



Teachers' Notes

Let's Eat!

Written by Ana Zamorano
Illustrated by Julie Vivas

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OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Picture Book
Title	Let's Eat!
Author	Ana Zamorano
Illustrator	Julie Vivas
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About the story

Let's Eat! is about a little boy, Antonio, who is sent by his mother to fetch each person in the family to come and eat lunch. Every time he goes to get someone they say they have something else to do and can't come. Mama thinks it is a real shame that every day at least one member of the family cannot come and eat. Mama is due to have a baby any day and feels that it is important that her family come home to eat and be together. At the end of the book Mama has her baby and the whole family gather together for lunch and help her make paella.

About the author

From Ana Zamorano:

'Before I started university I lived in Spain for 2 years. Even though I was born in Madrid, Spain, I met my Spanish family properly while living there at the age of 18. Food is very important in Spain. And it was very important in my family to gather together and eat at lunch time. Growing up in Australia, with a Spanish father, we always ate our meals together and at the table. I remember being surprised when I first stayed at a friend's house for dinner and everyone ate dinner off a plate on their lap watching TV. When I was young my father ran a restaurant and it was the most exciting place. It was like our dinners at home but with 100 people. This is what I think about when I think about my family. I am currently a publisher of children's books and I really love it because every book is different and the process is very collaborative. As an adult I still really like sitting around a table and eating with family and friends I especially like to make paella for a big group of people.'

About the illustrator

From Julie Vivas:

'I began illustrating picture books in 1980. It took me many years for my work to be accepted by a publisher and for me to be offered a contract to illustrate a picture book. *The Tram to Bondi Beach*, written by Elizabeth Hathorn, was the first Then *Possum Magic* by Mem Fox was on my desk and *Let's Eat!* by Ana Zamorano many years after that. The part of illustrating a picture book I enjoy is the first ideas for pictures that come to me from reading the author's story. The images I make are my response to the story, though I am not told what to draw.

About the illustrations

'When working on *Let's Eat!* I did pages and pages of pencil roughs before I found my way into picture book images that could work with the author's words. I discovered the characters as I drew. I feel I can do anything with them. I can't really, but it's fun to feel I can at this stage.

Out of the rough drawing from *Let's Eat!* I made a dummy book to show and work on with the author and the publisher. We then decided together what is working page by page in the dummy and in particular, if the text and pictures are telling the story in a way that the images add to the text and extend the story. The ideas for the rough dummy came from Ana Zamorano's text and my memories, of meal times during my childhood, and having meals with my husband's family in Spain. My experience of villages in Spain and Antonio's family came from life there. The dancing too.

In *Let's Eat!*, Antonio's family members needed to come to a table to eat many times in this story. My image making meant drawing that dinner table in different ways. I used views of the table, from above and below, close up and far away through a window. The figures of main characters in other picture books have more space around them so I can draw their bodies expressively and show emotion and give them a personality. The figures in *Let's Eat!* that are sitting in chairs pulled into a table were harder to do. So the hands and facial expressions were where my focus was.

All the books I have illustrated have images from my own life in them .I was growing tomatoes in the front garden when I did the cover of *Let's Eat!* and the leaves of the plants smelt so good and the tomatoes were a beautiful red and they were delicious. I work where I live and as it happens the dinning room table has the best light. I do the water colour painting after transferring my dummy book drawings onto watercolour paper. The painting stage of the illustrations is a time where I am working alone for months and months. Working with paint on wet paper I enjoy, when it works, and I never know what the paint will do when it flows into the wet paper, it's alive and moving and that can be exciting, or just not work out and I have to start again. It is a good feeling to finish and pack up all the artwork to send on to the publisher for the next stage to be scanned and text added by the designer to prepare the computer files for printing the pages for the book.

Study notes for teachers

Themes:

Family

Food

Working together

Eating together as a family.

Activities and discussion ideas

If you were planning a dinner party with your family for breakfast or lunch, what would you make or ask others to cook? What is your favourite food?

What does each person in your family do at lunch time? What do you have for lunch?

How does your family prepare and eat a meal? Do different family members help?

What does your family like to do together?

How do various cultures gather together differently?

What do you think your grandparents and great-grandparents might have had for breakfast, lunch and dinner? Ask them!

How did your grandparents and great-grandparents shop for food? Ask them, and bring the answers back to discuss with the class.

Recipe for a seafood paella

Making a paella was always a family activity. Everyone had a job to do. You might like to try this recipe at home with your family. The quantity of seafood will depend on what is available, but Spanish cooking is generous, and made to share!

Ingredients

1 kg of short-grain rice
2 litres of stock (heat up and add saffron threads)
6 green prawns, shelled
5 chicken thighs
a handful of peas
a handful each of:
 pipis
 mussels
1 squid
1 crab
one large capsicum, deseeded and sliced
lemon wedges
a handful of parsley
salt
olive oil
white wine

Preparation

Pipis and mussels: sit these in cold water in the sink and if any are open, throw them out.

Mussels: scrub the beards off the shells.

Crab: take out the guts of the crab

Calamari: wash and cut into rings.

Heat a large dish or a paellera (big flat pan) over an even heat. Add olive oil. Once heated add the calamari and chicken and sear. Then add the capsicum. Add the rice and cook a little in the oil. Then add the wine, then the stock, to cover the rice and the peas. Then place the prawns, crab, pipis and mussels on top of the rice.

Allow to simmer until the prawns are cooked and the shells of the pipis and mussels are open. Keep adding stock as the rice needs it. Don't stir the rice. Once it is ready and there is no more liquid needed, add salt and turn off the heat and cover with foil just before eating.

Add lemon wedges and parsley.