



# Lesson Seven

## Herbs for Kids

Using herbs for food and medicines

### Lesson Overview

This lesson teaches children & youth about herbs and how they can be used as and made into medicines. It also covers basic ways to use culinary herbs.

### Lesson Objectives

Participants will be able to identify herbs growing in the garden.

Participants will be able to identify one plant that is an herb and what it can be used for.

Participants will be able to identify one annual herb (basil) and one perennial herb (mint).

Participants will be able to identify how one herb plant can be used for cooking.

Participants will be able to identify common foods that have herbs in them.

# **Key Terms**

## **Herbs**

Herbs are any plant with leaves, seeds, or flowers that have culinary and/or medicinal uses. Herbs are used for flavoring, food, medicines, and perfume.

## **Herbal Medicine or Herbalism**

the study or practice of the medicinal and therapeutic use of plants; herbalism. Herbal medicine is often used for the prevention and treatment of illnesses.

## **Infusion**

Pouring boiling water over fresh or dried herbs (best for leaves and flowers). You can also make infusions with oils.

## **Decoction**

Putting herbs like roots, bark or seed in boiling water and letting them simmer.

## Introduction to Lesson Seven

There are endless possibilities to learn and make things from herbs. Herbs are amazing because so many of them can be used for both culinary and medicinal purposes. This lesson gives us a huge opportunity to emphasize that **food is medicine**. What we put in our bodies on a daily basis can actual heal us and give us good health into the future. Participants are probably aware that many of the foods they eat on a daily basis are not actually good for their bodies. Making exciting (and beautiful) concoctions from herbs can help make the connection that food should be delicious, fun, and good for us.

### Herb Safety

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Never ingest a plant if you don't know what it is.

When “foraging” or looking for plants growing in nature make sure you are with someone who can properly identify plants.

Some herbs are safe to use always, others should be used sparingly or in small amounts.

Some herbs are not safe for babies, children, or nursing mothers.

Great herbs for all ages —

- Chamomile
- Lemon Balm
- Lavender
- Mint

Always ask an expert!!

## **Activity One - Herb Identification**

**Materials** // Various fresh and dried herbs

**Ages** // All Ages

**Time** // 10- 20 minutes

### **Activity Description** //

Bring a variety of herbs both fresh and dried. Pass them around so participants can use their senses (look, touch, taste, smell) to learn about the herbs. Ask them if they have seen any of these plants before. Bring laminated sheets that highlight what the different herbs can be used for.

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### **Herbs & Food Plants that are safe for kids...**

**Yarrow** - Used for cuts and scrapes this plant is amazingly healing for the skin.

**Calendula** - Healing to the skin

**Mint** - Digestive aid, helps with nausea, headaches

**Thyme** - Calms the throat, coughs and colds

**Ginger** - Helps with nausea and muscle pain

**Garlic** - Anti-fungal and Anti-bacterial. Helps to kill off bad bacteria, yeast, use when you have a virus or anytime you feel a cold coming on

**Raw/Local Honey** - An amazing cure for seasonal allergies

**Elderberry** - Cold and flu cure!

**Wild Cherry Bark** - Great for coughs

**Lemon Balm** - Calms the mind, supports liver, boosts memory and attentiveness

**Mullein** - Helps with coughs and respiratory congestion, especially helpful in expelling mucus

## **Activity Two - Herb Books**

**Materials** // Paper, scissors, string/twine, markers, colored pencils, glue sticks, etc.

**Ages** // 6+

**Time** // 10-15 minutes

### **Activity Description** //

Draw pictures or cut out pictures of herbs and glue them on pieces of paper. Turn it into a book where you write the different plants and what they can be used for. Participants can take this home so they remember each plant and how it can be used as a remedy.

## **Activity Three - Herb Walk**

**Materials** // Harvest Baskets

**Ages** // 6+

**Time** // 10 minutes

### **Activity Description** //

Are there any herbs in the garden? Take the participants on a walk to find herbs both cultivated and wild. Practice plant identification and harvest any herbs to take home or use for cooking.

## **Activity Four - Herb Infused Oils**

**Materials** //

Fresh or Dried Herbs

Carrier Oil - Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Almond Oil, Jojoba Oil

Clean and dry glass jars

Cheesecloth

**Ages** // All Ages

**Time** // 10 minutes

### **Activity Description** //

Solar Method

Place dried herbs into clean, dry glass jar. Cover with Extra Virgin Olive Oil (or another carrier oil of choice) leaving at least 1-2 inches of oil above the herbs to allow the herbs to swell. Cap the jar tightly and place in a sunny, warm window. If desired, the jar can be covered with a bag or box so that the oil is not exposed to direct sunlight. Shake the jar once or twice per day, or as often as your remember. If the herbs absorb the oil, then add more so that they are always submerged. Infuse 2-6 weeks and then strain with a cheesecloth.

