

Experiential Activities Grades 3-5



Create Infused Water - Fun!

To help encourage children to drink more water, adding some natural flavoring can often do the trick! Create samples of different flavored water for them to try, then let them create a bottle of their favorite!

Materials:

- Large pitchers of water
- Fruit, vegetables and herbs to flavor water (Oranges, lemons, limes, strawberries, pineapple, cucumbers, mint, etc.) – you decide what varieties, remembering that most kids will want flavors that are simple and familiar. But maybe try one that is a bit different, just to see! Sample recipes found below.
- Knife & cutting board (adult use only)
- Bowls
- Small Dixie cups for samples
- Empty water bottles (with lids) for each child (have them bring them from home)

Instructions:

1. Create at least three different varieties of infused water and allow each child to try them and pick their favorite one
2. Take a vote to see which flavor is the most popular
3. Cut up additional ingredients (small enough to fit in water bottles) and place in bowls
4. Help (or allow) children to put ingredients of their favorite (or create their own) flavor into their water bottle, add water, and encourage them to drink it during the day or take it home to share with their family
5. Try to incorporate infused water into the daily routine - during snack, in between activities or on special occasions throughout the year



Blueberry & Mint

2 cups blueberries
2 sprigs of mint, muddled
2 quarts of water

Strawberry & Basil

10 strawberries, thinly sliced
3 basil leaves, torn into quarters and muddled
2 quarts of water

Citrus Blend

1 orange, thinly sliced
1 lime, thinly sliced
1/2 a lemon, thinly sliced
2 quarts water

Adapted from: <http://www.superhealthykids.com/flavored-water-for-kids/> and <http://www.momadvice.com/post/ditch-the-juice-box-fruit-infused-water-recipes>





Healthy Teeth Activity!

Water is the best drink option not only because it helps keep us hydrated and healthy but also because it doesn't damage our teeth. Demonstrate to children the effects of what different drinks do to our teeth by completing the activity below.

Duration: One week

What you'll need:

- 3-5 cups (1 cup per type of beverage)
- Eggs (2 per type of beverage)
- Water
- Orange juice
- Cola soda
- You can add any other drinks you can think of if you want to take this experiment to the next level!

Instructions:

1. Pour the liquids into the individual cups.
2. Crack the eggs, discard the yolk and egg white, but keep the shells. ***These shells are going to represent the enamel on our teeth.***
3. Put one to two eggshells into each cup of liquid (fully submerged).
4. Leave for one week, topping up the different liquid levels every few days.
5. After one week, take the egg shells out and examine what the different drinks have done to them.

Results:

The shell in the orange juice should be pretty much dissolved (due to high acid and sugar contents in the juice). The shell in the soda will have brown spots, while the shell in the water should be completely untouched, demonstrating to the kids exactly why water is always the best choice. Remind them that you can always infuse water with fresh fruits and veggies and herbs for a delicious and flavorful option!

Adapted from: <https://iquitsugar.com/3-fun-activities-for-kids-to-teach-them-about-sugar/>



Measuring Sugar in Drinks

Do you know how much sugar is in your drinks? This activity gives kids a visual reference of how much sugar is in common beverages that they drink, while it also teaches them how to read nutrition labels (for information on how to read a nutrition label see: <http://bit.ly/labelsugar>).

What you'll need:

- A bag of sugar
- A teaspoon measuring spoon
- A plate or baggies
- A bottle (or can) of soda
- A bottle of orange juice
- A bottle of sports drink

Sugars equation: 4 grams equals 1 teaspoon

Instructions:

1. Using the nutrition labels on each bottle, discuss how to read a nutrition label (<http://bit.ly/labelsugar>). Be sure to point out how to look at serving sizes, which are smaller than you think!
2. Start with the soda and show the kids where on the label they can find the amount of sugar that is in the drink. Teach the kids how to identify the exact amount of sugar in teaspoons using the **sugars equation** above, then using the teaspoon, have a child scoop out the amount of sugar onto a plate or into a baggie.
3. With the visual in front of them ask the kids if it would be good for them to eat that whole plate of sugar/baggie of sugar. Let them know that the American Heart Association recommends a maximum of 25g (6 teaspoons) of sugar per day for kids, and many others recommend even less!
4. Repeat steps two and three with the orange juice and sports drink.

