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# My Thoughts and Feelings

**Project skill**

exploring your attitudes about aging and older people

**Life skill**

understanding yourself

**What to do**

Check each statement, indicating whether you agree or disagree. If you do not understand a particular statement, ask your group leader, a family member, or project helper for assistance.



all old folks are not the same

1. Older people are set in their ways.
2. Older people love children.
3. All older people are pretty much the same.
4. Older people don't have a sense of humor.
5. If you live long enough, you'll become senile or confused.
6. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
7. Older people prefer people their own age.
8. Older people often have interesting ideas.
9. I usually try to help older people.
10. Sometimes I wonder what it is like to be old.
11. Older people don't understand teenagers.
12. People over 65 should just enjoy life.
13. Most older people like to play bingo.
14. Older people think they are always right.

Agree	Not Sure	Disagree

Adapted from *Growing Together*. 1992. Blair County Cooperative Extension, The Pennsylvania State University, and Home Nursing Agency of Blair County.

# What Do You Think?

**Project skill**

exploring your attitudes about aging and older people

**What to do**

Complete the following activity, and discuss your answers with your group or with your project helper.

**Life skill**

understanding yourself  
relating to others



What three words would you use to describe an old person?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Name three good things about growing old.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Name three bad things about growing old.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Looking back: Of course, you can think of both good and bad things about aging and older people. That's because older people have both good and bad traits, just like everyone else!

all old folks are not the same

# Aging Quiz

### Project skill

learning what is true and false about aging and older people

### Life skill

learning to learn

### What to do

Answer the following true/false statements by circling the correct answer. Discuss your answers as a group or with your project helper. Family members may also be interested in your results.



- 1. Older people are all alike. T F
- 2. Most older people live in nursing homes. T F
- 3. If an older person is hard of hearing, you should shout so that he or she can hear you. T F
- 4. An older person who has a hearing problem will know it. T F
- 5. Older people should not exercise because they might fall. T F
- 6. Accidents sometimes happen to older people because they have poor eyesight. T F
- 7. Older people sometimes develop blisters on their feet without noticing them. T F
- 8. As eyes age, it may become more difficult to tell the color green from the color blue. T F
- 9. Our muscles become weaker as we get older. T F
- 10. The older you get, the less you sleep. T F

all old folks are not the same





# Read to Know More

## Project skill

learning more about older people by reading a story that has characters from at least two generations

## What to do

Choose a book from your leader's youth reading list, read it, and answer these questions. (Your leader may have the books for you to check out. Just ask!)

## Life skills

learning to learn  
relating to others



My book choice is

---

The author is

---

What did this book teach you about growing older?

---

---

---

# What's in the News?

## Project skill

learning more about older people

## Life skill

learning to learn

## What to do

Find a newspaper article or advertisement that features an older person, attach it to this page, and answer the questions.



