I was leaving a meeting this week when I happened to look inside my purse and notice it.
I began to smile, a warm feeling passed through me, and I was instantly happy.
It wasn't loose change that could be used for the snack machine later. It wasn't that peppermint I had been searching for earlier. And it wasn't that tube of lipstick I thought I had lost.
It was a small, green dinosaur that would fit inside the palm of your hand. It was a toy that our son James has been holding onto for the past few days.
Earlier that morning in the parking lot of his school he had held onto that dinosaur with a tight grip. I knew he would lose it if I let him take it with him to daycare. But he wasn't sold on the idea of leaving it in the car.
The tears began to roll down his cheek as James didn't quite understand why he had to leave the toy in the truck.
"Baby, just leave it in the truck," I said, trying to loosen his grip. "When I pick you up today, it will be right here waiting on you.
The tears really started rolling then.
"But he doesn't like the truck," James said. "He can't like it. He's scared."
The sad look on his face almost made me cry. No, he doesn't belong in the truck, I thought to myself.
"Tell you what," I said. "What if I hang onto him all day. I can put him in my purse, and he won't be scared. I will give him back when I pick you up."
"In your purse," James asked, looking in the front seat. "You put in."
I had to show James that his dinosaur would be placed inside my purse. He watched as I dropped it inside along with my wallet, mirror and other things that only Mommas carry around.
James was then able to go into school without worrying about his little friend.
We gave James the dinosaur inside an egg a few days earlier. It was one of those toys that you place inside a jar of water. Over the course of 72 hours, the egg eventually cracks and a baby dinosaur emerges.
When my husband Jason showed James the egg and explained to him that there was a dinosaur inside, James went crazy with excitement.
His small face covered with a grin. His hands tightened together under his chin. He began to jump up and down as Jason placed the egg inside a Mason jar filled with water.
After school, James would almost break his neck running up the porch steps to get inside the house. Standing on his toes, he would look on the kitchen counter at the egg jar.

“It’s cracking,” he screamed.
On a normal morning James takes a few minutes to wake up as I dress him. But with a baby dinosaur to check on, it was a different story.
“Hurry up Momma,” he said, as I tried to put his socks on. “I gotta go check on my egg.”
The egg finally hatched Tuesday afternoon. James’ friend was finally able to come out of the jar and into his hands.
At first he named the new pet, “Truck Show”. But since then, he had settled for “T-Rex,” and finally “Baby T.”
Last night, Jason and I laughed as we watched James show Baby T his assortment of trucks. He also read a book to Baby T, ate his supper with Baby T and slept with Baby T.
So, it meant a lot to me to know how much trust James has in his Momma to babysit his dinosaur while he was at school.
I’m even excited to present him with his friend after work.
The little toy cost less than $3, and it doesn’t have any bells or whistles. But James is in love with his new friend.
I have a feeling that Baby T may be coming with me to work for a little while longer. And I don’t mind it. Seeing his green head pop out of my purse during the day reminds me of James.
I wonder what other toys I could fit inside my purse for that instant picker-upper.