

Fellowship of the Least Coin Skit



Scene: Mabel pours pennies out of a container and starts counting them. There is a knock at the door.

Mabel: Who is it?

Myrtle: It's just me, Sis. What are you doing?

Mabel: Come on in, Myrtle. Have a seat and take a load off. I'm just counting my pennies.

Myrtle: I knew it! I told you so! Mabel, I tried to warn you when you married that good for nothing you would end up pinching pennies and having to watch every cent you spend. You wouldn't listen to anybody, even me, your much wiser big sister! No! You were "IN LOVE!" You thought your "love" would change him. I told you he would never amount to a hill of beans. Didn't I? Now, just look at you! Having to count pennies just to, to --- what is it that you need? Have you been able to pay your gas bill? How about the electric bill? Are you hungry? Is there even any food in this house for you to eat? Oh, Mercy, Mercy! Mabel, what are you going to do?

Mabel: Myrtle! Myrtle! Calm down! I have money. All the bills are paid, and, yes, there is food in the house. We are doing just fine. Homer makes a good living for us, and we even have a small retirement account started.

Myrtle: Well, IF THAT'S TRUE - what in the world are you doing counting pennies?

Mabel: I'm counting these pennies so I can turn them in at the next Women's Ministry meeting for our Least Coin Offering.

Myrtle: Least Coin Offering? I've never heard of such a thing. What is that? Are you just covering up the fact that you're broke?

Mabel: Myrtle! (Sighs) Actually, it's called The Fellowship of the Least Coin. It is an organization that promotes peace, justice, and harmony through two aspects of the Christian life - prayer and offering.

Myrtle: I know the penny is the least coin we have in America, but why do you use THEM for this offering? Pennies don't add up to much. Most people don't even take them when I give them change down at the 7-11. They just leave them laying there. It certainly would take A LOT of pennies to raise enough money to amount to anything. Why don't you just write a check - that is IF you really do have money like you said.

Mabel: It is NOT a fund raiser! It's important that only the least coin of each currency be set aside so that even the poorest women of each country can equally be a part of this fellowship of love and care. It is a movement of prayer, peace and reconciliation.

Myrtle: Well -- okay. I can see how that would be fair for everybody. What do you have to do besides keeping your pennies?

- Mabel:** Anyone who wants to join this movement must make a commitment to spend time in prayer whenever she has a strained relationship with another person, and to hold victims of jealousy, hatred, violence and injustice up in prayer. Each time I pray for justice, peace and reconciliation, I put in a penny as a tangible token toward my prayer being answered.
- Myrtle:** Oh, you KNOW how much I believe in the power of prayer. I even carry a notebook around with me all the time to make a note to myself when somebody mentions a prayer concern. Then when I get home, I write it down in my Prayer Journal. It is amazing to me the number of miracles I have seen because of prayer. Remember when my next door neighbor was told she only had a few weeks to live because she had cancer? Well, that was years ago, and now she's as healthy as a horse. The doctor can't explain it, but I know it was because of all the prayers offered up on her behalf. I just couldn't get through a day without first spending time in prayer for all those problems.
- Mabel:** Yes, prayer is very important. One proof of that is the strength of the Least Coin Offering when individual Christian women from all over the world join together in prayer for the healing of broken relationships in families, communities, and nations.
- Myrtle:** But what about the pennies? What do you do with them?
- Mabel:** I take them to our Women's Ministry meeting; we all put our pennies together. At the Spring Regional meeting, our money is combined with the other local Women's Ministries. Then the treasurer sends a check to Church Women United in New York City, which takes care of the Least Coin Custodial Fund for the United States.
- Myrtle:** How much money is collected each year? Which country gives the most? I bet it is America! We're the best at everything. I'm Proud To Be An American!!
- Mabel:** Well, I don't know about that. They never tell how much each country collects - only the total sum collected each year. That way, no one country is able to brag, or be embarrassed about their offering.
- Myrtle:** Who thought this up and got it started?
- Mabel:** The idea for the Fellowship of the Least Coin came as a vision from God to a lady in India. In 1956 she was part of a Pacific Mission Team. There were seven women from different countries traveling in Asia after World War II. Right in the middle of the trip, she was refused a visa to Korea. While she waited in the Philippines, she thought about what she had seen in the war-torn countries of Asia and all the things that kept women apart. When she was able to join the team again, she suggested that prayer could overcome all those barriers. She challenged Christian women of Asia and the Presbyterian Church of the U.S. to start a project of Christian prayer and positive action in which every woman could participate. Every time a woman prayed she was to set aside a "least coin" of her currency. That encouraged the women of the team to show their unity, in Christian faith, regardless of their country or financial circumstances.
- Myrtle:** That's interesting! 1956. Hey, that was almost 50 years ago.
- Mabel:** Yeah, and in 1996 women from more than 80 countries around the world celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

Myrtle: It will be interesting to see how many participate in the Golden Anniversary in 2006.

