

Awesome After School Kits

Learn to Set the Table

Objective:

Youth will learn:

- to set a table for a meal
- to hold flatware appropriately while eating.

Grade Level: 4-12

Academic Standards:

Time: 45 minutes

Supplies Needed:

9 or more sets of dishes for each place setting

- 9 plastic plates
- 9 plastic beverage glasses
- 9 plastic table knives
- 9 plastic forks
- 9 plastic spoons
- 9 paper or cloth napkins
- Enough knives & forks for every person
- Optional: 9 place mats

Optional Supplies for teaching visual:

1 plastic dinner plate
1 plastic beverage glass
1 set of plastic flatware (knife, fork, & spoon)
1 napkin (paper or cloth)

Curriculum to Use:

This lesson plan. (This topic is usually considered part of a home environment or etiquette project. Information on how to set a table is not included in the 4-H Home Environment series but is necessary to complete the activity in Unit 3: Where I Live, on pp 11-13. Unit 3 is available as a pub to download at: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/4jb/4jb03po/4jb03po.pdf>)

Presenter Information: Fewer young people today than in past generations are taught how to set a table. With today's on-the-go lifestyle, some families rarely sit down together at a table for a meal. Recent research has shown that children in families that eat together tend to do better in school. Having a "set" table is not a necessity but a well set table makes for a pleasant setting for family interaction.

Pre-Test: *Administer the paper pretest or ask for four volunteers. Without giving hints, ask each one to use the tableware you have placed in front of them to set the table. When they finish, ask the rest of the group to look at each example and stand in front of the one they think is accurate. Designate an area for those who think none of the examples is correct. Do not indicate if any are accurate but say something like, "Let's find out." Mentally note which youth select the arrangement that is considered a standard place setting.*

Activity Introduction: *Share with participants.*

Say: "How many of you set the table at your house? Have you ever been to a meal somewhere that the table was set with dishes ready for you to sit down and eat? Even if you haven't already had that experience, today you will learn how to set a table for your family.

Activity: *Conduct activity with participants.*

Gather youth close to the demo area or use the visual which can be held up for all to see. Show youth where to position each piece of the place setting as you talk. (A placemat is not required but it is helpful in defining the space for the tableware.) Use diagram A as your model for placement.



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1 place mat

Computer generated,
self-stick or hand
lettering for title
Foam-core board—
about 14" X 18"

Advance Preparation:

- Pick up kit at CES office
- If possible, place an 8' table at front of room
- Optional: Make a visual that shows a simple standard place setting.

Place or write "Basic Place Setting" across the top of the board. Below the title, position the dishes on the board as shown in the diagram. Determine where each utensil touches the board and place a small piece of hook/loop tape on the item. While both sides of the h&l tape are stuck together, peel the plastic away from the matching piece of h&l tape. Position the plate in the appropriate place on the board and press until the h&l tape adheres to the board. Continue until all pieces are attached to the board.

Bring out the following points:

Plate: The plate is placed in the center of the space. Position the plate about 1 inch from the edge of the table. Using your thumb as a ruler, that's about the space between the tip of your thumb and the first joint.

Flatware: The term used for the knives, forks and spoons is flatware. Some people refer to it as silverware but that is really only appropriate when the flatware is made out of the metal silver. Flatware is often made of stainless steel and plastic, too. Show examples.

Knife: Place the knife next to the plate on the right. Turn the sharper side toward the plate. Using your thumb, place it about an inch from the edge of the table.

Spoon: Place the spoon to the right of the knife, about 1 inch from the edge of the table.

Fork: Place the fork to the left of the plate.

Beverage or drinking glass: Place the glass above the tip of the knife.

Napkin: The most logical place for the napkin is to the left of the fork; however, it is acceptable to place it at other locations. Some like to place it in the center of the plate. Some place the napkin under the fork but then guests must move the fork in order to place the napkin in their lap before they begin to eat. At fancy dinners, the napkin might even be folded in a unique way and placed anywhere at the place setting.

When finished, leave the example in place and let the youth try setting a place using the dishes in the kit. Based on the number of youth in the group and the number of dishes, let them work individually or in pairs to actually set a place.

Bring the youth back together as a group. Hand each member a knife and fork. Show youth how to hold the flatware.

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Explain that while eating, forks and spoons are held like a pencil. The handle is held by the tips of the thumb and index finger and it rests on the middle finger. Young children are often taught to hold the handle in the palm with all fingers wrapped around the handle. As children grow, they are expected to switch from “palm holding” to the “pencil holding” position.

Next show how to hold flatware to cut a piece of meat or vegetable. Show how right-handed people hold the flatware. (Hands are reversed for left-handed people.)

- Fork is placed in left hand with tines down holding food in place. Grasp handle with hand; place index finger in top of neck of the fork; other fingers should grip the handle underneath.
- Hold the knife in the right hand in the same position. Using the knife, gently “saw” back and forth until the food is cut. Cut one piece at a time; place each bite into the mouth. Repeat the process.

Optional:
 Samples of silver,
 stainless, and plastic
 flatware
 Samples of dishes

Note:
 The visual is handy
 while working with
 large groups because it
 can be held up as an
 example.

Talk It Over: *Discuss questions with participants.*
 Gather the groups back together to talk about the experience.

Sharing – Remind the kids of the first activity (pre-test). 1) How closely did the place settings done by the volunteers match what you have learned today? 2) Did anything about the placement of each piece surprise you? 3) When you learned to hold the knife and fork, were you surprised in how to do it?

Processing – 3) Why would it make a difference where the dishes and flatware are placed? (orderly/ organized, attractive, makes people feel comfortable to eat with others or in public) 4) Does it make a difference in how you hold the flatware when you eat?

Generalizing – Let’s talk about eating together. 5) Do you enjoy eating with other people? 6) Can you think of times when families might get together to have special meals? (Holidays, birthdays, weddings) 7) What happens when people eat together? (get to know each other better, form relationships, celebrate)

Applying – 8) Do you think you could set the table for your family or a special occasion?

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Post-Test: *Conduct test with participants if applicable.*

The activity where youth are engaged in setting the table serves as the post-test. Move around the room to see that each person's place setting conforms to the standard.

Extended Learning:

For teens, it might be appropriate to add more dishes to the place setting--pieces that they might encounter at a prom, banquet, nice restaurant, or formal dinner. Consider adding: salad fork, soup spoon, cup and saucer, bread plate, and dessert spoon or fork. See diagram B.

Presenter Tip: You may want to bring dishes to show examples of several place settings—from casual to formal. Be careful to consider the interests of boys in your group.

Sources: additional information about setting a table can be found on the internet.

Tips for making a kit to be used multiple times:

Paper plates and napkins and plastic flatware and glasses can be used in the kit. These are easy to locate, inexpensive and easy to transport.

For use over and over, plastic dishes might be a good investment. They are light weight and resist breaking. Discount stores and groceries often sell colorful lightweight sets during the summer. These are usually clearanced in August. Since glasses can take up a lot of room in the tub or box, be sure to select the type that can be stacked. Although place mats are optional, you may choose to include them because they define the area for each place setting.

Place an inventory list on the lid of the container so the person returning the kit to the CES office can check to see that all pieces have been gathered and returned to the container.

This lesson plan was written Martha Welch, Extension Specialist for 4-H YD with input from the Family and Consumer Sciences After-School Kits Design Team, September 2010. The team is made up of Extension Agents Lynnette Allen, Breckenridge County; Martha Arterburn, Allen County; Kim Cox, Morgan County; Natasha Lucas, Owsley County and Martha Welch, Extension Specialist for 4-H YD.