*(Attach article or advertisement here or on the back of this page.)*

1. How does the clipping or ad portray older people?

---



---



---

2. Do you think the clipping or ad is a fair portrayal of older people? What would make it better?

---



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# Portraits of Myself

**Project skill**

realizing that everybody will grow old

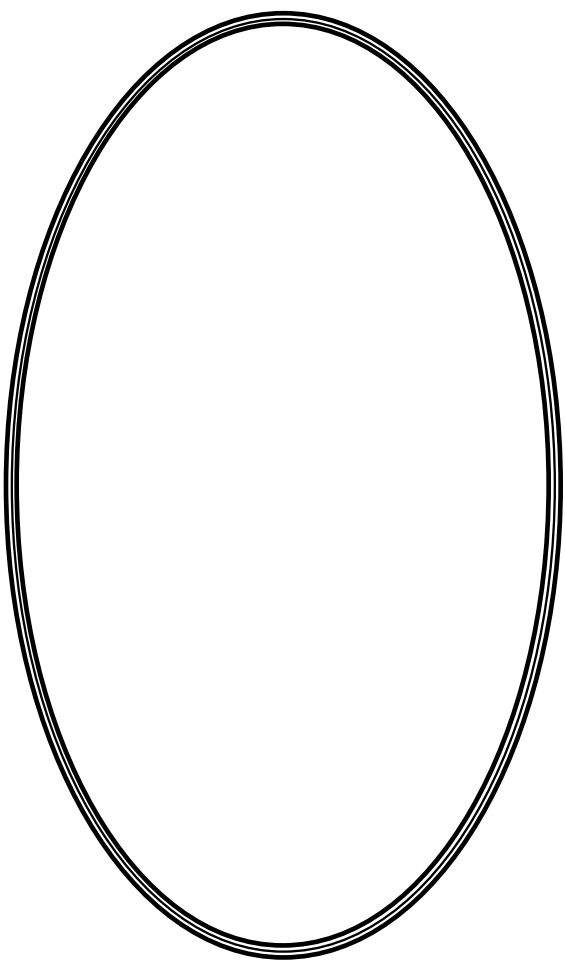
**Life skill**

understanding yourself

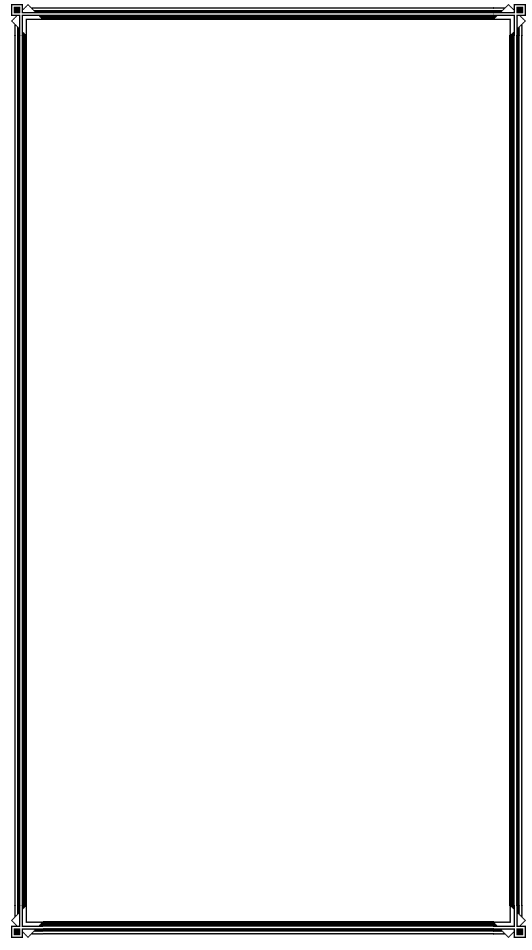
**What to do**

What do you think you will be like when you are an older person? On these pages, use the space in each box to draw a

picture of yourself at a stage of life that you have already experienced or will experience. For example, draw yourself as a baby in the first box and as a small child in the second box. In the boxes labeled young adult, middle-aged adult, and older adult, draw yourself in a way as you imagine or hope that you will be. What will you look like at these ages, and what will you be doing? Have fun!

