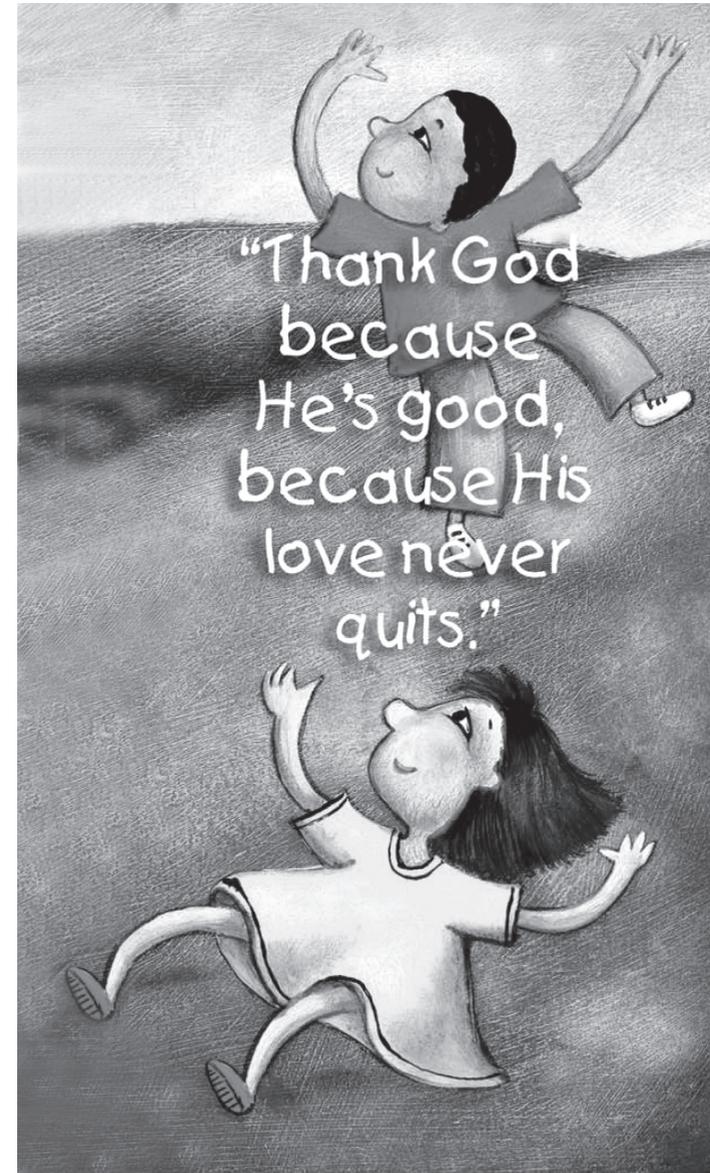


GIVING GOD'S WAY



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LEADERS NOTES

and over his shoes as he stood there at the door.

“I’d say your water pipes froze in the cold weather and the ice broke the pipes,” said the pastor.

“And now the weather is warmer, the ice has melted and this water is coming from the broken pipes,” said Dad.

“Certainly looks like it,” said the pastor. “We’d better turn the water off at the mains.”

The men went back outside and turned the water off. Then they went inside again, up the stairs to the attic to get the pears.

“You know something?” asked Dad, as he carried the box of pears down from the attic. “I think the water has only just started leaking out of the pipes. The carpet isn’t soggy yet.”

The pastor bent down and pushed his hand hard into the carpet. It was dry underneath.

“You’re right,” he said. “But it’s just as well we came when we did. If the water had kept on pouring out of the pipes, the house would have been flooded and the ceilings would have fallen down. Then you would have had a mess, an expensive mess.”

Dad shook his head in amazement.

“You know I haven’t been over here for weeks. The only reason I came now was to get the pears,” said Dad. “If you hadn’t come I wouldn’t have come over to the house until next week at least.”

“This wasn’t just a lucky chance,” said the pastor. “I’m sure that God put it in my mind to visit Grandma today.”

“And he reminded me about the tithe pears,” said Dad.

“Yes, God was looking after you and your wife and Ashleigh. And He used your faithful tithe-paying to save your home.”

“Amazing! Thank you, Lord,” prayed Dad.

Janet Rieger

THE TITHE PEARS

(A true story)

There was only one fruit tree in Ashleigh's garden. It was a pear tree; the kind of pears that could last all winter without going bad, if you stored them properly. Ashleigh's Dad stored them at the top of the house in the attic where it was always cool and sometimes very cold in winter.

Ashleigh's Dad was careful about the way he stored the pears, placing them so that they wouldn't touch each other or get bruised. There was only one thing he was more careful about and that was the way he counted the pears. He'd count 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and then he'd put the tenth one in another box. Why do you think he did that?