Mabel: Every time I think about it I get excited! I can hardly wait.

Myrtle: In this day and age, everything HAS to have a symbol, logo, or something for easy identification. What's theirs?

Mabel: It's a lotus flower formed by praying hands.

Myrtle: A what?? Who in the world came up with an idea like that?

Mabel: Some lady from Hong Kong. I think she was the first Chairperson of the very first Assembly of the Asian Church Women's Conference. The actual design was done by her brother-in-law, who was a commercial artist. I think I have a picture of it here somewhere. Here it is.

Myrtle: Well, that's certainly different. (Thoughtful pause) And just what do they do with all the pennies collected each year?

Mabel: Each year an amazing variety of projects suggestions from all over the world are reviewed by an International Committee, and 35 to 50 grants to are approved.

Myrtle: How in the world do they select the projects? I'm sure there are hundreds of requests for these grants each year. How do they know the ones that are selected are worthy?

Mabel: First the applicants have to have tried to raise funds themselves so it is not just a handout. Then, they are selected on the basis of what will help women and children have a better life. Such as programs of literacy, health, social concerns and leadership development; and sometimes disaster relief . The grants normally are no more than \$6,000 in U.S. money; they are different each year, and they are not given to build buildings. I remember one project in 1996 that particularly touched me. It was an Australian project to provide refugee women with an opportunity to learn to use electric sewing machines and to sew clothing and other household items for their families, helping them get a job. They practiced English as they learned to adapt to Australian society. I tend to forget how fortunate we are here in America. We take for granted all sorts of opportunities that others don't have.

Myrtle: This is SO exciting! Is it just a Women's Ministry thing? If not, how can I get involved?

Mabel: Every woman can participate. What makes it so good is that it is so simple, but important. It brings Christian women together in a fellowship of prayer regardless of race, nationality, culture or church membership. Women of the world are bound together by giving their "least coins." The offering is special because, whether they are rich or poor, educated or illiterate, urban or rural, all give only the smallest coin of their currency.

Myrtle: Our church has Stewardship programs, but I've never heard of this before. This sounds like it is more than just Stewardship of money. Right??

Mabel: It's stewardship of both money and ideas. It is a sharing of prayer, sharing of love and concern, sharing the spirit of justice and peace for women all over the world, as well as sharing of the "least coin." When "least coins" are put together, along with the individual

prayers offered by members around the world, they become a powerful force in bringing about justice, harmony, and peace. The coins are just a tangible symbol of our prayers. When these “least coins” are viewed as tokens of love they teach us to be humble, to value even the smallest thing, and to trust that nothing is impossible for God.

Myrtle: I’m proud of the Christian woman that you’ve become. One that believes in the power of prayer and that even the small things can be used by God! I’m really sorry for the way I acted when I saw you counting your “least coins.” I just didn’t know about this and didn’t understand. Now I do. Will you forgive me?

Mabel: Of course, I forgive you. We are sisters after all. I have to love you even if we don’t always agree. (Laughs) Seriously, I’m glad we are both Christian women. That gives us more than earthly family in common.

Myrtle: You know, I would like to share this with the ladies at my church. I don’t think they know about it. Do you have something I can take and show to them? I would love to start a Least Coin Offering there.

Mabel: Here, take this pamphlet. (Hands one to her) You can also order copies of the Circle of Prayer, a booklet of meditations and prayers by women around the world from Church Women United. I always like to repeat the Prayer of The Fellowship of The Least Coin after I count my pennies. I have a copy of that, too. Why don’t you join me?

Myrtle: I think I would like that very much. Let me see if I have any pennies to add to yours. (Looks in purse and adds a few coins.)

(Have ladies bring offering before prayer)

Prayer of the Fellowship of the Least Coin

**O Loving Creator, we present ourselves in your divine presence
to thank You for all the bountiful gifts of life.**

**We are especially grateful for the fellowship of the Least Coin
which binds us together in love and forgiveness around the globe.**

Free us from all doubts and prejudices, we pray.

**Inspire us to live in solidarity with humankind that we may
know the joy of giving and receiving.**

**Dear God, accept this Least Coin “Token of Love.” Make us mindful of the miracles of these
coins. Let us honour your creation with love, as shown through the life and resurrection of
your son, Jesus, the Christ. Amen.**

Mabel: Now, let’s go into the kitchen. (They get up and walk away -) Homer will be home soon, and we can talk while I cook supper. We got so involved in talking about my Least Coin Offering, I forgot to ask; why did you come over today? Do YOU need money? (Laughs)

(Written by Sidney Milton, Covenant Region, 2005)