The Widow's Mite: Games Workshop

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Teaching Method: Play a game of “Wheel of Fortune” to explore ways in which the church uses our gifts to do God’s work.

Bible Text: Mark 12: 38-44 NIV

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:7b NIV “for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Concepts:
1. A gift is special when it is a sacrifice.
2. We should give to the church because the church does God's work.
3. An offering can be money, time and talents.

Objectives:
1. locate the story in their Bibles.
2. play a game to explore some of the ways in which the church uses our gifts to do God’s work.
3. discuss the idea that God expects more from those who have the most.
4. fill out a “Promises to God” card with their plan for serving the church.

Leader Preparation/Supplies:
- Wheel of Fortune Game Wheel
- White Board and Markers
- Paper and Pencils
- Puzzles are Noted at End of Lesson
- Bibles
- Skittles - For reward or motivation as desired :)
- “Promises to God Sunday School Stewardship Card” - 1 per child

Welcome and Introductions:
Greet the children and introduce yourself. Explain that in this workshop, we’ll learn about giving to the church and how the church uses our gifts to do God’s work.

Scripture/Bible Story:
Make sure the children know that the story is known as “The Widow’s Mite,” and that a mite is a small coin. (Even though modern translations don’t use the word mite, the phrase is still widely used, and they need to recognize the allusion when they hear it in the future.)
With fifth and sixth graders, you might let several children take turns and read the story out loud. With other grades, read the story to them or tell the story in your own words.

**Application:**
Ask: “The widow was giving her money to the temple, just as we give to the church today. Why do we need to give to the church?” (Because the church does God’s work, and that requires our money and also our time.)

**Grades 1-2:** Tell the children they are going to play a game to learn about some of the ways our church does God’s work. Divide them into several teams of four or five kids and line the teams up as above. Explain that they will take turns spinning the wheel and answering questions about things that we do in our church.

Have the teams take turns as described above, with the child at the head of the line spinning and answering the question with the help of his teammates. Award points for correct answer, no points for wrong answer. Either way, the spinner goes to the end of his team’s line and it’s the next team’s turn.

AFTER EACH QUESTION, talk about what the activity is and why it is an example of doing God’s work. The idea is for them to become more aware of our church’s activities. Be sure you don’t give the impression that any of the “wrong” answers are “wrong” things to do – they’re just not the correct answer to the question at hand.

**Use the multiple-choice questions at the end of the lesson plan, and add your own if you like.**

**Grades 3-6:** Explain that the children are going to play Wheel of Fortune with puzzles that tell ways in which the church uses our money, time and talents to do God’s work.

Divide the class into several teams of three to five players. Have the shepherd keep score on a piece of paper. Line the teams up and tell them they are going to guess letters to words and phrases that tell different ways in which the church does God’s work. Draw short lines on the white board to represent each letter of the first puzzle. (Use the list at the end of the lesson plan, and add your own ideas to the list.)

The teams will take turns spinning the game wheel, then guessing letters to fill in the blanks. Let the first person in line for the team spin and guess a letter. The spinner can ask his team for help, but he is the only one who can make the guess. Don’t bother with “buying” vowels, just let the kids guess them along with the consonants. If the spinner guesses correctly, fill in the letter(s) and award his team the points he spun for (don’t multiply by the number of times the letter appears). If he guesses a letter that is not in the puzzle, write it at the bottom of the white board; award no points but don’t subtract points. Either way, go on to the next team for the next spin. After spinning, the player goes to the end of his team’s line. One spin, one guess per turn.
Instead of guessing a letter, the spinner can attempt to solve the puzzle. If he gets it right, award his team the points he spun for. If wrong, award no points and go on to the next team.

Keep going until every child has spun at least once. If the kids are taking too long to guess, give them a 30-second limit and get the shepherd to time the game using the timer in the supply bin.

