Local Fall Fruit
Apples, Pears, Melons

Month: October
Time Required: 30 minutes
Tasting: Local fall fruit, such as apples, pears or melons

Lesson Goals
☐ Students will increase their knowledge of fruits and vegetables.
☐ Students will learn to try new fruits and vegetables and increase their preference for them.
☐ Students will learn that their peers like to eat fruits and vegetables.
☐ Students will learn how to ask their parents/caregivers for the fruits and vegetables tasted in class.

Lesson Objectives
☐ Students will be able to identify apples, pears and/or melons as fall fruit.
☐ Students will be able to construct a plant using six plant parts.

Materials
☐ 6 Plant Part Puzzles, one of each
☐ My Plant Part Puzzle ½ sheet, one for each student
☐ Tasting materials: napkins or paper plates
☐ Image of apple tree (included in lesson)
☐ Locally-sourced fall fruit (apples, pears, or melons). Ideas include:
  - 2 fall fruits to sample (ex: apple and pear)
  - Different types of the same fall fruit (ex: 2 apple varieties)

Preparation
☐ Prepare Plant Part Puzzles: print 6 plant part puzzle pages, and cut the pages into pieces using the grid provided. Consider laminating the pages for reuse. Put each plant part puzzle in a baggie.
☐ Print the full sheet, “My Plant Part Puzzle,” and cut into ½ sheets, one per student
☐ Prepare fall fruit for tasting. Decide if you will chop the fruit before or during the lesson. Can you give students larger pieces for them to chop themselves? If so, add plastic knives to your materials and discuss knife safety before passing them out.

Recommended Books
(Send book suggestions to suzy.wilson@idph.iowa.gov.)
1. **Introduction:** 2 minutes  
*The “Introduction” section is a time to introduce yourself, recap previous lessons, establish norms, or introduce the day’s lesson.*

2. **Engage Activity:** 10 minutes  
*The “Engage Activity” section has two purposes: 1) to activate students’ prior knowledge and 2) to engage every student.*

Today, we’re going to learn about plant parts and how they work together to make food. To start, we’re going to work together! The following activity demonstrates and develops verbal communication, cooperation, strategic thinking and problem solving skills. Consider options for playing this game that fit safely within the classroom arrangement.

**People Puzzle!** *(adapted from Playworks, *All Tangled Up*)

Divide the classroom into two groups and have them form two tight circles. Instruct students, saying, *First, put out one hand and grab the hand of anyone in the circle except for the people standing next to you. Now, put your other hand out and grab the hand of someone else in the circle. Here’s the challenge! Get untangled without letting go of each other’s hands!*

- Emphasize that getting untangled requires a lot of communication and cooperation. *Be gentle! Be safe!*
- Make the groups smaller after each round: 2 circles, then 4 circles, then 6 circles. The people puzzle will become easier to complete with fewer people in the group.
- Consider adding restrictions to their communication methods as the groups get smaller.
- End in 6 groups around the room, or at table groups if the classroom arrangement allows for this.

Once all groups have completed the activity, ask a couple of students to share about how they worked together as a group to solve the people puzzle. Did they talk to each other? Did they have different roles? Celebrate their teamwork!

**Plant Part Puzzle!**

Use these 6 groups to work on the Plant Part Puzzle together (one group per plant part). Give a plant part puzzle to each group. Share, *Each group has a new puzzle to solve. As a team, work together to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. Once your group has solved the puzzle, work together to decide what the picture is. When you know, move quietly back to your desk and take three deep breaths.* Give students a few minutes to complete their plant part puzzles. Move around the room to assist groups as needed.

Once all groups have completed the activity and are at their desks, ask a couple of students to share about how they worked together as a group to solve their puzzle. Did they take turns? Did they talk to each other? Did they have different roles? Celebrate their teamwork! Say, *Just like we worked together to solve our people puzzle and these plant part puzzles, plant parts work together to make food!*
3. Experiential Learning: 10 minutes
This is a time for students to familiarize themselves with what you’ll be tasting. The best way to do this is through a hands-on or exploratory activity.

Explain to students, *Every plant is a puzzle of plant parts.* While displaying the complete image of the apple tree (included in the lesson), briefly describe the function of each plant part and read the names together as a class.

- **Roots**: soak up water and keep the plant in the ground
- **Stem**: brings water up and food down
- **Leaves**: help the plant make food
- **Flowers**: grow into fruit with the help of bees
- **Fruit**: holds and spreads new seeds
- **Seeds**: help make new plants

Have groups raise their hands when you get to the plant part that was on their puzzle. Count the plant parts together, 1-6. *Plants, like this apple tree, have 6 plant parts. The plant part we eat from an apple tree is the (choral response- “fruit!”). In the fall, the fruit on an apple tree is ready to harvest and eat. In which season are apples ready to eat? (Choral response- “in the fall!”) For our tasting today, we’re going to explore and taste some fall fruit.* Pass out samples with the classroom teacher’s support.

Explain to students, *we’re going to use our senses to explore the fall fruit today before we taste it. We’re going to take a really long time to eat it because we’re going to explore everything we can about the fall fruit using our 5 senses.* Lead students through 5 senses exploration.

