

The willingness to offer and sacrifice 27

Objective The confirmands know that God's work is built up on offerings and sacrifices which are brought out of love for the Lord.

Contents My willingness to offer time and money to the Lord.
Offerings and sacrifices are the evidence of our gratitude and love. They bring about blessings.
How do I offer and sacrifice? Our responsibility.
The various types of offerings and sacrifices.

1 Lead-in

Ask (homework) **What was required for God's work to develop?**

Listen to answers and supplement

God's hand of blessing directed everything. The following also contributed:

- the work of the pioneers,
- the activity of the Apostles,
- the commitment of God's children,
- tangible offerings and sacrifices of time, and
- many prayers.

Explain

Significant sacrifices were made so that God's work could develop. God's children made these sacrifices in faith and out of gratitude and a deep love for God. Our loving God blessed these sacrifices.

2 Sacrifices and offerings

Explain

We generally make sacrifices to achieve a certain earthly goal.

Ask

Why do we make sacrifices in our earthly life?

Listen to answers and supplement

For example, to

- become a famous athlete,
- secure a good education and profession,
- make it possible to acquire possessions (house, car, etc.),
- expand our knowledge in some field, and
- remain healthy.

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Explain	As New Apostolic Christians we also make sacrifices. Sacrifices which we make for God are more than deprivations.
Workbook exercises A and B	The confirmands do and discuss exercise A. Afterwards they work on exercise B together. Their suggestions are discussed and supplemented using the following explanations, if necessary.
Explain	Offerings are contributions or gifts which we bring to our heavenly Father out of love. They express our faith and gratitude.
Ask	As God's child what types of offerings and sacrifices can I bring?
Workbook exercise C	The confirmands answer this question by doing exercise C in their workbook. Afterwards their answers are discussed.
Listen to answers and supplement	<p>I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - give some of my free time to God and His work, - place my tangible offerings in the offering box, - do without those things which are incompatible with my spiritual life, and - overcome that which displeases God.
Explain	There are tangible sacrifices (e.g. monetary offerings) and intangible sacrifices (e.g. giving of our time). There are also spiritual sacrifices (e.g. intercessory prayers, endeavouring to do God's will, rejecting worldly offers). Spiritual sacrifices also include putting our talents and energy at God's disposal.
Ask	As God's child why do you bring offerings and make sacrifices?
Listen to answers and supplement	<p>As God's child I bring offerings and make sacrifices because I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - am happy that I am permitted to be God's child, - would like to express my gratitude to my heavenly Father, - would like to demonstrate my love for God, - want to keep God's commandments, - want to contribute to the completion of God's work, - want to become more and more like Jesus Christ, and - would like to be blessed by God.
Explain	Those who want to reach a goal must realise that for the most part they themselves are responsible for attaining it. This is to be clarified through an example: When a doctor advises a patient to give up certain eating habits, it is up to the patient to follow this advice. To be able to reach our spiritual goal we receive strength and help from God. However, we are also responsible for our own actions. The genuine desire to offer and sacrifice is part of this.
<i>Without effort and dedication there is no success</i>	
Ask	How can we offer and make sacrifices?
Listen to answers and summarise	<p>We can offer and make sacrifices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - voluntarily, joyfully, and to express our gratitude to God, or - reluctantly and without joy.



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Tell	The following examples found in the Bible are to illustrate the significance of having the right disposition when bringing offerings and making sacrifices. Abraham demonstrated his willingness to offer when he gave Melchizedek, the king of Salem, a tenth of everything (cf. Genesis 14: 18–20 and Hebrews 7: 1–2).
<i>Abraham sacrifices trustingly</i>	God expected Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Without contradiction Abraham set out for Mount Moriah. He was already reaching for the knife to kill his son when God's angel stopped him (cf. Genesis 22: 1–19).
Explain	God blessed Abraham richly because of his disposition. Abraham had proven his fear of God and willingness to sacrifice. As a result the close bond between God and this faithful man, who is called God's friend, became even closer.
<i>God blesses Abraham</i>	
A student tells	On his way to Laban, Jacob had a dream. He saw a ladder the top of which touched heaven. God stood at the top and promised great things to Jacob. When Jacob woke up he was deeply affected by this. He called the place where he had spent the night Bethel (God's house). Jacob made a vow: "Of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You" (Genesis 28: 22).
<i>Jacob offers reverently and gratefully</i>	
Explain	God richly blessed Jacob's offerings. While he was with Laban he became very rich. When he returned to his fatherland he could say, "I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies" (Genesis 32: 10).
<i>God blesses Jacob</i>	
A student tells	The Lord Jesus observed the people putting offerings into the collection box. Many of them gave very little of their surplus as an offering. A poor widow offered everything she had. The Lord Jesus regarded this offering more highly than the gifts of the others (cf. Luke 21: 1–4).
<i>The poor widow's offering</i>	
Explain	The Israelites offered a tenth of their harvests and were promised rich blessings: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it!" (Malachi 3: 10).
<i>God blesses all those who offer faithfully</i>	
	The Lord Jesus confirmed that it is good to give the tithe, or tenth part (cf. Matthew 23: 23).
Hint	There is one line that was left blank in Exercise C of Lesson 2 in the workbook. The confirmands are now to fill in this blank with the sentence: "These offerings and sacrifices are blessed".



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3 God blesses our sacrifices and those who sacrifice

Elaborate

The right heart's disposition

*Sow plentifully,
reap abundantly*

The confirmation teacher encourages the confirmands to ask themselves how they offer and sacrifice. Do we make our sacrifices joyfully, out of love and gratitude? It is worthwhile for us to earnestly examine our heart's disposition time and again so that we may experience the full effect of the divine blessings. It is well known that gratitude is the key to the heart of the benefactor.

Apostle Paul wrote: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9: 6–7).

The main points

I also want to **gladly bring offerings and make sacrifices!**

Homework

The confirmands do the exercise in lesson 28a in their workbook.

