

Bud, Not Buddy
By: Christopher Paul Curtis
2000 Newbery Award Winner

Citation and Synopsis:

Curtis, C. (1999). *Bud, not Buddy*. New York: Random House Children's Books.

Buddy Caldwell is a motherless 10-year old boy who is determined to find his father. He escapes from a bad foster home and begins a journey from Flint, Michigan to Grand Rapids, Michigan. He carries all of his belongings with him, including memories of his momma, and flyers of Herman E. Calloway and the Dusky Devastators, a renowned jazz band. The story takes place in 1936 during the Great Depression, and is rich in humor, optimism, and determination. The melodious sounds of jazz tie the story together, and the wonderful cast of interesting characters that Bud encounters along the way makes his adventures entertaining and endearing. Bud never does find out who his father is, but he does find a place where he is welcomed as a family member and feels a sense of belonging.

Themes:

- The Great Depression
- Family and Relationships
- Survival
- Hope
- Racism

Activities and Teaching Ideas:

Prediction plays a major role in this text. Bud is very mysterious and the reader doesn't know from one minute to the next what he will do. Another activity would be for the students keep a reading log predicting what they think Bud is going to do next. Have the students reflect on his/her predictions. Have the students make a memory box. Ask the students to bring or make five items/memories that they would bring with them if they had to leave their home for a long period of time. Compare their memory box to the items in Bud's suitcase. The students can interview someone that lived during the Great Depression or what their parents or grandparents remember about the depression. Have the students find out who the major jazz artists were during the depression and why jazz music was so important during that time period. When Bud describes the smell on his blanket, have the students write about a familiar smell to them. Such as their grandmother's cooking or a camping trip. Explain the word euphemism is a word used to soften the meaning of something that is unpleasant. Bud says, "I don't know why grown folks can't say someone is dead, they think it's a lot easier to say their gone." (p178)

Integration Ideas:

Language Arts/Social Studies:

The Great Depression

Notorious figures: Pretty Boy Floyd and Baby Face Nelson

Family: Homelessness, extended family, foster care, adoption

Map skills: Find Flint and Grand Rapids, Michigan on a map

Economics: Compare prices now and then

The job market

Discuss Labor Unions/Laws

Discuss the forms of communications during the depression

Math:

Calculate the distances between the two areas using an Atlas of Standard Highway Mileage Guide

Calculate the distance between Georgia and Flint, Michigan

Music: The impact/significance of Jazz music during the Great Depression

Art: Design a new flier introducing Bud into Callaway's band.

Website Resources:

- Garfield School District (2002) [Garfield School District](http://www.garfieldre2.k12.co.us/quizzes/plewis/quiz.mgi). Retrieved March 2, 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.garfieldre2.k12.co.us/quizzes/plewis/quiz.mgi>
This website allows students to take an online quiz on Bud, Not Buddy.
- Lamb, A. (2000) [EduScapes: a site for life-long learners](http://eduscapes.com/reading/bud/student.htm). Retrieved March 2, 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://eduscapes.com/reading/bud/student.htm>
This website provides the teacher and student with activities and information about the Bud, Not Buddy and Christopher Paul Curtis.
- Powells.com. (2002) [Welcome to Powell's city of books](http://www.powells.com/authors/curtis.html). Retrieved March 2, 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.powells.com/authors/curtis.html>
This is an interview with the Christopher Paul Curtis. The interview provides the teacher with background information about the author. The interview also mentions his new book.
- Random House (2002) [Welcome to Teachers @ Random](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/). Retrieved on March 2, 2002 from the World Wide Web: www.randomhouse.com/teachers/
This is a great website for teachers. At this site, the teachers can access information about Bud, Not Buddy and links to other websites. The teacher can also find teaching ideas, related titles, reviews of the book, and information about the author.

