

# LEARNING CONNECTION

## Foods from Many Places

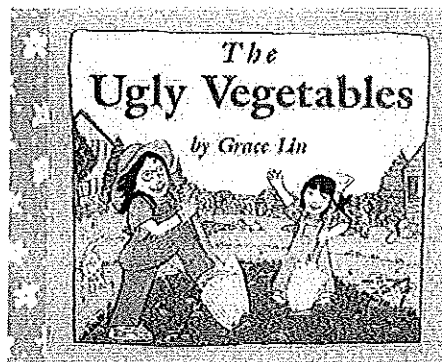
### Lesson Overview

Children are introduced to multicultural food habits in this lesson. The leader will read the book *The Ugly Vegetables*, a true story about a Chinese-American girl and her mother's garden of Chinese vegetables. The children will also explore how different families use food in their daily life. Parents will be encouraged to send healthy family favorite recipes that depict individual traditions and/or culture.

### Materials Needed

To teach the lesson:

- Book: Lin, G. (2001). *The ugly vegetables*. Charlesbridge Publishing.
- In advance, ask families to submit family favorite recipes, emphasizing their own unique culture, ethnicity, and/or traditions.



### Key Concepts

- People and families have different food habits.
- It is fun to learn about the foods that other people eat.
- Tasting foods from other cultures is one way to appreciate differences in people.





### Lesson Background

Culture refers to the background, customs, and beliefs that contribute to a person's understanding of the world. Early childhood is the ideal time to expose children to differences in people and foster an appreciation for self and others.

Food is truly the universal language. Learning about a variety of food habits and tasting different ethnic foods is a fun and meaningful way to introduce young children to other cultures.

Introduce different ethnic foods into child care meals and snacks. Ask families to share recipes and food traditions and incorporate these into the child care program. The storybooks listed in the Going Further section highlight foods used in a variety of cultures.

### Teach the Lesson

- In advance ask families to submit family favorite recipes emphasizing their own unique culture, ethnicity, and traditions. Encourage families to also include a short description of how the recipe reflects their individual culture.
- Read the book *The Ugly Vegetables* to the children.
- Ask the children some or all of the following questions: Why do you think the girl in the story thought the vegetables in her mother's garden were ugly? Do you think she wanted to be like other people? Is it OK to be different from other people? Allow children to offer their opinions and ideas.
- Ask if the children have ever tasted foods of other cultures, including at home, at other peoples' houses, or at a restaurant. Allow children to share their experiences.
- Read and share the family recipes that the children brought from home. Allow each child to talk about his or her recipe. You may want to extend this activity over a week, sharing a few family recipes each day.
- Whenever possible, incorporate the family favorite recipes into child care snacks or meals.
- Optional: expand the lesson by taking a field trip to a local ethnic market.



## Going Further

### Children:

- Books to Read
  - ◆ Hester, D., & Urbanovic, J. (2007). *Grandma Lena's big ol' turnip*. Albert Whitman & Co.
  - ◆ Browne, E. (1999). *Handa's surprise*. Candlewick Press.
  - ◆ Gershatro, D., & Gershatro, P. (1995). *Bread is for eating*. Henry Holt & Co., Inc.
  - ◆ Mora, P., & López, R. (2007). *Yum! ¡MmMm! ¡Qué rico! Americas' Sproutings*. Lee & Low Books, Inc.

### Leader:

- Celebrating Diversity, Nurturing Respect. (2005). *Mealtime Memo for Child Care*. Retrieved August, 2008, from <http://www.nfsmi.org>
- Cultural Diversity. (2002). *Mealtime Memo for Child Care*. Retrieved August, 2008, from <http://www.nfsmi.org>
- Grace Lin, author of *The Ugly Vegetables*, has additional activity ideas to accompany her book available on line at <http://www.gracelin.com>

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