

Have You Eaten a Flower Today?

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop appreciation for different types of fruits and vegetables.
- Learn the use of different parts of plants.
- Learn about the growth of plants.
- Experience and develop appreciation for the taste of various foods.
- Develop motor skills through the art and food activities.

GROUP SIZE:

6–8 children per adult volunteer

TIME FRAME:

This lesson is designed for a group meeting between 30 and 60 minutes. Each activity will take about 5–15 minutes to complete.

BACKGROUND:

This lesson is designed to help children learn to appreciate and try new fruits and vegetables. By getting children to think about the parts of the plant we eat, we can have fun eating roots, flowers, and leaves. The lesson will introduce new tastes and challenge children to try new foods in a fun way. The lesson also teaches children the different parts of the plant. To set the mood, have buckets or baskets full of different types of fruits and vegetables.

LIFE SKILL AREAS

- Decision-making opportunities will be provided by the hands-on activities.
- Motor skills will be developed through the activities.

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HELPS TO THE VOLUNTEER

Try these suggestions:

- This lesson takes a variety of fruits and vegetables to conduct. It also requires materials for the terrarium activity. To offset the costs, you may want to ask parents to contribute some of the fruits and vegetables and terrarium supplies.
- Consider requesting that each parent bring one or two items for the lesson. You may want to assign them or have a sign-up sheet so you get representatives of each plant part.
- Try to encourage members to taste new and different foods. Broccoli might not be so “yucky” when you have fun eating a flower!
- If you wish for members to see the plants actually growing, you may want to do the terrarium activity early in the year and then observe how the various parts of the plants grow and develop.
- The plants in your terrarium do not need to be edible; they still have the same parts to demonstrate to the members.

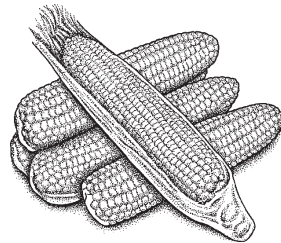
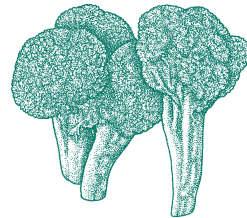
LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. Getting Started

ACTIVITY “Have You Eaten a Flower Today?”

Materials: variety of fruits and vegetables

Encourage the following discussion: Have any of you eaten any flowers today? How about seeds? Or how about leaves, has anyone eaten any leaves today? Some of you have eaten some leaves, or seeds, or maybe even a root. We eat many types of fruits and vegetables, but have you ever thought that these fruits and vegetables are really different parts of the plants we eat? Let’s look at some of the vegetables we eat and try to decide what part of the plant they are. Show the item and have members guess what part of the plant it might be. For example carrots (roots), celery (stems), lettuce (leaves), broccoli (flowers), tomato (fruit), and popcorn (seeds).



Application: We eat vegetables every day but don’t often think about what kind of plant they came from, and which part of the plant they represent.



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ACTIVITY “Oats, Peas, Beans”

Materials: none

Lead the group in the song Oats and Beans and Barley to the tune of *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, or any other tune that fits the lyrics. Lead into the discussion of different plants and their parts.

Oats and Beans and Barley (*Join hands and form a circle. You can walk or skip around the circle.*)

Chorus:



Oats and beans and barley grow,
Oats and beans and barley grow,
Do you or I or anyone know,
How oats and beans and barley grow?

(Bend down and plant the seeds)

First the farmer plants the seeds.

(Stands up and put hands on hips)

Stands up tall and takes his ease.



(Stamp twice, Clap twice)

Stamps his feet and claps his hands.

(Turn around with one hand shading eyes)

And turns around to view his land.

(chorus)

(Water imaginary seeds)

Then the farmer waters the ground.

(Hand on forehead, shading eyes)

Watches the sun shine all around.

(Stamp twice, Clap twice)

Stamps his feet and claps his hands.

(Turn around with hand shading eyes)

And turns around to view his land.

(chorus)

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Application: How do these different plants grow? Let's be plants. "Curl up into a seed" – with fists tucked in, crouch down. On knees, "Dig your roots in, grow your roots" – wiggle whole body or turn side to side. "Grow your stems" – all stand up, uncurling fists and reaching upward with backs of hands touching. "Now grow your flowers" – backs of hands still touching over your head, spread fingers apart and away from the other hand. "Okay, grow your fruit" (or oats, beans, or barley) – make a circle with finger tips touching over your head. "The fruit falls from the tree" (or the seeds fall from the stem) – drop the fruit (finger circle) to the ground. "And becomes a seed" – curl up into a seed again. Repeat several times, speeding up the progression each time.

This shows the cycle of seeds, the stages of growth, and the different parts of plants.

2. Digging Deeper

ACTIVITY "Plant Parts"

Materials: a variety of fruits and vegetables

Discuss the different parts of plants which we eat. Show the group an example of each plant part. Then have different samples which fit into each category and have the group place the plant in the right category.

Roots—carrots, radishes, beets, (potatoes are actually modified stems)

Stems—rhubarb, celery, asparagus

Leaves—cabbage, spinach, lettuce, parsley

Flowers—broccoli, cauliflower

Fruits—squash, eggplants, peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes

Seeds—popcorn, peanuts, peas (in pod), fresh green beans

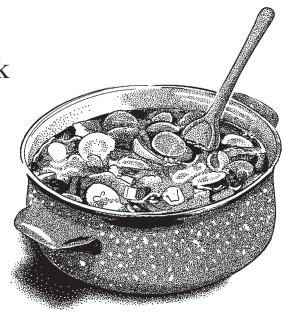


Application: There are many parts to a plant. Each plant has different parts which we can eat. Can you think of other plants we could eat? Can you figure out which part of the plant it is?