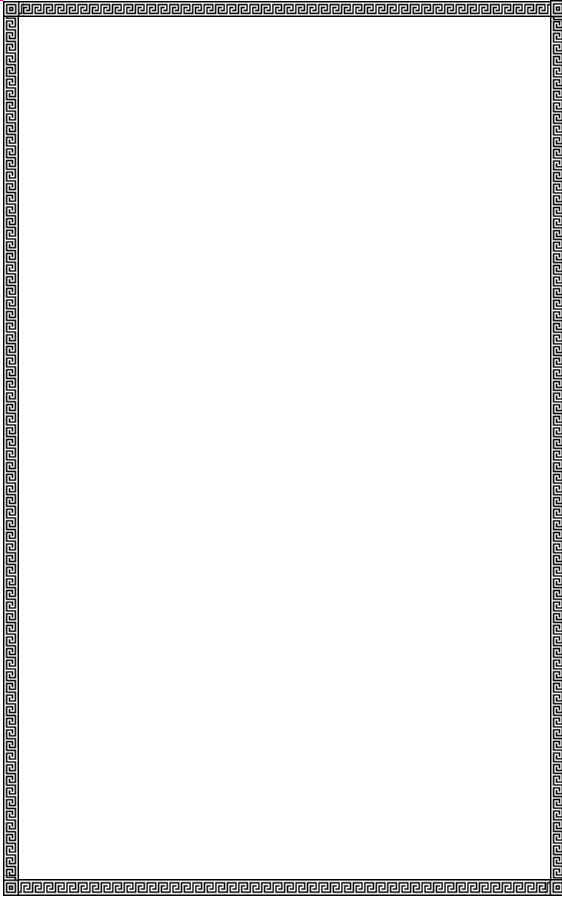


baby (birth to 2 years)

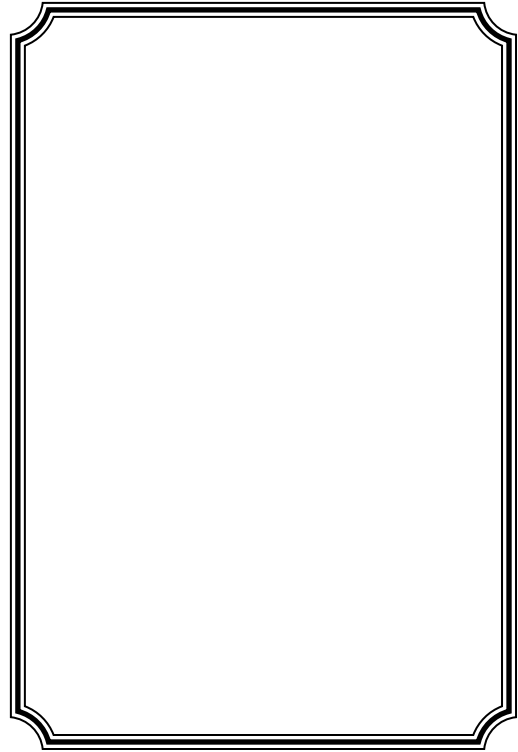


child (3 to 12 years)

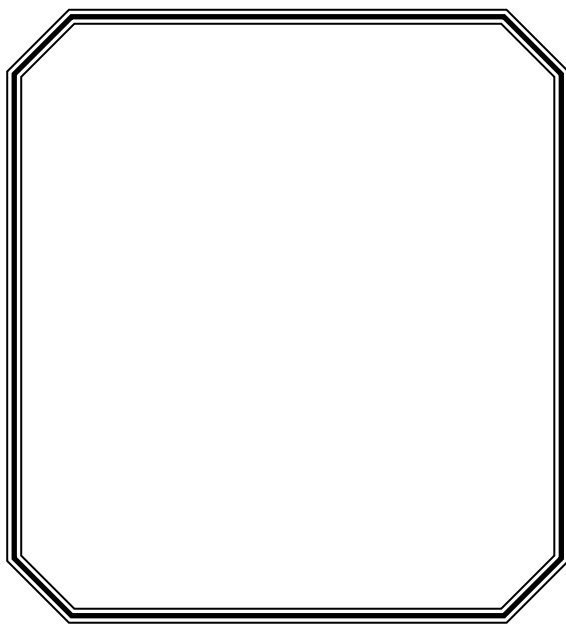
how old is old?



