

The BLUE Beads

By Rachael Lewis

(Based on a true story)

*I want to be kind to ev'ryone, for that is right, you see.
So I say to myself, "Remember this: kindness begins with
me" (Children's Songbook, 145).*

It was Claire's favorite part of the school day—show-and-tell. Today it was Jackie's and Michael's turn. Jackie went to the front of the classroom and held up

a snow globe. Its base was covered with flowers, and inside a carousel horse seemed to float in a sea of sparkles. Jackie said that her grandmother gave her this special gift for her eighth birthday. She carefully cranked the key at the bottom of the globe, and the class "ooed" and "aahed" as a beautiful tune played.





Jackie smiled and sat down. Then Michael came forward, empty-handed. Michael didn't talk a lot, and he seemed sad most of the time. A few of the children snickered as Michael went to the front. Claire felt a knot in her stomach. She felt sorry for Michael.

Michael dug his hand into his pocket and pulled out a tiny wooden turtle. "This turtle is from my dad," Michael said softly. "He's in the military, and I haven't seen him for a long time. He sent this to me from Hawaii." Michael looked down for a moment, then said firmly, "It's very special to me." The class was quiet as Michael went back to his seat.

All day, Claire thought about Michael. She thought about how she would feel if her dad were gone for a long time.

When school ended, Claire got on the bus. She sat across from Michael. She watched him play with his precious turtle. She wanted to talk to him, but she didn't know what to say. As Michael was getting off the bus, Claire noticed that his turtle was still on the seat. She jumped up, grabbed the turtle, and hurried to the door.

"Michael," she called. "You forgot your turtle!"

Michael looked surprised. "Thanks," he said.



The next day, Michael sat behind Claire on the bus. Claire smiled at him, and he smiled back. When Claire got home, she discovered a plastic bag in a pocket on her backpack. Inside the bag were a note and a pretty blue necklace. The note said,

Dear Claire,

Thank you so much for returning Michael's turtle.

It reminds him of his dad, so he takes it with him everywhere. It takes an honest person to return something that is lost. This is a necklace that Michael's father sent from Hawaii. I want you to have it. Thank you again.

Mrs. Clark (Michael's mother)

Claire is now an adult and has children of her own. She still has the necklace of blue beads. Each time she wears it, she remembers the warm feeling that comes from being a friend and being honest.

Claire put the necklace on and admired the blue beads. Her whole body seemed to fill up with warmth. For the rest of the year, Claire talked more with Michael and they became friends. ◆

How now?

Look at my toy honu!

Honu. It's Hawaiian for turtle!