

Universal Lesson Plan: A Week of Gingerbread Fun (Ages 2+)

Materials Needed (Per Day/Module)

- Age-appropriate gingerbread-themed book (e.g., *The Gingerbread Man*)
- Brown playdough (store-bought or homemade, preferably cinnamon/ginger scented)
- Gingerbread man cookie cutter (large, safe edges)
- Various safe loose parts for decorating (large buttons, dried beans, yarn pieces, pompoms - ensure they are too large to be a choking hazard)
- Cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg spices (in small, open bowls for safe smelling)
- Large paper cutouts of gingerbread people
- Washable glue sticks or liquid glue (toddler safe)
- Crayons or large markers (brown, red, white)
- Music source for movement activities
- Optional: Ingredients for a simple no-bake treat (e.g., mixing cream cheese and cinnamon)

Universal 5-Day Structure (Approx. 60 minutes per day)

Note: All activities must be monitored closely for safety and broken into short segments (5-10 minutes maximum) due to the developmental stage of the 2-year-old learner.

DAY 1: SENSORY EXPLORATION - SMELL AND TOUCH

Learning Objectives

- The learner will identify the color brown.
- The learner will explore different textures using hands and sensory materials.
- The learner will attempt to name two new scents (spice names or "yummy/spicy").

Introduction (5 minutes)

Hook: "What is that yummy smell? Let's use our nose!" (Hold up a small bowl of cinnamon or gingerbread spice mixture.)

Activity: Story Time Warm-up (I Do/We Do): Read a very short, engaging version of *The Gingerbread Man*. Focus on the words "run" and "catch."

Body: The Spice Table (45 minutes)

1. I Do (Modeling Scent/Texture):

- Teacher demonstrates gentle interaction with the spices. "Look, this is brown! This is cinnamon. Smell, smell, yummy!"
- Teacher places a small amount of brown playdough on the table. "Look, soft and brown, like our gingerbread man!"

2. We Do (Guided Exploration):

- Offer the learner small containers of cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg. Guide them to smell each one. Use simple language: "Spicy smell," "Sweet smell," "Good smell."
- Introduce the brown playdough. Help the learner pat, poke, and squish the dough.

3. You Do (Independent Sensory Play):

- The learner explores the playdough freely.
- **Formative Assessment:** Observe if the learner attempts to mimic the actions (patting, squishing) or uses any related vocabulary (brown, soft, yummy).

Conclusion (10 minutes)

Closure: Sing a simple cleanup song while putting the playdough away.

Recap: "We smelled the yummy spice! We played with the brown dough. Good job finding the brown!"

DAY 2: FINE MOTOR FUN - ROLLING AND CUTTING

Learning Objectives

- The learner will practice rolling playdough into long or flat shapes.
- The learner will practice using a cookie cutter.
- The learner will develop hand-eye coordination by placing small items onto the dough.

Introduction (5 minutes)

Hook: Show the gingerbread cookie cutter. "Look, we can make our friend! It's time to roll, roll, roll!"

Activity: Movement Warm-up (Gross Motor): Do five big arm rolls forward and five backward. "Roll your arms like we roll the dough!"

Body: Making Gingerbread Friends (45 minutes)

1. I Do (Modeling Rolling and Cutting):

- Teacher models pushing the dough flat with hands. "Flat, flat, flat."
- Teacher models pressing the cookie cutter down firmly and lifting the shape out. "Push hard! Lift up! Hello, gingerbread man!"

2. We Do (Guided Practice):

- Help the learner flatten the dough. Use hand-over-hand guidance to help them press the cutter firmly onto the playdough.
- Introduce small, safe manipulatives (buttons/beans). Guide the learner to poke them gently into the cut-out shape. "Button on the tummy! Poke, poke, poke."

3. You Do (Independent Practice):

- Provide a tray with the dough and cutter. Allow the learner time to practice rolling, patting, and cutting independently.
- **Differentiation (Scaffolding):** If rolling is too hard, provide the dough already flattened slightly.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

Closure: Look at the shapes the learner created. Give specific praise. "Wow, you made so many friends!"

Recap: "We rolled the dough, and we made a gingerbread man! We used our strong hands!"

DAY 3: ART AND DECORATION - GLUE AND STICKING

Learning Objectives

- The learner will practice using a glue stick or liquid glue safely.
- The learner will place decorative materials onto a template (fine motor precision).
- The learner will identify and use the color brown with a drawing tool.

Introduction (5 minutes)

Hook: Lay out a large pre-cut paper gingerbread shape. "This friend is bare! We need to give him buttons and eyes! Can you help?"

