The Widow's Mite: Art Lesson


**Teaching method:** Use thin sheets of copper and an embossing technique (repoussé) to create artistic coins to remember the widow's gift.

**Bible Text:** Mark 12: 38-44 NIV

**Memory Verse:** 2 Corinthians 9:7b NIV

"for God loves a cheerful giver."

**Leader Preparation:**
Read the scripture for this lesson.
Read and reflect on the overview material provided for this lesson.
Prepare an opening and/or closing prayer in case you need one.
Gather the following materials
Art Emboss brand embossing metal: copper, cut into appropriated sized circles; one for each younger student, two for each older student
Base for coins: Round wooden disks - one per student (Purchased at a craft store)
Double-sided tape
Stylus tools (ball point pens, wooden sticks or plastic clay tools) – one per student
Scraps of felt (slightly larger than copper circles)
Scrap paper; pencils; scraps of copper (for practice)
Books with pictures of Bible times coins
Bibles (for older students)
For younger students: The Children’s Bible in 365 Stories

**Before Start of Class:**
Cut circles of copper: For younger students lightly trace around wooden circles. Cut out one per student. For older students cut circles slightly larger than the wooden circles. Cut two per student.

**Opening:**
Greet your students warmly, welcoming them to the Art Workshop. Introduce yourself and any other adults.
[Note: The Shepherd will be quietly taking care of attendance, etc. while you are starting your lesson.]

Pass around the basket used to collect any monetary offering.
Say: This month besides collecting any money you may bring, we are collecting canned and boxed food for the Canned Food Drive. Around Thanksgiving every year we collect food to give to people who are in need. There are people living in this town who go hungry because they don’t have enough money to buy food.
Say: Let’s start our time together with prayer. Ask for any prayer requests. Ask if anyone would like to lead the group in prayer. Be prepared to say a prayer yourself, working in prayer requests. A suggestion: “Dear God, as we think about being creative today in our art project, we thank you for creating us. We thank you for the many skills and talents you have given us. Help us use our talents to help others. Amen”

**Dig In:**

**For 1st and 2nd graders:**
Ask: If we want to read a story about Jesus, where would we find it – in the Old Testament or the New Testament of the Bible?
Say: Our story today is from the New Testament section of the Bible, where we find stories about Jesus. We find our story in the Gospel of Mark.
Hold open a Bible. Have the copy of the story from pages 332 and 333 in The Children’s Bible in 365 Stories inside the Bible. [This reinforces that the story is from the Bible.]
Read the story.

**For 3rd grade and up:**
Distribute Bibles. (Encourage bringing own Bibles.)
As: The Bible is divided into two sections, what are they called? (old & new testament)
Would a story about Jesus be in the Old or New Testament? (new)
What are the first four books of the New Testament?
What do we call those first four books? (the Gospels)
What does the word Gospel mean? (good news)
Have everyone find the Gospel of Mark, chapter 12, verse 38.
Remind them of the quick way to find the New Testament: dividing the Bible in half gets them near Psalms in the OT. Dividing the back half in half again gets them near the beginning of the New Testament.
At the beginning of a Rotation, have kids take turns reading verses 38-44. In the latter part of the month, start off by asking the kids if they can tell you the story. Have them fill in any details by looking up passages in their Bibles. [Please have everyone find the story even if they don’t need to refer to it – it’s good practice in Bible usage.]
Say: At the beginning of the story Jesus says, “watch out for the teachers of the law”. Ask: Whom is he talking about? (religious leaders, Pharisees)
Say: Jesus is talking about the religious leaders and how they make their religion into a big show. They are more concerned about themselves than about poor widows. They give money just because they want to get something in return – the best seats in the synagogue or to be recognized as important. Jesus says this is the wrong reason to give.

**For all students:**
Ask: People in the temple were giving gifts of coins just like people today give money to the church. Why do we give money to church? (allow all answers)
Say: When we give money to our church we are giving money to do God’s work.
Ask: Does everyone have to give the same amount to the church? (no)
What did Jesus say about the widow’s gift? (verse 43, her gift was larger)
How can her gift be larger than what the richer people gave? (allow all answers)
The widow gave everything. Where did she expect her next meal to come from?

Say: The women gave all she had trusting that God would take care of her. Jesus was saying that the amount of the gift wasn’t really important but the attitude in which the gift is given is important. Jesus wants us to give out of love and faith. Our giving should be a response to God’s love. To remember the woman who gave her last coins, let’s each make our own coin.

Introduce and explain the art project:
Say: We will be using a process called repoussé to make a coin. We will use tools to create an embossed design on a thin piece of copper. Spend a few minutes thinking about your coin. Decide what you want your coin to look like. You may use these pieces of scrap paper to plan your coin.

Pass out supplies – starting with scrap paper and pencils. 1st – 3rd graders will each receive one piece of copper. Older students will receive two pieces.

Remind them to keep their design simple.
Show the students how to use the tools by demonstrating on pieces of scrap copper.

Process Suggestions:
Give each student a piece of felt. Place the copper on top of the felt.
If desired, they can trace their design from the scrap paper to the copper. ( Might wish to tape the design to the coin.) Use a stylus tool or a ballpoint pen, to trace the design, pressing gently. (Not too hard or they will go right through the copper!)
Turn over the copper piece. Your raised design is visible! Rub this front surface of the coin with a flat part of the tool to stretch the metal, reinforcing the design elements. Turn the coin back to the other side to further impress your design.

Work both sides of the metal. Add texture to some areas, creating patterns of parallel lines, dots, circles, etc. Continue to work both sides to see what is possible

Note that if anyone wants to do letters they will come out backwards so plan ahead!

For 3rd – 6th grade:
When both pieces of metal are decorated, use the double-stick tape to adhere the metal to the round disks. Work the edges, pressing them over the sides of the disk. A stylus tool may be used to create a ribbed edge. Some trimming away of excess metal may be necessary. Watch for sharp edges – can create paper type cuts!
**For 1st – 3rd grade:**
Have them decide which side of the coin is the “right” side. Use the double-stick tape to adhere the wrong side to the wooden disk.

**Discussion: (while the students are working)**
Share some of what you learned in the Overview material about “mites”. Explain why this story is called “the Widow’s Mite”.
In the US, a coin cannot bear the image of a living person. Coins in Jesus’ time often had pictures of the current political leaders.
Show pictures of ancient coins.
Do gifts to the church always have to be money? What other forms can gifts take? (Time, talent, etc.) What sort of gifts can kids give?
The widow gave all of her coins, trusting that God would take care of her. Can you name a time when you trusted God and God took care of you? [Leader: be prepared to tell a faith story of your own.]

**Closing:**
Say: As you show your family and friends the coin you made, tell them the story of the woman who gave all she had. Jesus loves you. Jesus wants you to love him back. One way we can do that is to be hands, feet and arms for Jesus. We have learned today that our gifts can do this in many ways.

**Resources:**
Comes in 9.25 by 12 inch sheets. For younger students coins are one-sided ovals approximately 2.5 by 2.75 inches. One sheet of copper makes 12 coins. For older students coins are double-sided. Circles need to be 2.5 inches. One sheet makes 6 coins.
Hints on tools from an elementary art teacher: use tongue depressors cut in half on the diagonal and sand the cut edge to smooth it. These provide a point, short, and long flat edges, and a curved edge for tooling lines and shapes.

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