

# Teacher's Handbook

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Books on the Menu® is a Program Created by  
Reading Is Fundamental® to Inspire Young People to Read and Learn



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Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF®) develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read. Through a national network of teachers, parents, and community volunteers, RIF programs provide books and other essential literacy resources to children at no cost to them or their families. RIF's highest priority is the nation's neediest children, from infancy to age 11.

Through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, RIF provides federal matching funds to thousands of school and community-based organizations that sponsor RIF programs. RIF also receives private support from hundreds of corporations and foundations, thousands of local organizations and businesses, and countless individuals.

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# Training Older Readers

A week or two before you plan to hold your first Read-Together, schedule three half-hour sessions. The first session will serve as an introduction to the program, while the later two will prepare students for planning and carrying out their read-togethers. You want to give your students enough time to digest the materials and practice reading aloud, but you don't want too much time to pass or they may lose their initial excitement about the program.

## Before the First Training

### 1. Introduce the program

Tell your students all about *Books on the Menu* — the goals of the program, how it works, and their role as reading mentors. Pump them up about their part, letting them know that as “experienced” readers, they can be a real inspiration to children who are just beginning to read.



From the very start, it is important to emphasize that, as older bookmates, *their job is not to teach younger children to read, but to help them enjoy books so that they will want to learn how to read.* Point out the benefits to themselves as older readers — a chance to share the kinds of books and stories they once loved, to help others, and to rediscover some of the fun they can have reading.

### 2. Observe the K-1 class

If possible, before your first training session, schedule a visit to the primary classroom during their story hour. You might want to send the older readers in small groups to observe the teacher and class in action. Remind them that they are there to pay attention to the younger children, not each other!

Before a visit to the kindergarten or first-grade classroom, discuss some things to observe as the teacher reads aloud:

- How does the teacher introduce the story, and wrap it up at the end?
- What does the teacher do to hold the children's attention?
- How does the teacher's style of reading aloud make the story interesting?
- What do younger children do while they listen?

- How do they react to different parts of the story?
- What do they say or do?
- How do they respond to the teacher?

Back in your classroom, encourage the children to share their observations. They may have noticed how squirmy younger children are, and how easily distracted they can be. They may have observed that younger children like to talk about themselves and their experiences, straying from the original story or question. They may pick up on the way children show their involvement with a book, laughing or exclaiming out loud. And they may comment on the teacher's patience — how he or she paused to let everyone enjoy the pictures, and asked questions to make sure they were all following the story.

If a classroom visit is not practical, consider showing older children a video of the primary teacher reading aloud to the younger class. Or arrange to have the primary teacher visit the intermediate class to demonstrate some read-aloud techniques and alert older readers as to what to expect when reading with young children.

### **3. Walk your students through the Bookmate Planner.**

Hand out copies of the *Bookmate Planner*. After older readers have had a few minutes to look over the material, walk them through each section, explaining how it can serve as their guide to the program.

Take a few more minutes to talk about read-togethers - how frequently they are scheduled and how long they last. Explain that bookmates will generally spend two sessions focusing on a single title, three at most. That should be enough time to read and talk about the book, and complete a related activity or project.

### **4. Let them see the books and choose one to read.**

Hopefully by this introductory event, you will have the *Books on the Menu* classroom collection. Let your students browse through the collection. Talk about the food theme. Ask if they are familiar with any of the titles, authors, or illustrators. They may be happy to see some "old friends" from their own primary days, and they may be interested to see some books they don't know.

Ask your students to choose one of the books to take home and read before the first training session.

## **5. Pass out the Pre-Implementation Survey**

This survey is designed to be filled out before the older bookmates participate in this program. Please collect the completed surveys and tally the results in the reproducible tally sheet. Both the survey and tally sheet may be found in section nine.

## **First Training Session**

### **1. Identify good read-aloud techniques**

Begin the first session by generating a list of good read-aloud techniques with your students. Write all their ideas on the board. At the top of the list should be “reading with expression.” Refer them to the *Bookmate Planner* for techniques they may have missed.

### **2. Model a few techniques**

Choose one of the books from the *BOTM* collection. Try, if possible, to pick one from the core collection. Begin reading in a matter-of-fact way, without interest or expression. After a page or two, stop and ask your students to comment on your reading. Encourage honesty.

After receiving their feedback, begin again. This time, model some of the read-aloud techniques you identified earlier: vary your speed, use different voices for different characters, raise and lower your voice to show excitement or suspense, and read with interest and enthusiasm.

Discuss what the class liked about your second read-aloud performance. Let them suggest ways you can make the story even more interesting. Add these to the list on the board.

### **3. Ask students to read aloud and critique each other.**

Break the class into small groups or pairs. Hand out copies of the “Read-Aloud Style Checklist” (reproducible found in section nine). Now it’s your students’ turn to read aloud and critique each other.

Refer them to the tips in the *Bookmate Planner* and the class list of read-aloud techniques. Give each student a Read-Aloud Style Checklist to help point out reading strengths and areas to work on.

Bring the class back together after each child has had the opportunity to read aloud and critique someone else. Ask the groups to highlight which methods were effective and the different techniques students used.

#### 4. Match bookmates.

At this point, students should select or be matched with a younger bookmate. Write out each primary child's name in full. You might have them make name badges for themselves and their bookmates to wear during the first Read-Together.

If possible, have the "Teacher's Comment Sheet" forms (reproducible found in section nine) filled out by the primary teacher for each younger child. Pass out these forms to the older partners. If the primary teacher prefers to hold short conferences, sign up the intermediate students to meet with the teacher during the first few read togethers.