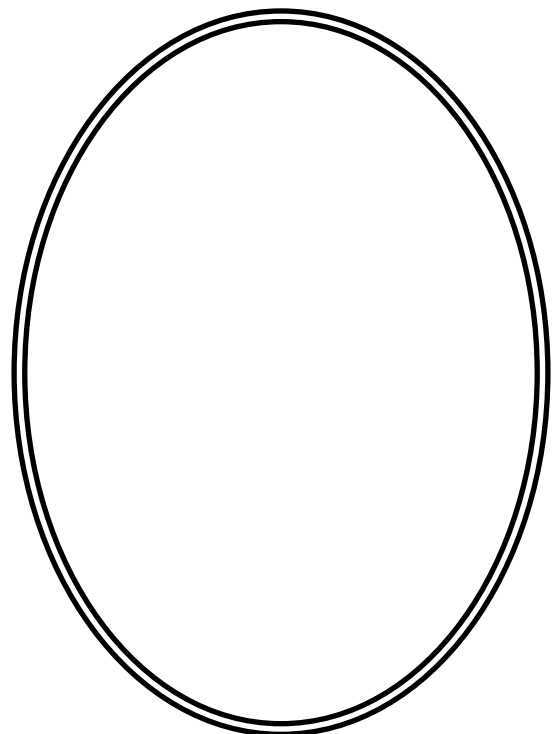
teenager (13 to 19 years)



young adult (20 to 40 years)



middle-aged adult (40 to 65 years)



older adult (65+ years)

how old is old?

# My Older Friends

**Project skill**

identifying older friends and family members

**Life skills**

communicating with others  
relating to others

**What to do:**

List five people you know who are at least 65 years old. Include their names, their ages, and what they like to do. If you do not know the answers to some of the questions, visit or call your older friends and ask them!



how old is old?

Name	Age	Hobbies/Interests

# People Portrait

## Project skill

making a collage of many kinds of people doing many different things

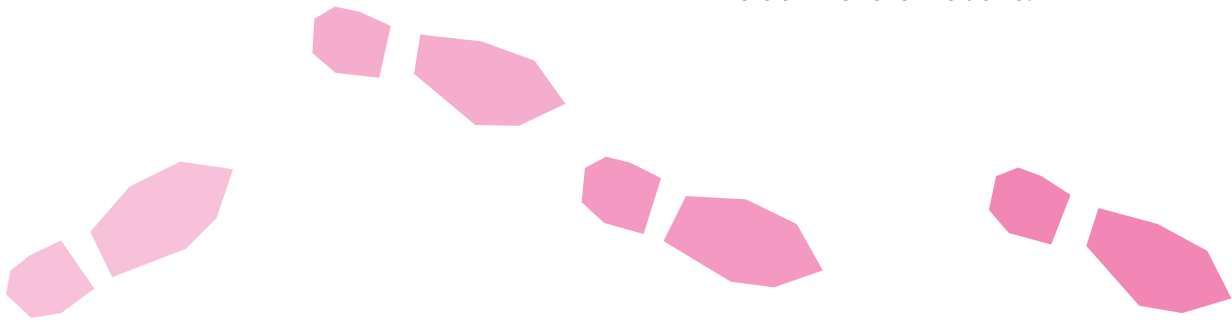
## Life skill

relating to others

## What to do

Look for pictures of all kinds of people, especially people of all ages doing all kinds of things together. Glue all of the people pictures together to form a collage (a big picture).

You can do this project alone or in a small group. It's especially fun to do with an older friend or relative.



# Interview an Older Friend

## Project skill

discovering new things about an older friend or family member

## Life skills

communicating with others  
relating to others

## What to do

This activity helps you find out more about an older friend or family member. Choose a person at least 65 years old to interview. It might be a family member, friend, or neighbor. Ask questions about your subject's experiences as a child, as a young adult, and as an older adult. Write the answers after the questions.



## Childhood

1. Did you have a favorite toy? If it was a doll or stuffed animal, what was its name?

---

2. What was your favorite candy? Do you associate it with a particular person or time?

---

3. Did you have pets as a child? What kind and what were their names?

---

4. Did you have a nickname? How did you get it?

---

5. Did you have chores around the house?

---

6. Do you remember a favorite bedtime story or poem?

---

7. What was your favorite subject in school? Was homework hard or easy for you?

---

8. Can you remember a historic event that happened when you were in school? Who told you about it? Your teacher? Your mother when you got home?

---

9. Did you ever want to run away? Why?

---

10. Did your father have a favorite saying you can remember him repeating? How about your mother? Do you sometimes find their words coming out of your mouth?