- **Touch**: Students can close their eyes and feel the fall fruit with their fingers. What does it feel like?
- **See**: Have students carefully examine the fall fruit. What details do they see? Are there any other plant parts in their tasting (seeds, stem, evidence of where the flower was)?
- **Smell**: Have students bring the fall fruit to their noses and inhale. Ask them to describe the smell.
- **Hear**: Using their fingers, have students snap the fall fruit in half. Everyone should be very quiet to listen for any sounds.

**Fall Fruit Taste Test Ideas:**
1. Offer classrooms 2 versions of fall fruit to sample (ex: apple and pear)
2. Offer classrooms different types of the same fall fruit (ex: 2 apple varieties)
3. Use all 5 senses to compare and contrast the samples.
4. Discuss flavors, textures, colors, etc., as a class.

4. Tasting Activity: 3 minutes
The “Tasting Activity” section is when students get to try the fruit or vegetable. *Don’t forget to review your food tasting norms (for example, “don’t yuck my yum”).*

Before you taste any samples, be sure to share your brave tasting rules (for example, don’t yuck my yum, we all try together, etc.). As students taste their fruit samples, talk the class through some descriptive words to describe the different fall fruit flavors.

**Local Food Facts!** If you’re tasting local food, be sure to share information about where it came from: Iowa farm/farmer, location, distance from the school (a map is a great visual here!), when it was harvested, how did you get it, etc.
Reflect

5. Voting Activity: 2 minutes
This is a time for students to give their opinion on what they tried!

As students taste the fall fruit, have them vote with their thumbs. Observe their voting and offer positive reinforcement regarding the Brave Taster Rules. If a student dislikes the tasting, perhaps ask what they would change about it.

6. Reflection: 3 minutes
Reflection is one of the most important processes for students to process and retain new information or experiences. Give students an opportunity to reflect on what they’ve learned or tried in your lesson. This is an excellent place for students to practice the “Asking Discussion.”

Student Plant Part Puzzle: Give each student the ½ sheet (below) and instruct them to make their own imaginary plant part puzzle. Use your imagination to create a new plant that has all 6 plant parts. When you’re done, cut your puzzle into pieces and share it with a friend!

Asking Discussion:
Raise your hand if you’re excited to go home and tell your family about tasting fall fruit.
- Will someone share what they liked or loved about the fall fruit? Select a couple students to share.
- Will someone share what they would change about the fall fruit? Select students to share.
- Ask a student with a raised hand: if you wanted to try fall fruit at home, how might you ask your grown-ups?
  - You might also ask additional questions like, where could you buy apples or other kinds of fall fruit?
  - What else do you know about fall fruit?

*Leave newsletters, incentives, stickers, and BINGO sheets with the teachers to pass out.
stem
leaves
flower
seeds
Draw an imaginary plant in the space below. Label it’s 6 plant parts. Cut your puzzle into pieces and share it with a friend.

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
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Additional Materials

Physical Activity
Choose a physical activity to incorporate into the lesson. Ideas for physical activities are available at https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/play-your-way/brain-breaks.

What You Need to Know About Fall Fruits

• Look for firm, smooth apples and avoid those that are soft or bruised.
• Seal apples in a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. Avoid placing them next to strong smelling foods such as onions.
• Prior to eating, rinse apples and pears under cool water. Both apple and pear skins are edible.
• Look for firm, un-bruised pears that give a little when pressed near the stem.
• To ripen pears, store them in a paper bag at room temperature. Once ripe, they can be stored in the refrigerator for 4 days.
• Look for honeydew melons that are creamy or yellow colored, heavy, and have a pleasant smell. Look for watermelons that are symmetrical in shape, heavy, and have yellow undersides.
• Uncut melons can be stored for 1 week at room temperature. Cut melons should be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.
• Scrub melons with a vegetable brush under cool water before cutting. Remove the center cluster of seeds, if it has them, and remove the rind (outer portion) before eating.

Facts About Fall Fruits

• In Iowa, apples are in season July-October, and pears are in season August–September. Melons are in season August-October.
• In the U.S. alone, there are over 2,500 varieties of apples. Some popular ones include Granny Smith, McIntosh, Honeycrisp, and Red Delicious.
• Apples and pears grow on trees and are in the pome (fleshy) fruit family with a core holding several small seeds.
• There are many varieties of pears including Cactus, Bartlett, Bosc, Asian, and Anjou.
• Some varieties of melons include Cantaloupe, Watermelon, Honeydew, Crenshaw, Casaba, and Canary. Cantaloupes are also sometimes called rockmelons or muskmelons!
• Melons grow on vines on the ground and are a part of the gourd plant family.

Health Connection

• Apples and pears provide fiber, vitamin C, and potassium. Eat the skin for the most fiber!
• Melons provide vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, and fiber. Potassium helps keep our hearts and muscles healthy!
• Watermelon contains the antioxidant lycopene, which helps keep our eyes and heart healthy!
• Vitamin A is important for eyesight and keeps our skin healthy. Vitamin C helps heal our skin and helps our bodies fight off illness!

References and Resources
https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/cook/produce-basics/
https://eatfresh.org/discover-foods/fruit
https://www.iowafarmtoschoolearlycare.org/choose-iowa-campaign

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