Decorate with Basic Garnishes

Description
In this activity, students will identify, make, and select a variety of basic garnishes for decorating baked goods. This includes the writing of a basic greeting on a cake. This activity can be paired with the Make Cupcakes or Make Holiday or Themed Cookies Activity Plans.

Lesson Objectives
Students will be able to:

- understand the meaning of garnish as pertaining to baked goods and pastry
- decide what kind of garnish is appropriate
- make a simple paper cone for piping
- apply garnish as appropriate for specific products
- understand and practise basic baked good presentation, and
- prepare various garnishes such toasted nuts and seeds; fruit zest, whipped cream; and chocolate.

Safety Considerations
Basic food and kitchen safety

Assumptions
The student understands ingredient measurement, food handling safety, and appropriate clothing and personal attire in kitchens.

Terminology
Garnish: An adornment or embellishment that decorates a food item.
Marzipan: A pliable mixture of almond paste and sugar that can be moulded into shapes used as a decoration.
Paper cone: A triangle of parchment paper cut and shaped to make a conical icing bag.
Piping: The action of squeezing a garnish through a cone to write a message on a cake or make a decorative border.
Rolled fondant: A pliable mixture of sugar and gums, often used to decorate cakes; also coloured and dried to make decorative shapes
Royal icing: A simple decorating icing that can be piped—typically used for decorating cakes and cookies.
Zest: The thin outside skin of a citrus fruit.
Decorate with Basic Garnishes

**Estimated Time**
Two classes of 45–60 minutes

**Recommended Number of Students**
This activity should be done individually.

**Facilities**
Home Economics lab or cafeteria kitchen

**Resources**

- **How to Make and Handle Parchment Cones** (from 2:40–7:20)
  https://youtu.be/XRkwFJv0olY

- **Learn How to Fold a Parchment Bag for Piping**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdAauRWBQ58

- **Piping with Royal Icing, Practicing with Templates**

- **Perfect Whipped Cream**
  https://www.crazyforcrust.com/perfect-whipped-cream/
Demonstrating Skills And Knowledge

**Procedure**
1. Explain why garnishes are desirable. Show before and after pictures (if available). Explain which garnishes are going to be practised.
2. Emphasize to the students that “less is more” and assessment will be partially based on neatness and cleanliness.
3. Demonstrate methods of making garnishes (optional).
4. Provide each student with a piping bag and tips or have them make piping bags from parchment paper (instructions below).
5. Ask the students to create between one and four garnishes (depending on supplies and time). A separate procedure is supplied below for each garnish.
6. Students can present their best garnish to the instructor and other students (optional).
7. When complete have the students reflect in their journals.

**Piping Bags**
1. Watch video(s) on making paper cones.
2. Demonstrate the making of a paper cone.
3. Supply pre-cut triangles of parchment paper to students and have them make two of their own.
4. Alternatively, supply either cloth (multi-use) or disposable (single-use) decorating bags, with coupler and tip, from a cake decorating supply outlet.

**Royal Icing**
1. Demonstrate recipe then have students make royal icing. Explain why royal icing sugar is chosen for a project. Explain to the students:
   - not to add too much liquid colouring as this will affect the consistency
   - to keep the icing covered with damp towel when not in use; store covered in the fridge
   - issues surrounding use of raw egg whites
2. Use a piping bag to practise piping with royal icing. Introduce students to practise templates. Emphasize the following:
   - tension of bag
   - amount of filling
   - size of tip
   - not touching the tip to surface to be written on
Melted Chocolate

1. To make things easier, use compound chocolate (also known as coating chocolate or candy melts), rather than couverture. (Couverture must be tempered to work properly and this is much more challenging.) Compound chocolate is available in stores that sell cake-decorating supplies.

2. Melt chocolate and stir well. Keep over warm water to stop it from hardening during the project. Chocolate should be viscous but not runny for piping, slightly more liquid for dipping.
   - Do not over-heat the chocolate.
   - Stir the melted chocolate often.
   - Chocolate can be passed through a mesh sieve if contaminated with crumbs.

3. Fill piping bags/cones and practise on parchment paper or back of a clean cookie sheet. Practice projects can be scraped back into the melting pot.

4. Other ways to use melted chocolate:
   - Finished décor can be stored in a cool place when dry and lifted off for garnishes.
   - Chocolate lines can be piped directly onto cookies to finish them.
   - Cookies can also be dipped in chocolate—often with toasted nuts or coloured sprinkles as a variation.

Bubble Sugar

1. Take some glucose syrup (available in stores that sell cake decorating supplies) and spread about 3 or 4 cm swaths evenly on parchment paper.

2. Add a couple of drops of water soluble food colour (or powder) evenly between two sheets of parchment paper or silicone mats.

3. Bake at 175°C (350°F) for 15–20 minutes. Let cool.

4. Break up for garnish of cake or cupcake, standing vertically for effect.

   Note: This can also be made with regular granulated sugar or a specialty product called Isomalt; however, it is necessary to wipe the parchment with alcohol which is probably not available in most high schools. If using granulated sugar, the garnish will not last very long, especially on a humid day.

Marzipan, Rolled Fondant, and Gum Paste

Marzipan is available in many food stores. This garnish is especially adaptable to make colourful seasonal decorations or small animals or figurines. Options for decorating:

- It can be coloured and moulded into various shapes. Use clay-modeling tools for finer details.
- Roll it out and cut with small cookie cutters.
Zest
1. Use a zester to remove long strings of the outside peel from a citrus fruit. Be careful not to take any white pith with the outside peel.
2. Toss the strings of peel in sugar and leave to dry.
3. Use raw and sparingly as a garnish or flavouring.

Berries
Fresh berries can be used whole or cut (strawberries) as a colourful garnish for topping off cupcakes that have been iced. Wash and dry the fruit and place unblemished berries as required.

Icing/Frosting
Many different styles of icing exist. The frosting recipe with the Make Cupcakes activity is a very versatile basic icing which may be used for colouring, piping, and spreading. Options for decorating:

- A simple flat icing can be used to drizzle on cinnamon buns.
- Cream cheese icing is good for carrot cake.
- European frostings with cooked syrup and whipped eggs.

Icing Sugar
Dust icing sugar using a sieve on finished baked products for a very professional finish. Mix a little cocoa powder in with the icing sugar to decorate chocolate products.

Nuts and Seeds
Various nuts and some seeds enhance the finish of many baked goods. The following are good for garnishing: almonds (whole or sliced), pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts (filberts), coconut, sunflower seeds.

The following seeds are good for garnishing bread products (either alone or blended): sesame seeds, poppy seeds, oat flakes, other cereal flakes, flax seed, sunflower seeds.

If using raw, place on unbaked muffins and breads. If garnishing after baking, toast the nuts and then sprinkle. Chop to the appropriate size.

Whipped Cream
Talk about the properties of whipping cream: butterfat content, how it whips, and what happens if it is over-whipped. Whipped cream for garnishing should stand on its own.

1. Whip cold whipping cream and either by hand or in a stand mixer.
2. Add sugar to taste and optionally some vanilla or the seeds scraped from a vanilla bean.
3. Piping can be done using a large piping bag and an appropriate tip.
**Evaluation Guidelines**

Consider co-creating the assessment criteria with your students at the beginning of the activity/project. You may want to include the following:

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**Piping Practice Templates**

**Note:** if you want to reuse these pages, tape a piece of waxed paper on top of the paper before piping.
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Youth Explore Trades Skills
Happy Birthday

Good Luck

BEST WISHES

HAPPY BIRTHDAY