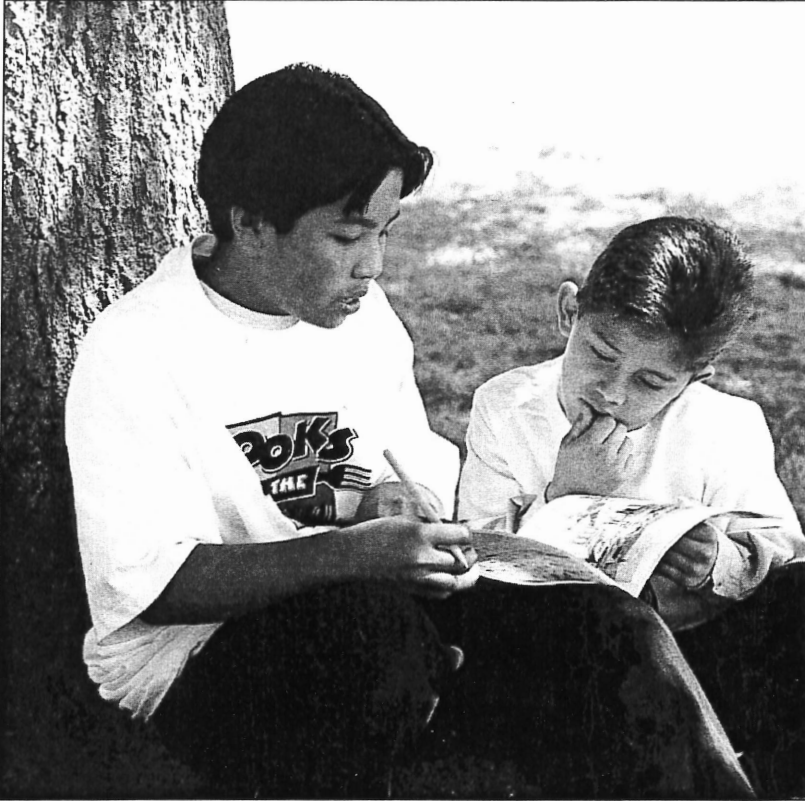
#### 5. Have your students read a book and review a menu for the next training session.

Have your students choose the first book they would like to read to their new bookmate. If they already know something about the younger reader's skills and interests, they can use this information to make an appropriate choice. Remind them to choose a book that also appeals to them.

Encourage students to take the book home, read it once to themselves, then several times out loud, practicing techniques from their first training session. A parent or younger brother or

sister is usually a receptive audience.

Copy one of the Menu Planners (reproducible found in section nine) for one book as an example to the group. Let them know that some of the books in the collection have menus to help them in talking and working with their bookmate. If the students have a menu linked when their book choice, make a copy for them to review before the second training session.





## Second training session

### 1. Students read aloud and critique each other.

Begin the second session by asking the class to break once more into groups or pairs. Have them take turns reading *BOTM* selections aloud and critiquing each other. Remind them to offer praise and constructive criticism. You might want to hand out more copies of the “Read-Aloud Style Checklist.”

You might wrap up this section of the training by having your students compare their style checklists with the first time they did this exercise. Did they get better? Have you seen improvement?

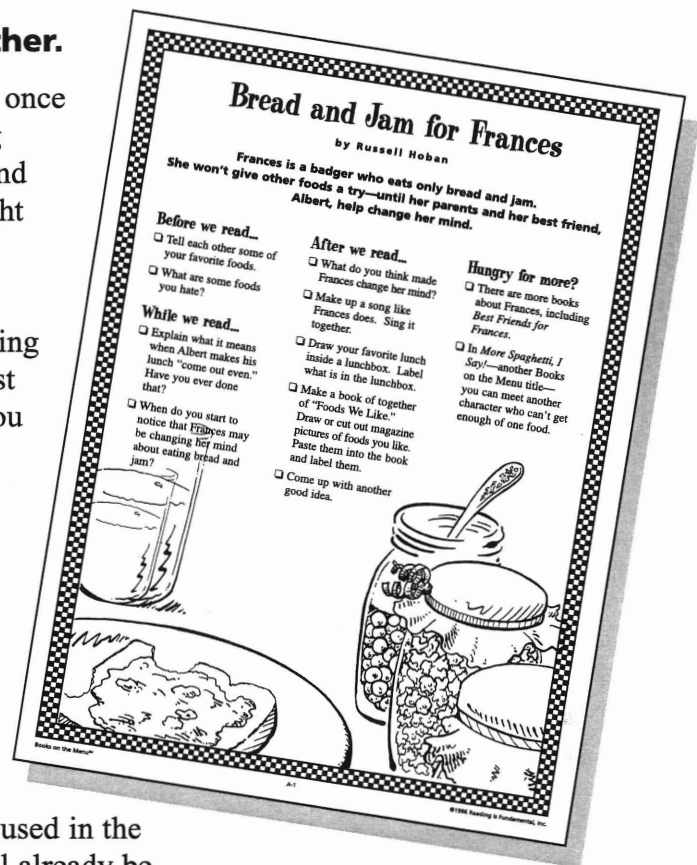
### 2. Discuss how to use the Menu Planners and Activity Ideas.

Teachers suggest that the best way to train older bookmates to plan and prepare for read-togethers is to take them through a “dry run” of the process. Choose a book and its corresponding Menu Planner and activity idea/page (reproducibles found in section nine) as an example as you discuss how to use these program components. You might want to use the same book you used in the Read Aloud from the last training session since they will already be familiar with the story.

Review the format of the Menu Planners. Point out that every menu includes a choice of things to talk about “Before we read” and “While we read,” and a choice of things to talk about or do “After we read.” These three components are also discussed in the *Bookmate Planner*. Related books featured under “Hungry for more?” include titles from the *BOTM* 24-book core collection and new titles.

In the “After we read” section of the Menu Planners, there will be 3 or 4 activity ideas for the bookmates to choose from. Encourage the older bookmate to read the options under this section to their younger buddy. Although the older readers are responsible for planning Read-Together activities, the younger child may want to help decide on the activity they will do after they read.

