

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, which means that for at least the last week or so, many of us have been planning, preparing, dreaming of, or perhaps dreading the big Thanksgiving meal. Wherever you fall, your feelings about Thanksgiving can't be separated from the food. Yes, Thanksgiving is about giving thanks, and yes, it's about family and friends. But if gratitude and family are the bricks of the holiday, the food is the mortar. And the food is connected to our memories and feelings, our hopes for Thanksgiving day, and our desire to connect to one another. Here are some books for children and teens that show how food brings and keeps us together.

"I Like Berries, Do You?" by Marjorie Pitzer is a board book for babies and toddlers with delightful photographs of toddlers and young children eating different foods. The children in the photos all have Down Syndrome, and the book can be used as a tool to encourage other children with Down Syndrome to try foods with different textures, smells, and tastes, but any young child will enjoy looking at the photos of other children and foods they may know. This book is a simple celebration of food!

"Feast For 10," by Cathryn Falwell is the ultimate Thanksgiving picture book because it's about food shopping, family, cooking a meal together, and enjoying the meal together. It's also a counting book, counting up everything needed for a big family meal. Join the family as they count ten hungry guests just as the meal is ready.

"Bee-bim Bop!" by Linda Sue Park is another picture book that celebrates the preparation and enjoyment of a meal: bee-bim bop, a Korean dish of rice and meat and vegetables. The words are rhythmic and rhyming and so much fun to read out loud as you follow a little girl who helps her Mama prepare her favorite food.

"Pies from Nowhere: How Georgia Gilmore Sustained the Montgomery Bus Boycott," by Dee Romito and illustrated by Laura Freeman, is a picture book biography that tells the story of Georgia Gilmore. When the Montgomery Bus Boycott started in 1955, Georgia pitched in to support the civil rights movement the best way she knew how: by cooking. She organized, cooked, and sold meals to raise the money needed to support the boycott. The book also includes one of her delicious recipes to try at home.

"From the Desk of Zoe Washington," by Janae Marks, was one of the best middle grade books of 2020. Zoe Washington loves to bake and wants to try out for the "Kids Bake Challenge" on TV. To prove that she's serious, her parents find her an internship at a local bakery where she can learn the realities of running a real bake shop. At the same time, Zoe is struggling with questions about her incarcerated father, whose letter she received on her twelfth birthday. Is he really innocent, as he claims? Can she juggle her internship with secretly tracking down a witness who could help her father get out of prison?

"With the Fire on High," by Elizabeth Acevedo, is a YA novel with a main character you can't help but fall in love with. Emoni Santiago is a teen mother with a passion for cooking. When she has the opportunity to travel to Spain with her school's cooking class, she thinks she'll never be able to afford to go. But a great idea and lots of determination help send her on the trip, where she develops her natural cooking skills.