---

### Young adult

1. What was your first job?

---

2. Did you date a lot? What did you like to do for fun?

---

3. Do you remember your first big romance? Did you get married, or how did the relationship end?

---

4. Is there a particular song you associate with that time of your life?

---

5. What was your first home like? Describe your household appliances.

---

how old is old?

## ACTIVITY

36

6. Did you have children? Who was the first person you called to say "It's a girl" or "It's a boy?"

---

7. What was the funniest experience you ever had with a child (yours or someone else's)?

---

8. What was your scariest moment as a parent? Or the scariest moment you experienced with any child?

---

9. What was the best trip or vacation you ever took? Why was it so special?

---

10. What was the best thing about this part of your life? The worst thing?

---

### Older adult

1. What is your favorite hobby or activity?

---

2. Do you enjoy a slower pace now, or are you as busy as ever?

---

3. If you have had to slow down because of age, what activities do you miss?

---

4. Has retirement been a good or bad experience? Why?

---

5. Do you have grandchildren? Do you see them often?

---

6. What is the best part about being or not being a grandparent? The worst part?

---

7. What things do you get to do now that you couldn't do when you were younger?

---

8. What are some of the biggest changes you've seen in your lifetime?

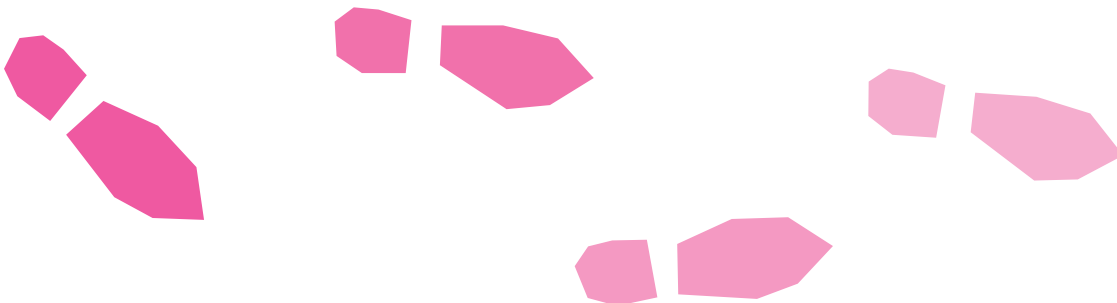
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9. Which president did you admire most during your lifetime? Was there another public figure you particularly admired?

---

10. What age has been the best age of your life? Why?

---



Adapted from Greene, B., and D.G. Fulford. 1993. *To Our Children's Children*. New York: Doubleday.

# Looking Through Someone Else's Eyes

**Project skill**

experiencing what it is like to have vision loss

**Life skill**

relating to others

**What to do**

You can experience what a loss in vision is like for an older person by using sunglasses with yellow lenses. Put the glasses on and listen carefully as your leader sets the stage for you. Now try to perform these simple tasks.



*Task A*

Find the names of three different people on a telephone-book page. Write down their names and phone numbers:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Task B*

Look for colored items in the room. Especially look for items that are blue and green. Now listen carefully as your leader sets the stage for Task B. Were the blue and green colors difficult to tell apart? What other colors were difficult to distinguish?

making sense of sensory changes

# Helping a Person Who Has Vision Problems

**Project skill**

discovering ways to help an older person who has vision problems

**What to do**

List some things you can do to create a safe and comfortable environment for an older person who has vision problems.

**Life skills**

relating to others  
problem solving and decision making



For example,

Make sure there is enough light in the room to see clearly.

Make sure there are no throw rugs, toys, or other objects that could be tripped over.

