

## Lesson Plan: Soap Making

### 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade

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### Lesson Summary

Today, none of us could imagine a world without soap. In fact we take for granted how important it is until we run out. Modern hygiene and our ability to prevent and stop the spread of infectious diseases rely on this humble staple of modern life. In this lesson, students will learn how soap was discovered and how the manufacturing of soap making has changed over time with our understanding of cleanliness and hygiene.

### Learning Objectives

Children will learn about how soap is produced throughout the world, and the uses of soap over the course of human history, as well as how they can make their own soap to use at home.

- The history of soap
- Soap production in the Southwestern borderlands
- Methods of modern soap production
- Follow a recipe to make homemade soap

### Background Information/Historical Context (For staff/teachers)

Today, none of us could imagine a world without soap. In fact, we take for granted how important it is until we run out. Modern hygiene and our ability to prevent and stop the spread of infectious diseases rely on this humble staple of modern life. Please see the resource file for a historic background on the use of soaps and soap production in history.

## Preparing the Lesson

- Read the background information
  - See Resource File 1 – History of Soap Making
- Print or download example photos
  - See Resource File 4 – Related Images
- Print or download the vocabulary page
  - See Resource File 2 – Related Vocabulary
- Gather the materials needed.
- The activities in the lesson are messy, so be sure you have gathered tablecloths and necessary clean up supplies.

## Teacher Presentation

- Summarize the history of soap making
  - See Resource File 1 – History of Soap Making
- Complete yucca root soap making presentation
  - See Hands-On Activity – Yucca Root Soap Making
- Introduce the related vocabulary list
  - See Resource File 2 – Related Vocabulary
- Complete hands-on activities which reinforce learning objectives.

## Essential Questions to Ask

- What is soap made of?
- How has soap production changed over time?

## Activities —

### Making Soaptree Yucca Root Soap

6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

In this activity, you will demonstrate for your student one way in which the yucca plant was, and continues to be used, for soap making. This time using the plant's root.

**Please see the resource files for detailed instructions on making soap using the Soaptree Yucca root.**

**Resource File 4 contains images of the Soaptree Yucca plant.**

### Making Soaptree Yucca Leaf Soap

3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

This activity can either be done as a student activity or a teacher-led demonstration showcasing another way in which the yucca plant was, and continues to be used, for soap making. This time using the plant's leaves.

**Please see the resource files for detailed instructions on making soap using the Soaptree Yucca leaves.**

**Resource File 4 contains images of the Soaptree Yucca plant.**

### Melt & Pour Soap Making (Cold Process)

3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

In this activity students will get to make their own soap to take home using the melt & pour method.

#### Materials Needed:

- Clear melt and pour glycerin soap base
- Pigment powder colorant dye
- Silicone molds
- Large crock pot – 2
- Glass or hard plastic cups
- Popsicle sticks
- Ladle
- Bags & plastic wrap to take home soap
- Small spray bottles
- 70% rubbing alcohol
- Markers (to mark molds)
- Tablecloths
- Scrub brush
- Sealable containers
- Paper towels
- Hammer
- Soap yucca root
- Soap yucca leaves
- Knife
- Warm & cold water (separate)
- Small strainer
- Small saw

Please see the resource files for detailed instructions on making some take home soap.

### **New Mexico State Standards:**

Please see Resource File 5 for a list of benchmarks and standards for this lesson.

### **Resources/Citations:**

Please see Resource File 6 for a list of resources and citations for the background information.

### **Questions & Comments**

We would love to hear from you and your students. Let us how your students did making soap! Send us photos of you and your students making soap. Please contact Instructional Coordinator, Alexandra McKinney, with questions or comments at [alexandra.mckinney@state.nm.us](mailto:alexandra.mckinney@state.nm.us).