AS EACH PUZZLE IS SOLVED, ask the team what the word or phrase means, and how it is an example of the church doing God’s work. For example, ask: “What is Habitat for Humanity?” (An organization that builds houses for poor people.) “When church members help with Habitat for Humanity, are we doing God’s work?” (Yes, because Jesus cared for poor people and commanded us to love and help others.)

Reflection Time: Faith Journals
Gather in a circle and discuss: “In the game we thought about a lot of ways in which the church does God’s work. All of those things happen because church members give their money and their time and use their talents to do them. Some people have more money, or more time, or more abilities, than other people.

Look at the Bible verse on the wall. Let’s read it together. “For God loves a cheerful giver.” What do you think that means? Did the widow have a little or a lot? (a little) Yet what did Jesus say about her offering? (She had given more than the rich people because she gave everything she had.) So whether God has given us a lot or a little, we need to use it to do God’s work cheerfully.

Pass out the “Promises to God” cards (a Stewardship card for children.) Have the children think about how they can use their gifts to serve the church. Suggest that they think, “Do I have a little or a lot to give?” Ask them to think about being a cheerful giver. Then fill out the cards with their plan. Encourage them to share the cards with their parents. (This activity takes the place of Faith Journal. They will take the cards home with them.)

Closing Prayer:
Ask the children to sit quietly for a prayer. Thank God for all of our gifts and ask for guidance in how to use them to do God’s work. Ask for help in being generous like the widow in doing as much as we can for the church and for others cheerfully.
Questions (Grades 1-2)

Which of these things is something we do at our church every Sunday?
- a. Play soccer
- b. Worship (We praise God, pray, think and learn about how God wants us to live.)
- c. Cook hot dogs

Which of these groups of people helps us to worship?
- a. The Girl Scouts
- b. The Boy Scouts
- c. The band or choir (People use their musical talent to praise God and help us worship)

What is the name for the kids who light the candles during the worship service?
- a. Sopranos
- b. Acolytes (Lighting candles shows that something special is happening, helps prepare us for worship.)
- c. Ushers

What do we call the people who hand out bulletins and help people to find their seats before worship?
- a. Greeters
- b. Ushers
- c. Altar Guild

Where can you go to learn about the Bible?
- a. Sunday School (Teaches kids about the Bible and what it means for our lives. Kids serve God by attending and learning; workshop leaders and shepherds serve God by giving lots of their time to Faith Quest.)
- b. Chuck E. Cheese
- c. Disney World

Which of these is a special activity just for fourth, fifth and sixth graders?
- a. JAM Jesus and Me (Getting together, making friends and having fun is a way to share God’s love with each other. Also, sometimes the group helps the church with landscaping or does projects to help other people.)
- b. Cherub choir
- c. Vacation Bible School

Which of these is a special fellowship group for first - third graders?
- a. the PB and Jamers
- b. the Air Hockey Rangers
- c. K•Motion (Kids in Motion)
Which of these is a special group just for kids in high school?

a. Stephen Ministry
b. Meals on Wheels
c. Youth Group (Older kids also get together for fun, service, learning how to live as Christians.)

There’s a group in our church called the Caring Ministers. One thing they do is:

a. Cut the grass
b. Preach sermons
c. Call on sick people (They also take meals to families where somebody is sick, drive people to the doctor, and help out in other ways when there is an illness or death.)

What service does the Interfaith Overflow Shelter provide?

a. Drains overflowing sinks.
b. Warm beds and shelter for homeless women and families with children.
c. Shelters insects from storms.

Sometimes our church helps to support an organization that builds houses for people who cannot afford to buy a home, giving them a safe place to live. This organization is called

a. Meals on Wheels
b. Habitat For Humanity (Members of our church help to build a houses. The Sunday school offering was given to the Habitat organization last year.)
c. The Red Cross

One organization that helps homeless families is called

a. Interfaith Works (An organization that works with the faith communities in Olympia to give homeless families a place to stay. Gloria Dei provides shelter for up to 18 women and children for about two weeks each year during the winter. Volunteers stay the night at the church, collect the laundry to be washed each morning and provide snacks and hospitality to the guests.)
b. Faith Quest
c. The choir

There’s a place in Olympia where the homeless can come to eat meals. This place is:

a. Red Robin Restaurant
b. The Farmers Market
c. The Salvation Army - (Each Friday, Gloria Dei members cook lunch and serve it at the Salvation Army. We call that meal the Dei Shelter. Gloria Dei also gives money to the Salvation Army every month to help them provide services to the homeless.)

