



## Harvest Objectives

Families will compare spinach leaves.

Families will identify that spinach are the leaves of the plant.

Families will taste a piece of spinach.



## Harvest Vocab

Leaf/Leaves

## Materials & Prep

Various-sized spinach (small leaves and large leaves) and/or different varieties (New Zealand spinach, savoy spinach, semi-savoy spinach, Malabar spinach, red cardinal spinach (has red veins and stems))

Paper/Chalkboard/Whiteboard and pen/chalk/whiteboard markers

Images (included at end of learning plan)

Knife & Cutting Board

Taste Test Chart

Stickers (or small Post-It Notes)

## Literature Connections

Sylvia's Spinach by Katherine Pryor

Vegetables, Vegetables! (Rookie Read-About Science) by Fay Robinson

## Warm Up

- In order to engage the family and activate prior knowledge, gather the family and pass around the spinach. Allow everyone to touch and look at the leaves, and ask them to think about how they would describe them (size, shape, color, weight, texture, smell, etc.) Do not tell them what it is. Tell the family to think of the name for the food, but to keep their answer inside their head. Then when everyone has held the spinach, ask them, "What is this called?" Consider having everyone say the answer aloud on the count of three. This way you'll know who in the family knows.
- Then discuss, have ever seen it before? Eaten one before? How was it prepared? Where do they think spinach comes from? How does it grow? (On trees, bushes?)
- Using the spinach pictures at the end of the learning plan, have the family sort them into a pile of spinach plant photos and spinach leaf photos. If possible, add a leaf to the leaf pile and a plant to the plant pile (sometimes bagged spinach has complete "plants" with the leaves still together.)
- Depending on family involvement, draw a Venn diagram on the board. Write the two spinach types above each circle. Holding up the spinach, ask the family what they have in common (texture, size, color, etc.) Record their observations in the middle of the Venn diagram. Then hold up just one. Record their descriptions that only fit that spinach piece. Repeat with the second spinach piece.



### Explain

- Explain that botanically they are vegetable (because we eat the leaves and there are no seeds inside). What other botanical vegetables can they think of? (Carrots, beets, onion, etc.) If possible, put out pictures of fruits and vegetables and allow the family to think about which ones are vegetables.
- Explain why we should eat spinach (helps heal cuts, healthy immune system, healthy, healthy eyes, healthy bodies, healthy muscles, and healthy bones) and for each reason come up with an action to help the family remember. For example, for healthy immune system they can shake one finger while saying “no” and then put a hand on their forehead while saying “fever.” Also explain how to pick good spinach (the leaves should be tender, bright green in color, and sturdy.) Please see the next pages for images to share with the family.

### Taste Test & Wrap-Up

- After rinsing the spinach, give each family member a leaf to taste.
- Create a chart that says “I Like” with a smiley face and “I Don’t Like” with a sad face. Give each child a sticker, and ask them to vote by placing it in a column. Count the number of children that like, and don’t like spinach and write that number in each column.
- Review with the family how spinach grows and the health benefits.

### Toddler Tasting

- To make spinach baby food puree, rinse spinach and place in a steamer basket in a pot. Add water to the pot just until the water can be seen through the holes of the steamer basket. Steam until soft (2-5 minutes). The leaves will shrink and appear wilted when done. Place spinach in blender/food processor, and blend until smooth. If needed, add fresh water until mixture is of the desired consistency. When cool, serve and enjoy!

### Taste Test Extension

**Rule of 15** “Put a food on the table at least 15 times to see if a child will accept it.” Susan B. Roberts, Tufts University Nutritionist and Co-author of Feeding Your Child for Lifelong Health

For an additional tasting experience, prepare this recipe with the family having each member help in an age-appropriate manner.

#### **Berry Spinach Smoothie** (for about 4 servings)

(adapted from: <http://reneeclerkin.com/recipe/berry-spinach-smoothie/>)

- 1 1/3 cups spinach leaves—1/3 cup per person
- 1 cup water or skim milk or rice milk—1/4 cup per person
- 1 cup frozen berries—1/4 cup per person
- 1 banana—1/4 banana per person
- Blender
- Mixing bowls & Measuring Cups (optional)





Preschool Home Visit Learning Plan  
**Spinach**

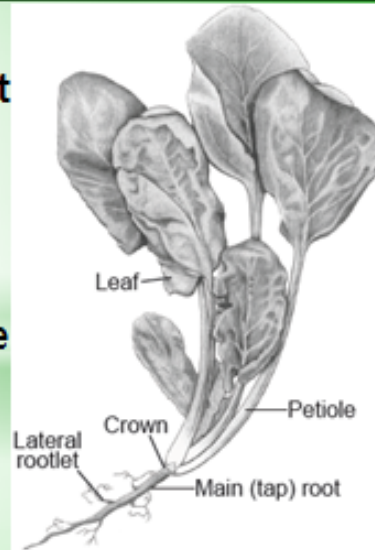
Cup (1 per person)

1. All participants should wash their hands.
  - a. Wet hands with warm water
  - b. Apply hand wash (soap)
  - c. Lather and wash for AT LEAST 15 seconds (the length of the ABC song)
  - d. Rinse both sides of hands with water all the way up to the wrists
  - e. Dry hands and shut off faucet with towel
2. Rinse the spinach under running water. Have an adult peel and cut the banana. Have the water and berries available for the children to measure.
3. Have one family member measure and add the spinach to the blender and another add the water/milk. Blend thoroughly. (This way there are not spinach chunks in your smoothie.)
4. Have other family members measure and add remaining ingredients. Blend until smooth and creamy. Serve in cups and enjoy!

## How does Spinach grow?



Spinach grows best in sandy soils in cool weather. We eat the leaves of the spinach plant.



Why should we eat Spinach?

Plus More!

Vitamin K Vitamin A Vitamin C



Heals Cuts



Healthy eyes



Healthy immune system  
(heals cuts, prevents colds)

B Vitamins



Healthy bodies  
(cell energy)

Iron



Healthy muscles

Calcium



Healthy bones

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## Preschool Home Visit Learning Plan

### Spinach

