

Stir Up the Senses With Gingerbread!

Explore the familiar tastes and smells of holiday gingerbread as you stimulate a study of the five senses.

ideas contributed by Lucia Kemp Henry

Gingerbread Chant 🗣️

Developing awareness of the five senses

Introduce the topic of senses to your youngsters with a deliciously rhythmic chant. Help little ones make construction paper stick puppets to use as they perform the chant. Duplicate a gingerbread boy or girl pattern (on page 9 or 10) onto brown construction paper for each child. Have each child cut out his gingerbread pattern and then decorate it with a variety of art materials, including buttons, pom-poms, rickrack, fabric scraps, or pasta. Glue a wide craft stick to the back of each finished puppet. When youngsters have their puppets in hand, teach them the chant:

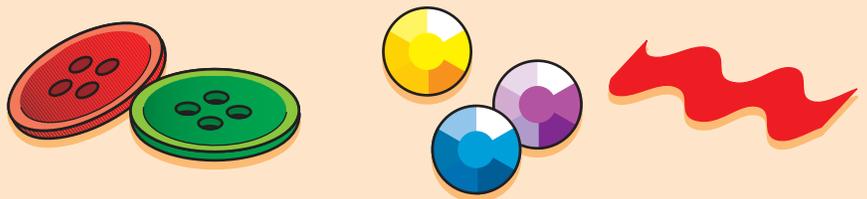


Gingerbread boy
Looks so neat!
Gingerbread boy
Smells so sweet!
Gingerbread boy
Tasty treat!

Gingerbread girl
Looks so nice!
Gingerbread girl
Smells like spice!
Gingerbread girl
Tastes so nice!



Then invite the children to divide themselves into two groups—boys and girls—to perform the chant. Have the boys chant their verse while the girls accompany them with rhythmic clapping. Then ask the boys to accompany the girls in the same way. Add even more fun by providing some cooking utensils, such as pairs of wooden spoons or tongs, for the children to use as rhythm instruments.



Let's Make Some Cookies!

Developing awareness of the five senses through cooking

What better way to stir up your youngsters' senses than by baking some real gingerbread cookies? Plan two sessions to complete this recipe—one for preparing the dough and another for cutting, baking, and decorating the cookies. Bring in a camera and take *lots* of photos during the preparation, decoration, and eating of the cookies. (You may want to use the photos later for the activity described in "A Book to Share" on page 6.)

Before you begin, ask little ones to concentrate on what they see, hear, smell, feel, and taste during the cooking experience. Periodically ask them questions during each stage of the preparations, such as "How does the cinnamon smell?" or "Does the dough feel thick or thin?"

After the children have baked, decorated, and eaten the cookies, label a sheet of chart paper with the headings "See," "Hear," "Feel," "Smell," and "Taste." Ask the children to dictate sentences describing what they experienced during the activity. Write each sentence under the appropriate heading on the chart paper. Then take the opportunity to discuss how each of our five senses helps us learn about our world.

See

I saw red and yellow icing on my cookie.

Hear

The spatula made a scraping sound.

Feel

The dough felt cold.

Smell

The cinnamon smelled spicy.

Taste

The cookies were sweet. I liked them!

Gingerbread Cookies

(makes about 4 dozen 4-inch cookies)

1/3 c. shortening	1 tsp. salt
1 c. packed brown sugar	1 tsp. allspice
1 1/2 c. molasses	1 tsp. ginger
2/3 c. cold water	1 tsp. n cloves
6 c. sifted flour	1 tsp. cinnamon
2 tsp. baking soda	

Thoroughly mix together the shortening, brown sugar, and molasses. Stir in the water. Sift together the flour, baking soda, salt, and spices; then add them to the mixture. Chill the dough; then roll it out on a floured surface to a thickness of about 1/2 inch. Cut the dough with gingerbread-man cookie cutters. Place the cookies two inches apart on a greased cookie sheet. Bake them at 350° for about 15 minutes. Cool; then frost and decorate as desired.



A Recipe to Remember

Strengthening the home-school connection

Now that they're pros at making and baking delicious gingerbread men, invite your youngsters to share their experiences with their families by making take-home recipe cards. First, duplicate the recipe on page 11 for each child. Then, using the gingerbread boy pattern on page 9, make a template from tagboard. For each child, fold a 12" x 18" sheet of brown construction paper in half. Place the gingerbread boy template on the paper, with the top of the pattern's head placed on the fold. After tracing the template, have each child cut around the outline through both thicknesses of her paper. Then have her cut out and glue her copy of the recipe inside the folded card.

To make this a sensory experience, have each child dip a cotton swab into glue and then make three dots on the card front to resemble the gingerbread man's buttons. Invite her to sprinkle cinnamon over the glue and then shake off the excess and allow the glue to dry. What a sweet-smelling message for Mom and Dad!