Christian Bucks

A Great Idea

When Christian Bucks was in first grade, his parents were thinking about moving to another country. They looked at pictures of schools in many places. Christian noticed a brightly colored bench on a playground at one school. He asked his mom to help him find out more about it. They learned that it was called a "buddy bench."

A **buddy bench** is a place where kids can sit if they are lonely at recess. Other kids see them and know how they are feeling. They can go up to someone sitting on a buddy bench and ask them to play. Christian liked the idea of a buddy bench. He wanted to get a buddy bench for his school.

> "A lot of kids, I noticed, were lonely at recess. Like, walking around by themselves with their heads down. They seemed upset. So, I thought the buddy bench would be a great way to give them a friend to play with at recess and to be happy at recess because recess is supposed to be fun."

Christian's Buddy Bench

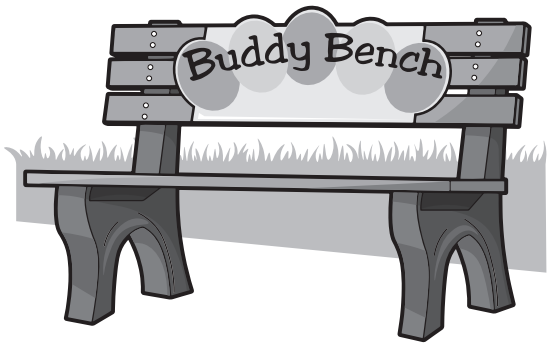
Christian's family decided not to move away. He stayed in his school and started second grade. Christian asked his principal if they could put a buddy bench on the playground. Mr. Miller, the principal, loved the idea!

Christian and Mr. Miller worked together to pick out and order a bench. They asked students from the local high school to paint the bench in bright, happy colors. Mr. Miller said that they needed to introduce the buddy bench idea to the school board. He asked Christian to give a short talk to explain the buddy bench. The school board thought it was a great idea!

Buddy Bench

Why might kids want to sit on a buddy bench?

- They are new to the school.
- Their friends are absent from school that day.
- They want to make new friends.
- They want to play something different from what they usually play at recess.



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Christian Bucks *(cont.)*

Introducing the Buddy Bench

Christian and Mr. Miller needed to introduce the buddy bench to the kids at his school. They made a short video about the buddy bench. In the video, they explained to kids that they could sit on the buddy bench if they were lonely at recess. They told kids that if they saw someone sitting on the buddy bench, they should go talk to them. They should ask if they want to play.

Mr. Miller had a school **assembly** for all the kids. He showed the video. All the kids loved it! They were excited to get out onto the playground to see their new buddy bench.

Spreading the Word

Christian got lots of attention for bringing the buddy bench to his school. The local newspaper took his picture and wrote a story about him. Then, a famous TV show **interviewed** him.

Soon, people all over the country heard about Christian and his buddy bench. Schools called him to ask him about it. He was invited to visit other schools to explain about buddy benches. Christian appeared in newspapers, magazines, children's books, videos, and TV shows. But he didn't want people to talk about him. He wanted them to talk about buddy benches.

Christian's mom helped him start a website where people can find out all about buddy benches. Thousands of schools all across the United States and in other countries now have buddy benches on their playgrounds.

Including People Is Kind

Have you ever felt left out? Maybe you didn't have someone to sit with at lunch. Maybe you don't have someone to play with at recess. Or maybe you were not invited to a party.

Excluding someone means leaving them out. Being excluded hurts people's feelings. Leaving a person out on purpose is a kind of bullying.

One way to be kind to others is to **include** them. If someone asks to play with you, say yes. Be kind and make them feel welcome.

"My hope is that every school gets a buddy bench and loneliness is cured cause of the buddy bench and new friendships are made."

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Key Ideas and Details

Directions: Answer the questions below about Christian Bucks. Use complete sentences.

1. What is this text about?

_____

_____

2. Name two details that you read about Christian.

Detail 1: _____

_____

Detail 2: _____

_____

3. The words *include* and *exclude* are opposites. What does it mean to *include* someone?

_____

_____

_____

What does it mean to *exclude* someone?

_____

_____

_____

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Craft and Structure

Directions: Answer the questions below. Use complete sentences.

1. Why do you think the author used a bulleted list to show you why kids might want to sit on a buddy bench?

_____

_____

How does the bulleted list help you understand the text?

_____

_____

2. What does the subheading "Spreading the Word" mean?

_____

_____

_____

3. What is a different subheading that the author could have used for the "Spreading the Word" section?

_____

_____

_____

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Integration of Knowledge and Meaning

Directions: Answer the questions below. Use complete sentences.

1. Why do you think Christian wanted people to talk about buddy benches and not about him?

_____

_____

2. Do you agree with the author that, "Being excluded hurts people's feelings"?

Yes **No**

Why or why not? _____

_____

3. Write about a time when you included someone or a time when someone included you.

_____

_____

How did it make you feel?

_____

_____

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Group Discussion

Brainstorming: Have you ever felt excluded?

- Why do you think you felt that way?
- How can you tell if someone doesn't feel included?
- What could you do to help them feel more welcome?

Taking Action

Directions: Think of a situation in which someone might not feel included. List some things you could do to help them and some things you should not do.

Things I can say	Things I should NOT say

Things I can do	Things I should NOT do