

Module 3: Whatza Cookin' Learning Centers - Miss Merri Mary and Greg the Grocer's Special on Green

Miss Merri Mary's and the Greg the Grocer's is one of six learning centers. It is designed to help children, youth and adults discover whatza cookin' with the seasons of Epiphany and Pentecost. Participants will design a candleholder and mat to celebrate the privilege to be enlightened by the power of God's presence and activity in their lives.

Kitchen utensils will be used to create a sense of continuity between the theme and the content of each learning center. Color-coded strips may be attached to Stirrin' Spoons to highlight the key learning at each learning center. Reasons for the Seasons' Party Planners include a "Stir-factor" sheet for each season along with several ideas for celebrating each one at home. The "Stirrin' Up a Celebration" menu cards will engage participants in learning some of the essential ingredients associated with each season. "Happy New Year" Party Packs are suggested to transport crafts and other learning materials. The "Please Wait to Be Seated" Gathering Activities introduce and distribute these resources for participant use as they move through the Whatza Cookin' Learning Centers.

The Leader's Notes for this activity, along with any needed preparations and supplies, are outlined below. A Program Planning Grid (PDF file) is available to assist you in coordinating the details and tasks involved. You may wish to display a sign to distinguish between the gathering activities and the learning centers. A "Whatza Cookin'" pattern/sign design (PDF file) is provided for this purpose. You may wish to print the name of the learning center on the bottom half of the hat.

Approximate time: 10 –15 minutes

Equipment and Supplies:

Whatza Cookin' sign design (PDF file)

Reference sheets for Epiphany and Pentecost A-B (PDF file)

Pattern for candle mat (PDF file)

Church Year Wheel (PDF file)

Clear plastic sheet cut into 8 ½ " x 11" pieces

One set of 9 x 12 foam craft sheets or construction paper in the colors of the Church Year per individual or family.

Paper punch

Permanent markers

Ribbon or yarn in the colors of the Church Year; red, green, blue, white and purple.

Plastic cups

Small plastic bags

One tea candle for each individual and family.

Leader's Notes:

Scan through the activity outline and adapt your plans to honor the time you have scheduled for your overall event. You may wish to recruit a few people to complete some of the initial steps involved.

The facilitator for this center may consider actually portraying Miss Merri Mary and the Greg the Grocer. A costume might simply consist of a chef hat (see pattern), a nametag and an apron, along with a few props, e.g. a large bowl and a spoon.

Cut one green cloth or crepe paper strip per family or participant. You may wish to write the name of the season on each strip or give participants the option to do so. Lay out a few extra Stirrin' Spoons participants who may not have participated in the "Special Guest Check-in" gathering activity.

You might wish to display an enlarged copy of the Church year Wheel and highlight or outline the seasons of Epiphany and Pentecost. (There is a copy of the wheel on the back page of the "Reasons for the Seasons" Party Planner, so this would not be absolutely necessary.) You might also decorate this center with green balloons to make it more festive.

Use the following instructions to make candle mat and candleholder.

- Place the pattern for the candle mat underneath the plastic sheet. Trace the pattern onto the plastic sheet using permanent markers.
- Cut the foam sheets or construction paper to align them with the plastic sheet.
- Punch two holes in each corner of the clear plastic and foam sheets.
- Cut four 9-12" pieces of yarn in each color of the church year and place them in bags for each individual or family. Use them to secure each corner of the plastic sheet to the appropriate foam color for each season.
- Provide a plastic cup with a wide mouth for each individual or family. Encourage them to write the beginning of the following Bible verse around the bottom of the cup.
"May your light shine before others ..." (That they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.) Matthew 5:16.
- Give each participant a tea light to put into the candleholder.

Refer them to the stir-factor sheet in their "Reasons for the Seasons" Party Planners as you share some of the characteristics of the seasons of Epiphany and Pentecost. Point out that these seasons mark a time to grow in our awareness of God's presence and activity in our lives.

Activity:

Introduce yourself and the seasons associated with your Whatza Cookin' Learning Center. Point out the significance of the color "green." Explain that colors are often used to identify things, e.g. an athletic team or a national flag. And, just as the color green is related the season of summer because it is a time when many seeds grow and flourish or the color "white" is related to winter because many people encounter and experience snow during this time, the church uses colors to identify and interpret the life and ministry of Jesus throughout the calendar year.

Display an enlarged Church Year Wheel or refer to the one in the "Reasons for the Seasons" Party Planner. Note that the church has a special way of looking at the calendar year. Point out that Christians associate the life and ministry of Jesus with specific days and months of the year. Some of the days or events of the church year are the same as a calendar year, e.g. Christmas and Easter, but some of them are just recognized in the church, e.g. the days before Christmas, which are marked as a time to get our hearts ready for Jesus. Those days are called Advent.

Note that each of the Whatza Cookin' Learning Centers will highlight one or more of the days or seasons of the church year, according to their designated color. **This season will stir up some thoughts about the color green and the seasons of Epiphany and Pentecost.**

Engage participants in a brief discussion about why the color green might be associated with the seasons Epiphany and Pentecost. Suggest that it represents new life and growth. The actual festival of Pentecost is white, but the remainder of the season is green as is the season of Epiphany. The season of Epiphany begins on Epiphany and extends to Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of the season of Lent. The word epiphany means "to reveal" or "make

known.” Refer to Luke 2:25-32 and point out Simeon’s belief that God’s Son is revealed in Jesus. Pentecost begins with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Refer to John 14:15, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments and I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth who the world will not receive, because it neither sees him or knows him” as you introduce this season. Pentecost begins 50 days after Easter eve with a celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit and continues into November, with a grand celebration of Christ as King, bringing closure on this season and on the current Church Year.

Invite participants to engage in the craft activity as you have planned and prepared for it. Encourage them to set aside a place to display their candle mats and candleholders where they might also be enlightened by stories of God’s presence and activity in the Bible and inspired to share some of their own stories of faith in this day and time.

Briefly review the essential ingredients of this season as you invite participants to describe Miss Merri Mary and Greg the Grocer’s Special on Green on their “Stirrin’ Up a Celebration” menu cards. Distribute the green strips of cloth or crepe paper and encourage participants to tie or glue it onto their end of their Stirrin’ Spoons.

Refer to the stir-factor sheets for Epiphany and Pentecost in the “Reasons for the Seasons” Party Planner and invite participants to consider some ways they might celebrate this season at home.