Point out the blank menu in the *Bookmate Planner*. This page is for bookmates who decide to read a book that is not included in the *BOTM* collection. The books you order for your classroom collections will determine how frequently the bookmates will have to come up with an original menu. Challenge bookmates to come up with an original menu of activities for these substitute/additional books.





Collect the menus in a binder where they can be shared with other bookmates. Another option is if there are books that don't have Menu Planners, you might want to work with the whole class on creating a menu for each title in your classroom collection.

## TIP

**A project for older kids might be to color in and laminate two sets of full-size menus for everyone's use during read togethers. Or teachers can provide pairs of bookmates with personal copies as needed.**

### **3. Discuss how to use the Bookmate Planners.**

These planners are a way to introduce the children to the program and they also offer general tips for leading activities. There is space to jot down notes in-between read togethers. Included in the planners are places for the older bookmates to keep a journal about their experiences as a reading mentor.

### **4. Discuss the art of asking questions.**

Refer older readers to the section in the Bookmate Planner that discusses general ways to look at books with younger bookmates. For example, bookmates can:

- Look at the cover and make predictions.
- Look at an illustration to interpret what's happening.
- Guess what a character might be thinking or saying.
- Identify the little stories in the big story.
- Find funny or interesting parts to revisit.

### **5. Encourage older bookmates to "go with the flow."**

Every teacher knows that while you structure time to go one way, it may go another. Older bookmates are going to learn this along the way.

Remind older readers that the most important goal of BOTM is to have fun. If they have to discard a question, point out one less detail, or simplify a project, that's okay. And during the Read-Together, they may even decide to do something entirely different from what they originally planned. You can never tell when an inspiration will strike!

# Read Together

## First Read Together

Typically, bookmates are split into two groups, meeting at two different sites, with a teacher facilitating at each site. Both teachers will need to be aware of what should be happening!

### 1. Get everybody together.

Have a plan for getting bookmates together. You may want to assign half the children to meet in the intermediate classroom, and the other half to meet in the primary classroom. Or you may have another site in mind, for example, the school library or multi-purpose room.

### 2. Get acquainted.

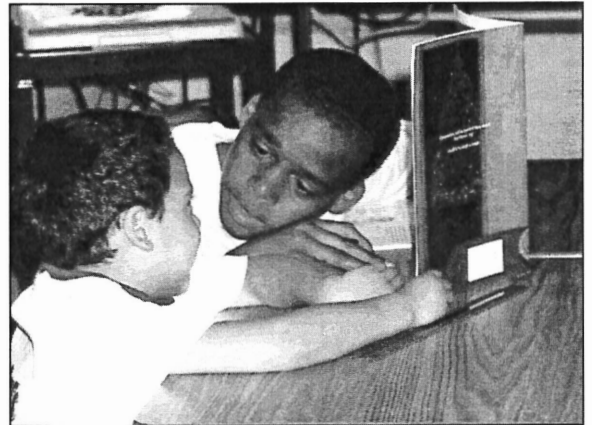
At the first Read Together, have older readers turn to the “Bookmate Interview” questions in their Bookmate Planner. This get-acquainted “interview” will serve as an icebreaker. The older children read the questions, coax answers from their younger partners, and offer similar information about themselves. The older children write both responses on the page.

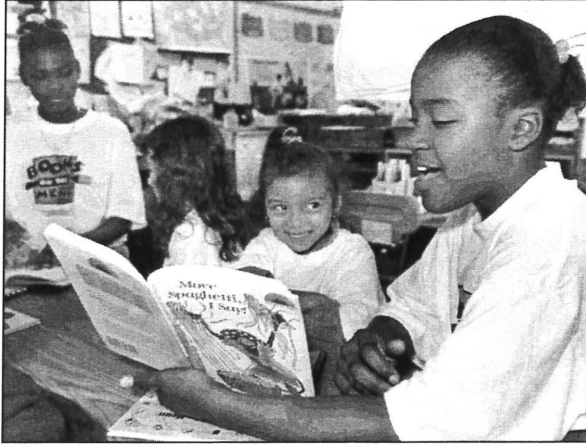
Pass out copies of “My Bookmate” (reproducible found in section nine and in the *Bookmate Planner*). Older bookmates may have to help their younger buddies fill in the blanks, but the younger children can draw pictures of their older bookmates by themselves. These pages may be displayed on a bulletin board, sent home along with the “Letter to Parent” (reproducible found in section nine), or saved with other keepsakes in the program folder that will eventually go home with the younger child.

### 3. Begin reading.

Bookmate interviews should last no more than 10 minutes. That will leave enough time for partners to read aloud and begin to talk about the book the older student has chosen for this first Read-Together.

Remind bookmates that they have options if they finish before the others, or before the session ends. You might want to post suggestions like these in the rooms where they read:





- Read the whole story, or just your favorite part, again.
- Guess what characters might be thinking or saying.
- Choose a favorite picture and examine it under your “mental microscope,” searching for tiny details.
- Talk about your own experience in relation to the story — restaurants you like, how you spend your day, ways you help cook, and so on.
- Read through some of the restaurant menus you have collected, and pretend to take each other’s orders.
- Take one of the “Kids’ Menu Short Orders,” activities keyed to the *BOTM* “Kids’ Menu” (reproducibles found in section nine).

#### **4. Watch the time.**

At the beginning of the Read Together, state the ending time and stick to it. Give them a five-minute warning so they can wrap up their discussion and/or story. The children will learn to plan their time accordingly.

## **Second Read Together**

Typically, bookmates spend two sessions with a book, so they will begin this Read-Together where they left off in the previous one, by:

- Finishing the book they started reading the first session,
- Reviewing story highlights,
- Talking more about it, or
- Beginning, and maybe finishing, an activity from the “After we read” section of the menu.

Between the first and second read togethers, provide time for older students to plan what they will do and collect supplies.

