

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
Curriculum Outline

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4
Session Title*	The Beginning	Elias Helps a Widow	A Poor Widow's Gift	Jars of Oil
Scripture Reference**	Genesis 1, 2	1 Kings 17:8-16	Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4	2 Kings 4:1-7
Learning Objective***	Young people can know that everything belongs to God and that we are only caretakers of God's creation.	Young people can know that a good steward manages the time, abilities, possessions, and money God gives them.	Young people can know that giving an offering is an act of worship to God.	Young people can know that God provides all things in every situation of life.
Bible Verse To Remember	Through God all things were made. John 1:3a	God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7	It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35	God shall supply all your need. Philippians 4:19
Activities	See individual Lesson Plans			

* Titles for Lessons are taken from *The Beginners Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mission City Press, 2005).

**Scripture Reference for older participants can be read in *The Orthodox Study Bible*, and for younger participants in *The Beginners Bible*.

***See the detailed lesson plans below for specific learning goals for each age group.

LESSON 1: THE BEGINNING

Objective: This lesson will introduce young people to how God lovingly and masterfully created the wonderful world in which we live. All things thus belong to God. Recognizing that all belongs to God is the first step in acknowledging that we are all merely stewards, caretakers of God's creation.

Lesson Plan:

Arrival (5-10 minutes): (Younger participants) As the children arrive, have lots of stuffed animals placed in various locations around the room. Have the children walk around the room and tell you the types of animals they see. Ask them if they have ever seen any of these animals in real life? Ask them if they have ever been to a zoo to see all the different types of animals God has created. Name them.

Opening Prayer: O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who are in all places and fill all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell in us and cleanse us of all impurity and save our souls, O Good One. Amen.

Bible Story (10 minutes): Listen carefully as I tell you the wonderful story about how God created the heavens and the earth. When I'm done I will ask you some very interesting questions. [Read *The Beginner's Bible*, pages 7-13 (read slowly, answer questions, show the pictures); use cutouts of the various things God has created and put up on the board.]

Discussion Questions:

1. What was our story about today? (God creating the heavens and the earth)
2. Who made day and night? (God)
3. Who made the sky and water? (God)
4. Who made land and vegetation? (God)
5. Who made the sun and stars? (God)
6. Who made the sea creatures and the birds in the sky? (God)
7. Who made the wild creatures, tame creatures and the creepy crawling creatures? (God)
8. Who made us? (God)

Break Time (10 Minutes): Use this time for refreshments or to continue talking about Creation.

Today's Memory Verse (5 minutes): "Through God all things were made." John 1:3a

Today's Craft to take Home (10 minutes): Make a "God Created Nature" bracelet. Place 2" masking tape on the child's wrist, sticky side out. Take a nature walk and let the children create their nature bracelets by sticking grass, pebbles, leaves, flowers, etc. to the bracelet.

Closing:

Closing Prayer: Make the Sign of the Cross and say the Memory Verse together.

Teacher: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.
(If it is Easter time use the Easter greeting: "Christ is Risen!" "Indeed He is Risen!")

LESSON 2: ELIJAH HELPS A WIDOW

Objective: Today's lesson teaches us what it means to trust God like the woman did. Young people can know that a good steward manages the time, abilities, possessions, and money God gives them

Lesson Plan:

Arrival (5-10 minutes): Bring unpopped popcorn and popped popcorn. As the children arrive, show the unpopped corn and ask the children if they think it would feed many people. Then, show the popped corn. Share how a little bit of corn pops to make a lot! Explain how God did a special miracle for the woman to help her little bit of oil and flour go a long, long way.

Opening Prayer: O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. . . (see Lesson 1)

Bible Story (10 minutes): Elijah was God's messenger. He brought messages from God and helped many people, including the widow in today's story. [Read *The Beginner's Bible*, pages 206-208 (read slowly, answer questions, show the pictures)].

Discussion questions:

Why did God tell Elijah to go to a nearby town? (So a woman could take care of him)

Did the woman have flour and oil for Elijah when he came? (No)

What did Elijah promise the woman? (She would not go hungry)

What did the woman do for Elijah? (She made him some bread)

Did the woman's oil and flour run out? (No)

Why? (God provided oil and flour to make bread for her and Elijah)

Break Time (10 Minutes): Use this time to serve refreshments. Suggestion: use tortillas made of flour and oil. Explain how tortillas are made. Cut the tortilla into shapes using cookie cutters or scissors. Spread peanut butter, butter, or other items on the bread. It was much like this bread that the woman could make from here flour and oil for a long time.

Today's Action (5 minutes): Bowing the Head. It is a sign of respect to lower one's head. It is a way to show respect to God while praying. When our head is lowered we can't look around at other things and we can pray right to God.

Today's Memory Verse (5 minutes): "God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

Today's Craft to take Home (10 minutes): Bring paper plates to class. Let the kids draw food that they would like to have on their paper plate. Or cut out food items from a newspaper or magazine that you provide. Talk about how God took care of the woman and her son, and how He takes care of us. We are blessed by God that our food is in constant supply.

