Learning About Plants
Flowers for a Special Occasion

Purpose:
- Recognize what plants need to live and grow
- Name basic parts of plants

Activity 1: Learning About Plants
Before beginning activity, check with participants about any allergies they may have to plants.
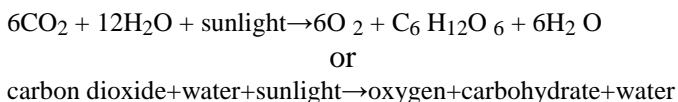
Supplies:
- Bring plants (weeds are OK) for each participant

Ask the participants if they know what plants need to grow. The four key components are:
- water
- soil (hydroponic plants are an exception)
- sunlight
- air -- more specifically carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the air.

Discuss the uniqueness of plants as the only organism that can produce their own food. Here is the actual equation for photosynthesis:

$$6CO_2 + 12H_2O + sunlight \rightarrow 6O_2 + C_6H_{12}O_6 + 6H_2O$$
$$or$$
$$carbon\ dioxide + water + sunlight \rightarrow oxygen + carbohydrate + water$$

Have participants identify basic parts of the plants they have been given, such as: leaves, roots, flowers, stems.

Expand discussion on the complexity of plants and look at:

shape of leaves	leaf opposition
texture	flowers
edges	stems

Activity 2: Flowers for A Special Occasion
Supplies:
- Bring a potted petunia or other flowering plant for each participant
- Potting soil
- 16 oz. paper cup for each participant (may be donated by a fast-food restaurant)
- Colored plastic wrap
- String, yarn or ribbon, approximately 12" per participant

1. Demonstrate how to remove a potted plant from its container without damaging the plant.
2. Pull apart the roots to allow for better growth.
3. Have participants fill paper cups about 2/3 full with potting soil.
4. Use fingers to make a hole large enough to place the potted plant into.
5. Place the plant into the hole in the soil in the paper cup. Add more potting soil and carefully press the soil tightly around the plant.
6. Add a small amount of water.
7. Form a foot square piece of colored plastic wrap around the paper cup as a florist would. Use yarn, ribbon or string to tie the plastic wrap into place.
8. Participants can share their plants with friends or families for a special occasion.

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

2 activities for grades K - 6. Allow 30 minutes. Science Standard – Life Science
Colorado State University Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development