



Tithing or Ice Cream?



Katy could pay it back later, couldn't she?

By Mikaela Wilkins
(Based on a true story)

This story took place in the USA.

Katy and her brother Christian set their bikes on the grass.

"Want to get ice cream at the store?" Christian asked.

"Yes!" Katy said. It was hot outside, and biking was hard work. Ice cream sounded perfect!

Katy ran inside. She found the little bag where she kept her money. When she opened it, she frowned. She didn't have enough money for ice cream.

Then she glanced at the jar of money on her shelf. She kept her tithing money there to give to the bishop. There was enough money for ice cream in there!

Katy took some money from her tithing jar. Then she and Christian hurried to the store and picked the flavors they wanted. Katy felt a little guilty as she licked her chocolate ice-cream cone. But she hadn't taken very much money. She could pay it back later.

A few weeks later, Katy went to get ice cream again. She still didn't have enough money, so she took a little more from her tithing jar. *I'll pay this back too*, she told herself.

Katy kept taking money from her tithing jar. She always promised to pay it back. But it got hard to remember how much she had taken. And she didn't have enough money to replace it.

Soon it was time for her family's tithing interview. They would meet with Bishop Leavitt. He would ask each of them if they had paid a full tithing on all the money they earned that year.

That Sunday, Katy put the rest of her tithing money in an envelope and gave it to the bishop. But she knew it wasn't enough. Her stomach felt sick.

Later, Katy's family sat together in Bishop Leavitt's office.

"Are you a full-tithe payer?" Bishop Leavitt asked Christian.

"Yes!" Christian said.

Katy shifted in her chair. Would it be OK to tell him that she was a full-tithe payer too? She hadn't paid all her tithing *yet*, but she was going to!

"Are you a full-tithe payer?" Bishop Leavitt asked Katy.

Katy looked down. It would be wrong to lie.

"No," she said quietly. "I used some of my tithing money to buy ice cream."

"I know Heavenly Father is grateful for the tithing you did pay. And when we make a wrong choice, we can repent and try to do better." Bishop Leavitt smiled at Katy. "I know you will try to pay all your tithing in the future."

Katy nodded. She wanted to be a full-tithe payer!

The next time she earned some money, Katy put 10 percent in her tithing jar. Then she put in a little more. *Is this enough to replace what I took?* she wondered. She added even more, just in case.

But she still felt guilty. Maybe she could pay even more tithing until she felt she had replaced it all. She put her head in her hands.

Mom came into the room. "What's wrong?"

Katy sighed. "I don't know how much tithing I need to pay to make up for what I spent."

Mom gave Katy a hug. "I'm glad you want to fix your mistake," she said. "But sometimes we just need to start where we are and try again. Heavenly Father will forgive us when we do our best to repent."

Was that true? Even for her tithing mistake?

When Mom left, Katy prayed. "Heavenly Father, I'm sorry that I didn't pay all my tithing. I want to pay it back, but I don't know how much I owe. Will You forgive me and let me start over and try again?"

Katy felt peaceful. It felt good to ask for forgiveness. She knew that Heavenly Father would help her do better from then on! ●