

## *How To Eat Fried Worms*

by Thomas Rockwell

published by Dell Publishing Co., Inc.

*How To Eat Fried Worms* (1973) is a classic novel that if you have not read, you are likely to have at least heard about. A group of young boys start out having an innocent conversation about the salmon casserole Tom had refused to eat for dinner. The boys begin to debate if eating more and more obscene items would be easier to swallow than the salmon casserole. The boys come to an impasse on worms being easier to eat and an argument ensues. In a classic game of chicken between two of the boys, Billy is challenged and accepts to eat fifteen worms in fifteen days. When confronted with the actual task of eating the worms, however, Billy realizes that he may have bitten off more than he can chew. Billy and his friend Tom start coming up with some very interesting culinary techniques on how to make the worms as palatable as possible as he attempts to grind his way through the challenge one worm at a time.



Group discussion questions:

- Has anyone here ever eaten an insect? (Allow for a brief Q&A from the group)
- What was your favorite way that Billy attempted to eat a worm?
- Any different ways that you would like to have read or suggest Billy eat a worm?
- Is this a story line that you could see some young kids playing out in their own way and eating some worms?

- In western cultures we do not actively eat insects, but in Africa, Middle East and Asia it is common for people to eat numerous insects in various ways. What is causing the disconnect for western culture to eat insects?
- Ignorance and presentation can play a huge role in getting people to try insect cuisine. If you were offered something that had been made from cricket flour such as a cookie, protein bar or burger and found out afterwards, would you be more willing to have more?
- In the book a letter from Dr. McGrath addresses medical concerns from eating the worms. What are your thoughts on the medical aspect of eating insects? (Toddlers often learn from watching, if we teach them to eat insects, what are the implications when they come across a random insect with no immediate oversight?)
- Who knows what an Entomologist is? (Make sure to highlight the different aspects of entomology to ensure the whole group is aware.)
- Do you think that the actions taken by the boys would lead or encourage them to possibly be an entomologist? Is there something about all, some, or an insect that would lead you to want to study insects and become an entomologist? (Social dynamics, appearance, capabilities, etc.)

\*Consider having the following additions to further enhance the experience and dialogue:

- have different types of worms (earthworms, caterpillars, maggots, grubs, etc.) available for discussion about size, texture, appearance, etc.
- have snacks on hand made from an insect base (if offered prior without informing the group of the insect ingredient, make sure to address possible allergies and have trash cans on hand for after the revelation)