

★ BASEBALL BUDDIES ★ Building a Team

by Aaron Derr



Discussion Guide

1. At the beginning of the book, Luis is the new kid on an already established baseball team. Remember, his family had moved from Texas to Ohio. What do you think that felt like for him?
2. Have you ever been the new kid at school, on a team, or in a club or activity? What was that experience like?
3. Luis and Jimmie are opposites who eventually become friends. Do you think people who are opposites can be friends in real life? Do you have any friends who are very different from you? Think about what traits led to you becoming friends.
4. On p. 3, manatees are described as animals that are “kind of weird and funny looking, but also smart and capable of learning from their mistakes”—the perfect mascot for Luis’s new team. What animal would be the perfect mascot for your class, and why?
5. Why do you think Coach Joe chooses Luis as the team captain? Do you think Luis is a good choice? Why or why not? What qualities do you think a team captain should have?
6. Luis begins to hold players-only team meetings. Why do you think it’s good to have meetings without the coach present? How do you think the players-only meetings help the team become stronger?
7. Were you surprised that Jimmie agreed to go to the player-only meetings even though Luis didn’t hit a home run? Why do you think he agreed to go?
8. Would you consider the Manatees’ season successful? Why or why not? In what ways did the team become better?
9. By the end of the book, the Manatees have learned how to be good teammates to each other. What do you think qualities of a good teammate are? Name two or three.



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About the Author: Aaron Derr

Aaron Derr is a writer, specializing in sports and children's content, based just outside of Dallas, Texas. He has more than 20 years of experience writing and editing magazines and books for kids of all ages for companies such as Red Chair Press, TIME For Kids, Sports Illustrated for Kids and the Boy Scouts of America. When he's not reading or writing, Aaron enjoys watching and playing sports with his wife and two kids. He's learned a lot from his home team about being a good sport and building teams.

Synopsis of the Book

When Luis joins his new baseball team, the Manatees, things seem hopeless at first. Some of his new teammates—including “loud and obnoxious” home-run slugger Jimmie—are mean to him or to each other. His new coach doesn't tell the players everything to do like his old coach did. And some of the Manatees seem more interested in goofing off than in working hard. Then Coach Joe makes Luis team captain. Will Luis rise to the challenge? Can he get the Manatees to balance working hard and having fun? Will he help his teammates learn to be friends rather than compete?

Baseball Buddies explores the power of working together, what it takes to build a team, and the lasting friendships that form on the baseball field.

Praise for Baseball Buddies

“As a baseball announcer, I get to see big leaguers up close every day at work. As a dad, I see my own little leaguers at home all year 'round. And I see a little of both when I think of Luis, Gary and the rest of the Manatees in Baseball Buddies. Whatever your level, it's a perfect tale of building a team, working hard, trying your best and – of course – having fun!”

— Scott Franzke, radio play-by-play voice of the Philadelphia Phillies

“A wonderful narrative for readers who love baseball that also offers valuable lessons to those who don't.”

— Kirkus Reviews



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