

Ginger Fun: Smells, Shapes, and Sticky Glue!

Materials Needed:

- A small, real gingerbread cookie (for sensory exploration, optional for taste)
- Ground cinnamon or ginger spice in a small, safe container
- Large cutouts of a Gingerbread Man and/or a Gingerbread House (made from brown paper or cardboard)
- Construction paper shapes: circles, squares, and rectangles (small and large)
- Playdough (brown or plain)
- Small, easy-to-handle decorating items: large buttons, pom-poms, cereal pieces, or cotton balls
- Large glue stick or child-safe liquid glue
- Washcloths/wipes for easy cleanup
- Simple song (e.g., "The Muffin Man" adapted to "The Gingerbread Man")

Learning Objectives (I Can Statements)

By the end of this activity, the learner will be able to:

1. I can use my nose to smell the spice and my hands to touch the dough.
2. I can point to the circle and the square shapes when asked.
3. I can practice using the glue stick to stick things onto my gingerbread cutout.

Success Criteria

We know we succeeded when:

- We find the yummy smell of the gingerbread spice.
- We make a sound or motion for the shapes we see.
- We successfully put buttons or pom-poms onto our paper gingerbread friend.

Lesson Structure

1. Introduction: The Yummy Smell (Hook & Objectives)

Time: 5 minutes

The Spice Surprise

Instructional Method: Sensory Focus/Auditory

Activity: The educator brings out the jar of cinnamon or ginger and the gingerbread cookie, keeping them hidden at first.

Educator Talking Points (Modeling Language):

- "Oh, what is that smell? I smell something yummy! Sniff, sniff, sniff!" (Model a large sniff.)

- "It smells like... GINGERBREAD! Look! This is a little gingerbread man. Can you smell him? Good job!"
- "Today, we are going to use our noses to smell, our hands to touch, and we are going to find some shapes and make a sticky picture!"

2. Body: Explore, Shape, and Create (Content & Practice)

Time: 20-30 minutes

A. I DO: Sensory Exploration and Vocabulary (Modeling)

Instructional Method: Kinesthetic/Sensory

Activity: The educator introduces the playdough (the 'gingerbread dough') and models the basic sensory language.

Educator Talking Points:

- "Look at this dough. It feels SOFT. Can you squish it? Squish, squish, squish." (Model squishing and patting the dough.)
- "We can roll it! Roll, roll, roll. Is it sticky? A little sticky! Let's pat the dough."
- (If using a real cookie) "Look! The cookie is HARD. Tap, tap, tap. The dough is SOFT. We have soft and hard."

Formative Check: Does the child engage with the playdough? Do they attempt to mimic simple actions like rolling or patting?

B. WE DO: Shape Matching Fun (Shared Practice)

Instructional Method: Visual/Interactive

Activity: The educator introduces the large gingerbread paper cutout (man or house) and three basic shapes: circle, square, and optionally, rectangle.

Educator Talking Points:

- "Our gingerbread man needs buttons! What shape is a button? It's a CIRCLE. Round and round!" (Model tracing the circle shape.)
- "Look at this one. This is a SQUARE. It has straight lines. Square, square, square!" (Model placing the paper shapes onto the gingerbread cutout.)
- "Can you find the matching circle? Put the little circle on the big circle!" (Guide the child to match the small paper shape to the large shape drawn on the cutout.)

Formative Check: Can the child place the small shape onto the matching large shape with guidance?

C. YOU DO: Decorate Your Friend (Independent Practice)

Instructional Method: Fine Motor/Creative

Activity: The child uses the glue stick and small decorating items (pom-poms, buttons) to decorate their own paper gingerbread cutout.

Educator Talking Points:

- "Time for sticky glue! Open the glue stick. Rub, rub, rub the glue onto the paper." (Demonstrate how to hold and rub the large glue stick onto the paper.)
- "Now put a button right on the glue. Push it down! Good pushing!"
- (Encouragement): "You are making a wonderful, colorful gingerbread friend! More glue? Yes!"

Differentiation - Scaffolding: If using liquid glue, pre-apply small dots of glue and have the child only focus on placing the items. Use hand-over-hand technique for holding the glue stick.

Differentiation - Extension: For the more focused learner, ask them to glue only the 'red' pom-poms or only the items that feel 'fuzzy,' introducing early sorting concepts.

3. Conclusion: Cleanup and Goodbye (Closure & Recap)

Time: 5 minutes

Review and Rhyme

Instructional Method: Auditory/Movement

Activity: Sing a simple, familiar song adapted for the theme (e.g., to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"). Quick recap of key learning concepts.

Educator Talking Points:

- "Let's clean up our supplies! We are all finished making our gingerbread friend." (Model placing items in a container.)
- "What did we smell today? Yummy SPICE! What shape did we find? CIRCLE and SQUARE!"
- (Singing Example): *Gingerbread man, oh what fun, / We have just begun. / Smell the spice and touch the dough, / Now it's time to say hello!* (Encourage simple hand motions.)

Assessment

Formative Checks (During the Lesson)

- **Sensory Check:** Does the child react to the scent of ginger/cinnamon (e.g., sniffing, pointing)?
- **Language Check:** Does the child attempt to imitate simple vocabulary (e.g., "soft," "hard," "sticky")?
- **Shape Check:** Does the child correctly point to the circle shape on command (even 1 out of 2 times)?

Summative Assessment (End of Lesson)

Task: Completion of the Decorating Activity.

Evaluation: Assess the child's fine motor skills. Successful completion is defined as the child independently picking up and securing at least three decorating pieces onto the gingerbread cutout using the glue stick (demonstrating purpose and motor control).