

# poetic YOUTH

## Lesson 3: Food, Culture, & Poetry

**Learning Objectives:** To explore the idea of culture through food and poetry.

**Length of Session:** 60 minutes

**Supplies:** Writing Materials, Poems, paper plates

**Opening:** Provide a brief Introduction to the idea of culture. Ask students what they think the word means, add any important missing information, and talk about cultural indicators. Discuss how food is an important indicator of culture because it is a shared experience. Move into how poetry about food can be used to convey a specific culture.

Length: 5 minutes

**Warm-up:** Break into a circle. Tell students to raise their hands if they cannot hear another student. Start with a paper plate with a picture of a spoon on it (there will be one with a fork and knife, chopsticks, and one with a hand). Starting with facilitator, name foods that are eaten with the utensil on the plate and then toss it frisbee-style across the circle. Whoever catches it has to name another food in the category and then toss the plate to someone else. How many foods can be listed before the plate is dropped or we run out of ideas?

Length: 5-10 minutes

**Brief Discussion:** Share one or two food based poems and ask students to identify specifics about the poem, i.e. sensory details, who was cooking, who was eating, the general meaning of the poem, etc. How are these things indicators of culture? How do they convey a shared experience? How are the specific details connected to certain thoughts and emotions?

Length: 5-10 minutes

**Writing Exercise 1:** Students identify a dish that is typically shared on special occasions by their family. For that dish, they list three sensory details. Students list who cooks the food, where it gets eaten, where it gets served, and who eats it. For each food listed, write down two or three sensory details about the person/place. For example, pumpkin pie: smells like nutmeg, flaky crust topped with whipped cream, the surface is wrinkled like an old lady's face. Person cooking it, Grandma: too much perfume, hunched over. Where, Thanksgiving at Grandma and Grandpa's house: ornaments on a class shelf, thermostat turned up too high. Who eats it, older cousins and uncles: watching football, grandpa looks like a stuffed turkey on the couch, whipped cream piled high on thick slices of pie.

Length: 5-10 minutes

**Writing Exercise 2:** Students use the listed information to put together a scene from a special event. Format is 8 lines, no rhyme scheme, but students should incorporate at least 3 things they listed, and the food they choose should be central to the poem.

Length: 15 minutes

**Writing Exercise 3 (Optional):** Collaborative poem: Create a collaborative piece by imagining a potluck where each participant brings their favorite dish. Each person drafts a line about what they are bringing; combined, this creates the first stanza. Each person writes another line about what they're doing at the gathering; combine these to create the second stanza.

Length: 10 minutes

**Closing:** Ask for volunteers to share their poems, perhaps go around and have everyone share a single line or two at least first.

Length: 5-10 minutes