

21st Century Parables-A Child's Book is an educational book that gives stories that can be used to enhance inference and reasoning skills of children from third grade and up. Adults will also enjoy these stories.

21st Century Parables-A Child's Book

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## **21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY PARABLES**

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# **21<sup>st</sup> Century Parables- A Child's Book**

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**C**HAPTER ONE

**THE NICKEL THAT WANTED  
TO BE SPENT**

*By Linda A. Johnson*



*Little Jimmy Spencer received a nickel for his birthday, and it was so special that he put it away in a box. His Grandpa John had given it to him for being five years old that year. It was one cent for each of his five years. The nickel had been hidden away in Grandpa John's desk drawer for*

*years, fresh from the mint in the year he had gotten it from the bank. It was one of the old nickels with the proud head of an Indian chief on one side. He remembered at his birthday party how he blew out the five candles on his birthday cake. He was wishing that his Grandpa John would get well from the sickness that had taken over his body for the past two years. But, Grandpa John passed away last month and Jimmy promised never to spend the nickel that he had given*

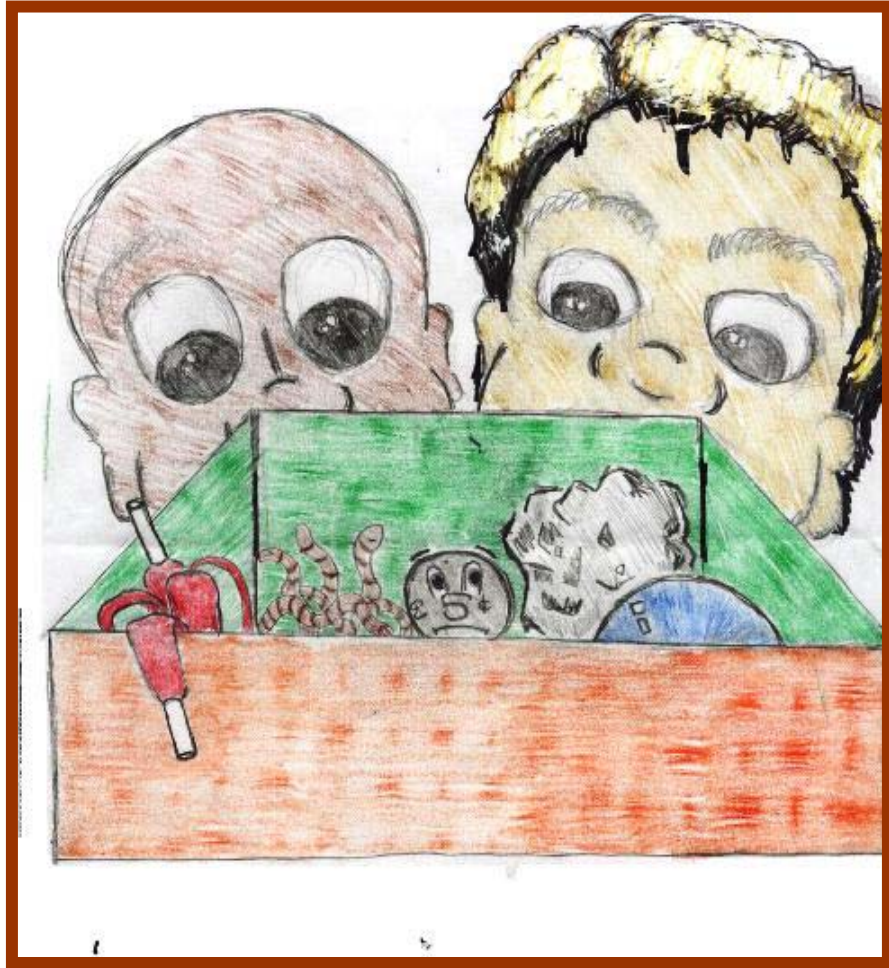
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***him. Jimmy felt that his Grandpa would always be alive in his heart as long as he held on to the precious coin.***

***However, the nickel had other ideas. It wanted to venture out and see the world. It did not like staying hidden away in a dark smelly old box along with the other things that Jimmy was saving. There were things like the big blue marble that kept rolling on top of him whenever***

***Jimmy moved the box, and the heavy rock that crushed him to the side until he could hardly breathe. Oh, he just could not bear those smelly shoe strings that held memories of Jimmy's first brand name pair of shoes. And, what about the fishing worms- long dead- but special because they were part of the bunch that Jimmy took on his first fishing trip with his dad. Nickel hum-hawed every time Jimmy explained each item to his friends, family, or***

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***whoever wanted to listen. It was just so unbearable until he made up a plan to escape! It wanted to be spent. Isn't that what money was for? He asked himself over and over again. He wanted out! How would he be able to do it was the problem.***

***One day Jimmy's friend named Isaac came over to spend the night. Nickel had noted that Isaac wanted him and he wanted him bad. Would things be better with Isaac instead of Jimmy? Well nickel knew that Isaac was***

