

SABBATH SCHOOL

Level 4 • Unit 2 • Week 3

WE HONOR GOD WITH OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OBJECTIVE:

To show through the example of Abraham and Melchizedek and other biblical examples that we honor God when we give Him a tenth of our increase.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Say: One of the most important men in the Old Testament is Abraham. Abraham is called “the friend of God” (James 2:23).

Ask: Why do you think Abraham is referred to as God’s friend? [Answers may vary.]

Ask: Would you like to be God’s friend? How do you think we can be God’s friend?

Ask: If people give you a present, do you consider them to be friends who are honoring you?

Say: We’ll talk about this again in a little while after we look at what Abraham did to show he honored God.

BIBLE LESSON:

Do: Tell the story of Abraham. Have a map from a Bible atlas available.

Say: God told Abraham to leave his parents’ hometown and go where God wanted him to live. The culture in which Abraham lived was probably very evil. Ur of the Chaldees is here [show a map and point to Ur]. It was a pagan culture that didn’t obey God. Abraham obeyed God when God asked him to leave Ur. He had to leave that pagan culture to be able to follow God. It was a big test for Abraham to leave Ur; but God wanted to see if Abraham would obey Him and just leave.

Ask: What are some ways in which our culture refuses to follow God? [Answers may vary—not observing the Sabbath and Holy Days, keeping Christmas, Easter, Valentine’s Day, cheating, lying and also not tithing.] We must not take part in activities around us which are unbiblical or wrong. We must obey God.

Say: Today we want to see how Abraham honored God by tithing.

Do: Tell the story about what happened when Abraham met with Melchizedek, the one who became Christ.

Say: Abraham's nephew, Lot, and his family were taken captive by some kings. Abraham took his trusted men and saved Lot and his family. After that he met with a high priest called Melchizedek.

Ask: Does anyone know who this Melchizedek was?

Say: The Bible calls Melchizedek "the king of Salem." *Salem* is the Hebrew word for "peace." The word *Jerusalem* means "the city of peace." The word for peace in Hebrew is *shalom* and in Arabic (the language of the Arabs in the Middle East) is *sallam*. Therefore, Melchizedek was the "king of Peace." Melchizedek was the most important spiritual leader on the earth at that time.

Ask: Does anyone know what happened when Abraham met with Melchizedek?

Say: That's right, Abraham gave a tenth of everything he had confiscated from the enemy.

Ask: Why did Abraham give God's tithes to Melchizedek?

Do: Have a class member read Hebrews 7:1-10.

Ask: Can anyone explain what this means?

Say: God is telling us here that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek because he was greater than Abraham and was doing God's work at that time. God is always doing a work on the earth. The work of God today is being done through Jesus Christ and the Church. God shows us through these scriptures that we should be paying tithes to the representatives of Jesus Christ, His ministers, who are busily doing the work of preaching the gospel to the world as a witness. [A discussion could take place about what our tithes and offerings accomplish. Try to have some recent statistics from church announcements: How many *Good News* magazines are sent out, what does one cost, etc. Other expenses of the Church: ministers' pay, places to meet, Feast sites, summer youth camps, travel for ministers around the world who must go to more isolated areas.]

Do: Have a student read Matthew 22:21 and explain to them what this scripture means.

Say: Jesus was talking about money in this story. Some of our money belongs to the government because they supply us with highways, police protection and other public services. But some of our money is God's money. God, in fact, owns everything anyway. All the money and all other resources in the world really belong to God. He is very good to us by giving us the greater portion because He wants to share what He has with us.

Do: Have a student read Matthew 23:23 and explain what Christ is saying.

Say: Jesus is telling us that we should tithe to God. Some people use this scripture to say that Jesus was telling us we don't need to tithe. But what Jesus was actually saying is that we need to have justice, mercy and faith and also tithe.

Do: Have a student read Deuteronomy 14:22-28 and explain what this means.

Say: God not only wants us to give a tithe so that the gospel can be preached, He also wants us to save a tithe to enable us to go to the Feast of Tabernacles every year.

Ask: Why does God want us to save that much money for such a short period of time—eight days?

Say: The Feast represents a time in the not-too-distant future when God's kingdom will reign on earth. At that time, all people will know God, have a lot of wealth and also be very giving. Having a tenth of all we earn in the year to spend at the Feast, and share with the needy who earned very little during the year, reminds us of the riches of the future kingdom of God.

Do: Have a student read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 and explain.

Say: God wants us to be happy when we give money to Him. He owns everything but allows us to keep most of it. If we cheerfully give Him a little bit more out of what He allows us to keep (that's called an "offering"), He's very happy with us and blesses us.

LESSON APPLICATION:

Supplies needed for each child:

Graph paper

Pencils

Markers or colored pencils

Say: Suppose you did a job for a neighbor and earned \$2.50. Let's make bar graphs to show what part of that money is first tithe, what part is second tithe (to be used at the Feast) and what part is your money.

Do: Have the students make a bar graph to show the principle of tithing. Have them put a title on it. have them label the first bar "First Tithe (For God)," the second bar "Second Tithe (for the Feast)," and the third bar "My Money." Lastly, they can color the bars.

Ask: Remember at the beginning of the class, we asked when a person gives you a gift whether or not you felt they were honoring you as a friend? Do you think God considers us friends when we tithe to Him?

Say: We show God we want to be His friend by giving Him His tithe (just like Abraham); and saving for the Feast so we can go to worship Him and learn to be more like Him. We also show our love to God by giving offerings to Him. God tells us to tithe. Some people in the past said that it was not required to tithe. They might say, "I tithe because I want to, not because I'm told to."

Ask: Does anyone know how we might respond to that statement?

Say: My response would be, "Well, I want to also. But isn't it all right for God to tell us to do something—like tithing or observing the Sabbath and the Feasts—because God is God? And if God tells us to do something, we should do it because it is commanded; but also because if we love God, we want to obey Him and be His friend."

Music:

Sing "Thank You Lord," from the United Church of God hymnal, (p. 20).

MEMORY VERSE:

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."

family activity

THE POINT:

To show through the example of Abraham and Melchizedek and other biblical examples that we honor God when we give Him a tenth of our increase.

ASK ME...

Ask your child what he learned about Abraham in class.

Points you can help him/her remember:

- Abraham obeyed God when he was asked to leave Ur.
- If he was going to follow God, he had to leave that pagan culture.
- We, too, must not take part in activities around us which are unbiblical or wrong. We must obey God.
- Abraham tithed to Melchizedek as God's representative on the earth so God's work could be accomplished.
- We save another tithe to remember the wealth, knowledge and giving attitude which will be extant under the rulership of God in His kingdom.
- When we give, we must have a cheerful attitude.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

It is very important that we teach and reinforce the biblical principle of tithing. If you haven't already, set up a system of tithing for your child. For example, set aside a container or bank where your child can place two cents out of every 10. When enough money accumulates, have your child send half of it as tithe to the home office and save half for spending at the Feast.

MEMORY VERSE:

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