

## Unit 4



Weeks  
1-8

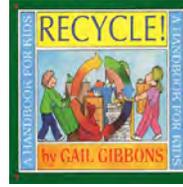
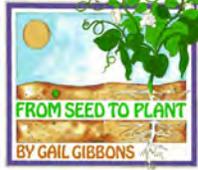
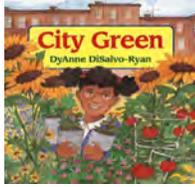
# Growing and Preparing Food

**Description:** The Dramatization Center is first set up as a pretend kitchen. As concepts are introduced throughout the unit, elements are added, including a nearby garden, recycling containers, and a compost bin. This is an extended, unit long project.



Dramatization

**Standards Addressed:**  
SS K.10  
SL.1, 2, 3, 4, 6  
L.1, 2, 4, 5, 6  
CC.4, 5, 6  
OA.1  
MD.1, 2, 3  
G.1



### Enduring Understandings:

- As stewards of the earth, humans must create and participate in sustainable systems that use the earth's resources wisely.
- People have a responsibility to protect and maintain the natural world.

### Essential Question:

What are sustainable systems, and what part do we play in them to make responsible decisions for our earth?

### Materials:

- pretend food and dishes
- pieces of fabric
- construction paper (variety of colors)
- markers
- crayons
- pencils
- empty containers/bins
- other props relevant to kitchen and gardening play

### Vocabulary:

- prepare
- solution
- recycle
- layer
- produce
- reuse
- scoop
- trash
- tidy
- plant
- group
- nourish
- nutrition
- seed
- protect
- scatter
- care
- sprout

### Preparation:

There are two options:

Tell the children you will be transforming the Dramatization Center into a kitchen and invite a group of children to help think about what materials and furnishings will be needed. Enlist the children's help in setting up the area and creating labels and signs for materials. Beautiful Stuff can be a good resource for materials (e.g., empty containers and boxes can be used as pretend food/items in the kitchen).

**OR**

If logistics do not permit this participatory approach, set up the area yourself. Arrange the area and materials so that it suggests a kitchen area for preparing food, with some pretend food, dishes, etc., if materials are available. If unavailable, use construction paper or recyclables to create food, plates, etc. Children can create these materials during Centers.

As the unit unfolds, children build their understandings. Gradually introduce the additional elements: a garden, compost buckets, and recycling bins. You may need to expand the borders of the Dramatization Center to allow more space, although the garden/farmers market area need not be very large. If your Dramatization Center is very small, rotate the elements instead of adding to the area over time (e.g. start with a kitchen, then remove the kitchen and change the area to a garden, then a farmers market, etc.)

Follow the Pre-sequenced Weekly Plans for suggestions about timing for adding or changing elements of the area, or adapt based on the interests of your group. The decision to include a garden or a farmer's market can be made based on the interests of the group and may be influenced by neighborhood or community characteristics.

### ***Ideas for stocking the area:***

- Garden: To represent soil, lay a piece of brown fabric on the ground or use brown construction paper. Provide fabric or paper pieces for plants, fruits, and vegetables. Offer empty seed packets and empty containers for watering.
- Recycling and compost bins: Small boxes or containers will work well. Children can make signs to denote which materials should be placed in each bin.
- Provide vocabulary cards from the read alouds in the area and embed key unit vocabulary in the conversation. Bring in real materials whenever possible.
- To help provide structure, gradually introduce materials into the area. Too many materials can become overwhelming for some children. Organize and label the materials.

### ***Intro to Centers: Kitchen***

"The Dramatization Center has changed; it is now a pretend kitchen! In the kitchen, you can prepare food."

"What kinds of foods do you and your family cook or eat at your house? Turn and tell a partner about some of the foods you eat and how you prepare these foods. "

"If we don't have the kind of food you want to prepare, you can make it using paper or you can use something else as pretend food. You can also write a recipe that explains how to prepare the food you like to eat."

*Hold up some items from the area. If children participated in the transformation of the area, invite them to talk about the changes or give a tour of the space.*

*Children turn and talk.*

*Show different colored paper.*

**Note:** *The Intro to Centers above is written for a garden but you could also utilize it to introduce a farmers' market (refer to "Using This as a Provocation" section).*

### ***During Centers: Kitchen***

Children may act out familiar food preparation scenarios from home. Encourage the children to describe the kinds of foods they eat or help prepare at home, and celebrate the diversity and wealth of knowledge that the children bring. Embed key unit vocabulary throughout your conversations with the children.

