

Stone Soup

Book by Marcia Brown

Literature based unit study prepared by Michelle Kiser and Wende

Social Studies

Geography: France

Stone Soup is a retelling of an old French Folktale. Have your child locate France on a world map. France is on the continent of Europe. Identify what countries and oceans border France.

Geography: Netherlands

Instead of studying France, you could also choose the Netherlands (also known as Holland) as the setting of this story. Point out the shoes that the villagers are wearing. How are they different than the shoes of your student?

Wooden shoes have been the most popular in European countries throughout history. The country most well-known for wooden shoes is Holland. The people of Holland wore wooden shoes for two reasons-- because of the swampy ground of Holland, and also because there was a lot of good wood (willows and poplars) in Holland.

Language Arts

Vocabulary

Discuss these vocabulary words as you encounter them in the story:

Banquet: a meal held in recognition of some occasion

Barley: a cereal grass with flowers in dense spikes (try to find a picture to show your student)

Peasant: a member of a European class of persons tilling the soil as small landowners or as laborers

Genre: Folktales

Stories that are told rather than read; they are passed down from one generation to another generation. Maybe your child has played “Whisper Down the Lane” before. If not, play this game to demonstrate how a story can change, sometimes only slightly and sometimes not, as it is told and retold again. As folktales are passed down, the stories take on characteristics of the time and place in which they are told, as well as the personality of the person telling the tale. Here are some common characteristics of folktales. Which characteristics do you find in *Stone Soup*?

Use this list to explore other folktales.

- Universal and timeless themes or morals, such as sharing, compassion, being gullible, etc.
- They speak to our need to understand and make sense of our existence (such as tales about creation)
- About the common person, something anyone rich or poor could relate to.
- Supernatural elements that may include magic, witches, wizards, dragons and/or other mythical creatures

Read other folktales to give your child a good taste of this genre. Here are some suggestions:

Best Loved Folktales of the World by Joanna Cole

Favorite Folktales from Around the World by Jane Yolen

Anansi Tales (African Folk Tales) by Eric Kimmel (and others)

[*Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*](#) by Verna Aardema

Russian Folk Tales by James Riordan

Listening Skills

Folktales are stories from long ago, before books were common. They were designed to be listened to again and again. Use your reading of *Stone Soup* as an opportunity to develop your child’s listening skills. After reading *Stone Soup* for the first time, have your child narrate back to you the story in his own words. See if his narration answers all the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions. Have him narrate again after reading the story a few times and look for improvement.

Writing: "How-to..."

In this story you are given the ingredients as well as the procedure for how to make stone soup. Ask students to write down the process of an everyday task such as how to brush their teeth or make their bed. Encourage them to include ingredients/ supplies, how they acquired them and then the step by step process to complete the task

Comparing and Contrasting

If you have the opportunity, read at least one other version of this story (see Library List at end of unit) this week. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the various versions. What's similar? What's different? What elements are found in every version?

Expression: "Brains over brawn"

What does this mean? Discuss the idea of brains over brawn. The soldiers were most likely in authority over the villagers and could have forced the villagers to meet their needs. How did using their brains benefit everyone?

Art

Monochromatic

As you look through the pictures in *Stone Soup*, does your child notice anything about the colors in the pictures? Marcia Brown has used a method called "monochromatic", meaning that the painting or drawing are in a single color or in various shades of the same color. While Marcia Brown has chosen to use shades of red, your child could color or paint a monochromatic picture in his choice of color.

Math

Addition

How many different ingredients were added to the pot of soup? Including the water, stones, vegetables, barley and beef, there were ten different ingredients. Ask your child how many different combinations of numbers he can put together to come to the answer of ten. Use baby carrots as manipulatives to figure out:

1+9=10 2+8=10 3+7=10 4+6=10 5+5=10 6+4=10 7+3=10 8+2=10 9+1=10

Measurement and Weight

Using a ruler, measure different vegetables. Draw the vegetable and record the results.

If you have a kitchen scale, you may also want to weigh your veggies. Weigh some before you cook and some after you cook. Which weighs more? Why?

Science

Cooking

Make stone soup. After placing clean stones in a pot, help your child to follow a favorite soup recipe with meat and vegetables. Make a chart of each of the items placed in the soup. Make a list of characteristics before cooking. Then make a list of characteristics after cooking.

Chemistry

Whether or not your child realizes it, making soup is a lesson in chemistry. Soup is a *mixture*, which is the combining of two or more substances in varying proportions, in which the original components retain their original chemical properties. In other words, when you put carrots, cabbage, and beef into a soup, you still end up with carrots, cabbage and beef after you cook the soup.

