

PRAYER TIME

We ask Jesus to help us discover what he wants us to do. What are we going to do to give joy to God and to others? We shall do a few things that only Jesus knows about. We shall write them down on two coins and we shall put them in the treasury, for Jesus, in the Holy place of Meeting.

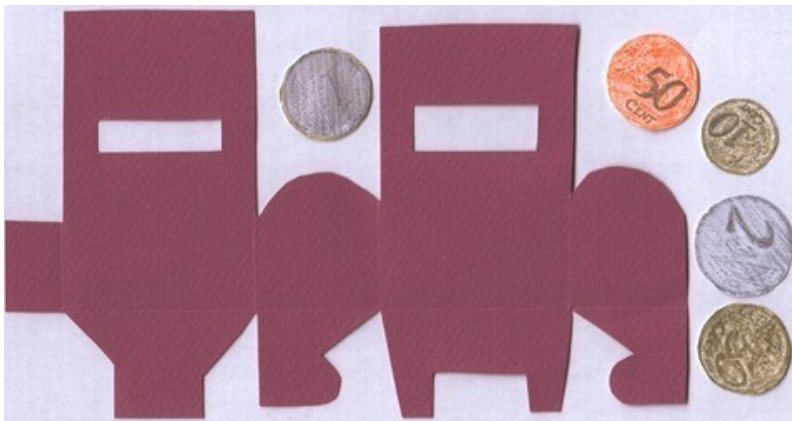
CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE HYMN OR SONG

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

The 'Acts-of-love Money-box'

The children make a money-box in which they put a paper coin every time they do an act of love with the intention of giving joy to Jesus and to others during Lent.

The coins can be made by placing paper tightly on top of real coins, colouring it and cutting it out.



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Session 23

The free gift of love

THE POOR WIDOW'S OFFERING

LORD JESUS,
The Only Son of God
You personally call each man
to follow you.
You invite us to enter into
the kingdom of God.
You reveal the fullness of the Father's love.
You desire the conversion of our hearts.

You announce salvation through your
Word and through many signs.
You await our response of faith.

You pray.
You invite us into a communion of love
with your Father and with our brothers.

**You give yourself freely in order to fulfil
the Father's plan of love.**

I give joy to God and to my brothers by my actions

THE WORD OF GOD (Lk 21 1-4)

Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box. He also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on."

CCC References

Preferring nothing to Jesus (2544)
Jesus' thanksgiving (2604)
Filial trust (2734-2741)
Persevering in love (2742-2745)
Serving others through the gift of self (1889)
Justice and solidarity (1939-1942)

Theme of the Session

Jesus, who knows the depths of our hearts, shows the poor widow as an example to his apostles. She gave everything she had out of love. She is like Jesus.

During this time of Lent, Jesus invites us to look at our life with his own eyes. For him, the tiniest act of love is the most precious treasure.

Lent is the time when we prepare ourselves to celebrate Easter: the death and resurrection of Jesus.

During the following weeks, we are going to discover why Jesus gives his life for us. In order to prepare us for the great feast of Easter, the Church invites us to see the world, others and ourselves as Jesus does.

Jesus invites us to take some time to look at our own life. We do many things, but what are the intentions of our hearts? There are good desires in us. What are they? The desire to know Jesus better, to love him more, to meet him in prayer...the desire to be like him and to love others as he does...Jesus knows all these good desires.

By showing us what the widow has done, Jesus invites us to think:

Do we know how to give? And what do we give? Do we give what we don't really need? Do we give things that we are not really going to miss?

Do we know how to give things away sometimes that we would rather keep for ourselves, things that we think we can't do without?

Do we know how to give some of our time in order to help out? Do we know how to share our toys and games, things that belong to us and that are precious to us?

It's a very beautiful thing to know how to share, but Jesus invites us to go even further. He asks us to love as the poor widow loved: to love in truth. Jesus wants us to understand that it is not the amount we give that matters, but how we give it. Not the quantity, but the quality. What matters most is the intention and the deep desire which is in the depths of our hearts.

What does this mean?

We like it when everyone knows about the good things we do, and we often expect to be praised for it. It's normal. Yet Jesus asks us to do good in secret, like the widow, without seeking admiration and praise.

Jesus respects the desire of her heart. He does not say anything. But he draws his disciples' attention to what the widow has done and to the beauty of her heart. He sets her as an example not only for his disciples, but also for us.



Your Word is a light for my life today

We are in the time of *Lent*

What is Lent?

RECALLING THE LAST SESSION

Jesus often prays in order to be with his Father and to draw very close to him. When they see him praying, his apostles want to pray as he does. Jesus reveals to them that God is their Father and that they can pray to him as his children, saying “*Father*”.

THE SESSION

Today we are going to learn how to see other people as Jesus sees them. Jesus does not see people in the same way as we do. He sees them as God sees them.

Let us prepare our hearts. Let us listen to the Word of Jesus.

Moment of silent prayer

Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box. He also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins.

What does Jesus see?

Let the children answer

Jesus sees rich people who put a lot of money in the treasury, which is like a big money-box. This money is used to build, look after, and make beautiful the house where people come to pray to God. This house is called the Temple.

Jesus does not only see the rich people; he also sees a poor widow. She lives in great poverty and she has very little money, so she only gives two little coins.

He said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them.



Do you agree with Jesus?

Give the children time to reflect

If we look at the situation with the eyes of man, the words of Jesus are really surprising. The rich people have given a lot more money than the poor widow. And yet Jesus always tells the truth. What does Jesus mean?

Let us listen:

“For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth.”

They have given from their abundance. This means that they have given what they don't really need in order to live. They will not suffer being deprived of the money they are giving! And what did the poor widow do? Jesus explains it to us:

“But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on.”

The poor widow did not just give what she did not need. She has given everything, absolutely everything she had to live on. She only had two small coins, and she gave them all away. Now she has nothing at all. Why did she do this? She is poor, and often poor people know best how to give. This is an act of trust and love for God and for others.

Now we can understand why Jesus says:

“I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them..”

Only Jesus could have said this. Only he can know the depths of our hearts. He knows in what difficult conditions the poor widow is living. He knows why she has done this. She has given everything out of love for God and for others.

The widow did not say anything. No one noticed her. She did not want to draw attention to her good deed. She only did it to give joy to God. Jesus also knows that she does not expect any praise for what she has done.