***greedy, constantly eating candy and ice cream. He was always begging Jimmy for money, and if he got in Isaac's pocket he would surely be spent for something sooner or later. Nickel got excited and thought. "I will give myself to Isaac."***

***That night Jimmy got the box off the shelf and began showing everything to Isaac. But, this time Nickel had managed to use the old shoestrings and drop himself-KERPLUNK-right in front of Isaac's feet. He knew what***

***Isaac would do next. Sure enough, the lad placed a dirty sneaker on top of Nickel until Jimmy put the box away and began preparing for bed. Then Isaac retrieved Nickel from the floor and put him in his pocket. Nickel exhaled in relief after being under that sneaker for so long. “Yes!” he exclaimed, “I am on my way now.”***

***The next day Nickel got his wish. He went along with some other change to pay for a Popsicle from an ice-cream truck traveling through the***

***neighborhood. Nickel immediately tried to get chummy with the other coins in the cash register. He introduced himself, but the other coins eyed him suspiciously and a quarter moved to one side utterly avoiding him like he was the plague. Nickel kept trying to get a conversation going, but it was all in vain. A dime finally explained, “Listen, man you will learn soon enough that it doesn’t make sense to try to make friends in our world, because you get shifted around***

***so much. You forget the names of everybody you meet. You will learn soon enough to just be quiet, mind your business, and wait for the next person's pocket or wallet you end up in. Yes, you just wait and wait and wait." Nickel looked around at all of the other coins and the sad look on their faces. He moved away in silence.***

***Suddenly everyone was scooped up and transferred to a teenage boy's pocket and he shook them around with his hand while heading for the park.***

***The next thing Nickel felt was- POW!  
He was being thrown against a wall  
along with the dime and the quarter,  
his fellow companions from the ice  
cream truck's cash register. What is  
this? He wondered. Then he heard  
other boys making bets and he knew.  
They are gambling with me! He  
thought frantically. "Someone get me  
out of here!" he screamed as he hit the  
wall again. Suddenly he found himself  
airborne sailing over a high wooden  
fence, and after a second or two he fell***

***into some water. The next thing he heard was SPLASH- SPLASH- SPLASH- and he noticed he was with some children who were playing in a swimming pool in the park. One of them saw him fall into the water, grabbed him up in a chubby fist and he was being rushed to a lady standing at the edge of the pool. “Mommy, Mommy, look what I found!” the child screamed, running to her mother, waving Nickel in the air between two fat fingers.***

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***The mother took Nickel and put him in her purse along with some other change. Nickel got the same cold shoulder from the other coins in the bag. He ignored them this time and he began wishing he were back in little Jimmy's box- safe, dry, and wanted. The pain from being thrown against the concrete walls was worse than when marble would roll on top of him. Oh, this was much worse; especially now that the lady started walking and all of the change was being slammed***

*against each other in her purse. Later, he heard the child screaming for a toy that was in a toy store window. “I want that dolly in the window Mommy!” he heard the little girl exclaim. And, evidently the mother was going to get it for her, because the mother pushed her way through the revolving doors of the toy store. She was asking for a baby doll that was being displayed in the store window. Nickel sighed, “Where will I end up next? He asked himself. He was almost*

*in tears when he was being taken out of the purse and tossed into another cash register. “Is this how it is to be spent?” He moaned to himself. He wanted to ask the other coins, but some of the new coins were moaning and sighing too. The coins that had been transferred around a lot were moody, stone-faced, and silent. Nickel wondered where Jimmy was.*

*A winter storm caused the toy store to close. The owner had slipped on some ice, and would be unable to open*

***the store for at least a month. This caused some of the old coins to loosen up and they began to teach the new coins how to get along in the change world. They told stories of some of the places they had been and things they had seen, but still it was a lonely world being moved around from place to place. One old quarter complained, “Things were not always like this, I can remember when humans used to save their coins. I was once in a piggy bank for five years. Then I was part of***

***a coin collection for ten years. Those were some of the best years of my life- no roaming around. Now it's just spend, spend, and spend. What is the world coming to? Coins should not be used like this!" he bowed his head in shame.***

***A dime chipped in, "Be grateful. In some countries they don't use us at all,"***

***Another nickel said, "There is a rumor going about that America wants to get rid of its coins too." A***

***penny started to cry. “What will happen to us then!” she wailed. “We will probably be ground to powder and made into something else.” The old quarter stated sadly. Nickel whispered silently, “Jimmy where are you?”***

***Well at that moment Jimmy was sitting on the side of his bed wondering. “Where is my birthday nickel?” Tears were rolling down his cheeks as he stared at the floor. He had been searching for the nickel***

***everywhere. He had accused Isaac today of stealing it, but his friend swore that he did not take it. But, the night that Isaac had spent the night was the last time Jimmy remembered seeing the nickel. He had wanted to search him, but he knew if Isaac had taken it, then, it was already spent to buy junk food. Just then his mother came into the room.***

***“Have you found it?” she said.***

***“No.” he replied.***

***“Would a new toy help you feel better? Do you remember that model plane that you wanted for Christmas? I can afford to buy it for you now,” offered mother.***

