

# Booktalk: Sledding Hill

Saskatchewan School Library Association

**THE MEDIUM – WINTER 2010**

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# Booktalk: Sledding Hill by Chris Crutcher

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Prepare to be “in character” to deliver this book talk to students. Wearing an object of clothing like a cap or shirt helps put you in the character’s place and signals to the students that you are taking on a role.

### Booktalk:

My name is Billy and I’m in grade 10. My best friend’s name is Eddie. Eddie has a tough time at school because he can’t focus. He never gets anything done because his mind jumps all over the place. The teachers think that he is stupid, but that’s not what I think. I know he is brilliant and almost a genius! All he needs is someone to help him focus on one thing. Eddie’s dad is a great guy who supports him in his struggle. However, something just terrible happens. Eddie’s dad dies in a terrible accident at work. And to make matters worse Eddie is the one to find his body.

Then one week later I, Billy, stupidly kick some sheet rock and it falls on me. Eddie is the one to find my body, also. Oh yeah, I forget to tell you, I’m dead. It is actually quite cool being dead because your spirit can go anywhere in the universe in mere seconds. I decide that the one place in the universe I need to be is with my friend Eddie. He needs me, the poor guy. He is so traumatized first by finding his dad’s body, and then mine, that he becomes mute. That means to cope with the trauma he decides to stop talking. When I first contact him I almost scare him to death, but I do find a way to communicate with him. He needs help!

Eddie’s mom has decided that religion will help him. However, she has chosen the wrong religious person to help him. He comes into the clutches of Reverend Tater. The Reverend also teaches at our school. He decides to lead a group of parents to ban a book that he considers evil and corrupt. I know that Eddie needs my help to stop this ridiculous action against our freedoms. I love the book and I see that banning it is an assault on our freedom to read and think what we want. There is a huge showdown between the kids and the parents, and what happens is amazing!

Does Eddie ever talk again? What is it like to be dead? What could be in a book for it to be considered too evil and corrupt to be in the school library? Read *Sledding Hill* by Chris Crutcher to find out.