

Taste Test

Objectives:

Kids learn about the basics of taste as one of the five senses, learn how to identify certain tastes through experience, and learn about the pleasures of thoughtful eating.

Materials:

- Blindfold
- Dixie cups
- Handouts (attached)
- Markers

Foods for the Taste Test (enough for one bite per student):

- Bitter: Dark Chocolate (at least 70%)
- Salty: Pretzels
- Sour: Lemon slices
- Sweet: Strawberries (with added sugar to enhance sweetness, if desired)
- Umami: Black Beans

Preparation:

Break up the taste samples into appropriate sizes and distribute amongst the dixie cups. Place them grouped according to taste category on a table.

Introduction:

Ask the class about what it's like to eat—what do they think about their food? What words do they use to describe their food? What are their favorite foods? What about those foods do they like? Talk about the five senses. How do we use all of these when we eat a meal?

Use the provided hand outs to continue the discussion of the senses, particularly taste. Explain the different kinds of tastes—sweet, salty, bitter, sour, umami (savory). Ask the students to come up with different foods they think would match each taste; feel free to help them out with the more difficult ones!

Activity:

1. Pass out page one and two of the handouts (feel free to use these during discussion). The first page is a brief matching activity, and the second provides a list of the five tastes and examples of

corresponding foods.

2. Taste Test! One at a time, or in groups (depending on class size), have each student put on a blindfold and step over to the table of samples. If time allows, every kid should have a bite of each of the five foods available. However, if need be each student can choose just one food (at random) to try.

3. Tell students to take their time with each taste, carefully observing along the way. Instead of having each student guess what food they've just eaten, have them follow a more descriptive approach. First smell the sample, then place the food on the tongue. Count to ten before chewing, using the tongue to feel the food's texture. Chew, slowly, noting the sound of the food. Finally, think about the taste—to which of the five tastes they've just learned about does the food correspond? What words, besides one of the five, would they use to describe it? Finally, have them guess what the food is.

Wrap Up:

Conclude with a brief discussion of the activity. How did it feel to spend so much time eating one bite? What was it like to eat something blindfolded? Which tastes did they like/dislike? Was this a more fun way of eating? For a final activity, complete page three of the handout (draw your favorite food!).