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Social Studies (Geography, Communities)  
Grade: 3  
Desert Dessert

**Objective/Purpose:**  
The purpose of this lab is to help review and assess what the class has learned about desert communities. They will also be able to apply mathematical skills that they have learned, such as measurement. The students will need to know and understand the concept of a desert community and what types of animals and plants live in that community.

**QCC:** 21 *Topic: Communities;* and 11 *Topic: Measurement*

**Materials:**  
- Several boxes of vanilla jello instant pudding  
- Milk  
- plain vanilla wafers  
- blender  
- gummy worms or other gummy snack  
- clear plastic cups  
- mixing bowl  
- spoons  
- Green Kool Aid

**Time Required:** One class period or approximately 50 minutes

**Background Information:** The idea for this experiment came directly from the Georgia Learning Connection web site. This is just a fun way to give the students an assessment on their knowledge of communities. A desert community consists of different types of animals and plants. The Georgia Learning Connection places this unit with the communities in the Social Studies section. The students need to understand the terms Desert, Cactus, Oasis, Arid, Tumbleweed, Nocturnal, and Parched.

**Preparation:** The GLC web site suggests allowing the students to help prepare the pudding. However, I find that it is very time consuming to have to wait several hours for the pudding to chill so I suggest preparing the pudding in advance, crushing the vanilla wafers, and making the green kool-aid.

**Safety Issues:** Make sure that you are aware of all food allergies that the students may have. Also make sure that the students are watched carefully and do not throw anything.

**Activity Outline:**  
1. First have the students complete the attached assessment sheet and ask them questions pertaining to the unit.  
2. Next, divide the small clear plastic cups to each student (give each student two).
3. Have the students spoon the instant pudding into one of their cups until it is half full.
4. Give the students some crushed vanilla wafers to put on top to give the illusion of sand.
5. Next, find some green gummy worms and have the students poke it into the top of their “sand”. They can loop them around one time to make it look like a cactus.
6. Fill their second cup with some “Cactus Juice” (green kool-aid) and ENJOY!

Possible Questions:

1. Where are some desert communities in the United States or around the world?
2. Name some animals that are found in the desert.
3. Why is it so dry in the desert?

Assessment: Attached Handout