

# 31 Days of the Little Way: Our Children's Picks at a Yard Sale

A few days ago my sister Treasa asked me whether I wanted a few books she had already read. She and her husband were setting up a table at a neighborhood yard sale, and they were going through things, deciding what they didn't need.

We always have things we don't need—doesn't everyone?—so John asked if he could put a few boxes together himself and join them. John loves selling at yard sales.

A few hours into the sale, our boys and I drove over to see how it was going. I didn't bring them earlier because I knew they would find something to buy on someone else's table. And, to be honest, so would I. But I figured we could only spend so much in the last half-hour or so of the sale.



Our sons immediately started nosing around to see what was for sale. Not surprisingly, they each found something to bring home.

Daniel spotted a small Christmas tree with lights and little colored ornaments on his uncle's table. And Leo found a board game version of charades.

As they fell in love with their items, I cringed inside. I could practically see myself putting the charades game—still untouched—in a yard sale pile six months from now. And the Christmas tree? It seemed like a perfect dust collector.

But the tree was free and the game was \$1. We had pleasant exchanges with all the people we talked to. It was a beautiful fall day. Why should we buy these items? I didn't see the point, but our children were so excited. So we headed home \$1 poorer, but we had a game and a tree. Yay?

Back at home our boys proceeded to show me how wrong I was. We have played the charades game for hours. It's surprisingly fun, and the words you have to act out are not easy. So the boys are learning some new vocabulary. It's an older version of this game, the type of game I would never have thought to buy. But it spoke to our 8-year-old, and now we're proud owners.

Then there's the Christmas tree. Just watching our 6-year-old carrying it in the front door made my heart melt. He was so proud. And when I plugged it in for him, he sat next to it on the floor and just gazed at the lights.



Even when one of the ornaments fell and shattered and I had to get the shop-vac out to capture all the shards of glass, I couldn't be annoyed that we had brought this

little tree into our home. It's adorable. And Daniel loves it.

Maybe there's holiness, I thought, in seeing value where someone else doesn't. Maybe there's holiness in taking an item that another person has enjoyed and giving it new life. Maybe I can find God in seeing the joy that these inexpensive cast-offs are bringing to our children's lives—and, I have to admit—mine.

And there's something to be said for stopping myself from saying "We don't need that so save the dollar" and seeing see the world through my children's eyes. We don't need a Christmas tree in mid-October, and we have plenty of board games already.

But we do love games, and nothing is quite as beautiful as the twinkling blue lights on a Christmas tree—even if Christmas is two-and-a-half months away.

