



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Resource Centre

Tricky Money Talk

Children's Story

Cycle A, Proper 24

Title:	Tricky Money Talk
Author:	Harold Schilk
Church:	Lethbridge Mennonite Church, Alberta
Text:	Matthew 22:15-22
Theme:	While we give our rulers what belongs to them, we must also give to God what is God's.
Needed:	A piece of paper currency, such as a \$5 note, a dozen eggs, and a Bible.

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder what the people who didn't like Jesus did when he gave them such a smart answer.
- I wonder if money can ever belong to God.
- I wonder if others can tell that we belong to God.

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Gathering Activity:

Begin by welcoming the children and expressing appreciation for their participation in this special part of the worship service where we worship from a child's point of view. Show them some money so you can think about it together. Draw their attention to the government leader's head on it and ask them the same question that Jesus asked in today's reading: "Whose picture is this?" Then ask: "To whom does this bill belong?" While some of the children might say that the bill belongs to you, the story teller, that is not the case (which might also surprise you, especially if you took the bill out of your wallet!). Show them the © **Bank of Canada** that is on all Canadian paper currency. Explain that we are allowed to use money to buy things, but the actual money belongs to the government.

Object Lesson:

Let's just imagine what would happen if we didn't have money. *Take out a dozen of eggs.*

If you were an egg farmer, instead of taking your wallet, you would have to take dozens of eggs with you wherever you went so that you could trade the eggs for a new book or a new TV set. Just think what that would be like. For some things you'd need a lot of eggs! And, think how heavy or gooey someone's purse or backpack would get if they only had eggs to trade with! So, it's good that the government makes money and it's good that your parents earn money, and not just eggs, by working. If there was no money, what would your parents trade with? Governments make paper money so that people have an easy way of buying things. Jesus surprised people who had questions about money a long time ago, so let's settle down to learn some more about Jesus and money. Maybe this time we'll imagine ourselves settling in on the laps of the disciples who were watching and learning from Jesus.

Bible Story:

One day, some people who didn't like Jesus wanted to get him into trouble. These people knew that many of Jesus' followers did not want to pay taxes to the emperor. (Emperor is what they called the government leader at that time.) Can you imagine people not wanting to pay taxes?! Well, people who didn't like Jesus asked him if it was good or bad to pay taxes to the emperor. If Jesus said that it was good then his followers might think that Jesus was more the emperor's friend than their friend, because the emperor wanted lots of their money for himself. But, if Jesus said that it was bad to pay taxes, then the emperor and the tax collectors might think Jesus was trying to stir up trouble against them. So Jesus was trapped! What could he say? He would get in trouble if he said paying taxes was "good" or "bad".

But Jesus was smart. He knew that money belonged to the emperor because it had his picture on it. *Open your Bible to this part of the dialogue.* When Jesus asked the troublemakers whose picture was on the coin they answered, "The emperor's." Jesus then told them, "That's right. Give the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and give God the things that are God's." (Mt.22:21) *Show them the place where Jesus' smart answer is written down.* What a good answer! Sometimes we forget whose things are whose.

But, what did Jesus mean when he said, "Give God the things that are God's"? What do you think? What bears the image of God like money bears the image of the government? *Wait for a response, then affirm, or add the following.* People are created to show God's image. We are to live so others can tell we belong to God. That happens when we love and share with others; when we live in fair, caring, and healthy ways. The people who were trying to trick Jesus needed a reminder that they belonged to God. Jesus really got it right! He knew what belongs to God and what belongs to the government. And, the good news is that Jesus can help us get it right, too.

Prayer:

Thank you Jesus, for your smart answer about what belongs to the government and what belongs to God. Please help us live and use our money in ways that show we are yours. Amen.