Results:

Hopefully this experiment will spur discussion and awareness with the kids on just how much hidden-sugar is in beverages they drink daily! Encourage them to look for low sugar options the next time they are at the grocery store or even better, to choose to drink water – the natural, no calorie beverage! Water is what keeps us healthy and hydrated and can taste great when infused with fresh fruits and veggies and/or herbs! Try the infused-water experiments found in the resources for this month!

Adapted from: <https://iquitsugar.com/3-fun-activities-for-kids-to-teach-them-about-sugar/>



Pour It Out!

Objective:

Children compare their usual intake of juice (as poured into a typical cup and measured) to a standard 4 ounce serving. (*Note: this activity works best with a small group so that the children can receive individual attention from the leader.*)

Materials:

- Cups or glasses of different sizes and shapes
- 2 Measuring cups with ounce markings
- Juice, water

Instructions:

1. Depending upon the size of your group, arrange the materials on a table in the front, or if staff allows, have duplicate materials set around the room for smaller groups to work together.
2. Invite two to four students to select a cup and pour the amount of juice that he/she would usually drink at home into the cup.
3. Inform the group that they are going to analyze their drinks to see if they are drinking more or less than they expected!
4. Instruct the child to pour the juice from the glass into the measuring cup to see how much juice he/she usually drinks – this may surprise them!
5. In the other measuring cup, pour out 4 ounces (1/2 cup) and tell the children that this is **one serving of juice**. How does this compare to the child's drink? Pour the standard amount into the selected cup to visual the difference.
6. Invite other children in pairs or small groups to experiment with the juice. What type or size of cup holds 4 ounces, so they learn how to not drink too much? How does this amount look when poured into different cups/containers that they are more used to using?
7. Explain that while 100% fruit juice gives us vitamins and natural sugar, we still need to limit the amount we drink because of the high sugar content.
8. Tell children that water is the best choice to quench thirst! Try some infused water (see below)!

Extension Activities:

- Taste water flavored with fruit slices such as lemon, lime, cucumbers, melons, berries, mint, or basil. Have the kids blindfold each other and see if they can correctly identify what flavor the water is! Or, freeze juice as ice cubes for a flavorful addition to water.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodandfun.org/resources/pdf/units/unit3.pdf>



Regrow Your Vegetables!

Get kids excited about gardening by regrowing vegetables and fruits to transform them from stems, cores, and seeds into fresh, delicious plants you can eat. It requires very little time and space, no soil, and no extra money! **At home gardening is a great way to reduce your grocery bills!**

What you'll need:

- Discarded fruits and vegetables (see list below)
- Bowls, cups, flower pots, etc. to grow plants in
- Water
- Paper and pen to label
- Sunlight



Instructions:

1. Decide What to Grow!

- Green onions—2" bottom with roots will start to grow within 3-5 days.
- Romaine lettuce—2" core at the bottom will start to grow within 3-5 days.
- Celery—2" bottom of stalk will start to grow within 3-5 days.
- Carrots (regular with green top, not baby)—the top with the green part will begin to sprout right away and can be replanted in the soil to grow new carrots.
- Potatoes (red, white and sweet)—will sprout within days and grow over several months
- Garlic—cloves sprout within 2-3 weeks and will regrow new cloves.
- Onion—begins to sprout within 2-3 weeks after its peak.
- Pineapple—the crown on top of a fresh pineapple will begin to take root in 2-3 weeks and produce a new pineapple in approximately 2 years.
- Avocados—the pit can be started in water and then planted in soil to grow an avocado tree.
Note: Avocados may not ever produce fruit, but do result in a beautiful houseplant!



2. Ready, Set, Regrow!

- Gather the discarded fruits and vegetables you decided to replant.
- Place each plant in a different cup, bowl, or other shallow container. (Note: Larger vegetables like celery and lettuce will need larger containers.)
- Add water. (Be sure to change the water every couple of days.)
- Place the plants in a sunny window where they can get plenty of light. This works great during winter months so you can enjoy the taste of fresh-grown food all year long!



Bonus activity:

Have each of the kids make a chart so they can track and measure growth as they regrow vegetables!

Adapted from: <http://www.mykidsadventures.com/regrow-vegetables/>

SEED HEART VALENTINES

Check out this fun, yet somewhat involved (warning!) project that uses recycle paper to make hearts containing seeds. Yes, you can plant these! The hearts take a bit of time to dry so this is not a project to start the day you want to use them!

