



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, create pictures with, 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 HOP

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”)

What You Do:

- Give each kid in your group a penny.
- When you say, “Go,” kids should place their penny on the top of their shoe and hop on one foot as long as they can without dropping the penny.
- If they drop their penny, they can put it back on their shoe and try again.

What You Say: “Great job, everyone! How much is a penny worth? How about a nickel? A dime? A quarter? Which is worth more money: a penny or a quarter? [Transition] In our Bible story today we’ll hear/we heard about a time when Jesus said that two pennies were worth more than hundreds—even thousands—of quarters!”

[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.

- **WHO GAVE MORE?** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Spark Story Bible, Pennies (from “Early Arriver Idea”)

What You Do:

- Read “The Widow’s Offering” to your group from the Spark Story Bible (p. 342-345).
- Put two pennies in one pile and 18 pennies in the other.
- Instruct the kids to close their eyes. Remove one penny from the pile of two.
—Invite kids to open their eyes and guess which pile is missing some pennies. Ask how many are missing.
- Play additional rounds, sometimes removing 1 penny from the pile of 2, sometimes removing 1 penny from the pile of 18, and sometimes not removing any pennies at all.
- During each round, encourage kids to guess how many pennies are missing from each pile.
- On the final round, remove 2 pennies from the pile of 2 and 2 pennies from the pile of 18.
—When you ask the kids to guess how many pennies are missing, they’ll likely first notice the pennies missing from the pile of two.
—Show them that you also removed 2 pennies from the large pile.
- Unpack the truth that even though the widow gave only a little bit of money, she really put in more than all the others because she gave everything she had.
- Read the following scenarios. Guide kids to give a thumbs up if the person practiced living for God and a thumbs down if they didn’t. (NOTE: Each scenario is thumbs up!)
—Jason got the best video game ever for Christmas. When his brother asked to play, he let him play as long as he wanted instead of just letting him play for five minutes.
—Sophie doesn’t usually let her little sister play in her room, but when her sister knocked on the door, Sophie let her in and played with her all afternoon. She even played her sister’s favorite games.
—Javier has a friend who didn’t get many presents for Christmas. Javier knew that his friend would really like two of his gifts, so instead



of keeping them, Javier decided to give them to his friend.

—Elaine loves cookies! When she went to the kitchen and saw that there were only two left, she decided to let her sister and brother have them instead of eating them herself.

What You Say: “Why did Jesus say the widow gave more than the others? (*She gave everything.*) Yes! Even though the widow gave only a little bit of money, she gave everything she had. She practiced living for God.

“How can you [**Bottom Line**] practice living for God? (*Pause.*) Can you share your toys even when you don’t want to? Can you let your brother play your video game for 30 minutes instead of for 5 minutes? Can you give half your allowance to someone who needs it instead of giving less? Can you read a story to your little sister even though you want to be by yourself?

[Make It Personal] (*Tell kids a way you’ll practice living for God by giving your time, energy, or money in a way that shows love and trust toward God.*) “So remember: [**Bottom Line**] Practice living for God.”

●● **LIVING FOR GOD** [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: Copy paper, crayons

What You Do:

- Briefly unpack the idea that living for God means that everything you do, everything you say, and everything you give is all for God.
 - Invite kids to talk about what it would look like if everything they did: helping set the table, putting their toys away, playing with their friends, they did for God. Would they give and do a little, or would they give and do a lot?
 - Hand out copy paper and set out the crayons where everybody can share them.
- Encourage them to think of one way they will do something for God this week, whether it’s how they help at home, how they play with their siblings or friends, or how they talk to their parents.
- Guide kids to draw what it would look like for them to do that thing as if they were doing it for God.

What You Say: “Living for God means that everything you do, everything you say, and everything you give is all for God. What is one way you can [**Bottom Line**] practice living for God this week? (*I can be kind to my brother even when he’s mean to me; I can share my video game with my sister for a long time and not just a little time; I can do what my mom tells me right away; etc.*) So this week, remember: [**Bottom Line**] practice living for God. It won’t always be easy, but with God’s help, you can do it.”

●● **VALUE FOR ALL THINGS** [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: Dice

What You Do:

- Read this month’s Memory Verse, 1 Timothy 4:8, (*found on the left column of the first page of this leader guide*) to your group. Repeat it a few times, inviting your group to say it with you.
- Invite a child to roll the dice. Here is what the numbers will represent: **1**-doing jumping jacks, **2**-running, **3**-playing a sport, **4**-riding a bike, **5**-swimming, **6**-dancing
- Invite another child to roll the dice. This time the numbers will represent: **1**-praying, **2**-reading the Bible, **3**-talking about God, **4**-going to church, **5**-helping my family and friends, **6**-hearing and doing what Jesus says
- Guide the kids to fill in the blanks with the activities rolled as you say the first portion of the memory verse. For example: “Training the body by doing jumping jacks has some value, but being godly by praying has value in every way.”
- Continue until each child has an opportunity to roll the dice.
- You can add pantomimed actions if your group needs to move!



- At the end of the game, guide kids to say the verse with you again.

What You Say: “What does it mean to say that something has value? (*It’s important; it’s valuable.*) 1 Timothy 4:8 says that training our bodies has some value, but being godly has value in every way. What do you think that means? (*Being godly is more important; being godly is better.*) Since being godly is so important, what are some ways that you can practice being godly? (*I can read my Bible, I can pray, I can hear and do what Jesus says, I can talk about God.*) **[Bottom Line] Practice living for God.**”

PRAY AND SEND [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Pennies (*from “Early Arriver Idea”*)

What You Do:

- Guide kids to gather around you.
- Give each child two pennies.
- Encourage the kids to let the pennies remind them to **[Bottom Line] practice living for God**, just like the widow in today’s story did.
- Close in prayer...

“Dear Lord, thank you for loving us. Thank you for forgiving us. Thank you for hearing us. Help us to live for you so that others would come to know your love for them. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

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 tell someone in their family the story of the widow who practiced living for God.