

A NOTE TO PARENTS

“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and give to God what is God’s.”

This famous saying, like so many of Jesus’ answers, does not attempt to give a specific, straight answer to a specific question. Instead, it challenges the hearer—and us, centuries later—to look at the question in a whole new way.

Jesus says that money “belongs” to Caesar because it has Caesar’s picture on it. This outrageous piece of logic suggests that money itself has no real existence, that it’s just a plaything the government has dreamed up for its own use, and the government is welcome to it all. By itself, this statement is crazy. It dismisses the whole issue of economic justice as if it were simply not a serious concern. But the second half of Jesus’ answer turns the first one upside down. “Give to God what is God’s.” Since God made us in his image, we belong to God. If we do, so does everything we have and everything we do. And since God also made Caesar in his own image, Caesar belongs to God, and so do all of Caesar’s works—including the economic system in his Empire. Jesus throws the whole question squarely back on his listeners: “It’s up to you. You belong to God; the world belongs to God; your money belongs to God. How are you going to give it back to God?”

Children can readily understand the idea of belonging to someone because you bear their name or their image. Remind your child that children belong to their parents: they have the same name, and often look like them. Make a game out of looking for signs of belonging: labels on clothing; family names on mailboxes or front doors; licenses and tags on pets; brands on farm animals; bookplates in library books; signatures on works of art or craftsmanship. This would be a good time to let your child experiment with rubber stamps or embossing tools, and use them to label some of his or her possessions (not to exclude others from enjoying them, but as a sign of responsibility and care). And especially if your congregation is preparing to celebrate Holy Baptism at All Saints’, remind your child of the seal of the Cross that we have all received at our baptism, marking us as “Christ’s own for ever.”

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Year A
PROPER 24
TRACKS 1 and 2

Jesus said, “Whose picture is this?
Whose name is on this money?”

MATTHEW 22:20



Caesar was the Emperor. He did not believe in God. People asked Jesus, "Should we pay taxes to Caesar?"



Jesus said, "You are trying to get me into trouble. Show me the tax money."



Caesar's picture was on the money.



Jesus said, "Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar. But give God what belongs to God."



Jesus said the money belonged to Caesar, because it had Caesar's name and picture stamped on it.

Jesus said that we are like that coin. Instead of Caesar's name and picture, we have God's name and picture stamped on us... because God made us to be like him. So we belong to God, and we need to give ourselves to God!



Hang a cross around the neck of each of these different people who all belong to God!