Herbs are best stored in dark bottles, in cool, dry, dark places like your kitchen cupboard.

**Herb Infused Oils** —

**Arnica**

**Yarrow**

**Calendula**

## **Activity Five - Plant Remedy Game**

**Materials** // 20 or more small laminated cards with different herbs, 8 laminated cards with a picture of the moon, 10 large laminated cards with different ailments, a map of the garden and Xs indicating where you put the laminated ailment cards, a spinner with numbers 1-4

**Ages** // All Ages

**Time** // 10-15 minutes (depending on how many cards you have)

### **Activity Description** //

This game is modeled after the game "Wildcraft" At the beginning pass out small laminated cards with different herbs on them to the participants. They need to keep these cards face down. Make sure you have enough cards so that each participant gets at least one and there is an extra stack as well.

Lay out the ailment cards in a path (according to a map, or you could choose to not make a map). Explain to the participants that we are trying to get through the path in the woods before the full moon comes. Using the spinner that you made have the participants spin to see how many steps they get to take toward the first ailment card. Once you reach an ailment card take turns having participants flip a card over in their stack/deck that they are holding. They need to find the right plant to remedy the ailment. Work together to figure out the answer and lay the card down once you have found it. If a participant flips over a moon card record this. You only get to draw 7 moon cards, if you draw more before getting the correct answer then you lose the game. Once you are finished you get to spin again and keep moving along the path. If you made a map have the participants look at the map to see where they go next. If you didn't use a map you could just remember which cards you want to take participants to or use other items like rocks to mark the path. Try to match the herb cards with the ailment cards before drawing all of the moon cards! If you get to the end of the path without drawing the moon cards, you all win!

## **Activity Six - Herbal Syrup**

### **Materials //**

1 quart filtered water

1/4 cup Ginger Root

1/4 cup Chamomile Flowers

1/4 cup Marshmallow Root

1 tbsp Cinnamon

1/4 cup lemon juice

1 cup honey

Measuring cups, hot plate or camp stove, cheesecloth, small jars with lids, labels, sharpies, spoon.

**Ages //** All Ages

**Time //** 20 minutes

### **Activity Description //**

If you continue to simmer a decoction over low heat until it has boiled down to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  its original volume, you have made an herbal concentrate. Herbal concentrates are then used to make syrups. To each pint of concentrate, add 3 – 4 tablespoons each of honey and vegetable glycerin. Syrups are good for coughs, sore throats and laryngitis will store in the refrigerator for up to a year.

Wild Cherry Bark Syrup

Directions

Pour the water into a medium saucepan and add the dried herbs. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Simmer until the volume is reduce by about half. You will need 1 cup of liquid after herbs are strained off. Pour through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth to remove herbs (compost them!) While liquid is still warm (not boiling) mix with lemon juice and honey and stir well. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2 months.

## **Activity Seven - Herbal Lotion from Wellness mama**

### **Materials //**

1/2 cup Almond or Jojoba Oil  
1/4 cup coconut oil  
1/4 cup beeswax  
1 tsp Vitamin E oil  
2 tbsp Shea Butter or Cocoa Butter  
Essential Oils - Vanilla

Measuring cups, hot plate or camp stove, small jars with lids, labels, sharpies, spoon.

**Ages //** All Ages

**Time //** 20 minutes

### **Directions**

Combine almond oil (or any other liquid oil), coconut oil and beeswax in a double boiler or a glass bowl on top. Add shea or cocoa butter in as well. As the water heats, the ingredients will start to melt. Stir occasionally as they melt to incorporate. When all ingredients are completely melted, add vitamin E oil (if using) and any essential oil scents like vanilla.

Pour into whatever jar or tin you will use for storage. Small mason jars (8 ounce) are great for this. Use as you would regular lotion. This lotion is ultra-moisturizing and more oily than water-based lotions so you won't need to use as much. It also has a longer shelf life than some homemade lotion recipes since all ingredients are already shelf stable and not water is added. Use within 6 months for best moisturizing benefits.



## **Activity Eight - Herbal Salve or Lip Balm**

### **Materials //**

8 oz herbal infused oils

1 oz beeswax

Vitamin E Oil (optional)

1-2 drops essential oil

Salve Tin Containers or Lip Balm Tubes

Measuring cups, hot plate or camp stove, small jars with lids, labels, sharpies, spoon.

**Ages //** All Ages

**Time //** 25 minutes

### **Activity Description //**

It is best to bring already infused herbal oils with you, but you can also bring dried herbs and show participants how to make an oil infusion. It is very easy. You place your dried herbs in the jar and completely cover them with an oil like almond oil, sunflower oil, olive oil, or coconut oil. You press the herbs down to make sure there are no air bubbles and then you put a lid on. Keep the jar in a cool, dry place that is out of direct sunlight for 2-3 weeks. Give the jar a shake every day to make sure the oils are still completely covering the herbs. In about 2-3 weeks you can take it out and strain the oil from the herbs. This is called a cold infusion. A hot infusion can be made by placing fresh or dried plant material in oil and heating it. Ideally you need to simmer the plants for a few hours on low on the stove. You can make a quicker infusion but make sure you wait until the color of the oil changes and the smell takes on the smell of the plant material that you are using. This is called a hot infusion.

