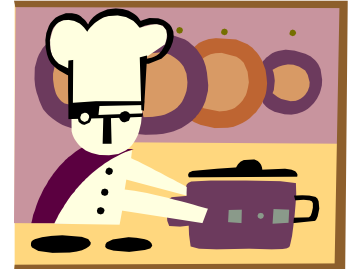


## Using Literature-Related Cooking Experiences to Foster The Development of Communication Skills

*Dr. Morrow shares many "Fun with a Purpose®" ideas for learning in the classroom. You will see several ways to share these ideas with families, too. You could, for example, send recipes home, asking children to tell their families about the books related to the recipes. You might circulate the books themselves. Or you could use a book and the related cooking (or results of the cooking) for a family time in the classroom. This would give you the chance to explain to parents how much learning can go along with cooking, with suggestions for similarly productive times in the kitchen at home. Older students can do the explaining themselves.*



*Students could put together a book with these recipes as well as recipes from their own families. If you could have a copy run off for every family, what a practical and long-lasting proof that would be of the mutual benefits of school and home sharing!*

Frequent exposure to many types of children's literature is an important part of a total developmental reading program. To build an appreciation for literature, children should have a variety of experiences related to books. Many fine pieces of children's literature include food as a major part of the story theme, such as *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey and *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* by Charlotte Zolotow. This suggests the possibility of cooking experiences related to children's books, a valuable activity in school or at home.

Children learn best when representing and experiencing concepts through many different modalities (Hohmann, Banet, and Weikart, 1979). A cooking activity related to children's literature provides one with this opportunity. The book becomes alive through the medium of food. The end product is both tangible and enjoyable. Cooking related to stories is a way to excite and enthuse children about books. Through cooking, children also have the opportunity to be actively involved in learning. Communication skills are enhanced within this pragmatic context.

### Communication Skills Developed

When students are given an assignment to find or create and then prepare an appropriate recipe for a particular piece of children's literature, they must apply and utilize many communication skills. The assignment uses a directed reading and thinking approach (Harris and Smith, 1980). The story is discussed prior to the reading. The food in the story is mentioned, along with the possibility of creating or finding a suitable recipe that correlates to the story. This helps to build interest and set the background and purpose for reading. Additionally, these activities aid comprehension since the students now have some expectations concerning what they are about to read. Children may also be asked to predict or suggest what they believe may be an appropriate recipe before the story is actually read. Listening comprehension is similarly encouraged and enhanced for children who are not yet able to read. Prior to reading the story to nonreaders, prepare for listening comprehension with discussions similar to those suggested for children who can already read.

Literature-related cooking experiences involve literal, inferential, and critical thinking skills. The literal facts and details of a story must be understood before a recipe can be appropriately selected or created. Inferential and critical thinking is required when children must problem-solve and make decisions as to the best recipe to suit the story theme. Study skills are utilized when students skim through cookbooks or use the table of contents or the index to find a recipe suitable for the story content. Notes are taken to share recipes with others. When the recipe is selected, it can be written on a large chart. This enables the children to become aware of the sequence of events and the directions they must follow in order to successfully prepare the food. Recipes have new words particular to cooking, such as *knead*, *blend*, *dice*, and *pare*. These words need to be defined and spelled, either by the teacher or through the use of the dictionary, thus contributing to spelling, vocabulary, and concept development.

Literature-related cooking experiences encourage children to communicate and further develop the complexity of their language. Research has shown that language development and reading success are closely related (Cullinan, 1977). Children discuss the theme of the stories and use the language found in the books. Students freely discuss the food they are preparing by comparing and contrasting textures, colors, and shapes. While listening to children preparing and tasting their own recipes, one might hear, "The lemon is sour and makes my tongue curl up on its edges;" "This pudding feels smooth and creamy in my mouth." As children use new language and descriptive terms, they will be increasing the vocabulary and syntactic complexity of their own language. Children are also eager to listen to their peers as they share ideas.

Thus far, the literature-related cooking experience has involved the children in all the communication skills. They have been reading, writing, using oral language, new vocabulary, listening, utilizing study skills, thinking critically through, problem solving, creating, and making decisions. Teachers spend a great deal of time teaching skills that help children to become independent, competent readers. After direct instruction, students must have the opportunity to use and practice these skills. Cooking gives the child the opportunity to practice and develop many of the skills necessary to become a fluent reader through an interesting, meaningful and practical context.