- Look at the cover and make predictions.
- Look at an illustration to interpret what is happening.
- Guess what a character might be thinking or saying.
- Identify the little stories in the big story.
- Find funny or interesting parts to revisit.
- Encourage older bookmates to “go with the flow.”

## **1. Bookmates read, work, and clean up together, keeping timing in mind.**

Remind bookmates that the Read Together activity will end promptly at the scheduled time, and that you will give them a five-minute warning so that they can stop, put projects away in the younger child's program folder, and clean up.

Reassure them that not everybody will finish their books and activities at the same time, or in the same number of sessions. *BOTM* is not a race, and there are no deadlines to meet. After a few read togethers, they will have a better sense of what they can plan to accomplish in a 30-minute session. A lot will depend on the maturity and interest of their younger bookmates, and their own menu choices.

If bookmates have spare time, they may choose their next book together or take up one of the earlier suggestions we listed for keeping busy until the end of the Read Together.

## **2. Bookmates choose a book for their next Read Together.**

Before the end of the second Read Together, bookmates should take a minute to return books they have finished to the reading room collection, and choose the next book they will read. This will give the older readers time to read and plan activities before they meet again.

Although older readers may have preferences, they should encourage their younger buddies to help choose what to read. The more input younger readers have in choosing, the more happily they will look forward to reading their next book.

## **3. Older readers replace supplies.**

When children return from the second session, take a minute as a group to decide on a procedure for replacing supplies. How will we notify each other if we are out of some material? Where do projects go? What to do if we don't finish?

Planning a Read Together and following through is a lot for intermediate students to envision and handle. Allow extra time to set up, clarify, and follow up with your students in the beginning of the program.



## After Each Read Together

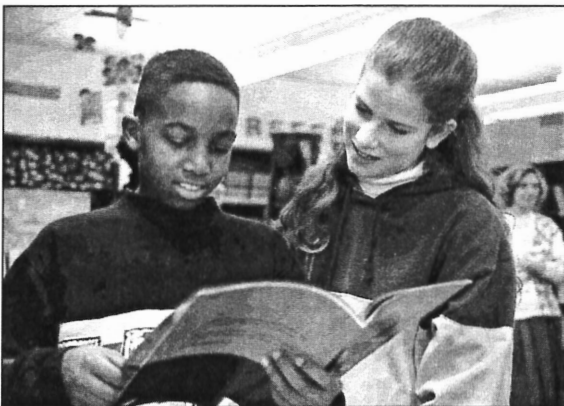
Back in their classrooms, both groups of children need time to process or digest what they have been doing. Older children are learning how to envision and plan a half-hour session. Younger children are having an exciting and challenging experience, which they want to share. In both classrooms:

### 1. Provide time to “debrief.”

It is initially difficult for anyone working with children — even experienced teachers — to accept how frequently plans must change. Help older bookmates see that this is just the way it goes. Remind them to relax, change plans, and “go with the flow.” And reassure them that you do not expect all readers to stay on the same schedule, beginning or completing books on the same day.

Schedule time for older bookmates to vent their joys and frustrations. You might give them time to chat in the last minutes before departure, or in the first thing in the morning during homeroom time. The chance to talk informally and compare notes will help older readers adjust their expectations and feel like they have a support group.

If you notice older readers taking too much responsibility, you may wish to remind them again to let the younger child do the cutting or hold the book and turn pages. But remember, too, that older children still enjoy the hands-on work they used to do, and in some cases need to make things just as much as younger children do. Handle this issue sensitively.



Encourage younger children to hold up a part of their work in progress, show a picture, or talk a little bit to their classmates about the books they are reading with their bookmates. This gives children a chance to honor each other’s work and makes books even more visible in the classroom.

### 2. Encourage journal writing.

Journals provide one more way you can find out what children are thinking. Included in the *Bookmate Planner* are specially formatted pages for older readers’ journal entries. Encourage journal writing after each Read-

Together. From time to time, you may want to review journals and respond to mentor concerns. The journals also offer teachers an opportunity to observe changes in attitude and maturity.

If students don't mind (and be sure to ask first!), intermediate teachers may occasionally want to share their journals with the primary teacher. Likewise, older bookmates will appreciate knowing what their little bookmates may be reporting back about their experiences. The primary teacher can respond to the journals with positive comments, for example:

"Shawn really loved the booklet he made with you. He took it home to read to his parents."

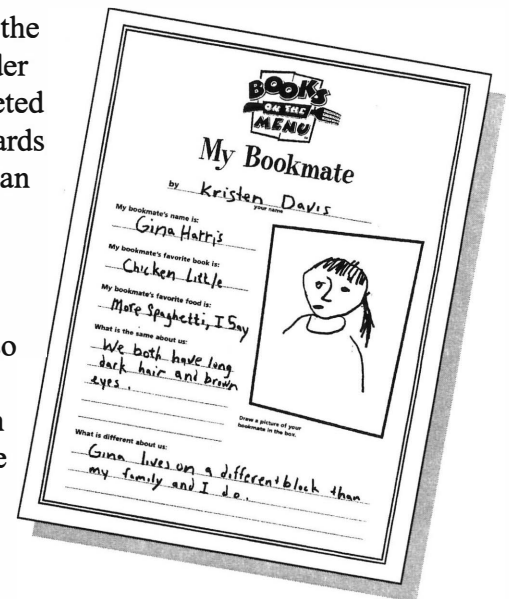
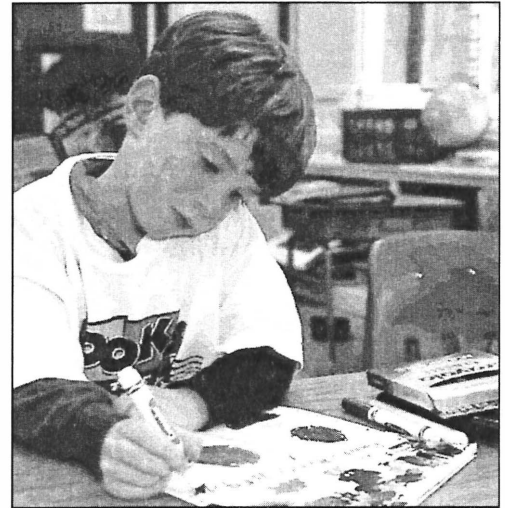
"Did you know that Katie knows how to read 'pizza' because she said you showed her how? Thank you!"

