

## Breaking Bread

1. Begin by introducing yourself and your organization. Prepare attendees by explaining how you will facilitate the conversation. For example, “*Today we are going to be talking about what “What food is most American?” We want to talk about how we connect to food and culture. We will look at a couple of different poems and photos to help guide our conversation. I encourage you to listen to each other*
2. Introductions- 5 minutes
  - a. Introduce yourself
  - b. Have participants go around and say which food they think is the most American.
  - c. Ask participants:
    - i. Did anyone’s response surprise you?
    - ii. Would anyone like to explain their response?
3. **Whole Group – 15 Minutes**
  - a. Pass out *Wonderbread* by Alfred Corn and have participants take turns reading the poem.
  - b. Ask participants:
    - i. What stands out to you about this poem?
    - ii. What is the author talking about?
    - iii. What food or meal do you think of when you read this poem?
    - iv. What memories do you associate with Wonder bread?
4. **Small Groups – 20 Minutes**
  - a. Break participants into groups of 2-3.
  - b. Pass out *In Praise of Okra* by January Gill O’Neil and have participants take turns reading the poem. Have participants discuss:
    - i. What is going on in this poem?
    - ii. What’s the author’s message in this poem?
    - iii. What foods do you connect with in the same way as the protagonist?
5. **Whole Group – 10 Minutes**
  - a. Have participants come back. Ask participants:
    - i. How does food connect us with our past?
    - ii. How does food connect us to each other?
6. **Whole Group – 15 Minutes**
  - a. Pass out *Help Save Liberty for Our Children* image. Ask Participants:
    - i. What’s happening in this image?
    - ii. How do hot dogs connect to the Statue of Liberty?
    - iii. What is American food?
    - iv. How do we define cuisine?
  - b. How does cuisine help define culture?
7. **Wrap- up – 5 minutes**
  - a. Have participants go around one more time. Have them end by asking them to say a word or phrase that comes to mind when they think of “American food.”

Wonderbread  
Alfred Corn

Loaf after loaf, in several sizes,  
and never does it not look fresh,  
as though its insides weren't moist  
or warm crust not the kind that spices  
a room with the plump aroma of toast.

Found on the table; among shadows  
next to the kitchen phone; dispatched  
FedEx (without return address, though).

Someone, possibly more than one  
person, loves me. Well then, who?

Amazing that bread should be so weightless,

down-light when handled, as a me  
dying to taste it takes a slice.

Which lasts just long enough to reach  
my mouth, but then, at the first bite,

Nothing! Nothing but air, thin air ....

Oh. One more loaf of wonderbread,  
only a pun for bread, seductive  
visually, but you could starve.

Get rid of it, throw it in the river—

Beyond which, grain fields. Future food for  
the just

and the unjust, those who love, and do not  
love.

**In Praise of Okra**  
**January Gill O'Neil**

No one believes in you  
like I do. I sit you down on the table  
& they overlook you for  
fried chicken & grits,  
crab cakes & hush puppies,  
black-eyed peas & succotash  
& sweet potatoes & watermelon.

Your stringy, slippery texture  
reminds them of the creature  
from the movie *Aliens*.

But I tell my friends if they don't like you  
they are cheating themselves;  
you were brought from Africa  
as seeds, hidden in the ears and hair  
of slaves.

Nothing was wasted in our kitchens.  
We took the unused & the throwaways  
& made feasts;  
we taught our children  
how to survive,  
adapt.

So I write this poem  
in praise of okra  
& the cooks who understood  
how to make something out of nothing.  
Your fibrous skin  
melts in my mouth—  
green flecks of flavor,  
still tough, unbruised,  
part of the fabric of earth.  
Soul food.

*Help Save Liberty For Our Children*



**Oscar Mayer.**  
**Helping to save Liberty for our children.**

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LIBERTY 1886-1986

A century ago, great men in France dreamed of giving America a symbolic gift to stand for freedom, and stand tall.  
But ultimately it was the small—the children of France and America—who helped gather up the funds to build Lady Liberty and give her a home.  
Now it's time to repair the Lady. To rebuild her frame and clean her copper skin. And it's the copper pennies from thousands of American schoolchildren that started

the fund for her reconstruction.  
Oscar Mayer is proud to be a sponsor of this effort. We're contributing to what the kids have already collected for Liberty. Because we believe in what she stands for... what our children are standing behind.  
At Oscar Mayer, we feel we owe it to our children. Without them, liberty wouldn't have much of a future.



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18. Alfred Corn, *Wonderbread*, Retrieved from:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46334/wonderbread>.

19. January Gill O'Neil. *In Praise of Okra*, 2009. Retrieved from: <https://poets.org/poem/praise-okra>.

20. "Help Save Liberty for Our Children," 1984. Retrieved from:

<https://www.monmouth.edu/departments-of-history-and-anthropology/wp-content/uploads/sites/525/2018/06/1980s-OscarMayerHotDogs1.pdf>.