

What's Cooking?

Skills Focus

Informational Text, Comparing & Contrasting

Connection to Habits of Good Readers

Connecting, Previewing, Questioning, Predicting

Overview

Cooking as a family is a great way for children and adults to bond while doing something fun. It also provides a chance for everyone to try something new together. Reading a recipe is also a way for children to learn how to follow step-by-step instructions. Giving children the opportunity to write a recipe can help them practice giving clear directions.

Guiding Questions and Talking Points

The following questions/talking points can be used to spark a discussion with your child:

- What is your favorite food? Why? If the dish has more than one ingredient, do you know what those ingredients are?
- Do you enjoy or think it would be fun to cook? If so, what do you like about it?
- Why do you think we sometimes use recipes?
- What kinds of information do we find in recipes?

Intro Activity

Imagine that we are making a family cookbook. What would the title be? Using art materials and a little imagination, work together to design the cover for your family cookbook.

Before (Background Knowledge and/or Vocabulary)

To build on existing background knowledge, ask your child to talk about a favorite family dish that he/she likes to eat. If you have a family recipe that has been passed down, discuss the origins of that recipe and why it is special to the family. Explain to your child that many people may prepare the same dish in different ways. Cookbooks are one source for finding different ways to prepare dishes.

The following are helpful terms for children to know when they are learning about cooking:

- **Ingredients:** something that is part of a mixture.
- **Measure:** to acquire the required amount of an element/ingredient.
- **Recipe:** a set of instructions for preparing food or a dish.
- **Bake:** to cook by dry heat in an oven.
- **Mix:** to form or make by combining ingredients.

During

Flip through a few cookbooks that you have at home, have found on the Internet, or have checked out of the library. Review the names and corresponding photographs of some of the dishes.

After previewing the cookbooks, choose a dish you would like to make together as a family. It could be a recipe for a fun beverage, a main dish, a salad, or even a dessert! Once you have chosen your dish, find two different recipes for making it. Compare the recipes and decide which one you would most like to make.

- **Emergent readers** can list the ingredients that are the same in both recipes. Next, have them predict how the ingredients that are different might change the taste of each dish.
- **Proficient readers** can pay particular attention to the measurements used in the recipes. Have your child look at the appropriate measuring utensils (measuring cup, measuring spoons). Then, invite your child to predict how the recipe might be affected if the quantities of the ingredients were to change (e.g., if we used a tablespoon of salt as opposed to a teaspoon of salt).
- **Advanced readers** can brainstorm possible ingredients to add to one or both of the recipes. Have your child explain why he/she would add these ingredients and what quantities would be most appropriate to add.

What's Cooking? (cont.)

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After (Extension Activities)

- Invite friends and family to a tasting party. Create invitations and menus for each guest. Provide all guests with a copy of the recipe for one of the dishes you made.
- Plan out a week of meals you would like to make and eat. Create a grocery list of items you will need in order to make each meal.
- Create an original recipe for pizza or an ice cream sundae.
- Use the website www.puzzlemaker.com to create a crossword or word search for all ingredients used in the recipe you followed.

Web Resources

The following cooking websites are designed specifically for kids:

- www.spatulatta.com
- www.heykidsletscook.com
- www.thekidscookmonday.org
- www.chopchopmag.org

Suggested Readings

[If You Give a Moose a Muffin](#), Laura Numeroff

[Stone Soup](#), Marcia Brown

[Cora Cooks Pancit](#), Dorina Lazo Gilmore and Kristi Valiant

[The Spatulatta Cookbook](#), Isabella and Olivia Gerasole

[Fairy Tale Feasts: A Literary Cookbook](#), Jane Yolen, Heidi Stemple and Philippe Beha