ACTIVITY "Garden Soup"

Materials: variety of fruits and vegetables cut and washed (small pieces will cook faster), stove or hot plate, large saucepan or soup pot, large spoon for stirring, bowls (or cups) and spoons for eating, and a copy of the story *Stone Soup* by Marcia Brown

Have the children select their favorite vegetable and place it in a soup pot. Add hot water (adding boiling water to the pot speeds the cooking and avoids boiling pot around the children) and simmer until the vegetables are tender. Have the children sample the soup as a snack. Read the story "Stone Soup" while the soup cooks.



Hint: You may want to have another adult help with this lesson. Someone who can add the boiling water and watch the soup simmer while the book is being read. The other adult can also assist with serving the soup. Let the soup cool before eating.

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Application: Each of us has favorite foods. It is fun to try new foods or to mix them together in new ways to discover new tastes.

ACTIVITY “Veggie Carts”

Materials: celery stalks, carrot slices, toothpicks, peanut butter, nuts, raisins, and cheese



Wash celery stalks and cut into 2-inch pieces. To both sides of the celery, attach round slices of carrots with toothpicks for wheels. Fill with peanut butter, nuts, raisins, cheese. Eat.

Application: Plants are very nutritious. What plants do these foods come from? Celery and carrots and nuts come from plants. Does peanut butter? How about raisins? What about cheese? No, but cows eat plants to make milk, and then we make cheese from milk.

3. Looking Within

ACTIVITY “Understanding Plant Parts”

Materials: whole potted plant

Discuss with the group the functions of each part of plants we eat.

Roots – underground part of the plant that absorbs nutrients and water from the soil. It is an anchor for plants, supports plant stems, and stores food.

Stems – part between the roots and the leaves. Stems carry nutrients from the roots to the leaves. Stems are the main trunk of the plant that provide structure and support for leaves, flowers, and fruit.

Leaves – helps make food through photosynthesis

Fruits – hold the seeds to protect them

Flowers – seed-producing parts of a plant

Seeds – part of the plant from which the new plant will come

Application: Ask the following questions:

- Can anyone show me where the roots (stems, flowers, etc.) are on this plant?
- Does anyone know why a plant needs to have roots (or leaves or flowers)? Why are they important to the plant?
- What parts of this plant could we eat? (Hint: this may be an opportunity to warn members they should not eat a plant unless they know it is safe to eat. Not all flowers, seeds, or leaves are edible.)
- How are plants different from humans?

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ACTIVITY “Plant People”

Materials: a variety of fruits and vegetables and toothpicks

Children will make a person using the items offered. Each “person” needs to include a representative of each plant part, leaf, seed, stem, fruit, flower, and root. Allow children to create their person by selecting these items and construct with toothpicks. Set the people in a central area for all of the group to view.

Application: Plant parts can be put together to create a plant or to be creative and make a person. Have children indicate which plant parts are used in their creation.

4. Bringing Closure

ACTIVITY “Plant Pictures”

Materials: worksheet *The Plants We Eat* and crayons or colored pencils

Today we have learned that we eat different parts of plants. Can you draw a picture of the different parts of the plants we learned to eat? Use the attached worksheet. Follow up with the children sharing or displaying their drawings.

Follow-up activities:

- Visit a fruit or vegetable farm.
- Visit a farmers’ market.

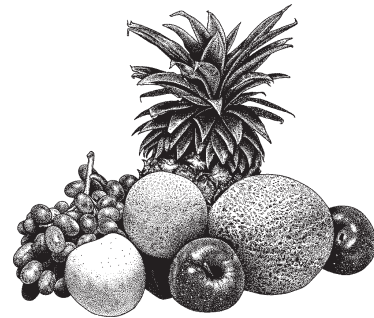
Reference: *Creative Food Experiences for Children*, Mary T. Goodwin and Gerry Pollen, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Washington, D.C., 1980.

5. Going Beyond

ACTIVITY “Veggie Smorgasbord”

Materials: a variety of fruits and vegetables

Offer a variety of fresh roots, stems, flowers, leaves, fruits, and seeds. Have the group observe the differences in shape, color, and texture of the different plant parts. Do each of the roots, stems, and leaves have the same texture? Do all of the leaves have the same shape? Can the group find any general characteristics of each plant part (such as all the roots have a rough texture)? If time or interest permits, eat the smorgasbord.



Application: Plants come in many shapes, sizes, and colors, just like people. Even though plants may look different, and have different flowers, leaves, and stems, they are basically the same. Just like plants are all different, people are different, too. Even though we have different colors of eyes and skin, we are all people, just like fruits and vegetables are all parts of plants.

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THE PLANTS WE EAT

<p>Draw a picture of a flower we eat.</p>	<p>Draw a picture of a root we eat.</p>
<p>Draw a picture of a stem we eat.</p>	<p>Draw a picture of a fruit we eat.</p>
<p>Draw a picture of a seed we eat.</p>	<p>Draw a picture of a leaf we eat.</p>



Reading Adventures

This listing of reading materials can be used as background information, for sharing before the group activity to set the stage for learning, or for sharing afterwards to reinforce the activity.

What's Inside Plants, by Anita Ganeri

How Does Your Garden Grow?, by Dominique and Philippe Joly, Nathalie Locoste, and Jean-Claude Senee

Fruit, by Jillian Powell

New Junior Garden Book, by Felder Rushing