Missionaries are people who travel to other places to help people. Right now, Gloria Dei has missionaries in

a. Canada and Mexico
b. Tanzania (Through the Tanzania Teaching Foundation)
c. France and England
Puzzles to Solve (grades 3-6)

WORSHIP - We praise God, pray, hear God's word, receive the sacraments, think and learn about how God wants us to live.

CHOIR - People in the choir use their musical talent to praise God and help us worship.

USHERS - make sure everybody has a bulletin and a seat, collect offering and assist people as needed.

ACOLYTES - Lighting candles shows that something special is happening, helps prepare us for worship. When the acolyte enters the sanctuary with the flame, it means “Christ is the light of the world.” When the acolyte leaves with the flame, it means “You are the light of the world.”

SUNDAY SCHOOL - Teaches kids about the Bible and what it means for our lives. Kids serve God by attending and learning; workshop leaders and shepherds serve God by giving lots of their time to helping kids learn about God.

J.A.M. - Jesus and Me Gloria Dei’s fellowship group for kids in 4-6th grade. Getting together, making friends and having fun is a way to share God’s love with each other. When this group goes Caroling or helps with a service project they are giving to others of their time and talents.

YOUTH GROUP - Gloria Dei’s High School Youth Group who get together for fun, service, learning how to live as Christians.

MISSION TRIP - High school students travel to different places and help others who need help. They might help by painting some buildings, cleaning up property, providing games and entertainment for children or leading worship for kids.

STEPHEN MINISTERS - church members who serve as special friends for people who are coping with an illness, or a death in the family, or a divorce, or losing their job, or some other crisis or big challenge.

CARING MINISTRY - church members who call on sick people, bring meals to families when somebody is sick, help out in other ways like giving people a ride to the doctor if they can’t drive.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY - An organization that builds houses for poor people. Some members of Gloria Dei members work with Habitat to help build houses.

INTERFAITH OVERFLOW SHELTER - Interfaith Works organizes community churches to give homeless families a place to stay. Gloria Dei opens it’s doors to our community of homeless in need of shelter for 2-4 weeks a year. About 18 women, children and
families spend the night at Gloria Dei during this time. Many volunteers from our church help by serving as overnight hosts and greeters, supplying food for snacks, taking home laundry to be washed, and transferring supplies to the next church to host the homeless.

DEI SHELTER - On Fridays, Gloria Dei members cook lunch and serve it at the Salvation Army in downtown Olympia. Gloria Dei also gives money to the Salvation Army every month to support the services they provide to the homeless.

OVERSEAS MISSIONS- Gloria Dei sponsors several missions in foreign countries. Members travel to Tanzania every year and teach English to young students. Another member travels to Paraguay to provide support and supplies to victims of cancer. Several doctors travel to other countries and provide medical care to those in greatest need. The church sends money to the Maasi School for Girls and provides support for women in Africa who want to establish a sewing business. Many wonderful missions are happening abroad.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF - Health kits and school kits are sent to African communities for distribution to families and children. Many people in the congregation donate supplies for the kits and their energy to prepare them to be shipped overseas.

MIDWIFE KITS - Gloria Dei sends 1000 - 1500 midwife kits to African countries each year. Materials such as baby blankets, baby hats and onesie t-shirts, Ivory soap, and other supplies are gathered or supplied by members of the church and packaged up at a Mid-wife kit packing day. Three times a year 35-50 volunteers come to church to assemble about 500 packages for shipment. It is a wonderful ministry that saves lives.