Yes, he was always very careful to give a tenth of the pears to God. He believed that God sent the sun and rain that made the pears grow and He deserved a tenth of the harvest. When the pears were all counted, Dad called the church pastor and asked him to come and collect God's tithe of the pears. Dad didn't have a car so he couldn't take them to the pastor. Every winter Dad tithed the pears and put them in a box for the pastor. Every winter the pastor came to collect the pears.

One very cold winter Ashleigh's grandfather died and so Ashleigh and her family shut up their house and went to live with Grandma for a few months to keep her company. The pastor had not come to collect the tithe of pears when the family went to stay with Grandma so they were still in the cold attic.

One day it snowed and the wind blew the snow into huge drifts. Ashleigh and her friends had snowball fights and slid down the hill on old car tyres. It was fun! The cold weather continued for a few weeks but finally the wind stopped blowing and the sun came out. That very day the pastor came to see how Grandma was getting on without grandfather. As his visit came to an end, Dad suddenly remembered the tithe pears still in the attic. They decided to go back home and collect them right then.

When they arrived at the house, Dad put the key in the lock and opened the front door but he didn't go in.

"Whoa, what's this?" he exclaimed. Water was flowing down the stairs

GIVING God's Way Tithing

Introduction

The Children's Ministries and Stewardship Departments are committed to helping children respond to God's love through tithing. There is a new and colourful tithe envelope for children. On the Sabbath that you give children the new tithe envelope (available free from your conference treasurer) we would like you spend your children's time in church worship telling the following object lesson or story.

The *Giving God's Way*, children's bulletin, which will need to be photocopied and distributed to each child, will help them understand more about their money and possession. It is important to introduce children to the concept of stewardship at an early age because values, attitudes and habits are invariably established before a child reaches nine years of age.

We need to let our children know that God has given us everything and that He has asked us to:

- a. Return a tenth of our increase in money and possessions to Him. Leviticus 27:30
- b. Share some of what's left with needy people. Matthew 10:8
- c. Spend wisely. Proverbs 19:17

Object Lesson

What Comes First?

Objects: I used a large vase that was heart shaped, box of chocolate, individually wrapped lollies, pretty stones (or any three things that are very different in size, as long as they can fit in with the concept of the lesson)

Preparation: Practice with the vase and objects, so that you can work out quantities of everything accurately, and so that you do not take too long during the story

Verse: Deuteronomy 14:23b 'If you give God a tenth you will learn to love and respect Him, always putting Him first in your life.' (JTV)

I have some things here today that are very important to me. They are some of my favourite things. Can you guess what my most favourite thing might be? Chocolate!!!! What about you? Do you like lollies? I have some lollies here too. I also have some precious stones, I love the colours and they remind me of God' promise to me, to look after me – the rainbow.

This beautiful vase represents my heart. And these things I have already shown you are the things that take up space in my heart – they are some of my favourite things. Do you think I can fit ALL of these things into my heart? Is there enough space? Let's find out. I am going to keep the chocolate until last, because it is my most favourite thing, it is special.

[Pour the little stones into the vase, then the lollies, commenting on how easily they fit in]. That was easy, now let's put my favourite thing in. [Try putting the chocolate in, it won't fit, so act like you are going to try squashing it in]. Oh no! My chocolate can't fit! Maybe this is not going to work. Maybe we can't have all three things in our hearts. But the chocolate needs to fit, because it is my favourite!

Let's try again. Anyone have any ideas on how we can make it all fit this time? Ok, let's have a go. [Place the chocolate in first, pour the lollies in around it, then pour the little stones in around them – gently shake the vase to encourage the stones to fill in all the gaps]. Wow – now look at that! By putting things in the right order, in order of how important they

are to me, we can fit everything in.

God wants us to do the same thing with Him. He wants us to put Him first in everything – He wants us to think of Him, talk to Him, love Him, thank Him – FIRST before anything else.

God looks after us. He gives us everything we need. He created the world and he owns everything. David wrote in a psalm that God owns all beautiful forests, all the cattle on the hills, all the birds, every living thing!!! That includes YOU! He also looks after everything He owns – He GIVES us everything.

Everything we have is actually God's and He let's us use it because He loves us so much. But He does ask that we let Him have some of it back, so He can use it. He wants us to give Him a Tithe, which is 10% of what He gives us. The best way we can show God that we love Him and thank Him for looking after us and giving us everything we need, is to give happily give back to Him.

The sad thing is that we often spend His money on the things we need and want, but when we finally remember we need to give Him 10%, we find that we don't have enough left for Him.

We need to show God our thankfulness by giving back to Him FIRST. He is most important, number one, and favourite in our lives. So we need to put Him first. By giving Him our tithe first, we will never forget or run out of money for Him. And just like the chocolate, and the lollies, and the stones all fit in when done in the right order, so will everything in our lives – IF we put God first and give back to Him 10% of our money.

[Give children ten 10c paper coins to practice making 10%. Also give them the tithe bulletin. Ask them to show it to you on the way out of church, and you will give them a lolly/reward relevant to the story.]

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