Offer props to embed literacy. For example, provide small slips of paper to create shopping lists or menu planners for the food that will be served. Encourage mathematical thinking. Ask children to count the number of people in the area and set the table with the corresponding number of plates. Count and categorize food. Foster number sense and data analysis skills by making requests such as, "I would like three kinds of green food for lunch today, please."

**Guiding Questions during Centers:** Kitchen

- What kind of food do you prepare at your house?
- What do you like to eat?
- Where do you think that food comes from?
- How will you work together to prepare a meal?
- How could you make some \_\_\_\_\_ (carrots/bread/napkins, etc.)?
- That sounds delicious! What ingredients will you need to make that dish? Let's write the recipe down so we can remember how to make this.

**Intro to Centers: Garden**

"Now that we know a lot about gardens and how seeds become plants, we have a new part in the Dramatization Center, a garden! Many of the foods we eat come from plants. In the garden, you can pretend to plant seeds and grow some food to prepare in the kitchen. Here is a packet of lettuce seeds."

"I think I will pretend to plant these seeds in the garden and water them with this watering can."

"When the lettuce grows, I will harvest it and use it to make a salad in the kitchen!"

*Show seed packet.*

*Pantomime planting seeds and watering.*

*Pantomime harvesting lettuce.*

**During Centers:** Garden

Scaffold expansion of the play to involve planting, tending, and harvesting the garden. The food grown can then be prepared and cooked in the kitchen for eating.

**Guiding Questions during Centers:** Garden

- What crops will you pretend to grow?
- What do these seeds/plants need to survive?

**Intro to Centers: Recycling Bins**

"We have learned all about recycling from this book, *Recycle!* by Gail Gibbons."

"After we read the book, some children suggested that we have recycling bins in our pretend kitchen so we could recycle food packages after we prepare food. This is a great idea!"

"Today in Dramatization, we will need help to make labels for our new recycling containers. What kinds of materials do you think we could recycle?"

*Hold up book, Recycle!.*

*Hold up bins.*

*Take a few ideas from the group.*

*Model creating a label, segmenting phonemes and naming letters as you write.*

**During Centers:** Recycling Bins

Support children to expand their use of the area. Children could recycle containers of food from the kitchen.

**Guiding Questions during Centers:** Recycling Bins

- Could you recycle the packaging from the pasta? Which bin should it go in?
- Where will the recycling go? What can it become?

## ***Intro to Centers: Compost Bins***

“We have been doing STEM Investigations about composting and talking about what materials decompose.”

“Some children have suggested we have a pretend compost bin in our pretend kitchen! This was a great idea, and here is the new bin.”

“What kinds of materials do you think we could put in the compost bin?”

*Show some materials from the STEM investigation.*

*Hold up pretend compost bin.*

*Have the children turn and talk.*

### ***During Centers:*** Compost Bins

Children can compost food scraps. The children could make food scraps by reusing scratch paper from the Writing and Drawing Center.

### ***Guiding Questions during Centers:*** Compost Bins

- What can we place in the compost bin?
- Which is the appropriate bin?
- What will happen to these food scraps when you put them in the compost bin?

### ***Thinking & Feedback:***

Share a recipe that a child or group of children has written to inspire writing of additional recipes.

When a problem arises over materials (e.g., not enough gardening tools for the garden), gather feedback from the whole class about how to solve the problem.

### ***Documentation:***

Make notes about how children are working, pretending, interacting with one another. Add additional elements and shape the trajectory of the activity to capitalize on the children’s specific interests.

### ***Using this as a Provocation:***

As children generate ideas of their own, they will likely make connections to read alouds, STEM Investigations, and Center activities. The possibilities are endless. Embrace innovation and adapt the continual activity to allow the children to have ownership of the Dramatization Center.

### **Farmers’ Market Option:**

Begin a conversation with the children about what a farmers market is, and how it is different from other kinds of markets. If there is a farmers market near your school, consider taking a walk there as a class or with a small group, to build background knowledge and to research how the market is set up. In the Dramatization Center, provide a few boxes and/or baskets to hold produce. Encourage children to reuse scraps of paper or Beautiful Stuff as money. Reused paper or cloth bags can be used to carry the produce back to the kitchen.

### **Guiding Questions for Farmers’ Market:**

- What foods can we buy at this market?
- How much does this food cost?
- What will you use as pretend money?