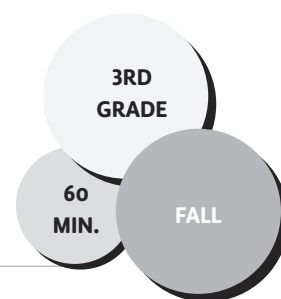


Celebrating the Harvest

THEME: GROWING AND ACCESSING HEALTHY FOOD



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why is it important to give thanks when harvesting from the garden?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to explain why being respectful in the garden is important.
- ✓ Students will be able to thoughtfully harvest from the garden.

CONCEPTS

abundance harvest
honoring respect tool safety

Engaging the Classroom Teacher

- During Action Step 2, suggest that the teacher supervise students on their scavenger hunt, answering questions, and ensuring students aren't yet harvesting from plants.
- During Action Steps 4 and 5, suggest that the teacher support students as they harvest, modeling the appropriate behavior alongside students.
- During Action Step 6, suggest that the teacher help pass out the tasting and encourage them to try the fruit or vegetable themselves!

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will appreciate the abundance of a garden, through observation and a scavenger hunt. They will learn how to respectfully and thoughtfully harvest from plants, and practice by harvesting and preparing a simple tasting of ripe fruits and vegetables from the garden.

MATERIALS

- How We Harvest Poster (p. 352)
- Harvest Scavenger Hunt Worksheet for each pair of students (p. 353)
- Clipboards and pencils
- Large bowls or colanders for students to harvest into
- Supplies for washing vegetables
 - Hose
 - Bus tubs
 - Clean, dry towels
- A few full watering cans
- Snips for deadheading, if available
- Mulch or finished compost, if available
- Wooden skewers, if using
- Plate or paper towel for each student
- Yogurt Herb Dip Ingredients, if using (see recipe below)
- Bowls for dip, if using

PREPARATION

- › Read local resources related to harvesting with respect and honor, such as Indigenous tradition or other local traditions of gratitude.

- › Read the story, *The Land Knows Me* by Leigh Joseph to have a strong understanding of what inspired the How We Harvest poster used in this lesson. Consider doing the reading adaptation listed at the end of this lesson.
- › Explore local, indigenous, and native harvest traditions in the community by talking with elders, partners, and individuals with local harvest knowledge. If possible, ask local individuals to share these traditions with students. If not, with permission, integrate those traditions into your harvest lesson.
- › Familiarize yourself with the local harvesting seasons because these are not the same in every place. You can teach gratitude and care for gardening all year round while also highlighting specific harvest celebrations e.g autumn and spring and/or indoor community growing spaces.
- › Create a large poster of the How We Harvest resource and post it up to share with students.
- › Determine what kind of tasting you'll have based on what you have to harvest (e.g., make wraps such as in the lesson Plant Part Wraps, pass out wooden skewers for students to make their own veggie skewers, or prepare the Yogurt Herb Dip).
- › Determine which beds you'll harvest from and how you'll arrange to have students all harvesting at the same time. Ideally, you'd have a couple adjacent beds students can harvest from and/or an adult volunteer to help students at another bed.
- › Set up a washing station close to a food-grade hose, where students can wash produce under running water.
- › Set up supplies for students to use to "give

back to plants," such as a few full watering cans, some snips for deadheading, some mulch, or some finished compost.

- › Prepare the dip, if using.

Yogurt Herb Dip

Yield: 4 cups, 25 servings of 2 tablespoons

1 32-ounce container Greek yogurt*
(about 4 cups)

Handful of finely chopped herbs
(such as parsley, dill, mint, and basil)

2–4 tablespoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon salt, more to taste

¼ teaspoon pepper, more to taste

*For dairy-free students, consider dairy-free alternatives such as coconut, almond, or cashew yogurt.

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl.
Taste and adjust seasoning, as needed.

ACTION STEPS

1. Engage: Gather students in a circle and say, *The word "abundance" means a lot of or an overflowing amount of something.* Have them repeat the word, perhaps performing an accompanying hand gesture you show them. Ask, *Staying in your spot, turn your head looking all around the garden. Where do you see abundance?* Have students share their observations, and then say, *The fall is a special time of year when all the hard work preparing the soil, planting seeds, watering, and weeding comes to fruition—it's time to pick and gather all the ripe crops we've tended all season long.* Discuss what "harvest" means and if there is a local word for this practice.