Activity: Color Identification: Hold up the brown crayon/marker and the paper cutout. "Brown! Just like the gingerbread man. Let's color!"

Body: The Decoration Station (45 minutes)

1. I Do (Modeling Gluing and Coloring):

- Teacher models simple coloring on the paper cutout using the brown crayon. "Draw, draw, brown legs!"
- Teacher models opening the glue stick, making one simple dot of glue, and sticking a large pompom/button onto the dot. "Glue dot! Button stick!"

2. We Do (Guided Practice):

- Help the learner hold the crayon or marker to color a small area brown.
- Assist the learner in using the glue stick to make small dots. Encourage them to press the decorative item onto the glue dot. Focus on 3-5 successful placements.

3. You Do (Independent Decoration):

- Provide various decorative materials (pompoms, yarn, stickers). Allow the learner to choose where to place the decorations.
- **Success Criteria:** The learner successfully adheres at least two items to the paper using the glue medium.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

Closure: Display the decorated gingerbread person. Let the learner name their creation (or give it a simple name like "Button Man").

Recap: "We used glue, glue, glue! And we gave our friend many colorful buttons!"

DAY 4: GROSS MOTOR AND STORYTELLING - RUN, RUN!

Learning Objectives

- The learner will practice imitation and following simple movement directions (running in place, jumping).
 - The learner will demonstrate recognition of key story phrases ("Run, run, as fast as you can!").
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- The learner will use gross motor skills to navigate a simple obstacle course.

Introduction (5 minutes)

Hook: Re-read the section of *The Gingerbread Man* where he runs away. Emphasize the sound effects and movement words.

Activity: Run, Run, Run! (Movement Warm-up): Play fast-paced, child-friendly music and encourage the learner to run in place or skip/bounce freely.

Body: The Running Game (45 minutes)

1. I Do (Modeling Movement):

- Teacher models running in place and shouting, "Run, run, run!"
- Teacher sets up two safe 'obstacles' (e.g., crawling under a blanket draped over two chairs; walking around a tower of blocks).

2. We Do (Guided Movement):

- Run together. Stop and freeze when the music stops.
- Guide the learner through the simple obstacle course. "Crawl like a kitten! Step over the blocks!"

3. You Do (Independent Practice/Play):

- Encourage the learner to choose which obstacles to do next.
- **Differentiation (Extension):** Introduce simple sequencing. "First we crawl, then we jump, then we run!"
- **Formative Assessment:** Observe if the learner attempts the required movements and shows excitement when saying "Run, run!"

Conclusion (10 minutes)

Closure: Cool down with slow music, stretching arms up high like the oven and then melting low like cooling gingerbread.

Recap: "We ran and we jumped! Just like the speedy gingerbread man! Now we are tired!"

DAY 5: CULINARY AND REVIEW - MIX AND TASTE

Learning Objectives

- The learner will practice scooping and stirring with simple ingredients.
- The learner will use sensory input (taste) related to the theme.
- The learner will recall favorite activities from the week.

Introduction (5 minutes)

Hook: "We learned all about gingerbread! Today we get to make a yummy treat to eat!"

Activity: Theme Review: Hold up the playdough, the spice, and the cutter. Ask: "What is this? (Playdough/brown). What does this smell like? (Yummy!)."

Body: The Simple Mix (45 minutes)

(Adaptation Note: If baking actual gingerbread cookies is feasible and safe, do that. Otherwise, use this simplified, no-bake option.)

1. I Do (Modeling Mixing):

- Teacher models spooning a safe, edible ingredient (e.g., yogurt, soft cream cheese) into a bowl. "Scoop, scoop, in the bowl."
- Teacher adds a tiny pinch of cinnamon/spice and models stirring. "Stir, stir, mix it up!"

2. We Do (Guided Cooking):

- Give the learner a small, sturdy bowl and a spoon. Help them scoop their base ingredient.
- Let the learner shake a small amount of cinnamon or vanilla into the mix.
- Assist the learner in stirring the mixture until combined.

3. You Do (Tasting and Celebration):

- Provide a small taste of the finished mix (on a cracker, finger, or spoon).
- **Summative Assessment:** Ask the learner which activity they liked best (pointing to the playdough, the painting, or the running).

Conclusion (10 minutes)

Closure: Enjoy the treat together. Play the story music one last time.

Recap: "We made a yummy snack! We played with brown dough, we made a running friend, and we had fun all week! Yay, gingerbread!"