Based on

**Bud, Not Buddy**

By Christopher Paul Curtis

**About the Book:**
Bud Caldwell is an orphaned African American boy in Michigan during the Great Depression. He is confident in who he is and where he came from. He makes sure people know that his name is Bud, not Buddy. Although he has never met him, he is convinced that big band leader Herman E. Calloway is his father. After being placed with an uncaring foster family, Bud decides that it is time to strike out on his own and find his long lost father. He experiences the difficulties of being an African American and homeless during the Depression. Through the kindness of several people, Bud makes his way to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to meet who he thinks is his father. He does not find his father, but he finds so much more. Bud finds a place to belong.

**Set the Stage:**
Use the following to get the students ready to read:

- Discuss with students The Great Depression. Talk about the unemployment rate and the many difficulties families faced.
- Describe Hoovervilles and why they sprang up all over the country. Discuss why they were called this name. Discuss how their lives were similar and different from those who are homeless today.
- Discuss the concept of segregation as it existed during the Depression.

**Review:**
After reading the book, discuss the following:

- Why is it so important for Bud to make sure no one calls him Buddy?
- Why is the suitcase so important to Bud? Do you keep things that have sentimental value? What are some things you have saved and why are they important? Why do people feel the need to do this?
- Why does Bud think that six is when you are a grown-up?
- How is Bud treated at the Amos house? Why do you think they wanted him to come and live with them? How does Bud get even with the Amos family?
- Why does Bud think that Herman E. Calloway is his father? Why does he decide to set out looking for him?
- What obstacles does Bud face on his journey from Flint to Grand Rapids? Who helps him along the way? Why were people so kind to him? Do you think people today would act the same way?
- What clues are there that Herman E. Calloway is not Bud's father? Why is Herman E. Calloway important to Bud? Did you guess the relationship before it was revealed?
- Why does Bud finally unpack his suitcase at the end of the book?
Student Activity (found on the last page of this PDF):
In this activity, students will describe how various characters influenced Bud’s journey.

Related Activities:
To extend students’ enjoyment of the book, try these:

• **Big Bands**: Herman E. Calloway was a band leader. Use the Internet or local library to find recordings of music from the Depression era. Play these for the class. Discuss why the songs might have been important to the people of the time. Have students discuss what songs are important to them today and explain why. Have students write a summary about how music reflects real life.

• **It’s All in the Flyer**: Have students design a flyer that a band like Herman E. Calloway and The Dusky Devastators of the Depression might have made. Have them come up with an original band name and design for the flyer.

• **Hoovervilles**: Bud and Bugs stayed the night in a Hooverville. Have the students list five useful items that they would want to have if they lived in a Hooverville in the 1930s. Then have students write a one paragraph explanation of why they selected the specific five items.

• **Walk a Mile in My Shoes**: Bud and the librarian determined the mileage from Flint to Grand Rapids. Have students use a map scale to find the mileage from their home town to a city of their choice. Then have students calculate how many hours it would take to walk that distance if they traveled at 5 miles per hour. Last, have students calculate the time it would take to travel that distance in a car going 65 miles per hour.

• **Highlighting the Times**: Have students research the Depression era. Then have them make a poster that creatively displays five characteristics reflective of that era. Students can write a summary paper explaining each of the five displays and how they characterize the 1930s.

• **Pack Your Bags**: Bud carried all of his special items in his suitcase. Have students use a shoebox to make and decorate a suitcase. Students are to put five items that represent themselves. Students can share their suitcase with the class.
A Place to Call Home
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Directions: Describe how the following people helped Bud on his journey to discover a place he could unpack his suitcase.

The librarian: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Bugs: __________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Deza Malone: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Lefty Lewis: _____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Mrs. Sleets: _____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Steady Eddie: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Miss Thomas: ____________________________________________________________

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