finish out our month in **Mark 12:41-44**. Jesus is with his disciples and notices how wealthy people are giving lots of money, but then came a poor widow. She gave just two small coins. While this seemed like such a small gift, Jesus says this woman actually gave more than the rich people because she gave everything she had.

Bottom Line: Practice living for God. We know that most of us love to sing and worship God. But worship isn't just something we do when we sing at church; worship is really how we honor God with our whole lives—through how we love others and serve them, how we give of our time and talents, how we obey and praise God, even how we rest. We want families to practice the faith skill, LIVE, and discover that worship isn't just singing loud, it's living loud.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Ask God to help you encourage kids to live for God in order to show others God's love.

•• **EARLY ARRIVER IDEA**

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: 20 Pennies

What You Do:

- Set out the pennies and invite the kids to stack, "draw" dot pictures, or arrange them however they choose. As they work, ask:
 - How much is a penny worth?
 - How many pennies do you think it would take to buy a pack of gum? a candy bar? a video game?
 - If you had only two pennies, what would you do with them?

•• **PENNY DON'T DROP**



Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Pennies (*from Early Arriver Idea*), empty leader bins, masking tape

What You Do:

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Make sure the teams are even, or assign one kid to go twice if necessary.
- Mark a starting line for each team with masking tape, and line up the teams behind it.
- Empty out your leader bins, and place them about 15 feet away from each team.
- When you say, “Go,” kids will take turns placing a penny on the top of their shoes and hopping on one foot to the bucket without dropping the penny.
- Once they reach the bucket, they must tilt their foot and drop the penny into the bucket and run back to tag the next person in line.
- If they drop the penny, they must return to the starting line and try again.
- The first team to finish is the winner.
- **NOTE:** If this proves too difficult for your group, allow them to walk quickly to the bins instead of hopping on one foot.

What You Say: “Great job! Quick, someone raise your hand and tell me how much a penny is worth. *(Pause.)* That’s right! It would take ONE HUNDRED of these to make a dollar. A penny isn’t worth much, is it? [Transition] In our Bible story today, we’ll hear/we heard about someone who gave a little—like a couple of pennies—and someone who gave a lot. But one of these givers caught Jesus’ attention.”

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children’s Ministry Worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

- **PENNY DROP** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: Chair, pennies (*from Early Arriver Idea*), plastic cup

What You Do:

- Place the cup on the floor behind the chair.
- Instruct the kids to line up and one at a time, kneel on the chair (facing the back), lean forward, and drop a penny from chest height into the cup.
- If they make it into the cup, play passes to the next person in line. If they miss, that kid has to answer a question about today’s Bible story. Kids can get help from friends if they need it.
- Bible Story Review Questions:
 - What was Jesus watching the people do in our Bible story today? (*Place their money in the temple treasury*)
 - Did the rich men give a little or a lot? (*A lot*)
 - Did the rich men trust God to provide all their needs? How do you know? (*No, because they still had plenty to live on*)
 - How much did the widow put in? (*Two small coins*)
 - Which of the two givers was Jesus most pleased with: the rich men or the widow? (*The widow*)
 - Why wasn’t Jesus impressed with the giving of the rich men? (*Because they didn’t make a sacrifice that required them to trust God*)



- Who did the widow trust? (*God*)
- What do you think the word “sacrifice” means? (*To give up something valuable*)
- Was the widow—who had very little—given a different command than the rich men? (*No, both were expected to give*)
- Did Jesus know the hearts of the people who gave? (*Yes, Jesus knows all our hearts*)
- What are some ways that we show we trust God? (*By obeying God, even when it seems easier/better/more fun to do what we want to do*)
- Why is it important to be obedient to God? (*Because God made everything, which means that the way God tells us to live is the BEST way*)
- Today we learned we should practice doing what? (*Living for God*)
- What are some ways you can live for God? (*Various answers*)

