



God cares about what's inside

Children's Story

Cycle C, Proper 25

Title: God cares about what's inside
Author: Barrette Plett
Church: Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg MB
Text: Luke 18: 9-14
Theme: Bragging and contempt are less pleasing to God than a dirty appearance.

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder how these women felt after they gave their money for the offering.
- I wonder which person was listening to God's love on the inside.
- I wonder how the way we share our money lets others know what we are like on the inside.
- If our money talked about what's on the inside of us, I wonder what it would be saying.

Gathering Activity:

As the children come forward, show them two packages and ask them which one they think has better stuff inside it. Open the pretty one first. Then open the ugly one. Ask them which present is better. This shows us that we can't always tell if something is good by looking at the outside. People are something like these packages. In today's Bible reading from Luke 18 (show them the passage) Jesus tells us that we can't always tell what people are like on the inside, but God can. Our children's story will help us understand this idea. Let's get ready to listen to this story with our hearts, by getting comfortable and quiet, as if we were each snuggled onto the lap of Jesus and he was telling us this story.

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Story:

This is a story about two people. One person was a very famous woman. Everybody thought she was fantastic. She was very beautiful and did exciting things. She had so many friends that people actually worried that other people wouldn't like them if they didn't say nice things about her.

The second person in this story was also sort of famous. People talked about her a lot, but they didn't like her. She collected the town's garbage. Collecting garbage was important but it wasn't a fancy job. It was a smelly job, and her clothes got dirty. She often smelled stinky, like the garbage she collected. But when she found useful things in the garbage she gave them to people who were poor. Some people made fun of her clothes and the way she talked.

The famous woman was very rich. She was very good at pretending but she wasn't good at sharing. One of her friends told her it would be a good idea to share some of her money with poor people because then people would think she was really nice and she would be even more popular. She didn't want to share her money, but she agreed to try.

The next Sunday, the woman who was famous and the woman who collected garbage went to the same church. The woman who was famous sat as far away as she could from the woman who collected garbage. When the offering time started, the famous person took out a stack of paper pretend money that looked very real. She went to the front of the church and said, "I'm very famous and very important and I'm putting all this money in the offering plate to help the poor." Everybody clapped for her.

The woman who collected garbage put her money into the offering basket before she left the church, but she did it quietly. She gave the

money because she liked helping people who had less than she did. She put in \$100, but she had it in an old envelope, so no one saw how much she gave.

Later, when the ushers counted the money, they realized that the woman who collected garbage had given much more money than the woman who was famous and that her gift was fake because it was just pretend money. This made them wonder why everybody thought the famous woman was so much better than the kind woman who collected garbage.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for knowing and caring about the good in people who aren't popular. Help us see your love in people in the way they share, even when they don't look fancy and aren't popular. Help us listen to your love inside of us and share it in ways that don't show off or brag. Amen.

* Bryan Moyer Suderman's newly released CD, *My Money Talks*, would supplement this story very well. Available through www.smalltallmusic.com/.