Journal Resource:

- Kaiser, Marjorie M. (2000). Bud, Not Buddy: Common Reading, Uncommon Listening. *The ALAN Review*. Spring/Summer, 40-44. The article provides a model of how to structure a common reading experience around a book on tape. It offers criteria for selecting audio books, using *Bud, not Buddy* as the model. The article includes a time schedule of the book, and prompts for pre-reading, listening, and journal entries. The article also offers extension activities.
- Pavonetti, L. (2001). Historical fiction-New and Old. *Voices from the Middle*, 9, 2, 78-82. This article provides information to find other books that contain similar historical fiction to Bud, Not Buddy. The article also provides a brief description of each book.

Book Resources

- Clark, S. (2001). *A guide to using Bud, not Buddy in the classroom*. New York: Teacher Created Materials. This resource is directly related to its literature equivalent and filled with a variety of cross-curricular lessons to do before, during, and after reading the book. This reproducible book includes sample plans, author information, vocabulary building ideas, and cross-curriculum activities.
- Gaines, A. (2002). *Christopher Paul Curtis: a real life reader biography*. Bear, Delaware: Mitchell Lane Publishers. One day his wife, who was a nurse, offered to support the family while Christopher took a year off to work on a children's book. The result, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham -- 1963*, would change his life. After his second book, *Bud, Not Buddy* was released and also became an award winner; Christopher Paul Curtis was able to do something he had always wanted. Write full-time.

Newspaper Resource:

- Beyond the top 50: Award Winners. (2002, February 28). *USA Today*, D4. Teachers can use this article for a brief summary of several books and see what the critics think about the book.

Information about the Author: Christopher Paul Curtis was born May 10, 1953 in Flint, Michigan. He always knew that he wanted to write. He graduated from high school 1971 and went to work at Fisher Body Plant and Automobile Factory. Mr. Curtis met his wife in 1978, at a basketball game in Canada. In 1993, he began writing full time when his wife offered to support the family for a full year. In 1994, he submitted his first novel to a contest sponsored by Delacorte Press. He did not win the prize, but Delacorte wanted to publish his book. His first book, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* was published. In 1999, his book Bud, Not Buddy, was published and received the Newberry Medal and a Coretta Scott Award in 2000.

Other books the reader might enjoy:

- The Watsons Go to Birmingham, by Christopher Paul Curtis
- A Year Down Yonder, by Richard Peck
- Because of Winn-Dixie, by Kate DiCamillo
- A Long Way from Chicago, by Richard Peck
- The View from Saturday, by E.L. Konigsburg
- Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor

Annotations of Articles:

- Beavin, K. (2000). Audiobook Reviews. *The Horn Book*, 76, 340-344. This article provides a review of the audiocassette of *Bud, not Buddy* narrated by James Avery. His variations of tone make the audiocassette enjoyable to listen to.
- Brabham, Edna G. & Villaume, Susan K. (2000). Continuing conversations about literature circles. *The Reading Teacher*, 54, 278. This article provides teachers with information on implementing literature circles into the classroom. It discusses the recommended number of students in each group, the texts that can be used, and how to prepare for literature circles.
- Johnson, N. & Giorgis, C. (2000). 2000 Newberry Medal winner: Christopher Paul Curtis. *The Reading Teacher*, 54, 424. This article is a biography of Christopher Paul Curtis' life. It is a one-on-one interview about how and why he began writing.
- Johnson, N., Giorgis, C., Colbert, C., Conner, A., King, J., & Kulesza, D. (2000). Children's Books: Identity. *The Reading Teacher*, 53 (5), 434-435. The article reviews several books, including Bud, Not Buddy, which can be used to help define the term "family".
- Lamb, Wendy. (2000) Christopher Paul Curtis. *Horn Book Magazine*, 76, 397-399. This article focuses on the author of Bud, Not Buddy, Christopher Paul Curtis. The writer is a friend of Curtis', and she provides information about his life before he became a writer, his family, and significant elements from other books he wrote before winning the Newberry Book Award for Bud, Not Buddy. The article reviews several books, including *Bud, not Buddy*, which can be used to help define the term "family".



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