Primary teachers may also help younger children record their responses to books and working with their bookmates by keeping a group journal. Let several children dictate while the teacher records. Younger children can also keep their own picture journals, and those children who are already writers may be encouraged to keep a simple journal consisting of a few stapled pages.

### 3. Encourage bookmates to acknowledge one another.

The relationships that develop between bookmates are critical elements of the program's success. Primary teachers can encourage the younger kids to express their affection and appreciation for their older bookmates. A surprise bulletin board displaying drawings of completed "My Bookmate" reproducibles (found in section nine), thank-you cards or letters with invented spelling, homemade books, and valentines can go a long way to making older bookmates feel valued.

Intermediate teachers, for their part, can encourage older bookmates to acknowledge their younger buddies by name in the hall, lunchroom, playground, or bus. The older children should also be reminded to praise their bookmates for their attention, cooperation, interesting ideas, and new skills. Friendly recognition and approval from their older bookmates will boost the confidence of these soon-to-be readers.



## Group Sharing

Bookmates are naturally curious about other pairs' activities. Providing an occasional opportunity to share their ideas and experiences with the group will help satisfy their curiosity, improve their presentation skills, and encourage them to learn from one another. Here are a few group-sharing possibilities:

### 1. Encourage bookmates to share "Book Discoveries."

Let bookmates show off how smart they are about books. Keep a stack of "Book Discovery" forms (reproducible found in section nine) handy so that bookmates can fill them out when, in their planning or discussion, they come up with their own good ideas.

The forms can be the basis of a Book Talk presentation (see #3 in this section). You may also want to encourage bookmates to use these forms to write mini book reviews and post them on your *Books on the Menu* bulletin board.

### 2. Hold work-sharing sessions.

At the very beginning or end of a Read-Together, save a little time for group show-and-tell. Let bookmates read aloud something they have written, or hold up a project and explain what it is and why they chose to make it.

Encourage the children to comment on what they like and notice each other's work. If you would like to see more writing activity, bring attention to writing in your own comments, alerting them to the possibilities:

"I like the funny things the characters are saying in the voice balloons."

"Look at all the things you labeled in your picture!"



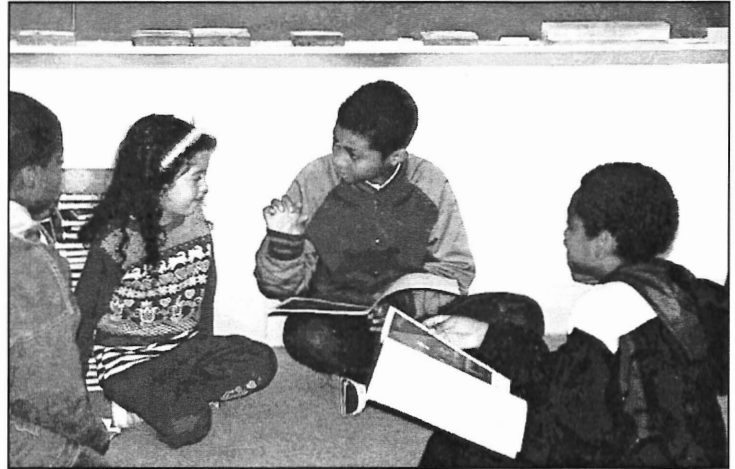


“That’s a great story you wrote! It kept me interested in finding out what happened.”

### 3. Hold a “Book Talk.”

To maximize book interest and discussion during *BOTM*, incorporate Book Talks into the program schedule. After every three or four weeks, plan to have a Book Talk as part of, or in lieu of, the regularly scheduled Read-Together. Discussions can take place in small groups or large groups.

Small groups might consist of children who have all read the same book. Model the first talk by sitting with a small group in front of the rest of the children. You might talk about how the characters would have done something differently. Or you might ask readers to respond to a situation, or give advice to a character: “If you were one of the cat waiters, what would you say to the sheep?” Older bookmates can naturally lead these small group discussions.



If you prefer to hold a Book Talk with the whole group, come up with a generic question that will elicit responses from all the children. Here are some examples:

- How are the characters in your book different, and how does that create a problem in the story?
- With your bookmate, come up to the audience and introduce yourselves as two of the main characters in your book. Tell something about yourselves that will make everyone want to read the book and get to know you.
- What did you find out by looking at the pictures in your book that the words of the story did not tell you?
- Why do you think other bookmates will like your book? Make up a commercial that will get kids to read it.
- What art medium or technique did the illustrator use to create the pictures?

Be sure to let bookmates know about the schedule change and Book Talk topic ahead of time so they can adjust their plans accordingly.

# Book Feast

## Organizing a Book Distribution

Since its founding, RIF has emphasized the importance of motivation in learning to read. Its goal has always been to create lifelong readers, not just distribute books. For this reason, RIF programs must include reading motivation activities during their book distributions. *BOTM* is a program that has activities throughout the project time, however, it is still a requirement that the teachers and coordinators have a motivational activity directly linked to the book distribution. Since *BOTM* is a food-themed program, we refer to this book distribution as a Book Feast.

Book ownership is a powerful motivation for reading. Book Feasts are great opportunities for all the bookmates to have a chance to choose a new book that won't have to go back on the classroom shelf, but is theirs to take home and keep free of charge.



