The Widow's Mite: Cooking Workshop

Part of a Lesson Set written by Carol Hulbert from: First United Methodist Church, 120 S. State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Adapted for Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Olympia, WA, by Beth Tobin in 2009.

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Teaching method: Remember the widow’s gift of two coins by making sugar cookie “coins” to share with others.

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.
Gather the following materials:
Pre-made cookie dough (recipe attached)
Bibles (for older students)
Parchment paper
Rolling pins
Flour
Round cookie cutters (Plastic cups work ok)
Zipper sandwich bags
Aprons
Items in kitchen: cookie sheets, serving utensils, hot pads, cups, napkins, and clean-up supplies

Before Start of Class:
Get out cookie sheets; cover with parchment paper.
Wash tops of tables.
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Fill a pitcher with ice and water (for serving later with cookies).

Opening:
Gather everyone around the tables in the kitchen. Greet your students warmly, welcoming them to the Cooking Workshop. Introduce yourself and any other adults.

Remind everyone what the M&M project is for the month: bringing boxed and canned food for the Canned Food Drive. The food collected will be shared with local groups that help feed the hungry.
[Note: The Shepherd will be taking care of attendance while you are starting your lesson.]

Say: We are going to be baking cookies today. We will save our prayer time for while the cookies are baking. Before we do any baking, let’s talk about what we are learning.

**Dig In:**
Say: Our story is called The “Widow’s Mite”. A mite is a name for a small coin. The story takes place in the temple – the place where Jewish people like Jesus would go to worship God. Instead of saying they were going to church, they went to temple. Just like us when we go to church, the people would give gifts – their offerings. In the temple they had special places where people could give their offerings. They didn’t use a basket to collect them like we use to collect for Missions & Me. They had boxes attached to the walls that were shaped like upside down trumpets – narrow at the top where they put the money in, and wider at the bottom.

**For 3rd-6th grade:**
Distribute Bibles. (Encourage everyone to bring his/her Bible each week.)
Ask: Where in the Bible would we read about Jesus teaching his disciples? (NT) What are the first four books of the New Testament?
What do we call those first four books? (the Gospels)
Have everyone find the Gospel of Mark, chapter 12, verse 41.
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.
Have students take turns reading verses 41-44.

**For 1st and 2nd grade:**
Hold open an Adventure Bible to Mark 12.
Say: Our story today is from the New Testament section of the Bible, where we find stories about Jesus.
While holding open a Bible, read verses 41-44.

**For all students:**
Ask: In this story Jesus is sitting in the temple and what does he see? (people giving gifts, widow giving 2 coins) What’s a widow? (a woman whose husband has died)

Say: In Bible times, over 2000 years ago, a woman relied on her husband to provide her with money for food. Women didn’t usually have paying jobs in those days. If a widow did not have a family to take care of her, she could end up poor.
Ask: Do you recall another Bible story we read last year about a widow who was poor? (Ruth)

Say: The widow in our story today sounds like she was very poor. She put two coins in the collection box. Some Bible versions would say she put in two mites, two small coins...
– and that was all the money she had!

Ask: 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.

Say: We can talk some more about giving while we make cookies. Today we have sugar cookie dough that we can roll out, and cut into cookie coins to remember the woman’s gift of two coins.

Have everyone put on aprons, wash their hands, and gather around to roll out cookies.

Dust the table lightly with flour, or sandwich dough between sheets of plastic wrap. If using wrap, wet the table first so the wrap stays in place. Supply lumps of pre-made dough and rolling pins. Have them take turns rolling out the dough. Cut with round cookie cutter (or clean cans).

**Discussion (while working):**
There will be extra cookies. What should be done with the extra cookies?
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.]
Ask the children to identify ways that people give out of faith to the church today. [Be sure to point out that money is just one way that people give.]
In Sunday School we hear about Mission and Me (M&M) projects. What do you suppose happens to the offerings that are collected from adults? (paying for heat, electric bills, supplies, supporting mission in Africa and the world, etc.) Wow, the church really relies on us to do God’s work!

When cookie sheets are full, bake for 8-10 minutes. Place the Shepherd in charge of making sure they don’t burn!

While Cookies are Baking:
Have students help clean up.
Gather students around the table again. If there is time, work through the Faith Journal Sheet.

Say: For our prayer time we are going to give each person on either side of you a gift – the gift of an Oreo prayer. An Oreo prayer is where the person standing between two people, says a prayer for the outside layers – the person standing on their right and on
their left. Before we say prayers for our outside layers we’ll go around the circle and do “Glads and Sads” (share something good or something not so good, from the past week). Pay attention to what your neighbors say – it can help you know how to pray for them.

Go around the circle and do the “Glads and Sads”. Then ask each person to offer a brief prayer for the person standing to either side. If they really feel uncomfortable they are allowed to “pass” but ask them to silently say their Oreo prayers – allow a moment of silence for them to do so. Then move on to the next person.

When cookies are ready:
Serve cups of water and allow students to each have one or two cookies. Have students help you put the remaining cookies into zipper storage bags so that everyone has a bag to share with someone else.

Closing:
Say: When you share these cookies with your friends or family, tell them the story of the widow who gave two coins. Talk about the ways your family gives gifts to the church, and to God’s work. Talk about how faith is important in our offering.

Resources:

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Attachment: Sugar Cookie Recipe

Note: This recipe was chosen and slightly edited because it is easy to manipulate -- not too sticky or too crumbly. It is heavy dough – good to mix with your hands! (Use of a heavy mixer, however, is suggested.) The dough for our lesson will be made ahead of time as it rolls better if chilled.

2 cups white sugar
1 cup shortening (NOT butter or margarine)
2 eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup buttermilk
3 teaspoons vanilla extract
6 cups all-purpose flour

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Roll out and cut into shapes. Parchment Paper needs to be used on the cookie sheets. Bake 8-10 minutes.