# Teaching Activity: Bread and Butter: The Staff of Life

*Activity to follow Halia Dmytryshyn’s poem “Through the Eye’s of a Child”*

## Appropriate for Students:

Junior Kindergarten to grade 12 (The lesson is geared toward elementary students, but may be used with high school students and even adults as well).

## Curriculum Fit/ Specific Expectations/ Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn through a holistic and experiential approach by actively participating in a combination of activities including: **story telling** and **shared reading** of the “Little Red Hen”, emphasizing **the use of voice**; the sharing of bread and making of butter; and understanding the injustice of having food forcibly taken away from those who produced it. Hunger is a sensitive topic which needs to be approached in a creative and meaningful manner, especially at the elementary school level.

## Materials Required:

* The book *“Little Red Hen”*

([www.enchantedlearning.com/stories/fairytale/littleredhen/story/](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/stories/fairytale/littleredhen/story/))

* Most versions of this Folk tale are very good – they include three friends or neighbours.

e.g. Dog, cat, and pig or duck, cat, and dog etc… and Little Red Hen and her chicks.

It tells the story of the many steps needed to produce bread, starting with planting grain, growing and harvesting, threshing, milling flour, and finally baking flour into bread to feed Little Red Hen’s hungry baby chicks.

* Plastic butter knives (one for each student)
* Paper plates or serviettes (one for each student)
* Bowl to pour the buttermilk into a container or bowl.
* Bread
  + Teacher will purchase several loaves of sliced bread from a local bakery or baked babka, paska, or bread made by baba.
* Butter
  + It is recommended that you make the butter with your class– as this activity is simple and economical and the effect and the results are awe inspiring and memorable. The following recipe may be used:

*Butter*

Ingredients

35% whipping cream (room temperature)

Small jar (with a tight fitting lid) for each student (visit Dollarama)

Instructions

1. Fill jar ½ full with whipping cream.
2. Tighten the lid on the jar;
3. holding both ends of the jar vigorously shake jar for several minutes until butter separates from buttermilk and forms into a lump.
4. Pour off buttermilk into teacher provided container/bowl.
5. Spread butter on bread.
6. Enjoy!

## Set-up Required:

* Fill the jars (one for each student) with 35% whipping cream.
* If you think that you are going to repeat this activity keep the jars and clean them for re-use. However, it really makes this activity more interesting for students when they take the jar home and shake up the butter for their own family.
* Pre-cut or slice the bread.
* Set aside the paper/plastic plates, serviettes, container/bowl, and butter knives.

## Teacher Tip:

The tasks may be completed sequentially in one lesson or you may choose parts of the lesson to complete according to the resources and time you have available.

## Pre-task Activity

* Introduce the Holodomor and the significance of wheat, during the Holodomor and today, for the Ukrainian people. The following excerpt may be read to the students:
* *Wheat is a precious crop throughout the world today and has been for thousands of years. This was especially true of “The Bread Basket of Europe” as Ukraine was known, in the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Wheat (flour) harvested one autumn had to last a family until the next harvest (usually in August). This wheat provided flour that was used in many ways during the year – especially in baking bread. The steps from planting wheat to milling it into flour is a long and intensive process. In the 1930s the Communist government in Moscow imposed quotas on Ukraine’s grain, which left families struggling, trying to save tiny amounts of wheat to see them through the cold harsh winter that followed. Because troops were brought in to take away* ***all wheat*** *and later,* ***all food*** *from farmers, millions of men, women, and children were starved to death as a result of this man-made Famine.*

## Task 1

* Provide each child with a glass jar with the whipping cream inside.
* Have the students shake the butter while completing task two.

## Task 2

* Read the “Little Red Hen” to your class modelling expression and voice.
  + It is important when reading the story to change the ending to emulate that when the bread is finally baked, and smeared with butter, and the Hen and her chicks are ready to eat the bread, a fox comes by, who did nothing to help produce the bread and comes and takes away the Hen’s bread.
* DISCUSSION - Analogy of the events of the Holodomor. Children need to understand the justice of not sharing the bread with those who did not “help. They should feel the injustice of the neighbour or a bully coming by and forcefully taking the bread away from the Hen and her chicks (children can recognize the injustice of having someone taking away the fruit of their labour).
* Have the students check if their butter is ready.
* Re-read or retell the “Little Red Hen”
  + The second reading: Invite students to participate in the Hen’s hard working journey, while her friends refuse to help her because they only want to play.
  + Have the students involved in telling the story through repeating various phrases or omitting words from the text. For example, “Who will help me plant?” “Not I said the cat.” “Not I said the dog.” “Not I said the pig.” Have the students repeat and read the phrases with expression and with appropriate voice.
* When the butter is ready, there will be clumps. The teacher will come around and help students to open the jar and pour out the buttermilk into a bowl with the butter remaining in the jar.
* Provide each student with a piece of bread, a butter knife, and a paper plate or serviette.
* Have students butter their bread.
* When the students are ready to eat the bread with butter (as Red Hen did with her chicks) hold up your hand and say “STOP! Do not eat the bread and butter. They belong to me, not you! Even though you baked the bread and turned the butter, it does not belong to you!”
* Then the teacher takes the bread and butter away – while explaining that this is what happened to the Ukrainians.

## Post Task Activity

* Give the bread and butter back to the students.
* DISCUSSION - How this activity focuses on the feelings of a person who had worked hard, but someone took away the fruit of their labour, without compensation.
  + Include in the discussion that the Holodomor is an example of extreme bullying or genocide as we understand it, using force by any means to get what they want, regardless of the price. With the Holodomor, it was the Communist government in Moscow t who used force to take away Ukrainian food. This led to millions of Ukrainian deaths by starvation in the years of 1932 and 1933.

**Prepared by Halia Dmytryshyn**