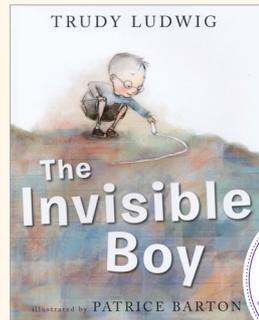


The Invisible Boy

by Trudy Ludwig and illustrated by Patrice Barton

Themes

Encourage Others
Kindness/Unkindness
Inclusion



Brian seems to be invisible. Nobody notices him or thinks to include him in games or invite him to parties. When Justin, the new boy, arrives at school, Brian is the first to make him feel welcome while the other kids are unkind. Brian and Justin encourage each other and soon discover that small acts of kindness can help others feel good AND help you feel better about yourself.

Key Vocabulary

Invisible: not seen, hidden from view or hardly noticeable
Flummoxed: puzzling or confusing

Teacher Note: Brian is 'The Invisible Boy' because he wants to be seen, but isn't. He "doesn't take up a lot of space" (page 4). Highlight that both introverted AND extraverted kids want to be noticed and included by their peers.

Discussion Starters

- 1. Why did Brian feel invisible? What is the difference between actually being invisible and feeling invisible?**
Answers will vary. Brian feels not noticed, doesn't need any or demand any attention, quiet, not selected for teams, not invited to parties, eats at far end of table, away from other kids, chooses alone activities (drawing) rather than playing board games. Someone who feels invisible feels like no one know they are there, isn't included in conversation and is avoided.
- 2. How did Brian feel when everyone was talking about the good time they had at the birthday party? Why? Answers will vary. Left out. Sad. Jealous. Brian wished he had been at the party too. Do you think it was a kind thing to do? Why not? Answers will vary**
- 3. How did ALL the kids treat the new student when he first came to class?**
Most were cautious – not wanting to be friends until they knew more about him. Brian was the only one who smiled at him.
- 4. Notice the colouration difference in the illustration when Brian smiled at Justin – why did the illustrator choose to make it change?**
Brian is pictured in black and white when he feels invisible, compared to other children. As he gets noticed, he gains a little colour in his face. It made him feel good about himself when he was kind to Justin – even though it was just a little smile. Notice how colour changes throughout the rest of story.
- 5. Brian wonders which is worse – being laughed at or feeling invisible. Discuss what students think about this.**
Answers will vary – being laughed at makes you centre of attention. Feeling invisible gives you no attention. Both make you feel bad because neither is encouraging or kind.
- 6. How did Justin encourage Brian? He noticed that he was a good artist and suggested he draw the pictures for the story their small group needed.**

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How did Brian feel when Justin said that? *He smiled – he was happy that someone noticed. The kind words were encouraging to Brian. He felt like the group needed him.*

7. Discuss why Brian wanted to draw a hole in the floor to swallow him up.

Answers will vary – He thought he had a friend in Justin but when kids had to find partners, someone else took Justin and he was by himself again. It's another way of feeling invisible - to drop in a hole and disappear from the earth.

What changed that feeling? *Brian was encouraged when Justin kindly asked him to join his group. Brian encouraged him again when he showed confidence that Brian could draw amazing things for their story.*

8. How did lunchtime change for Brian after that experience?

20 long minutes (of kids talking and laughing with everyone else but him) changed when Justin and Emilio smiled at him, waved at him and made room for him at the table. They encouraged him with smiles, words and actions.

Writing Prompt

Are there kids in your school who feel invisible like Brian? What could you do to ENCOURAGE them and help them to not feel so invisible? Write out your plan and then go try it. After you have encouraged someone, finish your writing. How did they feel and how did it make you feel?

Activities

Can-You-See-Me Chart

Complete the printable chart 'Encourage Me to Not Be Invisible.' In the first column have students identify when they feel invisible. In the second column, have them write what would ENCOURAGE them in that situation and make them feel visible again.

Visible Kindness

As a class, make a list of problems in your lunchroom, break time or on the school bus. Divide your class into groups and each group can take one of the problems and design a poster that encourages others to solve that problem with kindness!

PRINTABLE:

Can-You-See-Me Chart

EXAMPLE:

Problem: After lunch, the cafeteria is very messy...

Poster Ideas:

"Encourage each other to clean up your lunch spot!"

"Remember to throw away your trash before going to break time."

"Be a good friend and help clean up the lunch room, even if you didn't make the mess."

Resources

For more info...

Accelerated Reading Quiz: 161744

Author website: <http://www.trudyludwig.com/index.html>

I feel invisible when...

ENCOURAGE me by...

