

Gospel Lesson for Older Children

Scripture: Matthew 22:15-22

In this season after Pentecost, we hear stories of Jesus' ministry in the world and our call to engage in that mission. This season is also known as Ordinary Time coming from the word "ordinal" which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The color for this season is green and it is often referred to as the green growing time as we hear stories of what God is calling us to do in the world, we join in that call, and we grow in our faith.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Once again, people who opposed Jesus and his message are trying to entrap him. This is the first of three exchanges between the Jewish leaders and Jesus. The lesson begins with them buttering Jesus up, and then asking a question that they thought would show that he was speaking out against the government so that he could get arrested. However, Jesus does not fall for it and calls them to the test instead.

Theme: Giving to God

Supplies Needed: Plain white paper bowls, art supplies to decorate with (tissue paper, markers, crayons, glue, paper shapes), plain index cards cut in half, markers, pens and/or pencils

Beginning: Welcome the children into the room and have them sit in your gathering area. Ask how their week was. Ask if any of them have coins with them and if they do – what do they see on the coins?

Opening Prayer: *Loving God, we thank you for bringing us together today. Be with us as we hear your word and help us to learn about how we can give to you. Amen.*

The Story: Matthew 22:15-22

In the Bible we hear stories of many people. These people are just like us, they eat and sleep, go to school and work. God has a plan for each of them, and in hearing the stories we learn that God's plan is for each of us too. Read Matthew 22:15-22.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder why the people were trying to trick Jesus into answering a tricky question?
- I wonder what Jesus meant when he said, "give to the emperor the things that are the emperors."
- I wonder what Jesus meant when he said give to "God the things that are God's?"
- I wonder how we give to God?

Introduction to the Activity:

In Jesus' time, you had to pay taxes with a coin that had the image of the Emperor, Caesar on it and an inscription that read "Tiberius Caesar, august son of the divine Augustus, high priest." The Jewish community saw this as offensive because it was saying that the emperor was a high priest. These coins bore the image of the emperor.

I wonder what bears the image of God? Allow the children to respond What bears the image of God? Human beings, creation, our gifts and talents

Activity: Giving Bowl

To help us remember the ways in which we can give to God, we are going to create a giving bowl. Each of you will receive a bowl to decorate and cards to fill in with ways that you can give back to God the things that are God's. Each day, on your own or with your family, you can draw a card out of the bowl and work to do thing that day in order to give back to God.

Before we begin decorating and working on our cards, let's brainstorm ways that we can give back to God the things that are God's.

For example: Give God time in prayer Give God time in helping others Give God part of your allowance each week by donating money to the church or another organization that serves those in need Give to God by creating something (art, poetry, music) that glorifies God Time Talent Treasure

Getting Closure: Invite the children to clean up the space and gather in the circle again. Invite them to share what they created or to share one way they thought of that they give to God.

Closing Prayer: *Gracious God, We thank you for our time together today. Help us to remember those ways in which we can give back to you and serve you each day. Be with us as we leave this place, and help us to remember your gifts to us. Amen.*

Matthew 22:15-22

The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor

the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

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