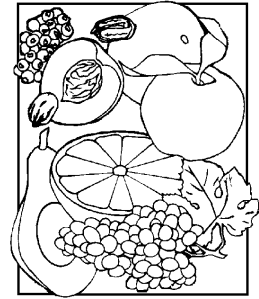


## *Lesson Ten - Fruit*

The Lord has blessed us with an incredible variety of tasty fruit. From sweet to tart, crisp to soft, some type of fruit will complement any meal or provide a nutritious snack. Most kids enjoy fruit and even very young children enjoy applesauce or other pureed fruit.

Fruit needs little preparation and can easily be added to a breakfast, lunch or dinner. We often eat fresh fruit raw. **Canned fruit** is a convenient alternative, especially when certain types of fruit are out of season. **Dried fruit** is lightweight and easy to carry and eat anywhere. Unsweetened **frozen fruit** can be added to fruit salad, used in baking, or to make fruit smoothies.



**Juice** is another way to add fruit into the diet, but be sure to buy 100% fruit juice. Much juice on store shelves today is mostly sugar water with little nutritional value.

### **In this lesson, the girls will learn to:**

- Identify and taste different types of fruit
- Cook a fruit dessert
- Thicken liquids with cornstarch
- Create fruit garnishes and centerpieces

### **Review:**

- Food Guide Pyramid – Fruit Group (Lesson 9)
- Safely using sharp utensils (Lesson 1)

### **Give each girl a copy of:**

- Before I Cook Fruit
- Fall Fruit Compote Recipe
- Special Touches with Fruit

Buy pieces of **different types of fruit** for the girls to sample. Choose some they may not have tried before: kiwi, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, nectarines. While most have eaten canned pineapple, they may never have tried a fresh one. Review how to safely use sharp knives and let the girls wash and slice the fruit and arrange it on a plate.

**Read together** the first page of “**Before I Cook Fruit**”. The USDA recommends that we eat 2-4 servings per day, or about 2 Cups. Ask the girls to keep track of the fruit they eat for one week. Unfortunately, few of us eat as much fruit as we should. We miss many important nutrients and fiber. Encourage the girls to choose fruit for a snack in place of candy or other sweets.

On the second page of “Before I Cook Fruit”, the girls are introduced to cooking fruit and thickening it with **cornstarch**. Show them a box of cornstarch and put some in a dish so they can see and touch it.

Read the section on cornstarch together. Show them how easily one teaspoon of cornstarch dissolves in a little cold water.

The **Fall Fruit Compote** is delicious made with pears or apples. Apples are readily available year-round, but pears are in season during the fall and winter. Almost everyone has eaten apples. If pears are available, have the girls try the recipe with pears. Or, make a batch with pears and another with apples. I found that some girls were unfamiliar with pears and enjoyed them once they cooked the dessert.

**Demonstrate the Compote recipe** showing the girls how to:

- safely peel and slice the fruit
- safely use your stove (or hot plate)
- add cornstarch to water and then the hot fruit mixture

Pears are usually shipped unripe to reduce bruising. **Buy the pears several days in advance** so they will ripen before cooking. To hasten ripening, place pears in a paper bag and close the bag. Fruit emits a gas that speeds up the ripening process when it is trapped in a bag. Purchase a couple **extra pears** in case any are bad inside.

This recipe serves two. Have the girls choose a partner and **work in pairs**. They can take turns peeling the fruit and stirring the mixture at the stove. The recipe can be doubled for larger groups if necessary. When I do not have room at the stove for all of the girls, I use an electric hot plate to add an extra cooking surface. Or, have the girls take turns at the stove. The fruit only takes a few minutes to cook.

There are **many different types of pears and apples**. For this recipe, you can use any type you prefer. Bartlett or Bosc pears are especially good for cooking. For apples, I prefer Red Delicious or Gala though there are many other great varieties. Granny Smith apples are very tart and I would not recommend them for this recipe unless you add more sugar.

An additional recipe, **Blueberry Breakfast Sauce**, is included to give the girls more practice using cornstarch. This delicious sauce is easy to prepare and could be used for another class activity combined with the pancake recipe in the Quick Breads chapter.

