

Mateo Saves a Seat

A small welcome can make a big difference.



The community garden was getting ready for a spring picnic. Mateo wiped the long wooden table. His friends were busy at the far end, making colourful paper flowers.

He placed his bag on one seat and his jacket on another. Then he spread his drawing paper across the table. ‘These places are for my friends,’ he said.



A girl he had not met came through the gate with her aunt. She looked at the busy table, then sat on a small wall by herself.



Mateo noticed the girl watching the paper flowers. He was making a bright orange one. His friends were busy with their crafts. The empty seats beside him seemed very quiet.



‘Do you want to make a flower?’ he called. The girl glanced at his bag and jacket. ‘Where can I sit?’ she asked. Mateo looked at his things.



He moved the bag beneath the table and folded his jacket. ‘Here,’ he said. ‘I’m Mateo.’ ‘I’m Inez,’ she replied, sitting carefully at the end of the bench.



Mateo gave her a sheet of yellow paper. As his friends watched, Inez folded it into little pleats. She opened it, and the paper looked like sunshine.



‘Will you show me?’ he asked. Inez demonstrated slowly. His first folds were uneven, but she waited. Soon two bright flowers rested on the table between them.

When everyone sat down, Mateo nearly reached for his jacket to save another place. Instead, they all shuffled along a little. There was room on the bench.

Inez showed the others how to fold flowers. One child made tiny petals. Another made enormous ones. They arranged the whole colourful bunch in an empty jar.

When the picnic began, Mateo sat between an old friend and a new one. They passed the fruit bowl carefully and laughed about a flower bigger than a plate.



Before leaving, Mateo checked the bench. No bags covered the seats now. He carried the paper flowers to the gate, where their cheerful colours welcomed everyone coming in.

The end

Making room can be the beginning of friendship.

How did Mateo help Inez feel welcome?

Little adventures. A kinder tomorrow.

An original MimoMango story for sharing aloud.