

Bread Is Love

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen
based upon the picture book
written by Pooja Makhijani and illustrated by Lavanya Naidu



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Author, *Bread Is Love*

Pooja Makhijani is a writer, mother, and baker. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, NPR, *Teen Vogue*, and *Bon Appetit* among others. She lives in Central New Jersey with her daughter, the inspiration for *Bread Is Love*.

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Lavanya Naidu is a storyteller with a passion for building worlds and developing characters with heart. She is a graduate in animation film design and over the last decade has illustrated several children's books, worked on games and animation production (television and film). When she isn't drawing, Lavanya is collecting dinosaur models, boxing, hiking, cooking and patting all the dogs. Lavanya grew up in Kolkata, India and now lives with her husband and their ever growing collection of plants, in Melbourne.

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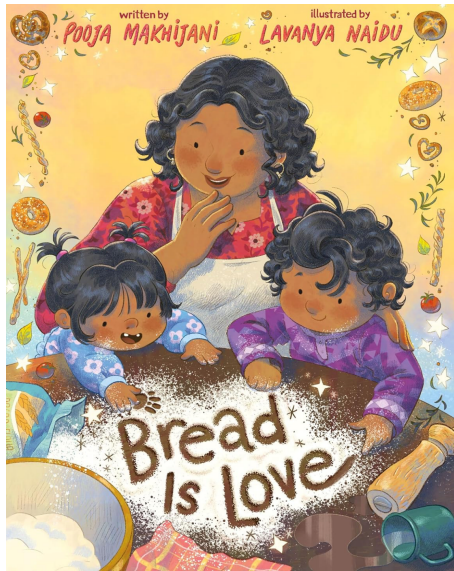
This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a B.A. in English education from Oswego State and a M.A. in educational theater from New York University. In addition to creating curriculum guides for children's books, Marcie can often be found writing books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at www.thisismarciecolleen.com.

How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Bread Is Love* is designed for students in kindergarten through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *Bread Is Love* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. Art and drama are used as a teaching tool throughout the guide.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama.



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Brief synopsis:

Join a mother and her adorable children for their weekly baking ritual in Pooja Makhijani's touching story, with warm, tender art by Lavanya Naidu. *Bread Is Love* celebrates the act of baking and eating bread, and sharing it with family.

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English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Before reading *Bread Is Love*, help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: jacket, front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers, and jacket flap.

Describe the cover illustration.

- o What do you see?
Encourage students to name objects, people, colors, and actions they notice.
- o Who do you see? Are there one or more characters? What are they doing?
- o What do you think is happening?
Ask students to infer action based on visual clues.
- o What clues tell you this story might be about baking? Look for ingredients, tools, or actions.
- o What clues tell you this story might be about family or relationships?
- o Choose two words to describe the feeling of the cover (for example, "cozy," "busy," "joyful"). Ask students to explain their thinking using evidence from the illustration.

Bring the cover and baking process to life through movement.

Ask students to stand and pretend to:

- Pour ingredients into a bowl
- Mix the dough
- Knead the dough
- Shape the bread.

Encourage big, exaggerated motions.

- o How did your body feel while doing these actions? Tired, strong, excited, messy?
- o Which action was the hardest? Which was the most fun?
- o What do you think the characters might be feeling while making bread together?
- o Do you think they are rushing or taking their time? How can you tell?

Read the title aloud: *Bread Is Love*.

- o What do you think this means?
- o How can bread be more than just food?
- o What kinds of things do people do with love?

Now read or listen to the book.

Once the story has been read aloud, guide students in reflecting on both the events and the meaning.

- What happened in the story?
Encourage students to retell the story in their own words.
- Who are the characters and what are they doing together?
- What steps are taken to make the bread?
Prompt students to think about the process from beginning to end.
- What moments feel joyful or successful?
- What goes wrong along the way?
- How do characters respond when something doesn't go as planned?
- Why is the process important in this story?
Guide students toward the idea that the experience of making bread together matters just as much as the final product.
- How has your thinking about *Bread Is Love* changed after reading the story?