## **Other Content Area Skills**

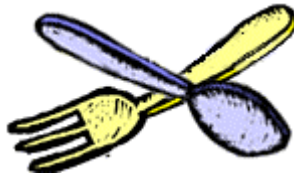
Many skills are utilized in literature-related cooking: social interaction takes place, math skills are used, and scientific discoveries are made.

Social studies skills are encouraged since cooking needs to begin with a set of rules, which might include safety precautions, cooperation, and clean-up requirements. These rules can be formulated by the class and written on a chart that is posted. Students also learn to share responsibilities as they work in groups.

Cooking utilizes math skills since it required knowledge of measurement; for example, what constitutes a cup, teaspoon, or ounce. It allows the teacher to use metric measurements in real situations. Calculations are used throughout the preparation of food, especially if the recipe needs to be increased to serve a large group.

Scientific discoveries are made and opportunity is provided for children to observe how foods can be changed into different shapes and consistencies.

These content area skills, coupled with the communication skills previously mentioned, tend to make literature-related cooking experiences an excellent interdisciplinary activity, a basic tenet of good teaching. Literature-related cooking can become a regular classroom experience with new units of instruction and with activities for different seasons and holidays. Choose literature that is appropriate for topics of study and has food as a major part of the story theme.



## Planning Literature-Related Cooking Experiences

Cooking experiences related to literature can be incorporated with topics being discussed in the classroom and with all units of study. To introduce children to literature-related cooking, read a story to the class that includes food as a major part of the story theme. Select stories that relate to a current topic of discussion. Allow the class to discuss the type of food they could prepare, based on the food mentioned in the book. Cookbooks may be consulted for ideas or exact recipes. Decide upon an appropriate recipe and write it on a chart. The children copy the chart into a notebook or on an index card, which becomes a part of a year-round literature cookbook. The following is a recipe for the story *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* by Charlotte Zolotow. The food in the story motivated the creation of the recipe. The format for the recipe provides a sample outline that has been used by children for recording recipes in a literature cookbook.

## Sample Recipe for Literature Cookbook

Book: *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present*

Author: Charlotte Zolotow

Publisher: Harper & Row, 1962

**Story Summary:** A little girl, trying to decide upon a birthday present for her mother, asks the help of a rabbit. Together, they decide upon an apple, banana, pear, and grapes for the present.

### Recipe

Mr. Rabbit's Fruit Ambrosia

Ingredients for 6 servings:

2 bananas

bunch of seedless grapes

2 apples

2 pears

2 cups of shredded coconut

**Directions** Peels and cut bananas, apples, and pears into small slices. Cut grapes in half. Arrange alternate layers of bananas, apples, pears, and grapes in clear plastic or glass serving dishes. Sprinkle each layer with the coconut, including the top. Chill and then serve immediately. If need to make ahead of time, squeeze lemon juice on fruit to prevent discoloration.

Before beginning the food preparation, students should be divided into small groups so that everyone has the opportunity to actively participate. When the children are in their groups, review safety rules as well as clean-up requirements. The sequence of cooking steps are read from the recipe chart and responsibilities for each part are assigned.

To help you provide cooking experiences related to current classroom topics regularly, a bibliography of children's literature has been listed according to seasons. The books were selected because they have food as a major part of the story theme and can motivate the creation or selection of recipes.

## Seasonal Food Stories and Recipes

### Fall Books with Food in the Theme

Kumin, M.W. *Follow the Fall*. Putnam Press, 1961.  
Moncure, J.B. *Fall is Here*. The Child's World, 1975.  
Tresselt, A.R. *Autumn Harvest*. Lothrop, 1951.

## Fall Books and Recipes

York, Carol. *Johnny Appleseed*. Troll, 1980.  
Middle graders will appreciate this story about Johnny Appleseed's adventures as a pioneer, and how he wandered through the West planting his apple seeds.

### Recipe

#### Apple Sauce

Ingredients for 12 servings:  
12 apples (1 medium apple per serving)  
water  
5 tbs. Sugar

**Directions** Cut apples into quarters; remove cores and stems and pare. Place in deep saucepan. Add water until the apple pieces are just covered. Cover and cook until apples are tender (about 20 to 30 minutes). Add sugar and continue cooking until sugar dissolves. Mash and stir apples until they are the desired consistency for sauce.

