



The Extra Ten

The cashier counted wrong — in Nora's favor. Just enough to buy the thing she'd wanted all year. And nobody saw.



HONESTY · WEEK 1 OF 4 · THE CHOICE

A QUICK NOTE TO PARENTS

Before you read together

This month the trail turns to **Honesty**. Last month closed with a promise — a boy, a store counter, a nickname. That boy was young Abraham Lincoln, and he is the hero of this month's *Constellation Trail* unit. Our free trail walks the same virtue in through a different door: it opens with a girl at a counter of her own, and ten dollars that were never hers.

The dilemma is one every child meets sooner or later — the moment when the easy thing and the honest thing point in opposite directions, and no one is watching to see which one you pick. We follow both roads all the way to their ends, then stop and hand the choice back to your child.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Honesty isn't only about the words you say. It's what your hands do with what isn't yours — especially when no one would ever know.

HOW TO USE IT

Read the story together (5 min), then the two-paths page, then talk it over. About 15 minutes, start to finish.

ONE TIP

Don't rush to the "right answer." The power is in stopping the story where we stop it — and letting your child sit in the choice before anyone rescues them from it.

HERE IS A STORY. AS YOU READ, ASK WHAT YOU WOULD DO.

The Extra Ten

Nora had been saving all year for one thing: a real set of watercolor paints. Twenty-four colors in little pans, the kind that turn to light on wet paper. They cost fifteen dollars, and she had twelve. She had been three dollars short for a very long time, saving a coin at a time in a jar on her windowsill. The last set in town sat on a shelf at Bell's, the corner store.

This afternoon her mother sent her to Bell's for a birthday card for Grandma, with a five-dollar bill and instructions not to dawdle. Nora picked out a card — two dollars — and carried it to the register.

Behind the counter was Cole, a high-schooler, and it was plainly his first week. The line behind Nora was long, the phone was ringing, and Cole's ears were red. He took her five, punched the keys, and pressed a fistful of change into her hand without really looking, already turning to the next customer.

Out on the sidewalk, Nora counted it the way her mother taught her. A two-dollar card, paid with a five — her change should be three dollars. But in her palm was a ten-dollar bill *and* three ones. Cole had given her back ten dollars too much.

She stood very still. Ten dollars. On top of the twelve in her jar, that was far more than enough for the paints sitting on the shelf twelve steps behind her. The last set. And no one had seen — not Cole, who had already forgotten her face, not the busy line, not a single soul.

Except that tonight, when the store closed, Cole would count his drawer and it would be ten dollars short. He was new. Mr. Bell watched that drawer closely.

Nora's feet were pointed at the paints. The ten was warm in her hand.

Stop the story here.

THE CHOICE IN THE STORY

Two roads from the counter

Every big choice is really two roads walked to their ends. Before anyone says what Nora *should* do, follow each road honestly — all the way.

ROAD ONE · KEEP THE TEN

That afternoon: Nora walks back in, buys the last set of paints, and carries home the thing she's wanted all year. That night the colors bloom on wet paper, every bit as bright as she hoped.

Down the trail: at closing, Cole's drawer comes up ten dollars short. He goes pale. Maybe he covers it from his own thin paycheck; maybe Mr. Bell stops trusting him. And every picture Nora paints has one small grey corner only she can see. She has learned a quiet thing about herself — that when money is loose and nobody is looking, she is the kind of person who keeps it. That lesson cost her far more than ten dollars.

ROAD TWO · GIVE IT BACK

That afternoon: Nora turns around, sets the extra ten on the counter, and says, "You gave me too much." Cole checks, and his red ears go grateful. She walks home with only her card and her own twelve dollars. The paints stay on the shelf. Nobody claps. It is a very ordinary afternoon.

Down the trail: Cole's drawer balances, and he remembers the kid who walked the ten back — so does Mr. Bell, who now trusts Nora at his counter more than he trusts most grown-ups. The paints will come, a little later, honestly earned; and when she finally opens the box there is no grey corner anywhere in it. She has learned the other quiet thing: that her hands can be trusted with what isn't watched. That is a good name, and it is not for sale.

THE WORD FOR THIS

Honesty is telling the truth with your words *and* your hands — even the truth that costs you. Especially the truth no one else would ever catch.

TALK IT OVER

Three questions, no wrong answers

1. Cole made the mistake, not Nora. Does that change whether keeping the ten would be honest? Whose ten dollars is it, really?

2. “Nobody saw.” But Nora saw. Is the truth still the truth when you are the only one who knows it?

3. The hardest one: is there loose money — or a wrong score, or a mistake that lands in your favor — somewhere in your week? You don’t have to say it out loud. Just find it, and decide now what you’ll do when it comes.

COPYWORK

Copy the line below in your best handwriting. Old words, worth keeping.

“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.”

— PROVERBS 22:1 (KJV)

WHERE THE TRAIL GOES NEXT

The paints are still on the shelf

We left Nora there on purpose — twelve steps from the paints, a warm ten in her hand, nobody watching. The story doesn't tell you what she chose, because the story isn't really about Nora. It's about the choice, and the choice is yours.

Next week on the trail: where does honesty even *come* from? We'll travel back to the oldest marketplaces in the world — where an honest merchant and a cheat could look exactly alike, until the moment you watched them weigh.

There was a real boy behind a real counter.

On the American frontier, a young store clerk realized he'd taken a few cents too many from a customer — and walked miles in the dark to give it back. Another day he'd weighed the tea a little light, and walked that back too. The neighbors began calling him a name he never asked for. What honesty cost him, what it won him, and the week-long challenge that goes with it: that's **Constellation Trail Unit Two: Honesty** — the second star of the constellation.

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