As a class, work together to list the steps of bread-making in order.

1. Gather ingredients.
2. Mix ingredients.
3. Knead the dough.
4. Let the dough rest or rise.
5. Shape the bread.
6. Bake the bread.
7. Share or eat the bread.

Extension Activities:

- Act it Out:
Assign each student or small group a step and have them act it out in order as a class performance.
- Put it in Order:
Write each step on a separate card. Mix them up and have students work in groups to put them back in the correct sequence.
- Add the “In-Between” Moments:
What do the characters do while waiting for the dough to rise (i.e. talking, resting, spending time together)?

This reinforces the idea that the “waiting” and “together time” are just as important as the baking itself.

Let’s talk about the people who made *Bread Is Love*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

Now, let’s look closely at the illustrations.

- What details do you notice in the kitchen?
- How do the characters show feelings without words?
- Can you find moments where something doesn’t go as planned?

Ask students to find:

- Something messy
- Something rising
- Something being shared
- A moment of waiting

Writing Activities

Bread Is...

Inspired by the structure of *Bread Is Love*, students explore big ideas using simple, repeated language. This pattern helps students build meaning step by step.

Remind students how the author uses repetition:

- “Bread is...”
- Each page adds a new idea or feeling.

Choose a topic as a class or let students choose their own:

- Family
- Friendship
- School
- Home

Example, "Friendship is..."

- Sharing
- Laughing
- Helping
- Listening

Encourage both actions and feelings.

Then create a short piece using the repeated pattern.

Friendship is sharing
Friendship is laughing together.
Friendship is helping when someone feels sad.
Friendship is being there.

Narrative vs. Dialogue

This activity helps students understand how stories are told through narration (telling) and dialogue (speaking).

- Narrative tells what is happening in the story
- Dialogue shows what characters say

Picture books often use both to bring a story to life.

Choose a moment from *Bread Is Love* (for example, mixing the dough or waiting for it to rise).

Part 1: Students describe the scene using only narration.

Example:

The family mixes the dough together. Their hands are messy and covered in flour. They work carefully and patiently.

Part 2: Students rewrite the same moment using only what the characters say.

Example:

"Can I mix?"
"Not too fast!"

“It’s sticky!”

“That means it’s working!”

Ask students:

- Which version gives more detail about what is happening?
- Which version helps you understand the characters better?
- Which version feels more fun or interesting to read?

Guide students to notice that:

- Narrative explains action and setting.
- Dialogue shows personality and emotion.

Extension:

- Combine both into a new version of the scene.
- Act out the dialogue in pairs or small groups.
- Add speech bubbles to illustrations.

- Why do authors use both narration and dialogue?
- How do they work together to tell a story?

Speaking and Listening Activities

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some ways to bring *Bread Is Love* to life in the classroom and have fun with speaking and listening skills.

Simon’s Recipe Says

This game helps students understand sequencing, listening skills, and the importance of following directions.

Explain to students that a recipe is a set of directions. When we bake, we must follow each step carefully—just like in the game “Simon Says.”

Choose a simple bread-making process and turn each step into a physical action.

Example Steps and Gestures:

- Pour ingredients → pretend to pour into a bowl
- Mix → stir with a big spoon
- Knead → push and fold the dough
- Wait → freeze or pretend to watch the dough rise
- Shape → form a loaf with hands
- Bake → place in oven and wipe hands

Once each step has a gesture, begin the game.

- "Simon's Recipe Says mix the dough!" (students act it out)
- "Simon's Recipe Says knead the dough!"
- "Shape the bread!" (no "Simon's Recipe Says"—students should *not* move)

Continue play as in traditional "Simon Says."

- What happened when you didn't follow directions exactly?
- Why is it important to follow each step in a recipe?
- What might happen if we skip a step when baking?

Extension:

- Invite students to bring in or share a favorite recipe.
- As a class, create new gestures and play again.
- Connect to writing by having students write their own simple "recipe" for a favorite activity.