### 1. Schedule a Book Distribution.

A Book Distribution can take place in an extra half-hour before or after one of your regularly scheduled Read Togethers, or it may be a separate event that takes place during another convenient time for both classes. If the younger children also eat lunch at school, a Book Feast may be planned as a special luncheon.

### 2. Plan a motivational activity for the event.

At the end of this section, we have listed a variety of motivational activities to choose from. We want you to plan and carry out motivational activities in conjunction with this event because fun activities help kids associate books and reading with positive experiences and excite their interest in reading.

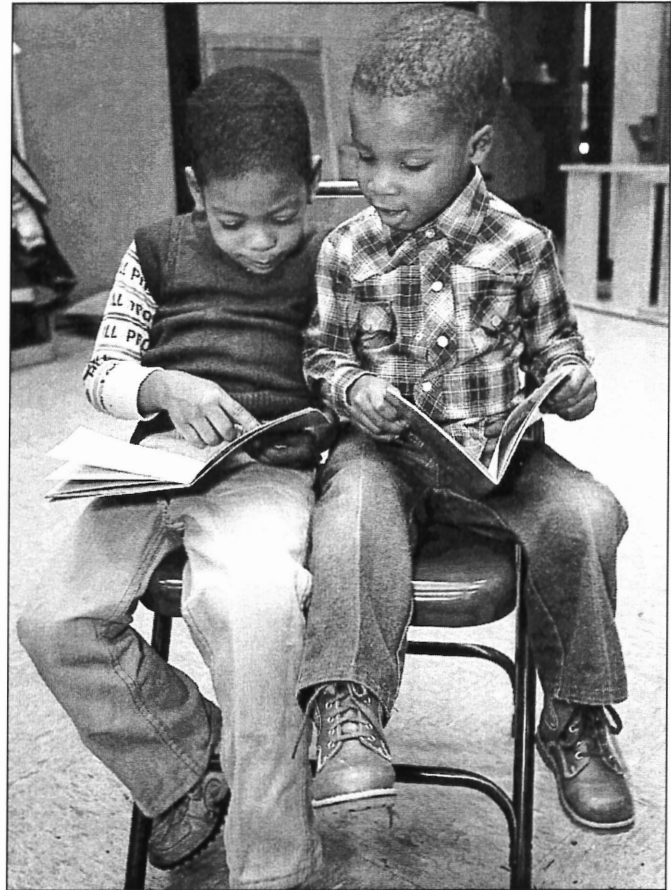
A simple idea is to have the children choose their books and then have the younger children read their new books with their bookmates or invite a guest reader to the event.

### 3. Let kids choose their books.

The focus of this event is the book distribution, a chance for each child to choose a book to keep, at no cost to him or his family. The important word here is *choose*. There should be enough books and absolutely no interference from adults, so that kids feel that they have had a chance to pick a book they really want to read and own.

Display a wide variety of titles — picture books for the primary students, including some *BOTM* titles and a combination of program titles and heartier fare for older readers. Have enough extra (at least 10%) that the children feel they have a choice.

Explain that the books are gifts to bookmates for their participation in the *Books on the Menu* program. For younger readers, it is a gift of encouragement — to read more, and practice their new skills. For older readers, it is a gift of thanks — for all their planning and hard work in carrying out the *BOTM* program, their spirit of service, and their demonstrated enthusiasm for books and reading.



### 4. Make it a Real Feast!

A Book Feast celebrates reading together and building a community of readers in your school.

Food has been a literary theme in your program; now it can be a *literal* part of the fun. You might also have the older readers brainstorm and come up with special activities that spin off of the *BOTM* titles they have been reading with their bookmates.

Here are some fun, food-related motivational ideas:

## Motivational Activities

### Microwave Recipes *(Motivational Activities that take no time at all)*

#### Cake Walk

Hold a “Cake Walk” as Carmen Lomas Garza describes in *Family Pictures*. Using the game of musical chairs as a model, place enough food pictures on the floor for each bookmate pair to stand near. Before you start the music, remove several pictures. Each time you

stop the music, bookmate pairs who don't land on a picture will leave the game to go together to the distribution table to choose books. This game helps pace the distribution and prevent chaos. The pair who wins the game is the last to choose books, so who really won? Everybody.

### **Food Feast**

Eat something prepared on the spot by bookmates. Or let the primary group prepare the snack for the first Book Feast, and let the intermediate group prepare for the second (If kids are handling food, make sure they wash their hands before choosing books).

### **Songs/Chants**

Sing a food song, such as "On Top of Spaghetti." Or chant a food rhyme, such as "Peanut Butter and Jelly," provided in the book by Nadine Bernard Wescott. Those who know the hand motions can come to the front of the group and demonstrate while the rest either read the chant from the chart or follow the leader.

### **Pin the Tail on the Food Pyramid**

Take a large replica of the food pyramid. Have smaller cutouts of food items, attaching Velcro or magnets, or any other adhesive device on the back of the food. Blindfold the children, spin them three times and see if they can put the food items in the right places. This is an excellent way to teach nutritious eating in a fun way.

### **Make Your Own Chef Hat and/or Apron**

Use old clothing or paper to create the hats or apron. Have specific instructions for the children to follow. Once their apron/hat is done, they may then personalize it by writing on it.

### **Unscramble Food Book Titles**

Choose food book titles or any food name and make a sheet for the students to unscramble.

### **Food Bingo**

Create a Bingo card with food categories in place of numbers. Operate the game as usual Bingo. You may cut up one of the game boards to create your calling card list.

## **Food Pictionary**

Create a list of food items. Divide the bookmates into teams. Select one writer in each group. Give them the clue and have each writer try to draw the clue until one team member guesses correctly.

## **Food Board Games**

CANDY LAND, a crossword puzzle with food as the theme or another food-related game can be a fun way to teach the importance of reading instructions.

