



Feed kids' minds, not their cavities.
Give brain candy.

Thank you for downloading your Books For Treats kit. It shows you are committed to help feed kids' minds, not their cavities. Included in this document are:

- A guide to sorting your books by the five grade/age groups
- A Books For Treats sign to post in your window or on your door
- Box signs to help your trick-or-treaters quickly find books in their age/grade level
- A bookmark template for you to print and put in each book.

Before we go over each item, let's look at how to make your Books For Treats experience most successful for you and for your trick-or-treaters.

- Determine how many books you need, based on your usual trick-or-treater traffic. Always have a few more in each of the categories so the kids have a choice of books. Although it is common to have some older kids trick-or-treating, this program is designed for kids through Grade 6. And, believe it or not, even older kids seem to appreciate getting books!
- Have different titles in each grade level, rather than all the same title. Kids like choices, so don't just hand them a book; let them choose instead. That way if they get a book they don't like, there's no blaming you!
- The grade levels are approximate. Let kids choose a book that they will enjoy reading, even if that means they choose from a grade lower or higher than their current grade level. Sometimes a parent likes to be involved with choosing the book.
- When you run out of books, just turn off your porch light.

- **A guide to sorting your books by age/grade level**

This guide will help you sort your books by 5 age/grade levels. We've found it is much more effective to have the books sorted by age/grade levels, rather than just having a pile of books for trick-or-treaters to go through. It speeds the choosing process.

- **Books For Treats sign**

Post your Books for Treats sign in your front window or on your door. When you post this sign weeks before Halloween, it builds kids' anticipation of the books they will get. Also, some parents who don't want their children to have candy will know to come to your home.

- **Bookmark template**

In this file is a template for 2-sided bookmarks. Please print out these bookmarks, cut them apart, and insert a bookmark into every book, so parents know what Books For Treats is and how they can become involved.

Bookmarks work best when they are copied onto card stock, then cut apart. If you are thinking of skipping this part because you don't have any card stock, please reconsider. Either go to your nearest copy shop and have them copy the bookmarks onto card stock for you, or just copy them on regular paper from your own printer. It is important to have bookmarks in every book.

- **Box signs to help your trick-or-treaters quickly find books in their grade level**

Once you've sorted your books, place them in a box with the corresponding box sign. The signs are designed so you can either fold them in half and stand them in front of the box or sticking out underneath (although they easily fall off), or just tape them to the front of the box.

We've found "banker boxes" are the perfect size for your Books For Treats books. Also, the lids make it easy to store your sorted books until Halloween.

Note: For some reason, 3-5 year old kids still are drawn to board books. Because we find it isn't as easy to find abundant board books, we hold back the board books and offer a handful at a time to babies in arms or strollers. If you have a lot of board books you can offer them to all the little kids.

Setting up your porch for trick-or-treaters

Here's how we set up the books at my home. Notice the boxes are at different heights for the height of the kids -- higher for older kids, lower for young ones. I put some baby/toddler books on a tray and offer the mom/dad to choose for their little one from the tray.

Frequently Asked Questions by residents

- **Why give children books instead of candy at Halloween?**

Books feed children's minds, while candy only feeds their cavities. Books encourage children to read, and parents to read with them and/or ask them about their books. Many successful people attribute their love of reading as a child to their success in adulthood. Many children rarely receive books as gifts, so even gently books are special treats.

- **Why would I want to go to the trouble of giving books? Candy is much easier to buy.**

Giving books instead of candy shows kids you care about them and are encouraging them to read. This not only helps raise their interest in reading, but raises their sense that the community cares about their future.

Many adults find Halloween candy is a problem, as some eat it before Halloween, or feel compelled to eat leftover candy. Just think of the favor you'll be doing your waistline by not having Halloween candy to contend with!

- **How would I get inexpensive books? Kids' books are expensive!**

Right now, you'll need to gather books yourself at garage sales, used book stores, thrift stores, and library book sales. For about the price of a candy bar, you can get books instead of candy. In the future, we are planning to offer boxes of mixed books for sale from www.BooksForTreats.org.

- **Why give recycled books instead of new books? Won't kids think that is cheesy?**

Our experience is that kids appreciate books, even gently books, as long as they are in good shape. You'll need to screen the books to make sure the books aren't ripped or marked up, although they may have the previous owner's name in the front and/or the stamp from the library.

Parents are encouraged to recycle their kids' books, and allow these books to continue to give pleasure, long after their child has outgrown them.

- **What will the kids think about getting books instead of candy?**

Our experience is that kids, as well as their parents, are thrilled by receiving books for treats. They are much more enthusiastic than we have ever seen them when we gave candy. We have witnessed many children running to the sidewalk waiving a new treasure yelling "Mom, look! I got a book!"

- **What will the kids' parents think?**

Our experience is that parents are excited that their children receive books for treats instead of candy. They know that books are much healthier for their kid's mind, as well as their body. When kids bring home pounds of candy, it can actually present a problem for a conscientious parent. They don't want their kids eating that much candy, so they either throw out much of it, ration it, eat it themselves, or give it away.

- **How will kids be able to carry around books? They're much heavier than candy.**

Most kids' treat bags will be no heavier than their school book bags. If their neighborhood has many Books for Treats homes, their parents can help carry their treats, they can drop some books home part way through their trick-or-treating, or even bring along a wagon to carry their books! We hope there are so many households giving books for treats that children need to have wagons!