Mime

- Ask students to silently act out a page from the book, exaggerating body motions and facial expressions. See if others can identify the page that goes along with the mimed action.

Drama

- Create a TV commercial to encourage people to read *Bread Is Love*.

Language Activities

Verb Detectives

Bread Is Love is a story of creating, doing, and action. Words that describe creating, doing, and action are verbs.

There are so many fun verbs throughout *Bread Is Love*, and readers will have fun trying to find them all.

Re-read *Bread Is Love* aloud and ask students to listen carefully for verbs.

- As soon as they hear a verb, they should raise their hand.
- Repeat the phrase using the verb. What might it mean, based on context?
- Look up the verb in the dictionary. (*Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this or the teacher can.*) Read the definition.

- Get up on your feet and act out the verb! *Using Total Physical Response, students can create an action that symbolizes the word and helps them remember it.*
- Create a list of the verbs and hang it on the wall. Revisit it repeatedly.

Math

Measuring & Fractions

Baking is full of math. Recipes require careful measuring to make sure ingredients are used correctly.

Discuss with students:

- What tools are used to measure ingredients? (measuring cups, measuring spoons)
- What is a cup? A half cup? A quarter cup? A teaspoon?
- Why is it important to measure carefully when baking?

Using classroom tools and pretend ingredients, like water or dry beans:

- Practice measuring:
 - 1 cup
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- Have students compare amounts:
 - Which is more?
 - Which is less?
 - Which are equal?

Fill and pour between containers to see how smaller amounts combine to make a whole.

- 2 cups = how many $\frac{1}{2}$ cups?
- 1 cup = how many $\frac{1}{4}$ cups?
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup + $\frac{1}{4}$ cup = ?

Encourage students to model answers using measuring tools or drawings.

Time and Estimation

Bread-making includes waiting time.

- How long does dough need to rise?

- Why do we have to wait?
- What can we do while we wait?

Choose a short classroom activity (reading, drawing, or cleaning up).

1. Ask students to estimate how long the activity will take (in minutes).
2. Record predictions.
3. Time the activity using a clock or timer.
4. Compare estimates to the actual time.

Discuss:

- Were your estimates close?
- What helped you make a good estimate?
- When else do we use estimation in daily life?

The average person spends at least an hour a day waiting, mostly in lines, which totals approximately 2 to 3 years in a lifetime.

- Lead a class discussion about different situations that require waiting (i.e. grocery store checkout, movie theater lines, amusement park rides, bathroom, etc.).
- How do the students feel about waiting?
- What is proper behavior when waiting?
- Have students share stories about a time when they were waiting. What were they waiting for? How did they feel? How long did they have to wait? How did they pass the time?

Under Where? Spatial Sense

Look at a spread in *Bread Is Love* that shows the family baking together in the kitchen.

Describe where the bowl is.

[examples: on the counter, in front of the child, next to the flour]

Describe where the flour is.

[example: on the counter, in the bag, spilled on the table]

Describe where the dough is.

[examples: in the bowl, on the table, between the characters]

Describe where the characters are.

[examples: next to each other, across from one another, behind the counter]

Encourage students to use positional words such as on, under, next to, between, behind, in front of, near, far

Have students pick another spread in *Bread Is Love* and discuss where things are spatially within that illustration.

- What has changed?
- Are the characters closer together or farther apart?
- Where is the bread at this point in the story?

Now look around your classroom. Help students connect spatial awareness to their own environment.

- Describe where your desk sits.
- Describe where your teacher is sitting or standing.
- Describe where the chalkboard/whiteboard is.
- Describe where the clock is.
- Describe where the door is.
- Can you describe where anything else is?

Science

The Science of Bread

Baking bread is not just cooking—it's science in action.

Explain to students:

- Yeast is a living organism (a tiny form of life).
- It feeds on sugar in the dough.
- As it feeds, it produces a gas called carbon dioxide.
- This gas creates bubbles in the dough, causing it to rise.

Connect back to the story:

- Where do we see the dough change?
- What clues show that something is happening, even when we can't see it?

