



Social Studies Unit | Grades 6-8 | Lesson 3: Lye Soap Don't Lie

Lesson Description

Lye soap was essential in everyday life in the 1800s. Whether it was taking a bath, catching fish, or trying to take the itch out of poison ivy, this soap had the remedy. In this activity students will visit Granny's Homemade Lye Soap and learn how the soap was made, what it was used for, and other fun facts along the way. So go visit Granny and see why Lye soap don't lie!

Concepts

Lye
Lard

Causticity

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn how Lye Soap is made.
 - Understand what Lye Soap was used for in the past and how it's used today.
 - Learn specific vocabulary that goes along with the making of lye soap.
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Content Standards

GLE's: SS 3b, c; SS 5c, e; SS 6i

National Standards in Social Studies

Arts and Communication

- **Standard 5:** Knows a range of arts and communication works from various historical and cultural periods.
 - Benchmark 5, Grades 9-12: Knows art forms that reflect cultural elements of the local community (e.g. folk art, utilitarian objects, community environment (landscape and architecture), works of local professional artists and craftsmen).

Grades K-4 History & Level II [Grade 3-4]

- **Standard 2:** Understands the history of a local community and how communities in North America varied long ago.
 - Benchmark 1, Grades K-2: Understands the changes in community life over time (e.g., changes in goods and services; changes in architecture and
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- landscape; change in jobs, schooling, transportation, communication, religion, recreation).
- Benchmark 7, Grades 3-4: Knows the history of the local community since it's founding, the people who came, the changes they brought, and significant events over time.
- Benchmark 8, Grades 3-4: Understands changes in land use and economic activities in the local community since its founding (e.g., changes in technology, the work people did, transportation, local resources).

Time Required

Approximately 30 minutes

Materials

- Student activity sheet from Kids-U-Cation website
 - Silver Dollar City Park Map
 - Writing utensil
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Procedures

1. Print off the student activity sheet from the Kids-U-Cation website and hand out to students.
 2. Pick up a park map upon entering Silver Dollar City to get to Granny's Homemade Lye Soap.
 3. Turn into teacher for a completion or accuracy grade.
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Closure

Review the key points of this lesson by discussing the following:

- Give an example of a "strange" ingredient in Lye soap.
 - Would any of you be willing to use Lye soap today?
 - Give me one of the steps in making Lye soap.
 - What was Lye soap used for?
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Assessment/Independent Practice

Give an assignment or test of your choice.



Name/Date: _____

Lye Soap Don't Lie

"Making Lye Soap: The Essential Skill of the 1800s"

You may be wondering how lard (fat from pigs) and lye (a cleaning agent) can work together to solve household problems from a simple cleaning to relieving the itch of poison ivy. Take a step back into time, visit a master craftsman, and find the connection between lard and lye and the useful soap it produces.

Materials: Map of Silver Dollar City, Lye Soap Don't Lie Student Activity Sheet

Directions: Use the Silver Dollar City park map to find Granny's Homeade Lye Soap. Introduce yourself to the craftsman and ask the four interview questions. Read the informational passage on the student activity sheet and complete the true or false questions.

Craftsman Interview Questions

Name of Craftsman: _____

1. How long does the lye soap making process take from the beginning to the end?

2. What are the steps in making lye soap?

3. What are some household uses of lye soap?

4. Why was lye soap so important in the 1800s and today?



Lye Soap



Fascinating Facts

Did you know?

- * Lye Soap cleanses the skin
- * Helps with pain from sunburn
- * Takes out stains on clothing
- * Fights dandruff
- * Can be used for fish bait
- * Relieves itching from poison ivy and bug bites

Lye soap is made from two key ingredients: lye and lard. The lye is a cleaning agent and the lard (fat from a pig) served as the balancing agent of the causticity (means it could burn the skin if not done properly) of lye. Lye was extracted usually from wood ashes then added to the lard. Two ingredients were cooked in large kettles and stirred for many hours. Once cooked together the mixture was poured into wooden molds. Once air-dried, cooled, and hardened the lye soap was cut into bars and ready to be used as a household staple.

True or False

Directions: Write true if the statement is factual about lye soap. Write false if the statement is not true.

1. _____ Lye soap has many household uses including: great for washing dishes, helps alleviate minor skin irritations, and can be used as fish bait.
2. _____ Lye soap is no longer used today.
3. _____ Lye soap is made with three chemical agents: glycerin, palm oil, and sodium hydroxide.
4. _____ Lye was collected from wood ashes such as fireplace ashes then added to the lard.
5. _____ Lard (usually fat from pigs) was collected during butchering time in the fall season and then cooked in a large kettle over a fire.