**Special Touches with Fruit** features fun-to-make fruit centerpieces and garnishes.

In **Extending the Lesson**, you’ll find four easy fruit recipes that are quick to prepare and can be done with young children.

## **What you'll need for this lesson:**

### **Ingredients for Fall Fruit Compote:** (for each pair of girls)

1 large ripe pear or apple  
2 T. sugar  
1/8 t. cinnamon  
2 t. cornstarch  
2 slices cinnamon bread  
Raisins, optional

### **Supplies:**

Stovetop burner or hot plate for each pair of girls  
Medium saucepan with lid  
Cutting Board  
Peeler  
Paring knife (steak knives will work)  
Measuring Cup for liquids  
Measuring Spoons  
Wooden Spoon or other large mixing spoon  
Fork (to test fruit for doneness)  
2 Small plates

### **For serving the dessert:**

Napkins  
Forks or spoons  
Glasses or cups  
Milk or juice to drink

### **For Fruit Centerpieces & Garnishes**

Fruit of your choice  
Toothpicks  
Paring knives  
Cutting Boards  
Plates, platters or cake plates (for centerpieces)  
Small glasses or goblets, optional

### **For frosted fruit:**

Grapes, strawberries, fresh cranberries, fresh blueberries  
Corn syrup  
White Sugar  
Zipper plastic bags – Sandwich size  
Pastry Brushes  
Waxed Paper

## Special Touches with Fruit



You can create beautiful **centerpieces and table décor** with colorful fruit! To make the candleholders in this centerpiece, cut a thin slice off one end of a lemon or lime. Use a paring knife to carve out some of the flesh inside and insert a candle. Insert a toothpick in the bottom of the fruit and press into an apple. Cut a thin slice off the bottom of the apple so it stands straight. Adults should light candles and supervise closely.

The lime on the right was simply set into a small goblet filled with fresh cranberries. The lime in the front of the centerpiece sits alone with a tea light inserted into it. In the back, a small wine glass was filled with cranberries and a curled piece of orange rind added for interest. Everything was arranged on a cake plate covered with parsley and dotted with more fresh cranberries. Experiment with whatever fruits are in season. Vary the height of each for added interest.



These cute **citrus critters** can be made in a minute. Cut a thin slice off one side of each lime so it rests flat on the table. The stem end is the mouth. For eyes, insert half a toothpick a short way into the lime and then press a fresh cranberry on the other end of the toothpick. A meat skewer can be used to more easily make a hole for the toothpick. Lemons or other types of fruit can be used, and whole cloves can become eyes. Critters can be grouped on a plate, or use a small piece of waxed paper under each to keep the fruit juice from leaking onto a table.



Cut a slit in the top to create cute **place card holders**. Cut index cards, write the names on them, and insert into fruit just before needed. The cards will absorb some fruit juice, but they can be laminated or covered with clear contact paper to prevent that, if desired.

**Frosted fruit** is an attractive garnish that is easy to make. Brush grapes, strawberries, or other fruit with light corn syrup, then roll in granulated sugar. Put the sugar in zippered sandwich bags to make clean-up easier. Set the frosted fruit on waxed paper and refrigerate until ready to use. The fruit adds color to dinner plates and looks nice on cakes and pies.



The girls use pastry brushes to brush corn syrup on fruit.

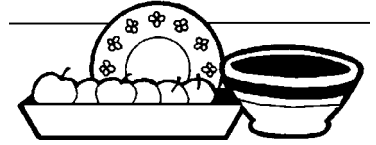


Dipping the fruit in sugar.

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Name:

## *Before I Cook Fruit*

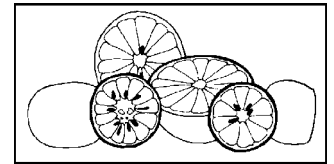


In **Genesis 1:29** God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.” (NIV) The Lord created such a wide variety of fruit for us to enjoy and to nourish our bodies. Like vegetables, fruits contain vitamins, minerals and fiber. The Food Guide Pyramid recommends we eat 2 – 4 servings, or about **2 Cups of fruit every day**.

