



TITLE: LOST AND FOUND

BOOK: Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul 2

PAGE: 279

TIME TO READ: 6 minutes

TOPICS: **Making Choices**
Living and learning
Acting with kindness

AGE LEVEL: Grades 1 and up

SYNOPSIS: A twelve-year-old finds \$1,000 in a secondhand nightstand. He decides to return it to the store to find the owners.

NOTES TO TEACHER:

As educators, we instill societal values in our students mostly by the examples we set on a daily basis. This is a good reinforcement for “doing the right thing” at any age!

You might choose to focus on the decision-making aspect of this story. For worksheets and practice skills on making decisions, go to the Appendix, pages 348–353.

Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul 2, Lost and Found

ELEMENTARY:

PRE-QUESTIONS:

If you found \$1,000, what would you do with it?

Explain.

Have you ever “found” something?

Describe what you thought at the time, and what you did.

Read Story

POST-QUESTIONS:

Describe what happened when Antonio went to paint the desk.

What does “finders keepers, losers weepers” mean to you?

Why do you think Antonio decided not to buy a bike with this money?

How do you think Antonio felt in returning the money to the owners?

After hearing this story, would you do anything differently if you found something now?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

Using paper plates, make a story board of masks showing the feelings and emotions of the characters in the story:

- **Antonio, when he found the money.**
- **Antonio, when he was undecided about what to do.**
- **Antonio and his family, when he told them he was giving back the money.**
- **The surprised faces of the store owners when he returned the money.**
- **The thrilled faces of the family who got their money back.**

Lost and Found

The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out.

Thomas B. Macaulay

It was my twelfth birthday, and what I really wanted most was a new bicycle. A blue low-rider with fat tires. But I knew that my family couldn't afford one. My parents said that I should be happy that I had a bicycle at all—if you can call that rickety old thing that I owned a bike.

A new bike was just a dream, so I settled for a nightstand. I figured that at least I would have a safe place to keep my private stuff, away from the reach of my pesky younger brothers. So I asked my parents for a nightstand with lockable drawers. And that's what I got.

We went to the secondhand furniture store and found an old, dark brown nightstand. It didn't look too cool, but at least it had drawers that I could keep locked. I decided that I would paint it and glue some stickers on it to make it look better.

After we took it home, I was getting ready to paint it. When I pulled the drawers out, I felt something stuck to the back of the lowest drawer. I reached in all the way to the back, and guess what I found? A Ziploc bag with some papers in it.

Cool! *Maybe I've found somebody's secret stuff*, I thought. When I opened the bag, I realized that the papers were some kind of official-looking documents. And wrapped in the papers were a bunch of ten and twenty dollar bills! Talk about finding a treasure! And on my birthday!

"Is this some kind of joke?" I said aloud. Maybe my family was playing a trick on me. Maybe this was fake money. But it looked pretty real. Somebody had been stashing money in this bag and hiding it in the back of the locked drawer. I went ahead and read the papers, and it turned out to be a will. Some old lady was leaving her savings for her son and grandchildren.

All this was too weird. My mind was going crazy. Was I the luckiest twelve-year-old ever? With this money I could buy the coolest bicycle. I could even buy bicycles for my brothers. Who knows? Maybe I even had enough here to get a car for my parents, so they could trash that embarrassing old junker that we had for a car.

"Finders keepers, losers weepers," I started singing as I began counting the money. When I reached a thousand dollars, I had to stop. My mother was knocking on my bedroom door. I quickly closed the drawer with the money in it.

"How is your painting job coming along? Do you want some help?"

"No . . . thanks, Mom, I haven't even started. I . . . I'll call you when it's ready."

"Is everything all right?" she asked.

No, everything was not right. Actually, my stomach was growling.

"I'm okay," I fibbed. "I'll let you know when it's ready."

When my mother left my room, I lay on my bed, and, staring at the ceiling, I started thinking about this past week. First, I didn't make the basketball team. Then I flunked the math test. Finally, my little brother destroyed my science project. (That's why I needed a nightstand with locked

drawers.) And now, I found this money on my birthday—the only good news in a long time. A solution to my problems. Yet I didn't feel good about it. How come?

I would have to make up lies to tell my family and friends. “Finders keepers . . .” the saying goes. But that money wasn't really meant for me, was it? The lady had been saving it for her family. She must have died and nobody knew about the money hidden in the nightstand. Her family donated it to the secondhand store, and now it was in my hands.

What a dilemma! I could keep it and get all kinds of stuff for me and my family. It wouldn't be too bad for me to keep it, if I shared it . . . right? I bargained with myself. What about keeping some and returning the rest? After all, nobody knew how much money was there . . . and it was my birthday! Or I could give it all back. Tell the truth. No new bicycles. No car.

“Somebody help me with this!” I pleaded. But I really didn't need someone else to give me the answer. I already knew right from wrong. That's why I flunked the math test even though I could have cheated. I decided not to flunk this test. It was a test of honor. My honor.

I called my parents and my brothers into my bedroom and showed them what I had found. They were wide-eyed—speechless! When they asked, “What should we do about this?” I already had the answer.

“Let's take it back to the store and find her family.” As I said this, my stomach quieted down.

The store owners could not believe it when we told them the story.

“You mean to say you found over a thousand dollars in cash and you are here to return it?” they asked, almost at the same time.

Looking through their donation records, they found the family's telephone number. They phoned them right there and then, and within a few minutes, they all came over to the store: her son, his wife, and their three children—a family pretty much like ours. The parents had tears in their eyes. The old lady's twelve-year-old grandson just kept looking at me as people were telling the story over and over.

You see, they were all still sad about her death. And the father had just lost his job. They had been praying for help, and it turned out that I brought in the answer to their prayers. My act of honesty not only helped them pay the rent, but strengthened their faith and gave them hope.

I had never felt better. No new bicycle could have made me feel as good about myself as I felt that day. I may have flunked the math test, but I passed a more important one—a lost and found test of my own character.

*Antonio Angulo Jr., twelve
As told by Marisol Muñoz-Kiehne*