Ipcar, Dahlov. *Hard Scrabble Harvest*. Doubleday & Company, 1976.  
This story for young readers relates in rhyme the farmers' struggle against the possibility of bad weather and pesky insects--from spring planting to fall harvest. Happily, the book ends with a harvest of tomatoes, apples, pumpkins, and corn.

## Recipe

### Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients for one 9" pie:

1½ cups cooked or canned pumpkin

¾ cup sugar

½ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. nutmeg

3 eggs, slightly beaten

1¼ cup milk

¾ cup evaporated milk

1 uncooked 9" pie shell

**Directions** Combine pumpkin, sugar, salt, and nutmeg. Add eggs and milk, and evaporated milk. Blend all together. Pour into the unbaked pie shell. Bake in a hot oven (425°F) for 10 minutes, then in a moderate oven (325°F) for another 45 minutes or until the mixture does not adhere to a knife inserted in the middle.

Devlin, W. & H. *Cranberry Thanksgiving*. Parent's Magazine, 1971.

Maggie and her grandmother live near a cranberry bog in this book for children of all ages. Maggie's grandmother is famous for her cranberry bread, and is said to make the best for miles around. On Thanksgiving both Maggie and her grandmother invite a guest to dinner. When the meal is over, Maggie's grandmother learns a lesson about judging people by how they look.

## Recipe

### Grandma's Famous Cranberry Bread

Ingredients for one loaf of bread:

2 cups of all-purpose flour

1 cup sugar

1½ tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

½ tsp. baking soda

¼ cup butter or margarine

1 egg, beaten

1 tsp. grated orange peel

¼ cup orange juice

1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts

1½ cups fresh or frozen cranberries, chopped

**Directions** Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in a large bowl. Cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Add egg, orange peel, and orange juice all at once; stir just until mixture is evenly moist. Fold in cranberries and nuts. Spoon into a greased 9" x 5" x 3" loaf pan. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour and 10 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove from pan and cool on wire rack. Slice and serve.

## Winter Books with Food in the Theme

De Regniers, Beatrice Shenk. *The Snow Party*. Pantheon Books, 1959.  
Marino, Dorothy. *Buzzy Bear's Winter Party*. Franklin Watts, 1967.  
Welber, Robert. *The Winter Picnic*. Pantheon Books, 1970.  
Welber, Robert. *The Winter Wedding*. Pantheon Books, 1975.

## Winter Books and Recipes

Hader, Berta and Elmer. *The Big Snow*. Macmillan Publishers, 1948.  
As the geese fly south, the animals recognize this as a sign that winter is coming. A big snow falls and covers the ground. The animals can no longer find food. Then a little old woman scatters seeds, nuts, and breadcrumbs for them.



### Recipe

#### Pinecone Bird Feeder

Each child will need:  
1 large pinecone  
peanut butter  
birdseed  
string

**Directions** Tie a length of string to each pinecone. Spread the peanut butter into the open spaces of a pinecone. Stick birdseed into the peanut butter. Tie the pinecone on a tree at home or outside the classroom.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day*. Viking Press, 1961.

On the first snowy day of winter, everyone will enjoy the adventures of a boy who goes out to play in the newly fallen snow. He builds a snowman, makes angels, throws snowballs, and takes one snowball into his house to save for tomorrow.

### Recipe

#### Ice Cream Snowballs

Ingredients for 25 snowballs:  
4 eggs  
2½ cups sugar  
6 cups light cream  
6 cups milk  
4 cups light cream  
2 tbs. Vanilla  
½ tsp. salt  
2 cups shredded coconut

**Directions** Beat eggs until light. Add sugar gradually, beating until mixture thickens. Add remaining ingredients except coconut and mix thoroughly. Freeze. Scoop out one scoop per child and sprinkle with coconut.

Marianna. *Miss Flora McFlimsey's Valentine*. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1967.  
Primary children will like this book. Miss Flora's wish to make surprise valentines for her friends in the forest is almost spoiled by one of the animals. All ends well with valentine treats.

**Recipe:** Valentine Surprise

Ingredients for 8 to 10 servings:

- 1 large pkg. cherry gelatin
- 1 jar cherry pie filling
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla

**Directions** Make gelatin according to directions on package. Mix in cherry pie filling before it gels. Put in an 8 1/2" x 11" flat dish. Refrigerate until it gels. Cream together sour cream, cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla. Spread on top of gelatin. Chill and serve.