Closing:

Closing Prayer: Make the Sign of the Cross and say the Memory Verse together.

Teacher: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.
(If it is Easter time use the Easter greeting: "Christ is Risen!" "Indeed He is Risen!")

LESSON 3: A POOR WIDOW'S GIFT

Objective: Today's lesson focuses on the gift of money that a poor widow gave to the temple. It was not the amount of the gift that was important – it was, as Jesus Himself says, “the greatest” of all the gifts given. Why? Because the poor widow gave all she had. The young people can look at themselves to see how much they give for others as contrasted to what they keep for themselves. After all, giving back to God is an act of worship, a sacrifice from us in thanksgiving for all that God has done for us.

Lesson Plan:

Arrival (5-10 minutes): Have several coins available for the children to look at: a penny, a nickel, a dime, a quarter, a half dollar, a dollar coin. Talk about the value of money, and how one might be very rich if he or she had only a penny and someone else had a dollar. Money is not the only value in life!

Opening Prayer: O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who are in all places and fill all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell in us and cleanse us of all impurity and save our souls, O Good One. Amen.

Bible Story (10 minutes): Listen carefully as I tell you the story about a very poor woman who gave a very large gift to her church. When I'm done I will ask you some very interesting questions. [Read *The Beginner's Bible*, pages 433- 436 (read slowly, answer questions, show the pictures).

Discussion Questions:

1. What does this story take place? (the temple, like our church today)
2. What were the disciples of Jesus doing? (watching people give offerings)
3. How much did the rich people give? (a lot)
4. What is a widow? (a woman whose husband had died and left her alone)
5. How much was the widow's offering? (two small coins)
6. Why did Jesus say this gift was greater than all the others? (the widow gave all she had)
7. Did the rich people give all they had? (no)
8. How do we know that? (Jesus said they still had plenty left over)

Break Time (10 Minutes): Use this time for refreshments or to continue talking about the story.

Today's Memory Verse (5 minutes): “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

Today's Craft to take Home (10 minutes): Make a chart for each person with two columns. Have the children write or draw in the first column a list or pictures of all the things that they consider their own possessions. The list in the second column all the things they have given back to God as they thank Him for the things in the first column. Help the children to see that not only money, but service of time and talent are gifts to give back too. Decorate the chart with the children's drawings of their own gifts to God.

Closing:

Closing Prayer: Make the Sign of the Cross and say the Memory Verse together.

Teacher: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.
(If it is Easter time use the Easter greeting: “Christ is Risen!” “Indeed He is Risen!”)

LESSON 4: JARS OF OIL

Objective: Today's lesson will help children to see that God takes care of us in ways we cannot understand if we follow the direction of those sent by Him to help us. The woman in the story had a difficult problem in her life. She met a man sent from God, Elisha, whose direction brought a great miracle for the woman. How much do we trust ourselves or do we trust the counsels of God?

Lesson Plan:

Arrival (5-10 minutes): Have a jar (like a canning jar) filled with a very small amount of cooking oil. Explain what oil was used for in the days of the Bible (for lamps, for cooking). Explain to the children that the oil in the jar would not go very far. Have a second jar filled with oil. Ask the children to talk about how long that one would last!

Opening Prayer: O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who are in all places and fill all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell in us and cleanse us of all impurity and save our souls, O Good One. Amen.

Bible Story (10 minutes): Listen carefully as I tell you the story about how God through His messenger Elisha provided for a woman in great need. When I'm done I will ask you some very interesting questions. [Read *The Beginner's Bible*, pages 222-225 (read slowly, answer questions, show the pictures).

Discussion Questions:

1. Who was Elisha? (a man sent from God to help people)
2. Why was the woman so upset? (she owed a man some money and couldn't pay)
3. What did the woman own? (only a little oil)
4. What did Elisha say to do with the little oil? (get some jars and fill them with the oil)
5. What happened to the oil? (the little oil she had filled all the jars)
6. Did Elisha make the oil fill all the jars? (no, God did)
7. How did God do that? (We don't know; God helps people who believe and trust Him)
8. How does God help us? (He provides us people who can help us when we are in trouble)
9. Who are these people? (parents, priests, teachers)

Break Time (10 Minutes): Use this time for refreshments or to continue talking about the story.

Today's Memory Verse (5 minutes): "God shall supply all your need." Philippians 4:19

Today's Craft to take Home (10 minutes): Provide some white plastic containers (empty half-gallon milk containers or any plastic container that can be drawn on). Have each child draw on the container a line where a little oil might come up to. Then draw a line where the oil would come up to if the container was full. Have the child write his or her name on the container and decorate with whatever the child would like to remind him or her about God's goodness. Instruct the children to take the containers home and share today's story with their families.

Closing:

Closing Prayer: Make the Sign of the Cross and say the Memory Verse together.

Teacher: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.
(If it is Easter time use the Easter greeting: "Christ is Risen!" "Indeed He is Risen!")