What You Say: “Jesus stopped to watch the people putting their money into the temple treasury. He wasn’t concerned with the AMOUNT that people gave. If that was true, then Jesus would have pointed out the wealthy people who put in large amounts of money. But he didn’t. Jesus pointed out the poor widow who only gave two small coins. But her gift proved that she trusted God to take care of her. She obediently gave all she had. Talk about living for God! We can live for God too by obeying God’s Word and trusting God to take care of all our needs. So my challenge to you is to make a commitment to **[Bottom Line] practice living for God.**”

[Make It Personal] *(Tell the kids about one thing you do on a regular basis to [Bottom Line] practice living for God. How does this habit or commitment make a difference in your life? Maybe you read your Bible and pray first thing in the morning. Maybe you tithe on a regular basis. Maybe you take time to journal on a regular basis. Share an example of one way you choose to live for God.)*

●● **A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create | An activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: “Penny” activity cards, pens

What You Do:

- Pass out one penny card to each kid.
- Pair up the kids and ask them to share one thing they could do this week to practice living for God.
- Instruct the kids to write that one thing on the back (*the blank side*) of their penny.
- After they’ve written their answer down, instruct the kids to switch pennies with their partners.
- Then gather as a group and let each kid share what’s written on the penny they are holding.
- Instruct the kids to return the pennies to their partners to take home.

What You Say: “You gave some great examples of ways we can all make a choice to **[Bottom Line] practice living for God.** I want you to take this penny home to remind you of the sacrifice the widow in our Bible story made AND to encourage you to take action as you make the commitment to **[Bottom Line] practice living for God.**”

●● **PENNY HOPSCOTCH** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Bible, “Hopscotch Memory Verse” activity pages, penny (*from Early Arriver Idea*), tape

What You Do:

- Select a volunteer to open the Bible to 1 Timothy 4:8. Then select a different volunteer to read this month’s memory verse aloud to the rest of the group.
- Lay the “Hopscotch Memory Verse” activity pages in a hopscotch pattern on the floor in your small group area. Consider taping one side of the page to the floor so kids don’t slip when they jump on it.



- Encourage the kids to read the verse aloud together as they look at the hopscotch grid.
- Line up the kids at the beginning of the hopscotch grid.
- Hand the first kid the penny and instruct him to pitch the penny so that it lands on one of the spots.
- Quickly pick up the penny and turn that page over so that the kids cannot see the words of that section of the verse.
- Encourage the first kid to jump across the grid and recite this month's verse, including the words that are now facedown.
- Play then moves to the next kid, who throws the penny, lands on a page, turns it face down, jumps along the path, and recites the whole verse.
- Play continues until every page is face down.
- Practice reciting the entire verse as a group from memory.

What You Say: "When you work on training the body—eating healthy food or exercising—it definitely has value. But when you **[Bottom Line] practice living for God**, it has value in every way for every part of your life! If you want to live the best kind of life, the best thing you can do is look at how God wants you to live. But it takes commitment. It takes practice. You don't get to do one thing for God and then you're done forever! You have to do it over and over. But the good news is, God wants us to do that, and so God will help us! All we have to do is ask."

PRAY AND SEND [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Kids' pennies from the "A Penny for Your Thoughts" activity

What You Do:

- Ask the kids to hold up their pennies from earlier.
- Give them a minute to pray that God would help them to make a commitment to follow through with what they have written as they **[Bottom Line] practice living for God**.
- Close your time in prayer.

What You Say: "A penny isn't worth a lot. But the gift the widow gave was the worth the MOST because it meant she trusted God with all she had. My challenge to you is that you will follow through with your commitment this week and **[Bottom Line] practice living for God**."

"Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we love you. You are an awesome God, and we know that living your way is the BEST way! Help us to follow through with the things we've written on our pennies this week as we **[Bottom Line] practice living for God**."

What You Do: Give each child a **GodTime** card. Sunday leaders, pass out **Parent Cue** cards to any adult who has not yet received one this month. Encourage the kids to show their parents the pennies and the ways they plan to **[Bottom Line] practice living for God** this week.