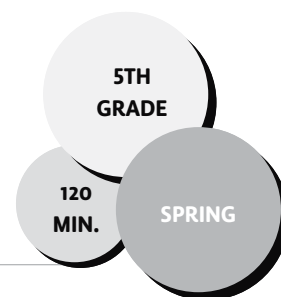


Gratitude Feast

THEME: CONNECTING FOOD AND COMMUNITY

Session 1: 60-min. planning period

Session 2: 1–2-hour Gratitude Feast, held at a convenient time for your students and guests



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can we express our gratitude to the growers and makers of our food?

What are the lessons about food and healthy choices we'll remember most?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to prepare and present a celebration to honor all the people who help them eat well every day.
- ✓ Students will be able to articulate what they have learned about living up to their full potential and how this will affect their lives in the future.

CONCEPTS

community	full potential
gratitude	honoring

ENGAGING THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

- Coordinate with classroom teacher(s) ideally a month prior to when you'd like to host the event. Together, determine a reasonable time frame between session 1 and 2. Have them help you consider the school calendar and any anticipated events or holidays.
- Ask the teacher for support in getting the word out.
- During Session 1, suggest that the teacher support students in making crafts and writing thank-you notes.

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students plan and create a celebratory feast to honor the people who help them eat well every day. After brainstorming ways to honor and thank their guests, students craft invitations, decorations, conversation-starter cards, and thank-you notes. This end-of-the-year celebration will also provide an opportunity for students to reflect on what lessons and habits from their time with FoodCorps they would like to bring into their next year. This lesson also serves as a follow-up to the lesson Full Potential Manifesto.

MATERIALS

- Crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Butcher paper
- Nice paper for making invitations
- Index cards
- Plates
- Silverware
- Serving utensils
- Jars or vases for bouquets
- Materials needed to prepare your foods

PREPARATION

- › Three weeks prior to Session 1: Planning the Gratitude Feast, determine a time and location for the event. If it will include multiple fifth-grade classes, you may want to reserve the cafeteria or another space for after school.

- › Two weeks prior to Session 1: Have students determine who will be invited and begin advertising the event through formal school communications (newsletter/website).
- › *Optional:* At least two weeks prior to Session 1: connect with farmers about sourcing food for the event and having them attend the feast. Ideally, you're also harvesting produce from your school's garden! Connect with families about being involved, for example, by preparing a food that is special or important to their family.
- › Session 1: Together with your students, begin making personalized invitations, decorations, and thank-you notes for attendees.
- › Two weeks prior to the event: Recruit volunteers to help day-of. Make a list of supplies you'll need, and determine how you'll be sourcing these.
- › After Session 1, and two to three days prior to the Feast itself, send a reminder email to invitees (FoodCorps partners, staff, etc.), and have the school remind families through formal communications (newsletter, website, automated voice messaging system, etc.)

SESSION 1: PLANNING THE GRATITUDE FEAST

ACTION STEPS

1. Brainstorming: Explain to students that today you'll be planning a celebratory feast to honor all the people who help them eat well. Ask, *Who should we invite? Who grows our food? Who prepares our food?* Have students brainstorm a list of people to invite including family, local farmers, cafeteria staff, and perhaps local restaurant cooks. Next, have them brainstorm ways to honor their guests.

You might want to introduce the concept of giving toasts to honor people. **(10 min.)**

2. Reflecting on the Purpose of the Feast:

Have students recall goals they set in their Full Potential Manifestos at the beginning of the year. Then have them explain how the people they just listed helped them reach those goals by growing, preparing, or providing them with nourishing foods. **(5 min.)**

3. Creating a Celebratory Space: Depending on the time you have available and the amount of students involved, you might assign or have students self-select into different committees for the following tasks. Or you might have one classroom responsible for each task. **(15–30 min.)**

- **Invitations:** Have students create invitations with the pertinent information for potential guests. You can have them decorate the invitations with simple leaf rubbings or more elaborate flower pounding. (See Life Lab's The Book of Gardening Projects for Kids or Life Lab's website for details on how to do flower pounding.) **(15 min.)**

- **Thank-You Notes and/or Short Speeches:** Designate time for students to write and/or draw thank-you notes or prepare short speeches to honor all the ways their guests have contributed to their nourishing eating goals. (As you're wrapping up programming in this community, consider this an opportunity for you to express gratitude to the school and those who've supported you.) **(15 min.)**

- **Conversation-Starter Cards:** Explain to students that conversation-starter cards are a fun way to get different people talking who may not know each other. Provide some examples of conversation starters such as, *If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be and why? Tell me about the first person who taught you how to cook. What's your favorite thing about your job? What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten?* Provide students with index cards and colored pencils. Have them write as many cards as they'd like, and encourage them to decorate the cards. **(15 min.)**

Decorations:

- Have students harvest flowers or herbs from the garden for making bouquets to serve as table decor.
- Students can decorate butcher paper that will serve as tablecloths with pictures of their favorite recipes and lessons with FoodCorps as well as words of gratitude and inspiration for their guests. **(20 min.)**

4. Planning Food: Consider the following suggestions, but ultimately decide what makes the most sense based on your students and community.

- Ask students if they have a family recipe, food memory, or something from their family that they'd like to include.
- Ask students which were their favorite recipes that they've made so far this year, and decide on one or two they would like to recreate for the feast.
- See if a farmer has surplus crop that students can prepare for the feast.

- Alternatively, you might have students research celebratory foods around the world and vote on something to prepare. **(15 min.)**

5. Setting Intentions: Have students reflect on all that they've done and learned with FoodCorps. If students created a Full Potential Manifesto at the start of the year, have them review it and consider how they've been fulfilling the goals they set for living up to their full potential. **(15 min.)**

SESSION 2: GRATITUDE FEAST

ACTION STEPS

1. Welcoming Guests to the Gratitude Feast:

Once all invitations are sent, decorations are made, and food is prepared, it is time for your Gratitude Feast! This is an informal gathering of community members who have supported your students throughout the year. During the Feast, welcome community members, and acknowledge them publicly for their contribution to the school food community. **(5 min.)**

2. Giving Thanks: Find some ways to acknowledge them, such as by having students share goals they set in their Full Potential Manifestos at the beginning of the year and having them explain how the people here helped them reach those goals by growing, preparing, or providing them with nourishing foods. They could do this in written thank-you cards or in short speeches. **(10 min.)**

3. Feasting: Have your students introduce the foods they've prepared, including information on where things were grown and/or how they were prepared. Then invite guests to enjoy the food together! **(20–45 min.)**

REFLECTION

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

Social and emotional learning

- *What are you thankful for?*
- *What have you learned about preparing nourishing food? What have you learned about growing food? What have you learned about making nourishing food choices?*
- *What will you carry with you after this year?*

Check for understanding

- *What goals did you set in your Full Potential Manifestos at the beginning of the year?*
- *How did the people at the Gratitude Feast help you reach those goals by growing, preparing, or providing you with nourishing foods?*

ADAPTATIONS

Garden Setting: Consider having your feast outside in the garden if the weather allows!

At Home: Have students discuss how they might translate this experience to eating at home. Who grows and prepares the food they eat outside of school, and how can they show their gratitude to these people?