Now it's your turn.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

## Project skill

experiencing hearing loss

## Life skill

relating to others

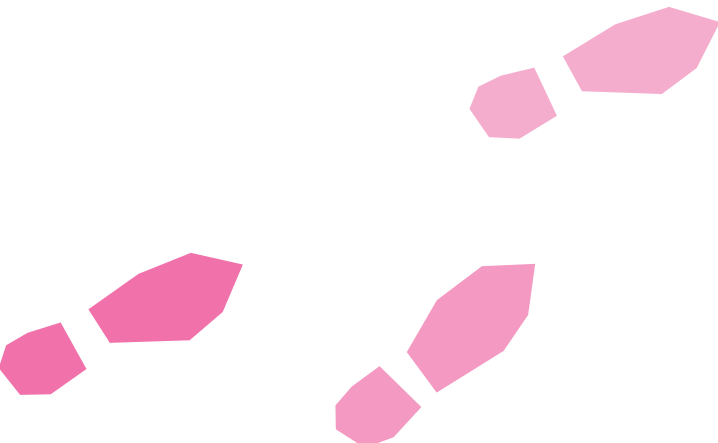
## What to do

You will be asked to write down ten words that you will hear on the “unfair hearing test” cassette. There are three columns on your answer sheet. The first time you hear the words, some of the high-pitched sounds will be taken out. This is how words sound to people who have hearing problems. Write your answers in column A.

The second time, you will hear the same words. This time, the pitch will be normal, but the volume will be low. Write your answers in column B.

Now you will hear the ten words again. This is what they would sound like if you were wearing a hearing aid. This time, write the words in column C. Good luck!





**Answer Sheet**

Column A	Column B	Column C
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
7	7	7
8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10

making sense of sensory changes

# What Did You Say?

**Project skill**

experiencing hearing loss

**Life skill**

relating to others

**What to do**

You can experience what it is like to have a hearing loss by placing cotton or ear plugs in your ears. Turn the radio up loud; then turn the television on with the volume at a normal range. Try to determine what is being said on the television. Discuss your feelings as a group or with your project helper.



Was it difficult to concentrate on the television program?

---

---

How much of the program did you hear?

---

---

Was it frustrating to listen to the program with all that background noise?

---

---

Your thoughts

---

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Adapted from *Growing Together*. 1992. Blair County Cooperative Extension, The Pennsylvania State University, and Home Nursing Agency of Blair County.

making sense of sensory changes

# Helping a Person Who Has Hearing Problems

**Project skill**

discovering ways to help an older person who has hearing problems

**Life skills**

communicating with others  
relating to others  
problem solving and decision making

**What to do**

Communicating with an older person who has trouble hearing can be frustrating for both of you. List some things you can do that might help the communication process.



For example,

Look directly at the person when you are talking. And don't shout.

Lower the pitch of your voice.

Now it's your turn.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

making sense of sensory changes

# Butterfingers

## Project skill

experiencing difficulties with touch and dexterity

## Life skill

relating to others

## What to do

You can understand what it's like to have trouble moving your fingers and lifting things with the help of transparent tape and gloves.

If you place transparent tape around all of your upper finger joints, your fingers will feel stiff.

If you place a glove on each hand, you will feel as if you have a reduced sense of touch.

Now that you have the transparent tape and gloves on your hands, listen carefully as your leader sets the stage for each task. To make the experiences even more difficult, wear the yellowed glasses!

**Important:** *A medicine bottle is used in the following task for demonstration purposes only. If your parent(s) have a rule against touching medicine bottles, don't attempt the task until you have permission.*



### Task A

1. Take out the medicine bottle filled with small, colored buttons.
2. Open the bottle.
3. Pull out one "pill."
4. What color is the "pill?"
5. How many "pills" remain in the bottle?
6. How many different colors of "pills" are in the bottle?
7. Put all the "pills" back in the bottle and close the lid.

### Task B

1. Take out a string.
2. Tie the string into a bow.
3. Untie the string.

### Task C

1. Take out the coin purse.
2. Open the purse.
3. Count out \$1.30.
4. Hand the money to a partner.  
(**Note:** Please put the money back in the coin purse after completing this task.)

### Task D

1. Take out a deck of playing cards.
2. Shuffle the cards.
3. Deal seven cards to yourself.
4. Put the cards in order from lowest to highest value while they remain in your hands.
5. Shuffle the cards once more and put them away.