## **Food/Spice Test**

Collect as many spices as possible. Place them out on a table (or tables) in little dishes. Label each dish with the name of the spice, and for educational purposes, what the spice is commonly used in. For example, oregano is often used with tomato sauces. First, have the children read each label and smell the spices. Then blindfold them to see which ones they recognize.

## **Kitchen Sandbox**

Build an indoor sandbox out of corn meal. Using a small baking pan or pie dish, spread a thin layer of corn meal over the bottom of the pan. Form a letter with your finger in the corn meal. Say the letter and its associated sound for a child who does not recognize letters yet. Ask a child who can recognize letters to say the letter you have drawn. You may use pencils or chopsticks in place of fingers.

## **Stove Top Recipes** *(Motivational Activities that last from 30 minutes to an hour)*

### **Special Guests**

Arrange to have speakers talk to the children about food. For example, a farmer may talk about growing fruits and vegetables or a pizza maker can show how to make a pizza, etc.

### **Donuts for Dad/Muffins for Mom**

Fathers/mothers come to school with their children. Mom and Dad bring a newspaper and the children bring their favorite book(s). Parents and kids share breakfast and reading. The activity can be held in the school cafeteria before school begins.

### **Alphabet-shaped cereal**

Divide up into small groups of 10 or fewer and choose a leader/writer. Give the writer a pencil and a paper with spaces for some nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. Give the group a cup or bowl of alphabet-shaped cereal. Have the leader ask for nouns, verbs, etc. based on what the group finds in the cereal. The group should then create a story from those words.

## **Cooking Class**

Find very simple recipes to teach to the class. If possible, find recipes that do not require cooking, for example, coleslaw, salad, sandwiches, snack mix, etc. Or you might show the children how to make their own pizzas, and have the cafeteria staff cook it for their lunches.

## **Story Book Sandwich**

Create sandwich parts so that each child has pictures of two bread slices for a front and back story book cover and one picture of each filling for the beginning, middle, and end of their stories. After their stories are complete, the children copy their work into appropriate parts of the sandwich, and assemble it. A staple or brass fastener in the top corner will help keep the story book sandwich together.

## **Food-related thank you notes**

RIF and our funders always appreciate thank you letters from the children we serve. You might want to have the children design thank you notes to look like food.

## **Edible Alphabet**

Shape the ABCs out of things your children like to eat. For example, make pretzel letters out of pretzel dough, cookie letters out of cookie dough, etc.

**To build up excitement about the upcoming book feast, you might want to give these ideas a try:**

## **Roasting Recipes** *(Motivational Activities for the whole day/week)*

### **Weekly Themes**

Send home a calendar to let the children's families know about the food theme for the week. For example, one day might be devoted to a certain vegetable, fruit or meat. Each day, encourage the children to wear a color to represent the theme of the day. For example, black and white for cow day, purple for grape day, etc.

### **Food Themes for Weekly Lunches**

International food themes can be coordinated with the cafeteria. During a week celebrating French Cuisine, for example, include different French food items on the daily menu. The next week can be Indian week, with a new Indian dish each day.

## **Adding Food to the Curriculum**

Tie food to every subject covered, where applicable. For example, if children are reading about China, discuss the types of food people eat in that country.

## **Scavenger Hunt for Books with Food in the Title**

Set the children loose in your library and ask them to list all the books they can find with food in the title.

## **Bring in Favorite Recipes for a School Cookbook**

Using the blank recipe cards (reproducible found in section nine), have the children bring in their favorite recipes from home. There is a place where they may draw a picture of the dish. Your completed cookbook may be sold to raise money for books for the children.

## **Teach How to Read Recipes**

Here is a fun way to teach children the measurements. Have a recipe typed up for each student. Be sure to explain the abbreviations (TSP, TBSP, etc.). Let the children experiment with doubling recipes and see how everything fits (3 TSP = 1 TBSP).

## **Potluck Lunch or Dinner**

This is an excellent way to get parents involved. Invite parents to bring in food during lunchtime, or as an after-school event. Have the children come up with the menu, and write out a descriptive explanation for each menu item. During the meal, children can relate to the group how they helped their parents make the dish.

## **Read It and Eat It**

An adult selects a book to read with child/children and pops popcorn as a treat (making reading like going to the movies). Or have adults read a folk tale or an animal story and afterwards the children help cut out and bake a gingerbread man or animal cookies and then eat the cookies after they have been baked.

## **Crock Pot Recipes** *(Motivational Activities to use throughout the program or send home)*

### **Family Cookbook**

Have the children collect recipes from various family members and combine them into a family cookbook to add to the family collection. Use cardboard to bind the book. Make holes to line up and connect with string at the completion.

## **Children help with the shopping**

Create a simple shopping list for the children to read from while you are food shopping. Older children may be able to write the list for you. Allow children to take responsibility for the list.

## **Assistant Chef**

Ask children to help read off ingredients in recipes to parents while they're cooking dinner. This may help to point out the importance of reading in that it is not exclusive to books, but a necessary part of daily living.

## **Progress Markers (Spaghetti and Meatballs)**

This is a way to measure the number of books a child is reading in the home. There are numerous ways to do this, one example is Spaghetti and Meatballs. Make a bulletin board of spaghetti, and add a meatball for each book read. Other markers include, Fish Tales (add scales for each book), Pizza Progress (add a topping for each book), World's Biggest Ice Cream Cone (add a scoop for each book). The possibilities are only limited by your appetite! *Note: If you plan to use this in your classroom, please do not make individual progress charts. One way to make it fun for a classroom is to document the number of books the entire classroom reads as a group.*

## **Food Coloring Name Pancakes**

Have children help make batter for pancakes. Once cooking is complete, have the children write their names or draw a picture with food coloring on a pancake. Make sure the children are closely supervised at all times. Children who are not able to write yet can still participate with help from older siblings or parents.

