



**Grade Level:** K-2

**Essential Skills:** 4, 5, 9

**CCSS:** K.RF.1, K.RI.1, K.RI.10, K.SL.1, 1.RI.1, 1.SL.1, 2.RI.1, 2.SL.1

**Social Science:** 2.17

**NGSS:** K-LS1-1, 2-LS2-1

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Materials:**

**Three Sisters Coloring Garden Kit\* or:**

**Per Student**

- 1 plastic glove\*
- 5 cotton balls\*
- 2 seeds of each of the following: squash, beans and corn\*
- *Three Sisters Coloring Booklet\**
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Glue

\*Included in the kit from Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom

**AITC Library Resources:**

**Books:**

Our School Garden  
Pumpkins  
How many seeds in a pumpkin?  
From Seed to Pumpkin

**More Lessons:**

Turf Buddies  
Seed, Soil, Sun  
Living Necklaces

# Lesson to Grow

## Three Sisters Coloring Garden

**Description:**

Students will investigate the “three sisters” crops (corn, beans, and squash) and explore the benefit to planting these crops together.

**Activity Directions:**

**Part 1: Introduction to Vegetables**

1. Read the book *The Vegetables we Eat* by Gail Gibbons.

2. Ask students the following questions:

- a. Why are vegetables an important part of our diet?
- b. What are the basic needs of plants?

3. Explain to students that vegetables are a very important part of our diets and Native American’s diets. Today, we are going to explore the three vegetables that many Native American tribes refer to as the “Three Sisters.”

**Part 2: Legend of the Three Sisters**

1. Ask your students if they know what a legend is. After students have offered their own ideas and prior knowledge, explain to your students that a legend is a way of passing stories from generation to generation. Legends are very important in many Native American cultures.

2. Explain to your class that they will be investigating the legend of the “Three Sisters” which focuses on growing food using techniques by some Native Americans. The “three sisters” refers to three vegetable crops that were commonly planted together – corn, beans and squash.

3. Provide each student with a copy of the *Three Sisters Coloring Booklet*. Read through the booklet as a class having students complete each page by coloring the pictures. On the page where each “sister” is introduced there is a circle. Provide each student with a single seed that corresponds with the picture to paste in the circle.

4. Optional: The back page of the booklet contains a place for students to document the germination progress of their seeds that they will complete in Part 3 of the lesson.

**Part 3: Planting a Three Sisters Garden**

Allow students the opportunity to explore the three sisters growing through germination in a glove.

1. Instruct students to write their name on the palm section of a clear plastic glove with a marker. Also, label each finger with the following each type of seed they will be planting in the glove.

2. Dip five cotton balls in water. Give each cotton ball 3 flat squeezes to wring out excess water.

3. Place the provided seeds on a small paper plate or paper towel and pick up with a moistened cotton ball.

4. Put the cotton ball with the seeds attached into the matching labeled finger in your glove. Teacher Tip: You may need to use a pencil to get the cotton ball all the way to the tips of the glove fingers.

5. Repeat steps three and four with the additional cotton balls and seeds.

6. Tape the glove to a window, chalkboard, or wall. A clothesline can also be used with clothespins holding the gloves on the line.

7. Germination will take place in 3-5 days. The cotton balls should stay moist through germination. If one or more appear dry you can add a little water with an eyedropper or spray bottle. Germinated seeds can be transplanted in 1-2 weeks. Cut the tip off each finger and pull out the germinated seeds (cotton ball and all), and transplant into a container with soil.