

TRADING for a Smile

By Hilary Watkins Lemon
(Based on a true story)

*Remember this: kindness begins with me
(Children's Songbook, 145).*

You're up early," Mom said as she walked into the kitchen. It was the day of the trade fair, and I had gotten up a little earlier than usual to make sure I was ready to go.

"I'm just checking my ornaments," I said. I opened a paper sack on the table and counted my handmade Christmas wreath ornaments. I had been working on them for a month, ever since Mrs. Moore announced that we would have a trade fair to practice what we had learned about supply and demand and bartering.





I hoped my ornaments would be a hit with my classmates!

When I arrived at school, my classmates had boxes and bags of their trade items. I looked around the room as they set out their goods: Suzelle had woven pot holders, Mark had made key chains out of hemp cord and silver charms, and Kylie had hammered together some bark to make boxes.

“I can’t wait to start trading,” I said to Jason, who was setting out some of the colorful balls he had made from balloons filled with sand. “Everyone brought really cool stuff to trade.”

“Yeah, except for Lucas,” Jason said.

I looked at Lucas’s desk. He was setting out a few rocks that were different colors. It looked like he had gotten some rocks from his yard and drawn on them with markers.

“Think anyone will trade with him?” I asked quietly.

“No!” Jason laughed. And he was right. I noticed that Kylie’s boxes were gone right away. My ornaments were pretty popular too. About halfway through the trade fair I only had two ornaments left.

I also saw that no one had traded with Lucas for any of his rocks. It seemed like he was trying to shrink or just disappear. I felt bad for him, but what could I do?

“He should have put more effort into it,” I thought. “If he had set aside more time to get ready for the trade

fair, he wouldn’t have this problem.” But I kept watching Lucas, hoping someone would trade with him.

It wasn’t long before Mrs. Moore said, “All right, everyone. Five more minutes to finish your trading.”

Lucas’s shoulders slumped. I knew he was feeling terrible. I also knew what I had to do.

“Lucas,” I said, “I’d like to swap one of my ornaments for two of your rocks. Would you like to trade?”

Lucas smiled a little and let me pick out two rocks. I handed him one of my wreath ornaments.

As we cleaned up the trade fair, I was sad that no one else had traded with Lucas. But I felt good because I had tried to include Lucas, and I had made him smile. It felt so good that I wanted to make him smile again. Maybe we could play basketball at lunch or hang out after school.

I smiled too as I looked at the rocks on my desk. They had started to look kind of nice to me. ♦

“I will seek good friends and treat others kindly.”

My Gospel Standards