You might even share how, in Old English, the word for the season between summer and winter was called “harvest.” **(5 min.)**

2. Scavenger Hunt: Pass out a clipboard and Harvest Scavenger Hunt Worksheet to each pair of students. Let students know they’ll be looking for things that are ready to harvest, but they won’t be harvesting anything yet. You’ll do that together later in the lesson! Remind the class of expectations in the garden and your callback strategy for when it’s time to circle up again. **(10 min.)**

3. How We Harvest: Call students back to the circle, and ask pairs to share one example of abundance they found in the garden. Invite local elders, partners, and individuals with local harvest knowledge in the community to participate in or lead this circle. Say, *Nature is giving us gifts of food to eat and preserve— gifts of beautiful flowers to make us smile and gifts of seeds to collect for planting next season (depending on the season). We want to honor these gifts by being respectful, thoughtful, and grateful.* Ask students, *What are some ways you or your family show respect and gratitude?* Have a few students share and collect their ideas by writing them down so everyone can see them. Then, ask students to consider which ideas might be ways they can show gratitude and give back to the plants for the gifts they are harvesting e.g. You can also say thank you to the plants before or after you harvest their fruit. Display the How We Harvest Poster of thoughtful harvesting practices for students to see. Go over each practice, and ask students why that practice is important and what that might look like. Share the origin of this tradition and local harvest traditions,

if possible. Explain to students that they can verbally ask plants for permission, such as saying, “May I harvest your fruit?” But also explain to students how to test for ripeness. Say, *By giving a gentle tug on a fruit, we can see if it’s ripe and ready. If it doesn’t want to come off easily, that’s the plant’s way of saying it’s not ready to be harvested yet.* Ask students, *What are some practices and traditions your family or the community have when harvesting?* Ideas might include saying thank you and breathing some carbon dioxide onto the plant, watering it, removing dead growth, applying mulch, top dressing with fresh compost, or weeding around its roots. **(10 min.)**

4. Harvesting and Preparing: Bring students to the beds they’ll be harvesting from, and tell students about the plant or plants they’ll be harvesting. Model the proper technique for harvesting that particular plant, and then allow students to harvest. Encourage each student to ask for permission and to harvest carefully. Have small groups of students take turns washing produce. **(10 min.)**

5. Giving Back to the Plants: Discuss with students what these plants need to grow and thrive (sun, nutrients from soil, water, and air), and then give back to the plant in their own way, such as by sprinkling plants with finished compost, weeding around them, speaking to them, or watering them. **(10 min.)**

6. Tasting: Gather students back together to try the fruit or vegetables you’ve harvested. Invite students to express words of gratitude before the tasting. **(10 min.)**

REFLECTION

Have students discuss the following questions in small groups, then share with the class: (5 min.)

Social and emotional learning

- Ask yourself: How was I respectful toward others and the plants in the garden today?
- How do you feel when you treat plants with care and respect?

Check for understanding

- How do we know if a plant is ready to be harvested?
- What examples of abundance in our garden are most exciting to you?
- What are ways we can give thanks to the plants that produce so much good food for us?
- Sometimes abundance isn't something we can see or touch. What are other examples of abundance in your life?

ADAPTATIONS

Reading: Read the story, *The Land Knows Me* by Leigh Joseph. This is a story about how to show care and gratitude for the plants' gifts during a Spring harvest. After reading the story, have students prepare their statement of thanks before they practice harvesting. Ask students, *What are some practices and traditions your family or the community have when harvesting?* Be sure to post the sentence frame for students to view. I am ...I am from...My heart is full today. I honor you.

Music: Sing "Dirt Made My Lunch" by the Banana Slug String Band, a song in which you give thanks to soil for helping grow the food you eat.

Gifting: If you have a bumper crop (a crop that has yielded an unusual abundance), consider ways of sharing the harvest with other school community members, such as setting up a table outside the classroom, sharing with parents at pickup, or donating to a local food pantry.

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5.B

Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are *friendly* or *helpful*).

NOTE: Connect to state social studies standards if possible.

How We Harvest Poster

Thoughtful Harvesting Practices

- Let the plants know who you are.
 - Ask permission.
- Be gentle and use care. The plant will let you know when it's ripe and ready.
- Respect and keep our plants safe by not taking too much. Take only what you need.
- Give plants a gift to say thank you for all that they have given us.
 - Share your harvest.



