

Librarian Book Talk Guide for *The Year the Swallows Came Early*

- Interest Level: Middle Grade Readers ages 8-12
- Genre: Contemporary Fiction
- Related Topics: California Missions, Cliff Swallows, and other migratory birds, cooking, recipes and food that remind us of important or special events, forgiveness, family.
- Booktalk Synopsis:

Eleanor “Groovy” Robinson loves cooking and plans to go to culinary school as soon as she’s old enough. But even Groovy’s thoughtfully planned menus won’t fix the things that start to go wrong the year she turns eleven. Suddenly, her father is in jail, her best friend’s long-absent mother reappears, and the swallows that make their annual migration to her hometown arrive surprisingly early. As Groovy begins to expect the unexpected, she learns the importance of forgiveness, understands the complex stories of the people around her, and realizes that even a really big shake-up can’t get in the way of a family that needs to come together.

- One line Hook: An eleven-year-old girl’s father is sent to jail, sending the family down the path of learning how to forgive.
- Related Reads:
- For more information about the missions in California, see:
<http://www.californiamissions.com/>
- For more information about the swallows, see:
http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Cliff_Swallow_dtl.html
- To see a video of the swallows making a nest, see:
<http://www.nps.gov/archive/yell/tours/thismonth/june2004/cliffswallows/index.htm>