

GRASSHOPPER

Garden to Table: Little Chefs Grow & Cook

1 hour · K – 2nd · After School · Teacher: Donna Bradley

Instructions: This lesson plan is your starting point — feel free to edit, rearrange, or customize it to fit your teaching style and your students' needs! These notes are yours. They will not be published anywhere.

Topics Covered

herb identification · garden care · measuring ingredients · following recipes · seasonal planting · food safety

Lesson Plan

1. Welcome Circle & Sensory Exploration (10 min)

- Gather students in a circle and pass around 3–4 fresh herb samples (basil, mint, rosemary, parsley) for students to smell, touch gently, and describe using their senses
- Teacher holds up each herb and shares one fun fact (e.g., 'Mint helps your tummy feel better!' or 'Basil smells like pizza!')
- Play 'Herb Detective' — teacher gives clues about one herb and students guess which one based on smell or appearance
- Review today's garden-to-table mission on a visual chart with pictures

2. Garden Learning Station (20 min)

- Demonstrate proper hand-washing technique before touching plants or food using song 'Scrub, Scrub, Bubble Up' (20 seconds)
- Show students how to gently pinch herbs at the stem (not tear leaves) using demo plant, then each child practices harvesting 2–3 leaves into their own small cup
- Teach the 'touch test' for ripeness — students gently squeeze foam balls labeled as different fruits (soft = ripe banana, firm = unripe apple) and sort into 'ready' and 'not yet' baskets
- Guide students to water classroom herb garden or plant seeds in small cups using child-safe scoops,

counting out loud together ('1 scoop soil, 2 scoops soil, 3 scoops soil')

3. Recipe Time: Measuring & Mixing (20 min)

- Display a large picture-recipe card with numbered steps and images (e.g., herbed butter: mix butter + chopped herbs + pinch of salt)
- Demonstrate measuring using oversized measuring cups and spoons, counting scoops together as a group ('1 tablespoon, 2 tablespoons...')
- Divide students into pairs, give each pair pre-measured ingredients in small bowls and a mixing task (stirring herb butter, making herb salt, or mixing a simple dip)
- Teacher circulates with a visual timer showing 'stir for 30 seconds' so students understand cooking time, then students taste their creation on a cracker or veggie stick

4. Wrap-Up & Garden Journal (10 min)

- Students draw or paste a picture of today's featured herb in their 'Garden Journal' (a folded paper booklet) and teacher writes the herb name while students trace letters
- Play quick review game: teacher says an herb name and students act out growing from a seed (crouch low, slowly stand up, stretch arms like leaves)
- Each student shares one thing they learned using sentence starter: 'Today I discovered...' with teacher recording answers on chart paper
- Preview next week's adventure with an exciting teaser (e.g., 'Next week we'll plant SEEDS and make something yummy!')

Materials Checklist

- 4–6 potted herb plants (basil, mint, parsley, rosemary)
- Small paper cups (1 per student)
- Child-safe plastic measuring cups and spoons (1 set per 2–3 students)
- Pre-measured ingredients in bowls (softened butter, salt, crackers or veggie sticks)
- Foam balls or stress balls in different firmness levels
- Garden journals (folded cardstock, 1 per student)
- Visual recipe cards with pictures and numbers
- Small watering cans or spray bottles, potting soil, seeds

Age Adaptations

Younger Kids: For Kindergarteners: Use only 2–3 herbs to avoid overwhelm, provide hand-over-hand guidance for measuring and harvesting, use picture-only recipe cards with minimal text, partner each K student with a 1st/2nd

grader for measuring tasks, extend sensory exploration time and shorten recipe complexity (just mix 2 ingredients instead of 3)

Older Kids: For 2nd graders: Introduce simple fraction concepts (1/2 cup, 1/4 teaspoon), have students read recipe steps aloud to the group, assign 'head chef' roles where they guide their partner through measuring, add a prediction activity ('Will this herb taste sweet or spicy?'), include simple writing tasks like labeling herbs or writing one recipe step in their journal

Movement Break

Garden Grow Dance: Students start as tiny seeds (crouched in a ball), teacher calls out weather — 'Sunshine!' (slowly stand and stretch up), 'Rain!' (wiggle fingers from head down), 'Wind!' (sway side to side), 'Harvest time!' (reach up and pretend to pick herbs above their heads). Repeat 3–4 times getting faster and sillier each round.

Bonus Activities

- Herb matching game: students match fresh herbs to laminated photos of the same herbs
- Create an herb crown: tape fresh herb sprigs to a paper headband for students to wear home
- Smell test challenge: blindfolded students smell herbs and try to identify them
- Plant observation: use magnifying glasses to examine herb leaves up close and count points or edges

Series Outline (8 Weeks)

Week	Theme	Key Activities
1	Meet the Herbs: Basil & Mint	Introduce basil and mint through smell, touch, and taste exploration, Plant basil seeds in individual cups and create plant markers, Make simple mint-infused water to taste and share
2	Seed Science & Seasonal Planting	Explore different seed sizes and shapes with magnifying glasses, Learn spring vs. fall planting seasons using a visual calendar with pictures, Plant parsley and cilantro seeds, practice watering technique and measuring soil
3	Harvest Helpers: When Is It Ready?	Practice the 'gentle pinch' harvesting method on classroom herb plants, Learn ripeness tests for tomatoes, strawberries, and avocados using real produce and foam models, Make a simple tomato-basil bruschetta topping (no cooking required)

Week	Theme	Key Activities
4	Recipe Readers: Following Picture Steps	Introduce numbered picture recipe cards for herbed butter, Practice measuring tablespoons and teaspoons with counting rhymes, Spread herbed butter on bread or crackers and identify which herbs are inside by smell
5	Garden Care: Water, Sunlight & Love	Learn the three things plants need to grow through a song and movement activity, Practice checking soil moisture with finger test and watering appropriately, Make herb markers with drawings and labels for the class garden
6	Measuring Masters: Cups & Spoons	Practice measuring dry ingredients (flour, sugar) and wet ingredients (water, oil) at different stations, Make a simple herb salt blend using measured ingredients (salt + dried herbs), Play measuring relay race: fill a cup to the line as a team challenge
7	Temperature & Time: Safe Cooking Basics	Learn about hot and cold using visual thermometer props (no real heat), Practice using sand timers and visual timers to understand cooking time, Prepare a no-bake herb cream cheese dip that 'sets' in the refrigerator (cold temperature)
8	Garden to Table Celebration	Harvest herbs from class garden and identify each one learned over 8 weeks, Follow a complete picture recipe as a group to make herbed crackers or a simple pasta salad with herbs, Create a take-home recipe card and small potted herb plant to continue growing at home



This lesson plan was drafted by Hopper, the Grasshopper Kids AI assistant. Want different results? You can [generate another plan](#), or text us with feedback so we can make the tool better. We built this to help save you time bringing more enrichment ideas to life!

grasshopperkids.com