***“No thanks. Besides, I heard that the toy store is closed. The owner got hurt,” Jimmy said sadly.***

***“Well I heard today that the toy store will be open tomorrow, and if you go with me. I promise to help you look for the nickel today and***

***tomorrow and everyday until we find it. Okay?" she asked.***

***"I guess so," moaned Jimmy.***

***When they arrived at the store the next day, they were the first customers. Jimmy got his plane and his mother gave him the change.***

***"Here. Do you want to put these in your piggy bank?" She offered.***

***"Someday you will be able to give your son or grandson a lucky nickel in***

***remembrance of your Grandpa John.  
He would have liked that.”***

***Jimmy put the coins in his pocket.  
He did not know that Mr. Nickel was  
one of them. He had heard Jimmy’s  
voice from the cash register in  
disbelief. He prayed that he would buy  
the plane and get some change, and  
that the change would include him.  
When he fell inside of the pocket he  
prayed again that Jimmy would take  
his mother’s advice and save him in a  
piggy bank. He still hated that box.***

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***When he was finally dropped inside of the piggy bank with the other coins, they all welcomed him and the new coins. Old Quarter and Dime were also welcomed in too, much to their joy. They were a happy, friendly, and contented bunch. “Welcome everyone to your new home,” their new friends all beamed.***

***Years later, Jimmy was attending his grandson’s fifth birthday party. He wanted to give him a coin from his***

***piggy bank that he had kept for years. The coins were especially valuable, because the country had stopped making and using coins in America. He poured the coins out onto the table and began to select one for his grandson. He saw a nickel with the head of an Indian chief on it and his old heart skipped a beat. He picked it up and turned it over to see the “GJ” scratched on the other side. He held his breath when he saw the letters representing his Grandpa John. He***

***could not believe his eyes. This was his special nickel that had been inside of his piggy bank all of these years.***

***Tears gathered in his eyes as he called his grandson over to give him the coin.***

***Well! He smiled and exclaimed to himself. "I certainly owe Isaac an apology after all these years." The old nickel smiled contentedly too.***

***EPILOGUE:  
CHILDREN STILL SAY THE  
FUNNIEST THINGS***

***GOOD JOB***

*The family is getting ready for bed,  
and before they do, each member is  
praying and thanking God. Michael,  
Malcolm, and Mom have all thanked  
God for one thing or another. Now it is  
little Lynda's turn,  
"I thank God for healing my finger  
and he didn't do a sloppy job either."*

**WHO STOLE THE COOKIE?**

***(Everyone is clapping to a certain beat  
in time with the words)***

***Everyone: “Who stole the cookie from  
the cookie jar?”***

***Mother: “Michael stole the cookie  
from the cookie jar.”***

***Michael: “Who me stole the cookie  
from the cookie jar”***

***Mother: “Yes you stole the cookie  
from the cookie jar.”***

***Michael: “Not me stole the cookie  
from the cookie jar.”***

**Everyone:** *“Then who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?”*

**Michael:** *“Camea stole the cookie from the cookie jar.”*

**Camea:** *“So.”*

### **CRY-BABY**

**Kenny is crying because he can't get his Spiderman toy to pose in the way that he wants it to (throwing a web).**

**Grandma:** *“Kenny, I am sick and tired of you crying all of the time.”*

**Kenny:** *“And I am sick of doing it.”*

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**TOO COOL**

***(Three-year-old Malcolm is doing flips  
in the living-room floor)***

***Malcolm: “Look, Grandma! Watch  
me do this.” (He does a somersault,  
and Grandma laughs)***

***Malcolm: “It’s not funny, Grandma.  
It’s cool.”***

**USING PROPER LANGUAGE**

***Kenny, Mickayla, and Phillip are all at Chuck-E-Cheese for Phillips sixth birthday party. Mickayla (four years old) is stuttering with her words as she argues with her brother, Phillip. Cousin Kenny (three years old) tries to help out.***

***Kenny: “Mickayla speak English.”***

## **COOKING LESSONS**

***Mickayla is four years old and she wants to learn how to cook. Her daddy is teaching her how to fix broccoli. She is standing on a chair at the stove stirring the vegetables together in a pot. Her six year old brother Phillip is excited and thinks it is funny that his sister is cooking:***

***Phillip: “Daddy, is Mickayla cooking?***

***Mickayla: “Yeah, I’m doing girls’ work, and I’m not cooking any stupid food, either!***

**MISCOMMUNICATION**

***Little Michael(seven years old) has been complaining to his Mom as to why so many things have labels that say 'Made in Taiwan' or 'Made in China.' One day Dad is swatting at flies, trying to get them out of the house. The children keep leaving the door open and the small insects keep rushing in. He is yelling at the flies to 'GET OUT!!!' And he also reprimands the children:***

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***Dad (Big Michael): “Hey you guys,  
keep the door closed! You are letting  
all of the flies in America in here!”***

***Little Michael: “Maybe these flies are  
made in Taiwan or China, Dad, and  
that’s why they don’t understand  
you.”***

***Dad glares at him.***

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