

The SEL Interactive Read Aloud Collection

Tulare County Office of Education

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The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig

SEL Competencies

Self-Awareness – Brian recognizes his feelings of loneliness and exclusion.

Self-Management – Brian copes with his emotions in a quiet and creative way.

Social Awareness – The story highlights the importance of noticing and including others.

Relationship Skills – Justin reaches out to Brian, showing kindness and inclusion.

Responsible Decision-Making – The characters make choices that impact Brian's sense of belonging.

Background

The Invisible Boy is a powerful story about Brian, a quiet and often overlooked child who feels invisible among his peers. While other children are busy playing and socializing, Brian is left out. He is not picked for teams, not invited to parties, and barely noticed by his classmates. However, when a new student, Justin, arrives, Brian extends kindness by drawing him a welcome note. This small act leads to Justin including Brian in group activities, helping Brian feel seen and valued. As Brian begins to feel included, the illustrations shift from black and white to color, symbolizing his growing confidence and sense of belonging.

This book is an excellent resource for discussing empathy, inclusion, and the impact of kindness on others.

Before You Read

What do you think it means to feel invisible? Have you ever felt this way?

Why do you think some kids might be left out or feel unseen in a classroom or on the playground?

Look at the cover illustration. What do you notice about the boy? How do you think he feels?

While You Read

Guiding Questions

(Self-Awareness - When Brian is introduced as "invisible")

How do you think Brian feels when no one notices him?

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(Social Awareness - When Brian is ignored during lunchtime and recess)

What do you notice about how the other kids treat Brian? Why do you think they act this way?

(Self-Management - When Brian copes by drawing instead of playing with others)

Why do you think Brian spends time drawing? How do hobbies help us when we feel sad?

(Relationship Skills - When Justin is introduced and gets teased for his lunch)

What should the other kids have done instead of laughing at Justin's lunch?

(Social Awareness - When Brian writes Justin a kind note about his lunch)

Why do you think Brian complimented Justin's food? How do kind words make people feel?

(Responsible Decision-Making - When Justin chooses to sit with Brian)

Justin could have ignored Brian like the other kids. Why do you think he made a different choice?

(Self-Awareness - When Brian starts to feel included in the classroom activity)

How is Brian feeling now compared to the beginning of the story? What changed?

(Book Format - When Brian gradually gains color in the illustrations)

At the beginning, Brian was in black and white, but now he has color. Why do you think the illustrator made this change?

(Relationship Skills - When Brian works with Justin and another student on a project)

How does working together help Brian feel like he belongs?

(Social Awareness - At the end of the book, when Brian is fully in color)

What does this story teach us about noticing and including others?

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After Reading	Inclusion Chain <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Class Discussion: Talk about what it means to make someone feel “invisible” versus “seen.”2. Brainstorming: Ask students to think of small ways they can include others in class, on the playground, or in group activities.3. Writing Activity: Each student writes one way they can help someone feel included on a paper strip.4. Building the Chain: Link all the paper strips together to create an "Inclusion Chain" and display it in the classroom as a reminder to notice and include others.