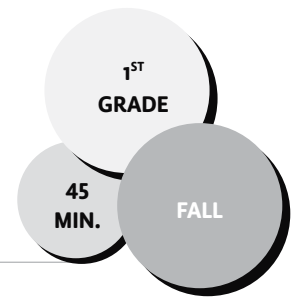


# Tea Time

**THEME:** CONNECTING FOOD AND COMMUNITY



## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

*How are plants used beyond cooking?*

*Why is teatime special?*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to explain how plants can be used as medicine.
- ✓ Students will be able to prepare for a tea party.

### CONCEPTS

herbs   plants as medicine   tea

### ENGAGING THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

- During Action Step 2, suggest that the teacher circulate through the garden helping students follow expectations as they harvest.
- During Action Step 4, suggest that the teacher help facilitate students getting into groups. Then have the teacher supervise the table-setting group while you supervise the two groups foraging in the garden.
- During Action Step 5, encourage the teacher to sit with the students and sample the homemade herbal tea.

## LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students harvest leaves from the garden to make tea and, while it is steeping, prepare for a tea party! In groups, students gather flowers for bouquets, make centerpieces out of found objects, and thoughtfully set the table for their classmates. The class then enjoys their homemade tea together.

### MATERIALS

- Large thermos of hot water
- 2–3 teapots or mason quart jars
- Snack that you make or purchase (see preparation)
- Tablecloths (amount dependent on your number of tables) or picnic blankets if you don't have picnic benches or tables in the garden
- 1 cup for each student (if you use paper cups, you can poke holes in them later and use them as containers in which to start seeds)
- Napkin or plate for each student (can be school paper towels, but you might bring in cloth dinner napkins to make it feel more special)
- 5–7 kid scissors (for cutting flowers and herbs for bouquets with supervision)
- 3–6 vases for flower bouquets (amount dependent on your table setup and preference)
- A couple bus tubs for dirty dishes

## PREPARATION

- › Make or buy a simple snack to serve with your tea. Consider using the Flatbread Crackers (p. 382) or Honey Seed Snacks recipe (p. 110). If not using one of those recipes, you might choose to buy herby flatbread crackers or a cookie with herbs, such as gingersnaps.
- › Select the herbs that are suitable to make tea in your garden. If your group is large, choose a couple different herbs in different spots in the garden to avoid overcrowding.
- › Investigate the medicinal properties of the herb with which you're making tea to share this information with students.

| GARDEN HERB | CAN HELP WITH . . . |
|-------------|---------------------|
|-------------|---------------------|

|                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Chamomile          | Sleep and digestion           |
| Feverfew           | Headaches                     |
| Mint               | Digestion                     |
| Lemon balm         | Stress                        |
| Tulsi (holy basil) | Stress, colds, and congestion |
| Raspberry leaf     | Boosting the immune system    |
| Lavender           | Relaxation and sleep          |

## ACTION STEPS

**1. Engage:** Gather students in a circle, and pass around various herbs you've collected from the garden, asking students to smell them. Ask, *Does anyone know any of these plants?* After they've shared, say, *These are all herbs I've collected from the garden. Herbs have a strong scent and taste. You only need a little to taste them in a dish or smell them.* Ask students to say the word "herbs." Explain that people use herbs not only for making food taste good but also for medicine. Give students a chance to share any benefits they know of for certain herbs.

Then share with students the medicinal properties of the herbs you've collected. Explain that today is a special day because they'll be making tea with herbs that they harvest from the garden so the class can have a tea party! Ask students to turn and talk about what they know about tea or a time they've had tea before. **(5 min.)**

**2. Harvesting Herbs:** Go over general garden expectations. Then remind students how to harvest with two hands, and ask that each student harvest just a little, for example five to ten leaves each, because a little goes a long way. Split students into two to three groups for harvesting, explaining how you'll call them back together and where they'll put their herbs once they return. **(5 min.)**

**3. Making Tea:** When students return with their herbs, have each student contribute a little piece of herb into your quart jar or teapot, and then cover with hot water from the thermos, making sure students have stepped back from containers for safety. Reinforce what each herb is for as students add them, for example, by saying, *Mmm lavender, we'll feel so nice and relaxed.* Explain, *The tea needs about fifteen minutes to steep, so in that time we can prepare our table for the tea party.* **(5 min.)**

**4. Preparation Groups:** Explain each role to students, and then divide them evenly among the roles to prepare. Consider allowing students to self-select their role. **(10 min.)**

**a. Setting the Table:** This group will lay out tablecloths, and place a cup and napkin at each table setting.

**b. Making Bouquets:** This group will cut flowers and herbs from the garden to make

bouquets. Be sure to set boundaries for this group, limiting the amount each student can cut.

**c. Making Centerpieces:** This group will gather natural objects from the garden to create centerpieces.

**5. Tea Party:** Have students settle into their places. Say to students, *Teatime is a special tradition for many people around the world. Sometimes tea drinking is a ritual or enjoyed during celebrations. It's a time to slow down and enjoy the moment and the people you're sharing with.* Explain that we won't eat or drink until everyone has their snack and tea so that we can enjoy it together. Have the classroom teacher or a volunteer pass out a snack to each student while you walk around pouring tea for each student. Encourage students to chat with their neighbors and then discuss the reflection questions as they enjoy their snack and tea. **(10 min.)**

**6. Cleanup:** Show students where to put their dirty dishes to help clear their setting. **(5 min.)**

## REFLECTION

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

### Social and emotional learning

- *What was your favorite part of our time together today?*
- *Ask yourself: How did I work with others today to make sure our tea party went well?*

### Check for understanding

- *Does anyone here drink tea at home? If so, how or why do you drink tea?*
- *How would you describe the flavor of our homemade tea?*

- *If you tried more than one kind of tea, which was your favorite? Why?*
- *How can you share making tea with your family and friends at home?*

## ADAPTATIONS

**Inviting Guests:** Have students invite their families and/or a buddy class to their tea party!

**Sun Tea Variation:** Make sun tea with students. Put ½ cup to 1 cup of dried herbs in ½ gallon jars. Fill each jar with cold water, and put a lid on each one. Set in the sun for three to five hours to steep and warm.

**Tablecloth Variation:** Consider using butcher paper as your tablecloths and having the table setting group draw a flower or other garden-based picture for each table setting.

**Bring-Home Extension:** Students can create family tea bags to share with their family using a paper coffee filter. Have each student add a handful of dried herbs to a coffee filter, and tie it up with cotton cooking twine. You can even attach a label onto the end of the string using a hole puncher and card stock. Have students write the ingredients on their label. Older students can write a favorite quote or words of inspiration if they'd like. This is a "family tea bag" because they can use it to make a whole pot of tea to share with family or friends.

**Compost Tea:** Explain to students that a kind way to take care of the garden plants is by serving them tea, Compost Tea! You can find directions on the internet for how to make compost tea, a nutrient-dense, chemical-free fertilizer from your school garden's compost.

**Teatime Rituals:** With older students, you can emphasize the ritual of tea as a mindfulness practice and/or research teatime rituals from around the world, including Japan's tea ceremonies, England's afternoon tea, Argentina's yerba mate, and India's chai tea.