**One serving** = 1 medium piece of raw fruit -or-  
½ Cup of chopped, canned or cooked fruit -or-  
¾ Cup of fruit juice (i.e. 100% fruit juice)

**Fruit develops** from the flower of a plant. Many fruits grow on trees: bananas, apples, pears and citrus fruit are just a few. Blueberries grow on bushes or small trees. Melons, grapes and tomatoes grow on vines. Yes, tomatoes are considered a fruit.

Like vegetables, fruits are **most nutritious when eaten raw**. Many vitamins are found in the skin, so it’s best, when possible, to eat fruit with the skin. Of course, bananas, melons and citrus fruit must be peeled first. Sometimes, when we cook fruit to make pie or other desserts, we peel it because the skin does not soften as much as the fleshy part of the fruit.



Citrus fruits include oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit and tangerines.

Whether you eat it raw or plan to cook it, **wash all fruit thoroughly**, rinsing each piece under running water. Rub it with your hands or a soft brush to remove any dirt. Place berries and other small fruit into a colander and then rinse them.

Often fruit is shipped to grocery stores before it is ripe. Many fruits like pears, peaches and plums ship better when they are hard and unripe. **To ripen fruit, store** it at room temperature. To speed up the ripening process, put fruit inside a paper bag and close the bag. Be sure to look inside the bag every day and check the fruit as it will ripen quickly. Once ripe, store the fruit in the refrigerator unless you will eat it right away.

Apples, berries, cherries and citrus fruit should be put in the refrigerator when you bring them home from the store. Most

refrigerators have produce bins that help keep the humidity level just right for fresh fruit and vegetables. Be careful not to store onions or strong-smelling vegetables with the fruit! The fruit may pick up those flavors.

**Fruit can be cooked** in a variety of ways. Apple pie is a favorite American dessert. Peach cobbler, Blueberry Buckle, Banana Bread, Lemon Meringue Pie, Apple Cake, Strawberry Jam – we use fruit in so many different ways. What are some of your favorite fruit recipes?

A **compote** is fruit cooked in a sugar syrup. It may be served by itself, or poured over cake or bread.



Stir cornstarch into cold water before adding it to the hot fruit mixture.

Often, when we make a pie, compote, or fruit crisp, we need to **thicken the fruit**. Many fruits are juicy, and unless we add something to thicken that juice, our dessert would be runny.

**Flour and cornstarch** are two of the most common thickeners. All-purpose flour is ground from wheat. **Cornstarch** is made by extracting starch from the corn kernel. Flour or cornstarch thicken sauces, pudding, gravy, and pies.

There are some **important differences between flour and cornstarch** that you need to remember when cooking. Cornstarch is twice as strong as flour. If a recipe calls for 2 Tablespoons of flour to thicken a sauce, you would only need 1 Tablespoon of cornstarch.

Liquids thickened with cornstarch have a brighter, more translucent appearance than those thickened with flour. That is especially attractive in fruit sauces and desserts.

Always **mix cornstarch in a cool liquid first**; it will dissolve more easily. Then heat it or add it to a hot mixture.

**Constantly stir** cornstarch mixture until it comes to a boil, and then boil one minute. If you heat the mixture in the microwave, you can stir just a few times. Heat on High until the mixture comes to a boil. Then boil gently one minute. Be careful! Thickened mixtures will be very hot.

Recipes usually tell how much cornstarch to use. If not, here is a good **rule of thumb** to remember:

To make a medium thick sauce,  
Use **1 Tablespoon of cornstarch** per cup of liquid to be thickened.

