



Chapter 21

Food and Fun

Trring...! The doorbell rang. When Manpreet opened the door she saw Divya and Swastik there. She called out excitedly, “Gurnoor! Look who has come.” Gurnoor came running. When she saw her friends she hugged them happily. “When did you come from the hostel (Boarding School)?” “Just Yesterday. Where are your parents? We want to meet them,” Swastik said.

“They are at the Gurudwara. We were about to go there too,” Gurnoor replied. “Oh good, we will also come with you,” said Divya.

“You come home only in the vacations. Do you like staying in your hostel? You must be missing your parents,” Gurnoor asked.

Divya said, “We do miss them, but hostel life is fun. Even if we don’t always like the food, we enjoy eating together with all the children.”

“You know, when someone in our hostel gets home-made food, we all rush to their rooms. That food finishes within minutes,” Swastik said laughingly.

- Do you study in a boarding school? If you do not, try to talk with someone who goes to a boarding school and find out –
 - In what ways is boarding school different from other schools?
 - What kind of food do they get there?
 - Where do the children sit and eat in the boarding school?
 - Who cooks food for the children in the boarding school? Who serves the food?
 - Who washes the vessels?
 - Do the children miss home-made food sometimes?
 - Would you like to go to a boarding school? Why?

At the Gurudwara

The children chatted all the way to the Gurudwara. There, they covered their heads.

They went into kitchen of the Gurudwara. It was very huge. A lot of activity was going on there. Food was being cooked in huge vessels. On one side the *channa* and *urad dal* was boiling.





In another vessel, the cauliflower and potato vegetable was being made. “There is your Papa! Gurnoor, let us go and meet him,” Swastik said.

“What are you doing here?” Manjit Singh was happy to see the children.

“Uncle, can we also help in the kitchen? What are you preparing?” Swastik asked.

Manjit Singh said, “I am preparing *kadhah prasad*. It takes a lot of effort to roast the flour in ghee in this big *kadhai*.”

“This is a kind of *halwa*. Isn’t it? When will you add sugar in it?” Divya asked.

They saw Manpreet’s mother and rushed to meet her. Divya asked, “What are you doing Aunty?” “*Beta*, we are rolling *chapaties* to bake them in this *tandoor*.” “So many *chapaties* at one go!” Divya was surprised. “Can I help?” “Sure! come and try, here everyone can help, but wash your hands first,” replied Aunty.



Divya washed her hands and joined the group near the *tava*. The *tava* was very hot. She started applying *ghee* on the *chapaties* as they were being taken out of the *tava*.

Swastik wondered aloud, “Who brings all the material to cook so much food?” One of the ladies answered, “Everyone here contributes in some way or the other. Some arrange for the material, some give money, and others help in the work”.

“So Swastik, how do you like it? Have you ever cooked before?” teased Manpreet.

“No, but I am enjoying working with everyone, ” said Swastik. We hardly realised how all this food – *chapaties*, rice, *halwa*, *dal* and vegetable – got prepared so fast.

After *ardaas*, *kadhah prasad* was distributed. Some of the boys quickly laid out *durries* in the verandah and all the people sat down in rows to have *langar*. Some people served food and others served water. Everyone ate together.

After finishing food everyone picked up one’s own plate, and put it in a big drum. People who were serving, ate in the end. They cleaned the place and washed the utensils.



Talk about it

- Ö The ‘cooking and eating together’ in a Gurudwara is called *langar*. Have you ever eaten in a *langar*? Where and when?



- How many people were cooking and how many were serving the food there?
- Are there other occasions when you have eaten with many people? Where and when? Who cooked and served the food there?