Place herbal infused oils and beeswax in glass jar and gently warm using a double boil method (glass jar is placed in a pot of water) over low heat until the wax melts. Remove from heat and add the essential oil and Vitamin E oil drops. Quickly pour into prepared tins or glass jars and allow to cool. Store in cool location.

### **Mandarin Nutmeg Lip Balm**

Materials

2 tbsp organic sunflower oil

1 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp mango butter

1 tbsp plus 1 tsp beeswax

15 drops mandarin EO

5 drops nutmeg EO

Coarsely chop the beeswax. Place beeswax, butter and oils in glass measuring cup and gently heat in the top of a double boiler until the beeswax has melted. Remove from the stovetop and add essential oils and Vitamin E Oil. Immediately pour the mixture into containers. Allow to cool completely before placing caps onto the lip balm containers. Makes approximately 1.5 oz of lip balm, enough to fill 10 lip balm tubes

## **Activity Nine - Herbal Bath Socks**

### **Materials //**

1 sock

Dried herbs - roses, chamomile, lavender, catnip, calendula, mints

Oatmeal

Epsom salts

Essential Oils - lavender, sweet orange, spearmint, rosemary, rose geranium, lang ylang

A jar or glass

**Ages // All Ages**

**Time // 10 minutes**



### **Activity Description //**

Fill sock with 1/8 to 1/4 cup herbs

1/8 to 1/4 cup old-fashioned oats

1/8 to 1/4 cup epsom salts

3-5 drops essential oils

### **How to use**

Put in warm bath the entire time. Reuse a few times. Dump remaining contents into compost pile (if you have one), wash the sock in the laundry, and make a new bath sock.

# Activity Ten - Herbal Teas

**Materials** // Electric teapot or saucepot with electric hot plate or propane camp stove, dried or fresh herbs, cheesecloth to put your herbs in or a strainer to strain the herbs when you are done, mugs or cups that are safe for having hot liquids, ice if you want to do iced tea, large glass jars

**Ages** // All Ages

**Time** // 20 minutes

## Activity Description //

Use either the infusion or decoction method with your herbs. There are various ways to do this. You could let the participants put the herbs directly in their cup and then pour the hot water over the herbs. You would then need to strain their liquid. You could make one batch of the tea you all decide on together which herbs to put in a large glass jar, let it steep for 5-15 minutes and then strain it. Then pour it into the individual cups (suggested). Make sure participants do not drink the tea until it cools. Add honey and stir with spoons. You could also make a decoction by putting the herbs in a saucepot and heating them to a boil for 5-15 minutes. Then strain and pour into individual cups. If you want to make iced tea then just add ice to individual cups or the large batch to cool it down. Hot beverages are actually good to drink during hot seasons!

**Infusion** - Pouring boiling water over fresh or dried herbs

**Decoction** - Putting herbs like roots, bark, or seeds in boiling water and letting them simmer

Herbal Teas - These give your body building blocks for healthy and happy

Tea for your Tummy

Ginger, Mint & Honey

Tea for your Cough

Thyme & Honey

Tea for boosting your Immune System

Echinacea & Nettles

Tea for Relaxation

Lavender and Chamomile

## **Activity Eleven - Herbal Jello**

### **Materials //**

1/4 box jello (one without yucky stuff/additives)

1/4 cup boiling water

1 oz. glycerin tincture (1/8 cup)

1 oz. cold water

Molds

**Ages //** All Ages

**Time //** 10 minutes

**Activity Description //** A really fun way to make medicine. Put jello packet into bowl and pour the boiling water onto jello. Stir and let sit for 2-3 minutes making sure it is completely dissolved. Add the 1 oz tincture and stir well. Add cold water and stir well. Pour into a pan or molds and place in cool area or refrigerator. Enjoy once jello hardens!

## **Activity Twelve - Herbal Ice Cubes**

### **Materials //**

Fresh herbs of various kinds

Ice Cube trays

Freezer bags (for later)

Cutting boards and knives

Saucepot to boil water

Campstove or electric stove

**Ages //** All Ages

**Time //** 10 minutes

### **Activity Description //**

Pack minced herb (s) into an ice cube tray, each 3/4 full. Fill with boiling water, (this will blanch the herbs before freezing and will help them retain their flavor and color). Once the herbal ice cubes are frozen, you can pop them out of their tray and into freezer bags for storage. This is a great way to store herbs for using in the winter!

## **Activity Thirteen - Cooking with Herbs**

### **Activity Description //**

See the Cooking with Herbs book!