



A Campaign of the
Oakland Literacy Coalition

Read Aloud Guide

Title: *Cora Cooks Pancit* by Dorina K. Lazo Gilmore, illustrated by Kristi Valiant

Best for: K-2nd grade

Summary: This book is about a young girl named Cora who loves helping in the kitchen, but she always gets stuck doing the “kid jobs.” One day, however, her older sisters and brother are out and Cora finally gets the chance to be Mama’s assistant chef to make pancit, her favorite noodle dish. When dinner is served and Cora’s siblings find out she helped make the meal, they praise her cooking and say it’s just like their grandpa’s.

Why we chose this book: This story highlights a common experience that many youngest siblings have - the fear of being left out, or worried about not being good enough. In this book, readers see the world through Cora’s eyes - watching her older siblings help prepare meals, and wishing she could join in, or have more interesting responsibilities. We like that this book shows Cora spending some quality time with her mother while cooking, and learning that she can finally do what she’s watched her siblings do.

Notes: Use the pronunciation guide at the front of the book before reading to help with unfamiliar words.

Central themes: Filipino-American family life, cooking, family relationships, recipes, siblings

Introducing the book: You can begin by showing the cover, reading the title and author, and then saying something like this:

“This book is about a young girl named Cora who likes to help her mom in the kitchen. They make a special food called “pancit.” It’s from the Philippines.”

“Have you ever cooked with someone in your family before? What did you make?”

After Reading: Debrief with students

"Why does Cora get to cook with her mom?" (Her siblings went out; she was the only one left)

"How does Cora's family react when they find out she cooked the Pancit almost all by herself?" (They are really impressed; they think she did a great job.)

"Now that Cora has cooked pancit, what do you predict will happen next time the family cooks together? What jobs do you think Cora will get to do?"