

## THE INVISIBLE BOY

By Trudy Ludwig

Brian feels invisible. Nobody seems to notice or include him in their activities. Justin, a new boy arrives at school and Brian is the first person to make him feel welcome. When Brian and Justin become friends, Brian no longer feels invisible.



**WITS LEADS Connection:** Look and Listen, Explore Points of View, Act

## Questions and Activities

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### PRE- READING ACTIVITY

Organize children into groups of two. Try to pair children who do not know each other well. Ask them to find three visible similarities and three visible differences between them. Next ask the children to find and discuss three similarities and differences between them that cannot be seen such as likes, dislikes, fears, or values. Ask students if they discovered anything surprising about each other's similarities or differences.



### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. The title of the books is *The Invisible Boy*. Based on your experience with the previous activity, what do you think the story is about?



### POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways Brian felt invisible? *Brian felt invisible in front of the teacher, Mrs. Carlotti who was dealing with other children who "took up more space" with their voice. He felt invisible when he did not get picked for the kickball team. Brian felt invisible when the children talked about a party he wasn't invited to.*
2. How do you think Brian feels if he thinks he is invisible to others? *Possible answers: rejected, lonely, isolated and maybe even depressed.*
3. Was it a fair way to choose the players for the kickball team? *If someone does not get to play because of the way players are selected then it is not fair. How could this be done in a way that includes everyone?*
4. Did Madison and her friends purposely try to hurt Brian with their conversation? *Probably not but Madison and her friends could be more sensitive about discussing the party in front of people who were not invited.*
5. What did Brian do to make himself visible to Justin? *He wrote him an encouraging note.*
6. How did Justin help Brian become visible? *Justin recognized that Brian was good at drawing and told him so. He invited Brian to join their special project team. Justin also invited Brian to share a seat at the table during lunch.*
7. Have you ever felt left out or invisible? What would have helped you to fit in or feel visible?

#### Possible Strategies To Consider:

- *Think about the values that are important to you. Are these values what you see and hear in the group you wish to be a part of? If yes, then talk to the people in the group about the effect of their words and/or actions. If no, then look for people with whom you feel most comfortable and get involved with those people and activities*
- *Talk about your feelings of invisibility with your friends or a trusted adult*

8. How could you help someone who might feel invisible? *Open up a conversation with one who may feel invisible – it's as simple as just taking notice of what they are doing, or asking how they feel or asking them for their opinion.*



## POST – READING ACTIVITIES

### **Making the Invisible - Visible**

Distribute the *Making the Invisible-Visible* handout to students. Ask them to review the scenarios illustrated from the book. If necessary, re-read the parts of the book leading up to those scenarios depicted on the handout. Ask students to consider alternate actions they could take. What would happen to make Brian more visible to those around him? Students are to write their ideas in the blank spaces next to each illustration. Invite students to draw and colour a picture to go with their ideas.

### **What Does it Mean to Feel Invisible or Visible?**

Review Brian's interactions in the story. What did Brian see that made him feel invisible or visible? What did Brian hear that made him feel invisible or visible? What other experiences made Brian feel invisible or visible? Distribute the *What does it mean to feel invisible or visible?* handout to students.

Everyone feels invisible sometimes. Ask them to reflect on times in which they have felt invisible or visible. What do those experiences look like? What is it that they hear that makes them feel invisible or visible? In what other ways do they visible or invisible? On the second page ask students to consider experiences when they may have caused others to feel invisible or visible. What did they see or say to make others invisible or visible? What other actions may make others feel invisible or visible?

### **Mix it Up Lunch**

Organize a Mix It Up Lunch. A Mix It Up Lunch allows students to explore people beyond their exclusive cliques by socializing with students from a variety of groups and backgrounds. Mix It Up is a project of [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org). Every year thousands of students sit in lunchrooms with students from different groups and backgrounds as a way to reduce social boundaries and stimulate ongoing dialogue about this issue. To organize a Mix it Up Lunch visit [www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/what-is-mix](http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/what-is-mix) and review the following tips:

Encourage students to sit with different people by:

- Inviting students to draw alphabet letters (or colors or numbers, etc.) as they enter the lunchroom, then having them sit at corresponding tables.
- Hand out treats (lollipops, playing cards, etc.) as students arrive, then have them sit at corresponding tables.
- Assign tables based on birthday month or season.
- Assign tables based on the first letter of the student's first name.
- Use random hand stamps or raffle tickets (or colored bracelets, buttons, etc.) to assign seats.

Support conversations between students by:

- Placing conversation starters at each table. These can be tied to a theme -"What is your favorite sports team?" -or be more general "Find five things you all have in common."
- Place a survey on each table for students to compare their answers about books, hobbies, games and/or sports etc.

## The Invisible Boy: Making the Invisible ~ Visible Name \_\_\_\_\_

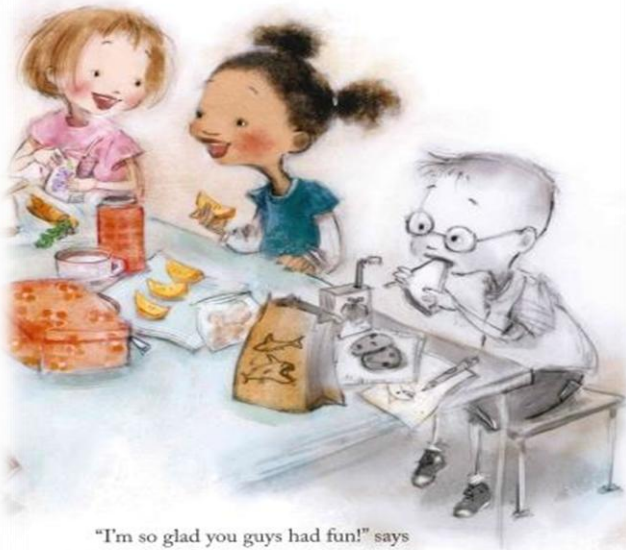
*When everyone is included, everyone wins.* Jesse Jackson

In each of the scenarios below Brian is left out – invisible. Describe ways in which Brian could become more included and more visible to those around him. Draw a colourful picture to go with your description.



J.T. glances in Brian's direction and, just as quickly, looks away. "We've got enough players for each team," he tells the others. "Let's play ball!"

"Yeah, so was the waterslide," adds Fiona.  
"That was the best pool party ever!"



"I'm so glad you guys had fun!" says Madison. Everybody did except Brian. He wasn't invited.