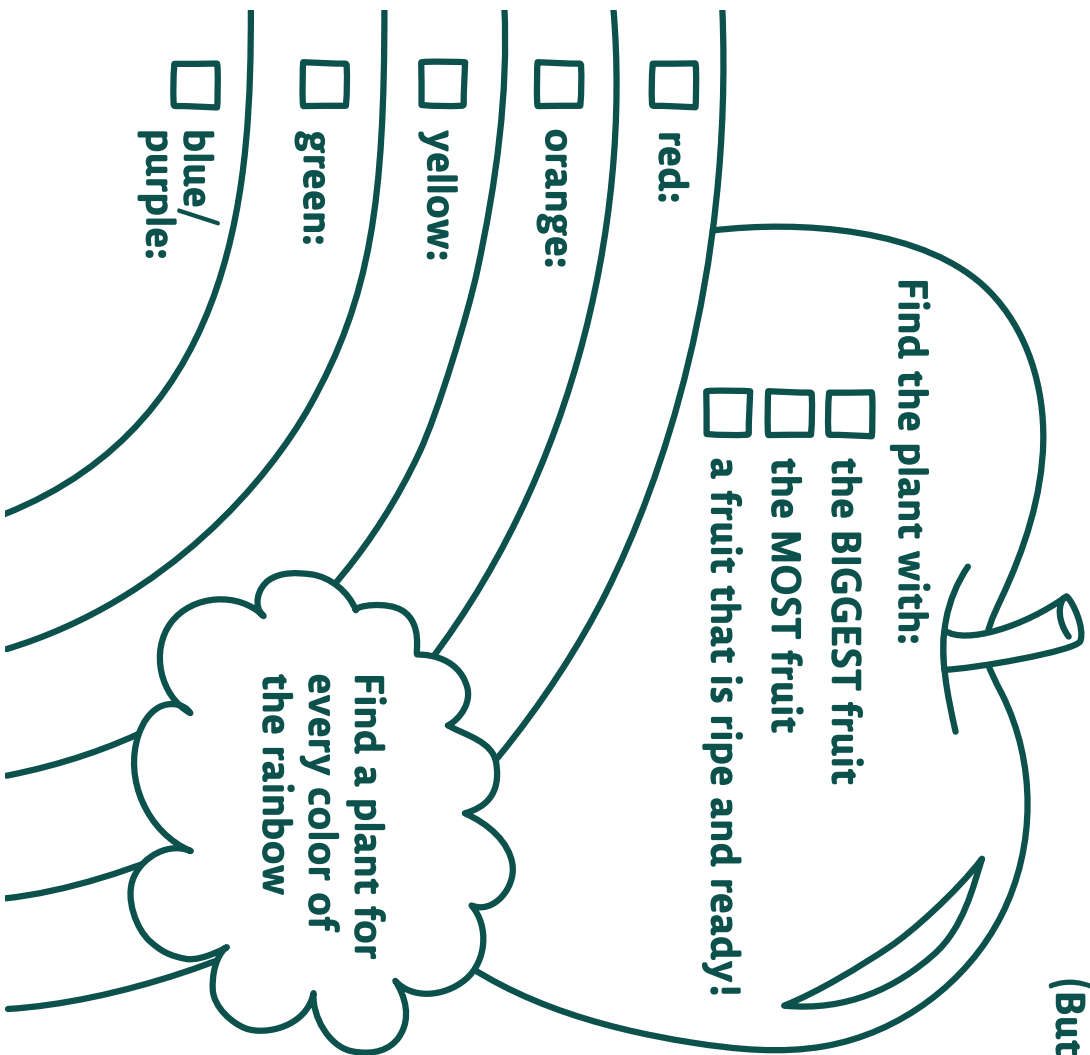
Inspired by the book, "The Land Knows Me" by Leigh Joseph (2025)

Name: _____

Date: _____

HARVEST SCAVENGER HUNT

DIRECTIONS: Find with your  eyes examples of **ABUNDANCE** in our garden.
(But don't harvest anything yet!)



EDIBLE PLANT PARTS

Find:

stems



flower



seeds



leaves



roots



that are ready
to be harvested