# Helping a Person Who Has Physical Limitations

**Project skill**

discovering ways to help an older person who has physical limitations

**Life skills**

relating to others  
problem solving and decision making

**What to do**

You can help people who have trouble performing tasks because they are stiff and can't move around well. List some things you can do to help an older person who has limited physical abilities.



For example,

*Offer to help the person walk by offering your arm.*

*Don't rush people if they want to complete a task themselves.*

Now it's your turn.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

making sense of sensory changes

# Pass the Jelly

## Project skill

experiencing changes in the senses of taste and smell

## Life skill

relating to others

## What to do

To experience the frustration of losing your senses of taste and smell, try the following tasks. Put on your glasses and gloves again, and you will use other items in your “immediate aging kit” as well.



### Task A

1. Take out crackers and jelly.
2. Place a small amount of jelly on the cracker.
3. Hold your nose and take a bite of the cracker.
4. Try to guess the flavor of the jelly.

Flavor? \_\_\_\_\_

### Task B

1. Take out a piece of chewing gum or a mint.
2. Unwrap the piece of chewing gum or the mint.
3. Hold your nose, and place the gum or mint in your mouth.
4. Try to guess the flavor of the gum or mint.

Flavor? \_\_\_\_\_

# Helping a Person Who Has Experienced Losses in Taste and Smell

## Project skill

discovering ways to help an older person who has experienced losses in his or her senses of taste and smell

## What to do

List some things you can do to help older people who are experiencing losses in their senses of taste and smell.

## Life skills

relating to others  
problem solving and decision making



For example,

*Offer herbs and spices to enhance the flavor of their food.*

---

*Make sure their smoke detectors are in working order.*

---

Now it's your turn.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_



# Changing Attitudes

**Project skill**

exploring your attitudes about aging and older people

**Life skill**

understanding yourself

**What to do**

Think about what you have learned from participating in *Walk in My Shoes*. Answer the following questions, and discuss your answers with the group and with your project helper.



What are the three most important things you learned about growing older or about older people?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, today's older people  
were yesterday's children.  
Someday, you will be an older  
person, too.  
Enjoy every stage of life!

what have you learned?

## Youth Reading List

Choose a book to read from the list that follows. Check with your leader to see if the books are available through your Cooperative Extension unit office. They may also be available through your local library.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Book</b>	<b>Author</b>
PS-2	<i>Grandfather and I</i>	Helen Buckley
PS-2	<i>Grandmother and I</i>	Helen Buckley
PS-2	<i>Just Grandma and Me</i>	Mercer Mayer
PS-2	<i>Just Grandpa and Me</i>	Mercer Mayer
PS-3	<i>Amazing Grace</i>	Mary Hoffman
PS-3	<i>How Old Is Old?</i>	Ann Combs
PS-3	<i>Mrs. Peachtree and the Eighth Avenue Cat</i>	Erica Silverman
K-3	<i>The Berenstain Bears and the Week at Grandma's</i>	Stan Berenstain
K-3	<i>The Wednesday Surprise</i>	Eve Bunting
K-3	<i>Sunshine Home</i>	Eve Bunting
K-5	<i>Happy Birthday, Grampie</i>	Susan Pearson
K-5	<i>How Does It Feel to be Old?</i>	Norma Farber
1-3	<i>I Dance in My Red Pajamas</i>	Edith Thacher Hurd
1-4	<i>When I Am Old with You</i>	Angela Johnson
1-4	<i>Mrs. Katz and Tush</i>	Patricia Polacco
1-4	<i>Through Grandpa's Eyes</i>	Patricia MacLachlan
3-5	<i>The Best Bad Thing</i>	Yoshiko Uchido
3-5	<i>Chin Chiang and the Dragon's Dance</i>	Ian Wallace
5-7	<i>Old John</i>	Peter Hartling
7-9	<i>Dogsong</i>	Gary Paulsen
11+	<i>To Hell with Dying</i>	Alice Walker




**Note:** PS = preschool; K = kindergarten.

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