



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE  
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

*Growing Active*  
**READERS**

# **Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday**

**Target Age: 1st to 3rd Grade**

**About the book:**

*Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday*  
by Judith Viorst

Publisher: Simon & Schuster  
ISBN#: 978-0-689-71199-2

Alexander started the week as a rich young man. There were so many things he could do with a dollar. The money began to disappear.

## Key Ideas

By the time you finish this discussion guide, your child will be able to **point to examples** of these key ideas in the book you read and discuss **real-life examples**, too. Use these definitions to explain the ideas. We've also included ways children can show they are ready to use them in their daily lives.

1. **Making decisions** - Many times there are different ways to use money. Taking the time to ask questions, learn about different choices, and compare what's good and bad about each choice helps reach good decisions

**How kids show it:** They can look at a few choices and select the one that will bring the best results.

2. **Prioritizing** - Sometimes we need to make choices about what we want or do. These choices can change from day to day. Prioritizing is arranging things in order of their importance to us.

**How kids show it:** They can prioritize choices when they want two or more things at the same time.

3. **Saving** - Some things cost more money than we have at one time. Saving means putting some money aside until we have enough to buy what we want.

**How kids show it:** They keep money in a safe place and keep track of the amount saved for future spending. (ages 7+) They can explain why money saved in a bank or credit union is still a personal belonging.

4. **Self-control** - Sometimes we can't have what we want right away and need to wait. Choosing not to spend money can sometimes be a good decision.

**How kids show it:** They can talk about times when they were able to wait and how they were able to do it.

## Something to think about

First, read the book yourself and think about these ideas:

- Alexander spent all his money.
- How he spent it did not make him happy.
- Sometimes we buy things we think we need instead of saving for something we need or want.
- Alexander learned that fighting temptations to spend money is hard.
- Sometimes we need to think and plan how to best use our money. Every person has different ideas about how to use money.

## Something to talk about

Before you begin to read the story with your child, look at the cover of the book together. Ask what the story might be about. As you read the story with your child, talk about these ideas:

- How did Alexander get his money? Where does your child get money?
- Talk about all the ways Alexander used his money. Was Alexander happy with how he used his money?
- Ask your child what he or she has spent money on and then wish he or she had not spent it. How did this make your child feel?
- Ask your child if he or she ever saves for something. Talk about how hard it is to wait and not to spend.
- Why did Alexander end up with only bus tokens?
- Talk about how hard it can be to decide the best way to use our money.

## Something to do

**Margarine bowl piggy bank (Ages 4+):** This activity will help your child learn to save by creating a place to keep money. Use a plastic margarine bowl or other container to make a place to save money. Cut a slit in the lid large enough to drop coins through. To decorate the bank, help your child glue on pictures, and play with money, or bits of ribbon.

**Dream Cloud (Ages 5+):** This activity will help your child decide what is important to save for. Ask your child to draw a big puffy cloud. Inside the clouds, ask your child to draw something he or she wants or needs. The item inside the cloud can also be a picture cut from a magazine. Talk with your child about how long it will take to save for the dream item.

**Needs or wants (Ages 5+):** This activity will help your child prioritize spending decisions. Create a two-column table. Label the left column “Needs” and the right one “Wants”. Then flip through a magazine, store circular, or catalog and ask your child to clip pictures of things he or she needs or wants just for fun. Then, ask them to paste the pictures into the appropriate column. Parents and children may not agree on what is a need and what is a want.

**Coin rubbings (Aged 6+):** This activity will help your child learn coin values. Before we spend our money, we need to know how much we have. For this activity, you will need scissors, blank paper, crayons, and a penny, nickel, dime, and quarter. Start with the penny. Remind your child that a penny is one cent. Put the penny under the paper. Have your child rub the long side of the crayon across the covered penny. Rub until you see the penny appear on the paper. Do this with all the coins. Each time, remind the child of how much the coin is worth. Cut out the shapes and practice counting the play money.