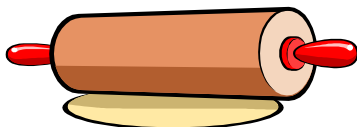
Lobel, Anita. *The Pancake*. William Morrow, 1978.  
This story of the adventures of a pancake who rolls away when overhearing that he is about to be eaten will appeal to primary children. The pancake escapes the woman, her seven children, a farmer, a goose, a cat, a goat...but not the pig.

**Recipe** M & M Pancakes

Ingredients for 12 pancakes:

- 2 cups pancake mix
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. oil or melted shortening
- 1 large pkg. M & M's

**Directions** Preheat and lightly grease a griddle. Put pancake mix, milk, eggs, and shortening in a bowl. Stir until smooth. Pour batter onto hot griddle in small circles. Turn pancakes when tops cover with bubbles. Let children decorate by pressing in M & M's.



## Spring Books with Food in the Theme

Blos, Joan. *It's Spring She Said*. Alfred Knopf, 1968.  
Delton, Judy. *Three Friends Find Spring*. Crown Publishers, Inc., 1977.  
Lerner, Sharon. *Who Will Wake Up Spring?* Lerner Publications Co., 1967.  
Krauss, Ruth. *The Carrot Seed*. Harper and Row, 1945.

## Spring Book and Recipe

Lawson, Robert. *Rabbit Hill*. Viking, 1944.  
A good story for middle elementary grades. The rabbit family and its friends worry if the people moving into the big house near their rabbit hill will be mean and pinching, or folks with a thought for the small creatures who have always lived there. The new folks prove their beneficence to animals by planting their vegetable garden without fences.

**Recipe**                      Rabbit Hill Spring Salad

If possible, using ingredients from a vegetable garden planted by the class.

Ingredients for 25 servings:  
2 heads lettuce  
2 cucumbers  
2 stalks celery  
1 bunch carrots  
1 dozen tomatoes

Directions Wash all vegetables. Tear lettuce into small pieces; slice cucumbers, celery, carrots, and tomatoes. Place each ingredient in its own separate bowl. Children take a dish and serve themselves salad-bar style.

## Summer Books with Food in the Theme

Garlick, M. *Down to the Beach*. Four Winds Press, 1973.  
Goffstein, M. B. *Fish for Supper*. Dial Press, 1976.  
Ichikawa, S. *Suzanne and Nicholas in the Garden*. Franklin Watts, 1976.  
Schick, E. *Summer at the Sea*. William Morrow & Co., 1979.

## Summer Books and Recipes

McCloskey, Robert. *Blueberries for Sal*. Viking Press, 1948.  
Primary children will have fun with this story. One summer day a little girl and her mother, as well as a bear cub and his mother, set out for a blueberry search in Maine. While hiking up opposite sides of a hill, the two children stray from their blueberry-picking mothers. The children are concerned only with filling themselves full of fruit. After a startle and two pails of fruit, they meet.

**Recipe**                      Blueberry Muffins

Ingredients for 15 large muffins:

1 stick butter  
1 cup sugar  
2 eggs  
1 cup flour  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 cup blueberries

**Directions**    Cream the butter and sugar together. Add eggs and beat. Add flour, baking powder, and vanilla. Mix well. Fold in blueberries gently. Drop mixture into foil baking cups. Bake at 350°F 25 minutes or until muffins are golden brown.

Lenski, Lois. *Strawberry Girl*. Lippincott, 1945.

Use this story with middle elementary grades. Birdie Boyer's family has moved to Florida's backwoods to raise small crops of sweet 'taters, strawberries, oranges, and the like.

**Recipe**                      Strawberry Layer Dessert

Ingredients for 12 servings:

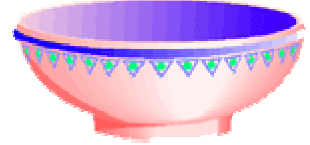
1 10-oz. pkg. frozen sliced strawberries (thawed)  
1 3-oz. pkg. strawberry gelatin  
1 cup hot water  
1 cup whipping cream (whipped)  
1 10" tube angel-food cake

**Directions**    Drain strawberries, reserving 1/2 cup syrup. Dissolve gelatin in hot water. Add reserved syrup. Chill until partially set. Beat mixture till light and fluffy. Fold in whipped cream. Chill until mixture is of spreading consistency. Transfer 1 1/2 cups mixture to small bowl; fold in drained strawberries. Split cake crosswise into three equal layers. Fill between layers with strawberry mixture. Frost top and sides with remaining whipped-cream mixture. Chill and serve.

