

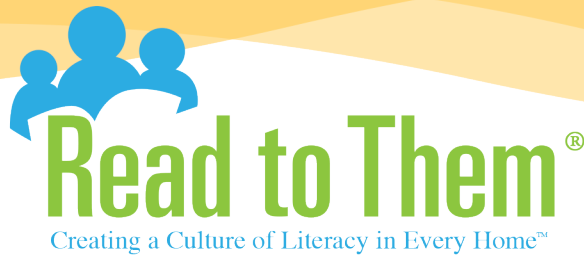
Activities for
The Chocolate Touch
by Patrick Skene Catling (1952)

1. **Stories about Six Bs** – Chapter 1 has a beautiful little list of John’s father’s story topics: baseball, beetles, birds’ nests, boats, brigands, and butterflies. The list may be somewhat dated as *The Chocolate Touch* was written back in 1952, so choose to let students explore or experience the “old-fashioned,” or let them modernize it. Ask your students to write a story incorporating all six topics in some way. They can choose to use one as a topic and then simply incorporate the rest, touch on all six, or do any number of other combinations to make their story work. Ideas like this encourage students not only to notice details in the text, but also to explore and extrapolate them.
2. **Share Candy** – This may be taboo in many of your schools, but this is a book about candy! If your school is willing – try to acquire samples of all the candy referenced in the book. There’s a detailed list in the middle of the first chapter. If you cannot find some of the actual items, just find appropriate substitutes. You can provide the candy to all of the students, or you can simply show off the old candy styles and then use them as incentives for trivia prizes.
3. **Moderation Banner** – Take the book’s main message, “all things in moderation,” and make a banner of it. Of course, in *The Chocolate Touch*, it is candy (specifically, chocolate!) that must be moderated. Invite students to explore other things that are best in moderation – cake, ice cream, video games, computer time, etc. – and work together as a class to draw each item around the message on the banner. Discuss why certain things are best in moderation and suggest alternative ways students can have fun without indulging too much. This activity could be a great segue into conversations about eating healthy, getting exercise, or even just being outside for a little while every day!

4. **Playground Games** – John references and plays old-fashioned games in the story. Learn about some of the games in the book: skipping rope, hide-and-seek, F.B.I. and spies, kick the can, blind man’s bluff, Grandmother’s footsteps, fox and geese, and even ducking for apples. Some of these could be played at recess or during P.E., or perhaps an assembly could be made out of one of the games.
5. **Banquet** – A big component of *The Chocolate Touch* is the celebration of food. One of its messages is to learn to appreciate the creamy milk and those juicy red cherries. Have a banquet to celebrate the “sensible things” – the healthy, normal food in the book. Here’s what John eats in the cafeteria: milk, cherries, cold chicken and ham, potato chips, lettuce-and-tomato-salad, whole-wheat rolls (with butter), and fresh fruit – slices of orange and grapefruit, bananas and grapes.
6. **Vocabulary** – It’s not exactly fun, but if John Midas has to do it, maybe your students will want to also. John has a vocabulary lesson in school. Allow your students to join him! Help them define some of the trickier words in the text. Then, invite them to use them in a sentence. Bonus points, or real prizes, can be awarded to students who use *The Chocolate Touch* vocabulary words in regular classroom conversation. You can use the **RTT** vocabulary reproducible to jump start this project.

Some words to consider:

Anxious	Suitable	Devoured
Persisted	Absentmindedly	Laden
Tonic	Cellophane	Tilted
Marmalade	Reluctantly	Crescent
Spectacles	Enamel	Basin
Reprovingly	Scorned	Sensible



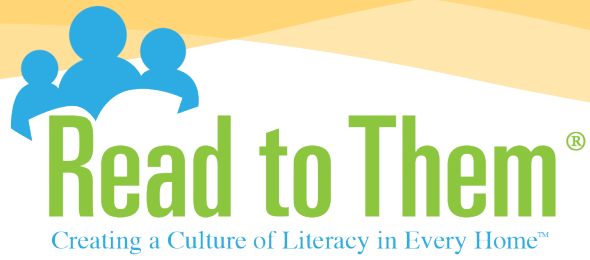
And, some words that are not in *The Chocolate Touch*, but can be used to describe all of the delicious foods your students will be excited to eat:

Scrumptious	Delectable	Savory
Tempting	Flavorful	Appetizing
Piquant	Tangy	Heavenly
Rich	Bitter	Exquisite
Satisfying	Decadent	Nourishing

7. **School-wide Scavenger Hunt** – When John returns to the mysterious candy store, he finds some of the artifacts of his odyssey hanging in the window, specifically the trumpet, the pencil, and the silver dollar. It’s always a good idea to keep your eye out for specific items and references from the text. Start with these three and hang them in your school, too. Then ask students to choose and make more – and hang them, too.

Alternately, you send your students around campus with a checklist to locate each displayed item. Have your students mark when they’ve found each one, writing down the location where they found it. This is a great small group activity! You can even promise prizes to the first students/groups who find each item from *The Chocolate Touch*.

8. **Poem Parody** – The band at John’s school rehearses an arrangement of the poem, “A Boy’s Song,” by James Hogg. The poem describes two children who love to play in the countryside. Hogg explains the many different things the children encounter there: bright and deep pools, a singing blackbird, thick hay, etc. Invite your students to read the poem. Help them understand the way Hogg describes the countryside, always starting with “Where...” Then ask them to use the same format to write their own poem about a place that they enjoy. Hogg ends each line with “That’s the way for Billy and me.” Have your students imagine who they would like to go to their chosen location with, and incorporate them in the last line of each stanza.



For example, if a student was writing about Disney World, they might say something like this:

Where the children always smile,
Where the laughter is the loudest,
Where movies come to life,
That's the way for sister and me.

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