Help students understand that even though we can't see the yeast working, we can see the results of its work.

This simple experiment helps students observe how yeast works.

Materials:

- warm water
- yeast
- sugar
- clear cup or container

Steps:

1. Pour warm water into the container.
2. Add yeast and sugar.
3. Stir gently.
4. Let the mixture sit and observe.

Ask students to watch closely and describe what they notice:

- bubbling
- foam forming
- smell changing
- mixture growing or expanding

Encourage students to use descriptive words.

- What changed over time?
- What do you think is causing the bubbles?
- Why do you think the mixture is growing?

Guide students to understand that the yeast is active and producing gas.

States of Matter

Bread-making is a great way to observe how materials change.

- Ingredients (before mixing):
solids (flour) and liquids (water)
- Dough (after mixing):
a soft mixture that can be shaped
- Bread (after baking):
a new form with a different texture and structure

Have students follow the transformation from start to finish.

Students can:

- draw each stage
- label what they observe
- describe how each stage is different

- What changes did you observe?
- Which changes could you see?
- Which changes happened that you could not see?

Help students recognize that baking involves both visible changes and invisible processes, all working together to create something new.

Social Studies

Bread Brings Us Together

Ask students to think of someone they enjoy spending time with—someone they might cook, bake, or share food with. This could be a family member, friend, or someone in their community.

- What are 3–5 things you like to do together?
- Do you ever make or share food together?

The Project:

- Have each student lie down on a large piece of paper while a partner traces their body.
- Inside the silhouette, write or draw the 3–5 things they enjoy doing with their special person (especially moments involving food or togetherness).
- Around the silhouette, students can draw or collage images of shared moments (cooking, eating, celebrating).
- Encourage details that show feelings—joy, comfort, connection.

Display the finished silhouettes with a title such as:
“Love Is Something We Share” or “Bread Brings Us Together.”

All About Me; All About My Table

Food is often at the center of our lives and communities.

This project helps students explore who they are and how food connects them to others.

Students will create a small book about themselves and the people they share meals with. Pages can be stapled or tied together with yarn.

Each student should have an opportunity to share their book with the class.

Pages may include:

- A self-portrait
- I am called _____.
- My first and last name is _____.
- I live in _____.
- I live with _____.
- I am good at _____.
- A food I love is _____.
- I like to eat with _____.

Add pages about others in their life:

- This is someone I share food with _____.
- We like to _____ together.
- A food we share is _____.

This helps students see how food connects people and builds community.

Food Traditions & Memories

In *Bread Is Love*, making bread is more than cooking—it is a tradition filled with meaning.

- What is a tradition?
- What is something your family or community makes or eats together?
- Why are these moments important?

Students write or draw in response to:

“A special food in my life is...”

Encourage them to include:

- Who they share it with
- When they eat it
- How it makes them feel

Bread Around the World

Bread is made and enjoyed all over the world. Different cultures have their own special kinds of bread, each with its own ingredients, shape, and traditions.

Assign each student (or small group) a type of bread to research. A list of possibilities is below, but do not feel limited to these options.

- Tortilla (Mexico)
- Naan (India)
- Baguette (France)
- Pita (Middle East)
- Injera (Ethiopia)
- Challah (Jewish tradition)
- Focaccia (Italy)
- Sourdough (United States)

Possible Sources for Information:

- Nonfiction books
- Library research
- The internet

Ask students to research and record information about their bread using the following categories:

- Where does this bread come from? (country or region)
- What ingredients are used to make it?
- How is it made or cooked?
- When is it typically eaten? (daily meal, celebration, special tradition)
- What makes this bread unique? (shape, texture, flavor)

Once information is gathered, students can create:

- An illustrated poster
or
- A short booklet of their findings

Encourage students to include:

- Drawings or images of the bread
- Labels and key facts
- Clear, complete sentences

Students can present their bread to the class.

Additional Challenge

- Compare two different breads.
 - How are they similar?
 - How are they different?
- Create a class "Bread Around the World" display or map showing where each bread comes from.