- **How will kids know that we're participating in Books for Treats?**

Post your Books for Treats sign in your window or on your door. When you post this sign weeks before Halloween, it builds kids' anticipation of the books they will get. Also, some parents who don't want their children to have candy will know to come to your home.

- **What if the kids or their parents aren't familiar with Books for Treats? How do I let them know what it is about?**

Put a bookmark in each book explaining what Books for Treats is, and how to get involved with the concept next year. We ask that you put a bookmark in each book.

- **Why should I only collect books for up to 6th grade? Why that age range?**

The vast majority of trick-or-treaters are up to 6th grade. There are many fewer older trick-or-treaters.

- **I get 4 or 5 trick-or-treaters at one time. How can they all go through the boxes at once?**

Kids know how to cooperate. They will work it out so they take turns choosing books. Several kids can look in a grade-specific book at once. If possible, spread your boxes out on your porch so kids don't bunch up.

- **Where am I supposed to put the boxes of books? I usually just open the door and throw some candy in the kids' bags.**

You can either put the boxes of books on 4 tables outside your door, then open the door to supervise when you hear trick-or-treaters on your porch.

- **I don't know how many kids I'll get. Some years it is a lot, some years not many. How will I know how many books to buy? What if I run out?**

Gather more than you think you'll need. If you run out, do what you did when you ran out of candy in previous years – just shut off your light and don't answer the door.

- **What if I have leftover books?**

Here are some ideas of what you can do with any leftover books:

- Save them for next year.
 - Give them to a child you care about.
 - Donate them to a local school, day care center, library or church,
- **How can I become more involved in spreading the Books for Treats concept?**
 - Collect reusable children's books from garage sales and thrift stores to give out. Clean out your own bookshelves and give out abandoned, gently read books.
 - Talk to your friends, coworkers and neighbors about participating in Books for Treats. Offer to gather books for them. Walk your neighbors through the process so they see how easy it is.
 - Get your company to make a corporate donation to help with the running of the Books for Treats foundation.
 - Make your own donation to Books for Treats.

Book Sorting

Sorting books by grade level is not an exact science, as kids in the same grade level could be normal, advanced, and remedial readers. Additionally, the book publishers list a range of grades for each reading level.

Following is a way to sort your books into the various grade levels. However, let kids choose from the books that are most comfortable to them.

A few publishers (Bantam) list the reading level on the front of their books. Other publishers (Harper/Trophy, Scholastic, Dell) print the reading level on the back of their books. The reading level code is usually found under the name of their publishing company (e.g., Harper/Trophy) and the price of their book. Others (Scholastic) put the reading level at the top on the back (e.g., “Level 1”). Here’s what it may look like on the back of the book:

Harper/Trophy
\$3.50 US/\$4.75 CDN
0408 RLE 1.5

Dell’s code looks like this:

RL: 2.0
006-009
0-440-46300-9

Look for a number following a code starting with “RL” for reading level. There may be a code, such as “RLE 1.5” That means the reading level is 1.5 or part way between reading level 1 and 2

And still other publishers just list an age range on the back of each book (e.g., ages 4 to 8). Pick an age in the middle of range, and put those books in that reading level. So if it says, “Ages 4-8, pick age 6, which is first grade.

Board books: Babies and Toddlers

Books for babies and toddlers are often printed on hard pages, or cardboard. Pop-up books are also for this age level.

Level 0: Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten

These books are for kids age 3-6. There are usually large, colorful, friendly illustrations. There are only a few lines of text per page. The books are designed for adults to read to the child. The print size is often large, like this:

A little brown fox
A little brown fox

Level 1 - 2: Grade 1-2

At this reading level, books are typically short 10-50 pages, so beginning readers can easily complete it. The amount of text on each page has increased, and there are fewer pictures on the pages. Words are short and simple. A common type size looks like this:

A little brown fox

Level 3 - 4: Grade 3-4

Level 3 books are longer than Level 1-2 and have more text per page with fewer images. Level 4 books are longer, often broken into chapters. Thus, they are often referred to as “chapter books.” The amount of text on each page increases. Words are longer. Here’s a common type size:

A little brown fox

Level 5 - 6: Grade 5 - 6

At each succeeding level, books have more text per page, have more advanced topics, longer and more complex words, and the text size decreased. There are few, if any, illustrations. At Levels 5 and 6, a common text size looks like this:

A little brown fox
A little brown fox
A little brown fox

To recap:

Age/Grade Level	Reading level listed on book
Baby - Toddler	Board books
Pre-Kindergarten-Kindergarten	Level 0
Grades 1 - 2	Level 1- 2
Grade 3 - 4	Level 3 - 4
Grade 5 - 6	Level 5 - 6



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How can I get involved?

- Give gently read children’s books to your trick-or-treaters.
- Volunteer to help
- Have your company become a sponsor
- Tell your neighbors about the program

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How do I buy gently read books?

Buy them at thrift stores, garage sales, used book stores and library book sales.

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What if I already have children's books to give at Halloween?

Download our free kit from www.BooksForTreats.org. You can print the contents of the kit on your personal printer including a Books For Treats sign to place in your window, grade level box dividers, bookmarks, and a guide to determine each book's reading level.

How can I get updates?

Complete the online form at www.BooksForTreats.org. You'll be notified when there are updates and news.

How can I get more info?

Visit www.BooksForTreats.org and read the Frequently Asked Questions. If you'd like to become a volunteer or sponsor, please send an email message to info@BooksForTreats.org, or call 408/998-7977.

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