

**Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide**

Title: *The Tortilla Factory*

Author: Gary Paulsen

Illustrator: Ruth Wright Paulsen

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:**

Harcourt Brace and Company, 1995

Also available in Spanish - *La Tortilleria*, Harcourt Brace and Company, 1995

**Connection to
Minnesota:**

Minnesota author

Summary:

This is a cycle of life story; the life of a tortilla and the workers who make it. Reading almost like a poem, the simple line or two of text on each page tells how the tortilla begins with a corn seed and progresses to the tortilla factory “where laughing people and clank – clunking machinery mix the flour into dough...” until the tortillas are eaten by the people who in turn work again in the fields to produce the corn to make the tortillas...

Suggested ages:

4-6

Tips for Reading:

- Read this book all the way through once. Go back again and read it more slowly talking about several of the illustrations as you do so.
- Use your voice to make some of the words “come to life”; for example, emphasize the /s/ in “rustling” or slow down when reading “push the dough, and squeeze the dough, and flatten the dough”.

**Questions
before reading:**

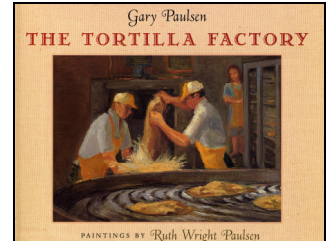
- What do you eat with almost every meal? Bread? Rice? Potatoes?
- How many of you eat tortillas with your meals?
- What are tortillas made from? Pass out samples of corn tortillas and flour tortillas for the children to taste and talk about the difference.
- Who makes tortillas and where are they made? Does anyone make them in your house?

**To Introduce
this story say:**

We’re going to listen to a story about how tortillas are made. Listen carefully for the beginning, middle, and end of the story. This story is like a circle, it can go around and around.

**Questions
After Reading:**

- What are the steps for making a tortilla?
- Have you ever helped to make tortillas or bread?
- What does the dough feel like?
- How is this story like a circle? What is the beginning, middle, and end?



RELATED ACTIVITIES

Art:

- Make tortillas with the children or invite someone from the community to demonstrate making tortillas.
- Mix masa dough with water to just feel the texture of the dough.
- Draw a life cycle picture for the tortilla and then for something else (another food, a person, a plant, etc).

Culture:

- Visit a tortilla factory if possible or a Mexican bakery.
- Eat (warm) corn tortillas with beans.

Suggestions for English Language Learners:

- Retell the story with the children, using language that describes the pictures in a straight forward manner. (For example, in winter nothing is growing/in spring people are digging and planting yellow corn seeds/ etc.)
- Ask children what food staple is common in their home countries (ingera, rice, etc.) and bring in samples to taste if possible.

Related Books:

- ***Bread, Bread, Bread*** by Ann Morris, illustrated by Ken Heyman (Harper Collins, 1989)
- ***Everybody Loves Bread*** by Norah Dooley, illustrated by Peter J. Thornton (Lerner Publishing Group, 1995)
- ***Big Moon Tortilla*** by Joy Cowley, illustrated by Dyanne Strongbow (Boyds Mills Press, 1998)
- ***The Runaway Tortilla*** by Eric A. Kimmel, illustrated by Randy Cecil (Winslow Press, 2000)



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