A *mixture* is different than a *compound* in that a compound is two or more substances that combined, make a new substance. Have your child identify each ingredient in the soup before and after it is cooked.

Food Sources

The soldiers enticed the peasants to bring many ingredients to add to the soup. Can your child remember them all? Review with your youngest children where the various foods come from:

Salt - a mineral that is used for seasoning. So yes, there is actually a stone that can flavor soup!

Pepper - a seasoning that comes from ground up dried berries of the *Piper nigrum* plant. Show your child some peppercorns and let him grind them in a peppermill.

Carrots - vegetables that come from a seed. The part that you eat is the root that grows underground.

Cabbages - vegetables that come from seed. It grows in the shape of a head, and you eat the leaves.

Beef - meat that comes from a cow.

Potatoes - grow from tubers, which are thick portions of the stem of a plant that grow underground.

Barley - a grain that grows on a hardy cereal grass.

Milk - comes from female mammals, especially that of the cow or goat.

Iron

The soldiers had the peasants bring them a large iron pot. Discuss where iron comes from. Iron is a metal that is extracted from iron ore, which is found in the ground. It is believed to be fourth most abundant element found on earth. The symbol for iron is *Fe*. Iron is the main component in steel, and is used in the production of many metals. If you have an iron pot available, have your children perform simple tests to check its properties: Will a magnet stick to it? Does it hold water or is it “porous” (a new word)? Is it heavy? What would be good uses for it? Iron holds heat for a very long time, and doesn’t melt like some softer metals, which makes it good for cooking over a fire. Mention the irons used for pressing clothes, and how they were originally made of cast iron, thus their names.

Health and Nutrition

Discuss the food groups & the servings required for a balanced meal. Allow student to make a meal by cutting pictures from magazines & gluing them to a paper plate. Help them determine if the meal is balanced.

Grains: (6-11 servings a day) Point out foods students might not think of as grains – oatmeal, corn meal, or rice and popcorn. Tell students that some grains are whole grains. At least half the grains they eat should be whole grain. Some names for whole grains are whole wheat, whole-grain corn, and oatmeal. Show them the words “whole grain” on the ingredients label or the front of a cereal box and ask them to look for it on a cereal box at home.

Vegetables: (3-5 servings a day) Do your students eat fresh vegetables? Frozen? Canned? Dark green and orange vegetables are especially important.

(Examples include spinach, broccoli, carrots, and sweet potatoes.) Ask students to name dark green and orange vegetables they'd like to try.

Fruits: (2-4 servings a day) Explain that fruit can be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried. Ask children about their favorite fruits. What type or form do they eat?

Milk: (2-3 servings a day) Ask students to name some foods in the milk group (milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream). Where does milk come from? Do they drink milk every day? For children who are lactose intolerant, there are lactose-free products.

Meat and Beans: (2-3 servings a day) Ask students to name foods from the meat and beans group (meat, fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, dry beans, and peas, nuts, and seeds). Do they ever eat beans at home for dinner?

Rocks

The soldiers put three round, smooth stones in the pot. Stones are pieces of rock that have been worn down in size by water or breakage. *Stone Soup* lends itself perfectly to the study of rocks. Rocks are minerals that have been consolidated and make up the earth's crust. They are classified by the way they were formed:

Sedimentary rocks are formed from dust and sand. The name sedimentary means "to settle".

Metamorphic rocks are minerals that have changed because of heat and pressure. Metamorphic means, "to change".

Igneous rocks are very hard rocks formed in high temperatures (i.e. lava). Its name means, "fire".

There are so many good resources available. You may want to have your child collect up rocks and pebbles and have him identify them using a good resource book or a web site.

Bible

Greed and Sharing

Discuss greed vs. sharing. What possible reasons could the villagers have for not wanting to share what they had? What does the Bible say about our response to those in authority? Read the passage Matthew 5:38-48. How are we to treat those that are unkind to us? Why?

Library List

Mean Soup by Betsy Everitt

Veggie Soup by Dorothy Donohue

[*Growing Vegetable Soup*](#) by Lois Ehlert

Stone Soup by Ann McGoven

Stone Soup by Tony Ross

Stone Soup by Heather Forest

Stone Soup by Jon J. Muth

Just For Fun

Vegetable Prints

Cut off part of different vegetables (an adult needs to do this). Place into kids paint onto a piece of paper or construction paper. Stamp on the paper. You can even make different animal shapes or make people using different vegetables.

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