## **Picture Menu**

Think of a restaurant menu as just another opportunity to read aloud to your children. At fast food restaurants, you can point out words on the overhead board; at sit-down restaurants, where the menus have pictures of some dishes, you can point those out. Once familiar with real menus, your children might like to make their own for a pretend restaurant.



# Assessment

## Assessing Your Program

The primary goal of *Books on the Menu (BOTM)* is to encourage children to read more and enjoy it. The program is designed to inspire prereaders and beginning readers and to increase their reading readiness and fluency. Older bookmates experience feelings of competence and satisfaction as they plan and lead activities and “give back” something of value to their school. They also gain confidence as readers.

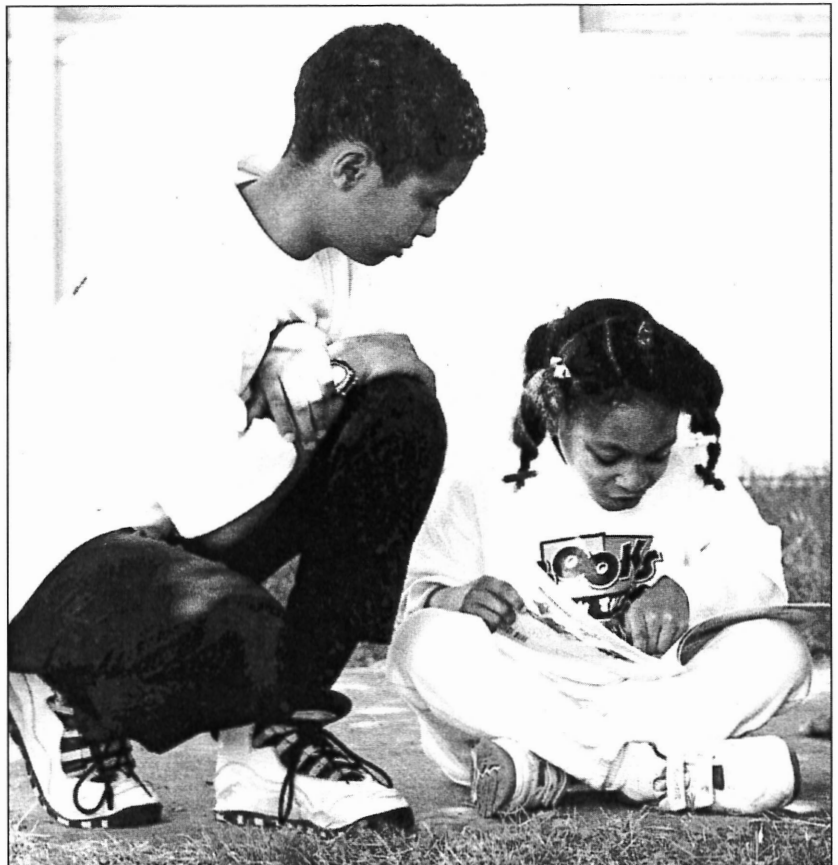
For a program designed primarily to motivate, qualitative measures of attitude and behavior are more appropriate for assessment than quantitative measures, such as test scores. We recommend a combination of the following:

## Observations and Anecdotes

Exchange anecdotes and observations with the primary teacher about your students, as you have observed them in their bookmate relationship, and in their respective classes.

On the following pages are things to look and listen for:

- Are *Books on the Menu* titles the ones children choose to talk about or take home?
- Are your students talking to each other about books?
- Are bookmates talking to each other in the halls?
- Are children talking about the program?
- Do you see younger children more often pointing to and reading words they can now recognize in print?
- Are kids chanting refrains from the stories?



- Are the older children taking a more active leadership role in any other classroom or school matters?
- Have there been any surprises, for example, has a disruptive student taken unusual initiative in *BOTM* and settled down?
- Are children reading more often?
- Is attendance higher on days you have Read Together?
- Are children talking about the program at home? What are you hearing from parents?
- Are teachers and adults in the school asking or commenting about the program? What have they heard?

## Pre- and Post-Test Attitude Surveys

Included in the Program Helpers section of this handbook are three attitude surveys. The surveys are designed to document changes in attitudes about reader — e.g. levels of interest and confidence — and changes in reading habits. You may also want to interview bookmate pairs and ask them directly, “What do you like about the *BOTM* program? What do you think older kids like you are getting out of this experience?”

The surveys included in section nine include:

- A pre-implementation survey questionnaire for older bookmates to be filled out just prior to the start of your *BOTM* program.
- A post-implementation survey questionnaire for older bookmates to be filled out at the end of the program.
- Questions for an oral interview of the younger children, to be conducted by the primary teacher with the entire class or smaller groups of children at the end of the program.

## Portfolio Assessment

There are several places you can look to evaluate changes in attitude and increased levels of interest and effort for individual children and bookmate pairs:

- The younger child’s program folder, which stores writings and other projects.
- The Menu Planners of the older bookmates, in which they have recorded notes.
- The older and younger readers’ journals.

## More Applications

*BOTM* is primarily a school-based motivational reading program, targeting intermediate and primary students. Teachers also assert that the program could reach and benefit more children in a variety of both formal and informal education settings. For example:

- Teachers have identified *BOTM* as a strong complement for children involved in ESL, remedial reading, and other pull-out programs.
- For older students with behavior or achievement problems, playing a mentoring role within the structure of *BOTM* can be a positive and esteem-building experience.
- *BOTM* can provide structure for peer or multi-age activities in before- and after-care programs at schools, churches, and community centers.
- The materials may be used as a curriculum for a school- or community-based tutorial program.
- Menu Planners and activity ideas/pages can provide great conversation starters for adult volunteers and guest readers, and help them to feel better prepared for reading with children.
- The materials might also be used by literacy volunteers, including high school or college students, who elect to work with younger children as part of a community service requirement for graduation.