

## How Can We Teach Children to Give an Offering?

God asks His people to give offerings to Him as an expression of thanksgiving. This is one way we can honor God. It's also a way we can help the church of Jesus go forward in our own village or neighborhood, in our own country, in all of Africa, and even in the whole world.

We have already said that it is not NECESSARY for the children to give an offering in Sunday school. It is not a requirement, however, they may give an offering if the church approves. Many churches have found that having an offering in Sunday school helps teach children to give, and this can be a help to the church.

Here are some principles that can guide us in helping children learn to give:

### 1. First, the church must decide on four things:

#### a. Will the children give an offering in Sunday school or not?

#### b. If they do, what will they give?

(Money? Corn? Manioc? Fruit? Firewood? Whatever they have?) If the church feels that it will be difficult for the children to give money, they could bring some other kind of offering. Many churches ask the children to bring a few sticks of firewood or wild mushrooms in season, or anything else that they do not need to buy—things they could find in the forest or on the ground or could raise in their gardens.

#### c. How will the children's offering be used?

The children's offering can go into the main church treasury, but in can encourage the children to have it go into a special treasury just for Sunday school. The church could use their offerings to help purchase materials needed for Sunday school: chalk, paper, glue, scissors, etc. They could purchase their own lesson books. They could give a small gift to the teachers to encourage and help them. The teachers' gifts could be money, or the church could use the offerings to buy them pens, soap, or something else they need.

(If the church doesn't use Sunday school offerings to help the teachers, the children could do some work for the teachers to help them. They could bring them firewood or fetch them water, or look for food for him in the forest. They could weave mats or thatch roofing for him, or bring poles to help fix up his home. They could sweep his yard and help plant his garden. All these activities could help and honor the teachers, even if the church did not have a means to pay them or honor them with gifts.)

#### d. Who will be responsible for the money?

The church must decide who will be the Sunday school treasury, to look after the Sunday school offerings, give out money as the church decides, and keep records of all input and output. It is not good for the teacher to act also as treasurer. It should be another person, a faithful person who is able to count, add and subtract accurately, and someone the church can trust.

### 2. The children should give their offerings African style, without trying to imitate western ways. In many places it is something like this:

- a. Choose one song to be used week after week as an offering song.
- b. Sing and dance with enthusiasm.
- c. Children come to the front of the church in a line. Many churches sing and dance or sway to the rhythm of the music as they come.
- d. Teach the children the procedures your church uses, to help prepare them for adult worship later on. These rules of protocol can include things like which group comes first, exactly where the offering procession goes, how quickly it is done, whether dancing is included, in which containers offerings are deposited, which hand should be extended, etc.
- e. Don't drag it out or it will consume too much time.

f. Encourage children when they bring an offering, but do not scold those who do not.

**3. Do everything openly and honestly before God and before the church.**

Both children and their parents must understand the plan the church has decided on for using the Sunday school offering. Follow that plan exactly. If it needs to change, the church should approve the change. Do not borrow from the money without approval of the church. Keep exact records, and give a report in the worship service each week.

**4. Every week, use one minute to give a tiny bit of teaching about giving to God. Here are some verses that give good teaching that you could share:**

- a. God wants us to give offerings with joyful hearts. 2 Corinthians 9:7
- b. God wants us to plan our giving, preparing our gifts ahead of time. 1 Corinthians 16:2
- c. God wants us to tithe, giving him one-tenth of all He gives us. If we do not give at least one-tenth, we are robbing God and we will bring His curse on ourselves. Malachi 3:8-11
- d. God plans for our offerings to help His servants who are teaching His Word. Deut. 18:24, 1 Timothy 5:17-18
- e. God wants us to give our best offerings to Him. He does not accept worthless things as offerings. Proverbs 3:9
- f. Giving offerings brings God's blessing. Proverbs 3:9-10
- g. Giving offerings will not help if we have sin in our hearts. Proverbs 15:9

**LET'S REVIEW**

Tell four things the church must decide before children begin to give offerings in Sunday school:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**LET'S PUT IT INTO PRACTICE**

Talk these four matters over with your church leaders. Ask them to make a decision. Then write below what they decided about all four matters.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which teaching about giving is most needed by the children in your village or neighborhood? Write it here, and write out the Bible verse that goes with it. Then begin using this teaching and verse when you take the first offering.

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From your personal Bible study, begin a list of other verses that give good teaching about giving. Begin your list here, and add to it whenever you find another useful verse:

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