## **General List of Books with Food as a Major Part of Their Theme**

Agnew, Seth M. *The Giant Sandwich*. Doubleday, 1970.  
Asch, Frank. *Good Lemonade*. Watts Publishers, 1976.  
Berestain, Janice and Stanley. *The Big Honey Hunt*. Beginner Books, 1962.  
Brandenberg, Franz. *Fresh Cider and Pie*. Macmillan, 1973.  
dePaola, Tomie. *The Popcorn Book*. Holiday House, 1978.  
Grimm, Brothers. *Hansel and Gretel*. Numerous editions.  
Hogrogian, Nonny. *Carrot Cake*. Greenwillow Books, 1976.  
Hutchins, Pat. *Don't Forget the Bacon*. Greenwillow Books, 1976.  
Le Sieg, Theo. *Ten Apples Up on Top*. Random House, 1961.  
Lionni, Leo. *In the Rabbit Garden*. Pantheon, 1975.

Lobel, Anita. *Potatoes, Potatoes*. Harper & Row, 1967.  
Lord, John Vernon. *The Giant Jam Sandwich*. Houghton Mifflin, 1973.  
McKee, David. *King Rollo and the Bread*. Anderson Press Limited, 1979.  
Potter, Beatrix. *The Roly-Poly Pudding*. Warne, 1908.  
Schaeppi, Mary. *The Tale of the Magic Bread*. Scroll press, 1970.  
Steadman, Ralph. *Jelly Book*. Scroll Press, 1970.



## General Books and Recipes

Dahl, R. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Alfred Knopf, 1973.  
Everyone, especially those who have seen the movie, will enjoy the adventures of Charlie Bucket, a poor boy who lives next to Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. Charlie wins a ticket for a tour of the factory; his adventures there are hilarious.

**Recipe** Charlie's Chocolate Flake Candy

Ingredients for 6 dozen pieces:  
5 cups cornflakes  
½ tsp. salt  
1 lb. sweet milk chocolate  
2 1-oz. squares unsweetened chocolate

**Directions** Combine cornflakes and salt. Melt the chocolate together in a double boiler; pour over cornflake mixture; mix well, slightly crushing the cornflakes. Drop from a teaspoon onto waxed paper. Chill several hours. Keep in cool place.

Blume, Judy. *Freckle Juice*. Dell, 1971.

Pupils in grades two to five, especially those with freckles, will enjoy this book. Nicky has freckles all over. Andrew wished he had freckles. Sharon offers Andrew her recipe for freckle juice for 50 cents. Andrew mixes the recipe and the unexpected happens.

**Recipe** Freckle Fruit Punch

Ingredients for 35 servings:  
3 qts. Unsweetened pineapple juice  
juice of 8 oranges  
juice of 4 lemons  
2 cups sugar  
4 qts. ginger ale  
2 qts. plain soda water  
1 pint fresh strawberries, quartered

**Directions** Combine juices and sugar and chill thoroughly. Just before serving add ginger ale, soda water, and strawberries.

## Current Cookbooks for Children

- Cunningham, Marion. *Cooking with Children*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
- Gooding, Suzanne. *Magic Spoon Cookbook*. Klutz, 1997.
- Katzen, Mollie and Ann Henderson. *Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes: A Cookbook for Preschoolers and Up*. Tricycle Press, 1994.
- Marx, Pamela. *Travel the World Cookbook*. Goodyear Book, Scott Foresman, 1996.
- Miller, Justin. *Cooking with Justin: Recipes for Kids and Parents by the World's Youngest Chef*. Andrews and McMeel (Universal Press Syndicate Company), 1997.
- Robins, Deri. *The Kids Around the World Cookbook*. Kingfisher, 1994.
- Zanzarella, Marianne. *The Good Housekeeping Illustrated Children's Cookbook*. Morrow Junior Books, 1997.
- Author unknown. *Betty Crocker's Cooking with Kids*. Macmillan, 1995.

## References

- Cullinan, B. "Books in the Life of a Young Child," in *Literature and Young Children*. Bernice Cullinan and Carolyn Carmichael (eds.), National Council of Teacher of English, 1977.
- Harris, L. and C. Smith. *Reading Instruction: Diagnostic Teaching in the Classroom* (Third Edition). Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.
- Hohmann, M., B. Banet and D.P. Weikart. *Young Children in Action*. The High/Scope Press, 1979.