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Name:

## Fall Fruit Compote

### Ingredients:

1 large ripe pear or apple, peeled & thinly sliced  
3/4 Cup water, divided  
2 Tablespoons sugar  
1 Tablespoon raisins, optional  
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
2 teaspoons cornstarch  
2 slices cinnamon bread

### Method:

Yield: 2 servings

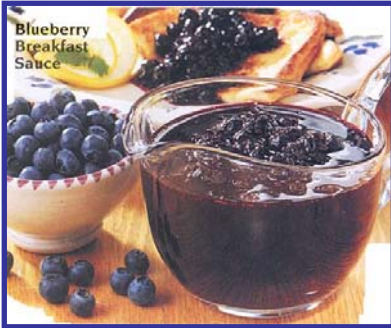
1. In a medium saucepan, combine the **pear or apple slices** with 1/2 Cup of water.
2. Add **sugar** and **cinnamon**. Add **raisins**, if desired. Stir.
3. Cover and cook over medium heat 6-8 minutes, or until fruit is tender. You may need to turn the heat down to maintain a gentle simmer.
4. Carefully remove the lid; open it so the steam escapes away from you. Test fruit with a fork. When the fruit is soft, turn off the heat.
5. Stir the **cornstarch** into the remaining 1/4 Cup water until smooth. Add to the fruit mixture.
6. Over low heat, bring to a gentle boil, stirring constantly. Cook and stir 1 minute or until thickened. Be sure to turn off the burner when you are done.
7. Spoon the cooked fruit over the slices of **cinnamon bread**. The bread may be toasted if you wish.

### Variations:

- This dessert could also be made with peaches.
- Instead of raisins, try craisins (dried cranberries) or golden raisins.
- Chopped pecans or other nuts can be sprinkled on top for added crunch.
- Canned fruit may be used; cut the cooking time down to just 1-2 minutes.



The girls take turns peeling a pear.



## Blueberry Breakfast Sauce

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 Cup sugar
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/3 Cup water
- 2 Cups fresh or frozen blueberries

### Method:

Yield: About 2 Cups

1. In a 2-quart saucepan, combine **sugar** and **cornstarch**.
2. Gradually stir in **water**.
3. Add **blueberries**.
4. Over medium heat, bring to a boil, stirring constantly.
5. Boil for 1 minute. Continue to stir.
6. Serve warm or cold over French toast, pancakes, or waffles. It's good over ice cream, too!

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## *Extending The Lesson ... Easy Fruit Fun*

Here are some easy to prepare fruit recipes that should entice even finicky eaters to eat more fruit!

### **Puppy Dog Salad**

**Ingredients:**

- 1 lettuce leaf
- 1 canned pear half
- 1 prune half
- 2 mandarin orange segments
- 1 red maraschino cherry
- 1 raisin

**Method:**

**Yield:** 1 serving

Place lettuce on a salad plate; place pear cut side down over lettuce. For ear, place the prune on the wide end of the pear. Place orange segments along bottom for collar. Place cherry at the narrow end of pear for nose. Add raisin for the eye.



### **Mallow Fruit Cups**

**Ingredients:**

- 1 can (15 ounces) fruit cocktail, drained
- 1 medium tart apple, diced
- 1/2 Cup miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 Cup whipped topping

**Method:**

**Yield:** 4-6 servings

In a bowl, combine all ingredients. Cover and refrigerate until serving.

All recipes in this section:

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## Banana-Pear Caterpillar

### Ingredients:

1 lettuce leaf  
1 medium banana, peeled  
1/2 red pear, cored and cut into 1/4-inch slices  
2 raisins

### Method:

**Yield:** 1 serving

Place lettuce on a salad plate; top with the banana. Cut 1/4-inch V-shaped slices halfway through the banana, spacing cuts 1 inch apart. Place a pear slice, peel side up, in each cut. For eyes, gently press raisins into one end of banana. Serve immediately.



## Apple-Raisin Ladybug

### Ingredients:

2 lettuce or kale leaves  
1 medium Red Delicious apple, cored and quartered  
2 teaspoons creamy peanut butter  
2 Tablespoons raisins  
5 red grapes

### Method:

**Yield:** 2 servings

Place lettuce leaves on two salad plates. Arrange two apple quarters, peel side up, on the lettuce. Use dabs of peanut butter to place raisins in the space between apple quarters. Place one grape at the stem end of apple for head. For legs, cut the remaining grapes lengthwise into 4 pieces; place 3 on each side of ladybugs. Place small dabs of peanut butter on remaining raisins; gently press onto apples for spots.

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