Materials:

- Paper or colored paper (can be newspaper)
- Food coloring (if you don't have colored paper)
- Thin seeds (we used Black Eyed Susan's, could use basil or other thin seed)
- Cookie cutter
- Screen (splatter screen or window screen)
- Warm water



Instructions:

1. Tear Paper – Let your kids go to town tearing paper into little pieces and placing them into a bowl.



2. Add Warm Water (and food coloring) – If you used colored paper you won't need food coloring and can just add your warm water. If you used white paper, mix your warm water with the food coloring before adding to the paper.

3. Let soak – Let your paper sit in the water for a couple of hours, maybe even overnight.

4. Blend paper into pulp – Use a hand mixer to blend the paper into a pulp.



5. Drain water – Drain any excess water off the mixture, but make sure you leave it moist. Don't squeeze any water out because you need it to make it spreadable.

6. Sprinkle seeds into mix – Sprinkle your flower seeds into the pulp and blend well so that they are all throughout. Do not use the mixer or blender to do this because you could damage the seeds.

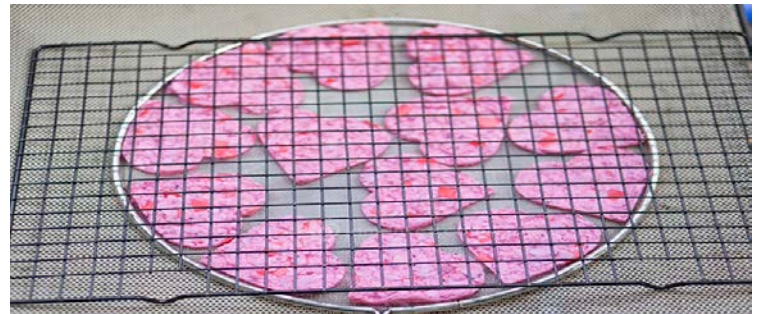


7. Prep screen – I used a splatter screen for this project, but you can use a window screen or buy some screen from your local hardware store. Place your screen on top of a cooling rack with a paper towel underneath. As you mold the shapes it will start to leak through the screen.



8. Shape mixture – Hold your cookie cutter tightly against the screen. Put a spoonful of paper pulp mixture into the shape and use the spoon to push and move it to the sides. Get it as even as you can. Make sure your shape isn't too thin because when it dries it will get smaller, making it very brittle and hard to remove from your screen.

9. Let dry – After you have a few placed on your screen you can place them out in the sun to dry. If making hearts in winter without much sun, place a box fan over them to speed up the drying process. Consider placing a drying rack or something else over the top of the hearts so none of the hearts will fly away, and so nothing accidentally hits them.



10. Carefully remove from screen – These may be difficult to remove so it is suggested that an adult do this part.

11. Attach to Valentine card – After you are done with your hearts, create valentines to give to friends. Underneath the heart, include instructions for the recipient to place the heart in a pot, on the top of soil, and then place in the sun, and water as needed to keep the seeds moist.

Adapted from: <https://jamonkey.com/diy-recycled-seed-paper-heart-valentines/>





Spring Garden Designer!

In many parts of the U.S., spring edible gardens typically are comprised of what we call “cool season” plants. These include salad greens, kale, broccoli, carrots, beets, and others. What would you plant in your spring garden? We have a fun activity below to help you be your own Spring Garden Designer!

1. Check out <http://bit.ly/plantschedule> to learn more about what to plant in the spring in your area.
2. After reviewing this link, think about what you would grow in your spring garden.
3. On a separate sheet of paper, draw a plot of what you would grow (remember to consider the spacing needed for each plant!). Below is a sample cool season garden plot.

Good luck, and we hope you will try to plant the garden you design!

10'-0"
4'-0"

Trellis not shown

Legend

K Kale
 L Lettuce
 P Peas
 B Batchlor Buttons

R Radish
 C Carrot
 B Beet
 P Pansies

Variety Recommendation

Lacinato (dinasour), or Russian Red/White or True Siberian Kale
 Lettuce - any loose leaf (not Iceberg or other heading types)
 Radish - any spring radish, Easter Egg, French Breakfast, Cherry (not Black Spanish)
 Carrots - Baby Fingers or any variety
 Peas - Cascadia Snap Peas (edible pod, heat tolerant, 3 feet tall)
 Beets - Detroit Dark Red

Master Gardener Demonstration Garden - Edible Cool Season Plot - March 2012

D. Shillingburg - Doña Ana Master Gardener - 1/2/2012