Podcast Name: Imagine This

Episode Title: Where does money come from?

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[ABC Podcast sting - This is an ABC Podcast]

Bri: Hello I'm Bri, and welcome to Imagine This. Today, we're finding out about something that I have right here in my pocket.

[Coins jangling]

Bri: Have you heard this sound before?

[Coins jingle]

Bri: What do you think it is?

Kids: Money.

 Money.

 Money.

 You have money in your pocket?

 In your pocket.

Bri: Yes. I've got some money here in my pocket. Some coins. Have you seen a coin before?

[Dramatic music]

Kids: Yes.

 It looks like 10 cents.

 Silver.

 20 cents.

 A circle.

Bri: There are lots of these coins all over the world, and they come in all different shapes and sizes. But where did they all come from? On today's show Millie has a question about this.

MILLIE: Where does money come from?

Bri: Interesting question. Do you think money grows on trees?

[Birds tweeting, comical growing sound]

Kids: No, only food.

Bri: Ah, yes. Food grows on trees, not money. Do you think it falls out of the sky?

[Curious music]

Kids: No.

Kids: No, it doesn't. People make it, it comes from the machine.

Bri: Money comes from a machine?

Kids: Yeah.

Bri: But how did it get there? There must be another place that the money comes from.

[Pleasant classical music]

Kids: Shops because you buy something, and you give them money, and then they give money back to you.

 From your work.

 The government.

 My dad's wallet or my mom's.

Kids: There's some buildings who make the money.

 How did the government make the money?

Bri: Hmm, it sounds like there are lots of different places that money comes from, and lots of different ways to get it. I know, let's ask someone who knows all about money.

Kids: Yeah.

 Yes.

Bri: Okay. Please welcome our very special guest today, all the way from Griffith University in Queensland.

[Drum roll]

Bri: It's the man who knows about money, Fabrizio Carmignani.

[Applause]

Fabrizio: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. You are too kind, too kind.

Bri: Hi Fabrizio.

Fabrizio: Hi.

Bri: Fabrizio. Where did money first come from?

Fabrizio: Before we had money, we used to swap things.

[Market chatter]

Bri: Swap things. What kind of things?

Fabrizio: Anything we used to swap vegetables.

[Playful music]

Fabrizio: We used to swap apples. We used to swap chickens.

Bri: Chickens?

Fabrizio: Yes.

Bri: Can you make the sound of a chicken?

[Kids make chicken sounds]

Fabrizio: We used to swap cows.

Bri: Cows. What sound does a cow make?

[Kids moo]

Fabrizio: We used to swap pigs.

Bri: Pigs. What does a pig sound like?

[Kids oink]

Fabrizio: And goats.

Bri: A goat? Can you make the sound of a goat too?

[Kids mimic goat]

Bri: Great animal sounds. So we used to use these animals and vegetables and anything we could find to swap for the things that we needed.

Fabrizio: That's right.

Bri:So why did we need money?

[Animal sounds]

Fabrizio: The poor chicken had to be taken from place to place so that you could swap them for an ice cream, but these chickens and cows and pigs and goats were too heavy, and these chickens and cows and pigs and goats didn't want to go to market. So we decided to invent...

Kids: Money.

Bri: So coins were made from silver and gold and metal because those little coins were a lot easier than taking a pig to market.

[Metal clashing]

[Pig snorts]

Bri: So who makes the money now Fabrizio?

Fabrizio: The coins come from a place called the mint and the mint is like a factory.

Bri: And what about those colourful notes?

Kids: There's some buildings who make the money. They print the papers.

Fabrizio: Yes, that's right. The notes are made in a factory.

Bri: So these coins and these notes and all of this money out there, how do I get it into my wallet?

[Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy plays softly]

Fabrizio: You could find money on the ground. If you are very lucky.

Bri: Hey, come check what I found. Look!

Kids: One dollar.

Bri: Woohoo I'm rich.

Fabrizio: Someone could give you money as a gift.

[Party horn]

Kids: HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

[Party horn]

Fabrizio: Most people get it by working.

Bri: Working. Like going to a job?

Kids: Yes. So they can get money.

Bri: Money to buy what?

Kids: Well for like shopping and stuff.

 Like food, toys.

 Ah, the things they need?

 Clothes.

 Is milk a need?

Bri: If you had money in your pocket, what would you buy?

Kids: Ice cream.

 Well I'd buy like, food and toys.

 Ice cream from the canteen!

[Cash register sound]

Bri: So Millie the answer to your question is that money was invented a long time ago.

[Sound of a goat, coins jingle]

Bri: And today it comes from a factory.

[Industrial sounds]

Bri: If you want to get some well, you might have to go to work to get some money in your pocket. So Fabrizio, if I worked really hard and had lots of money, could I have everything I want?

Fabrizio: Not really.

Bri: Why not?

Fabrizio: The best things in life are free.

Bri: Free, but what's better than buying ice cream?

[Upbeat jazz music]

Fabrizio: The ocean. Friendship. A hug.

Bri: Okay. Hugs up pretty good. Maybe one day this week, you and your family could find an activity to do together that is totally free, which means it doesn't cost any money at all, like going for a walk in the sunshine, going to the park or even playing a game together. Whatever it is, I hope you have lots of fun.

[Kids giggle]

Bri: Imagine This is produced by me, Brianna Peterson, and is a co-production between The Conversation and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. For more episodes of Imagine This plus a range of music and stories for young children, download the ABC Kids Listen app.