

## The Ugly Vegetables



Grace Lin

**The Ugly Vegetables**  
written and illustrated by Grace Lin



READS

## Reading and Activity Guide

Author Grace Lin has several other fun lesson suggestions on her website.

### BEFORE READING

+ Think of a time that you felt different from somebody else - maybe they were faster at soccer or a better draw-er than you or you liked something others didn't. *How did that make you feel?*

### DURING READING

+ *How does the girl feel about her garden, and why? How does her mom feel about the garden? Why do you think the mom feels differently? (If they don't know, read to find out!)*

+ Pause the video and replay the vegetable names. Try to repeat the names together (notice the intonation!) - adults, too! It can feel embarrassing to not be able to pronounce it correctly the first time - embrace the challenge and replay the names again until you feel comfortable saying them. It may be a struggle, but you'll discover the beauty of a new language. This also helps us appreciate the challenges others experience as they master a second language!

+ *What do you think made this "the best dinner ever"? Was it just the soup?*

### AFTER READING

+ *So, which was better - the beautiful flowers or the ugly vegetables? (Trick question! The flowers and vegetables were both special and important - the flowers were beautiful, smelled good, and provided food for bees and butterflies, while the vegetables were tasty and made a delicious soup that also smelled very fragrant, and fed a whole neighborhood!)*

+ *How do you think the girl felt about her garden in the middle of the story? And by the end?*

+ **Closing Thoughts:** *Sometimes you might notice things about yourself or your culture that are different from others. This might make you feel LESS special, beautiful, or important than others. Remember that what might seem "ugly" to others is so beautiful to God. His world includes a variety of cultures with their own special beauty and gifts, and thinks they are all special, beautiful, and important. Think about how the neighbors were able to bless each other by sharing their flowers and soup with each other! God has created you to be YOU! Each person blesses the world around them in a way no one else can.*

### Springboard Activities:

**Activity #1: Try it!** - Use author Grace Lin's Ugly Vegetable Soup recipe to cook this yummy soup at home!

**Activity #2: Taste Test** - Ready to experience a new food from a different culture? Put on your scientist hat and engage all five senses: Before you try the new food, observe: What does it look like? What color is it? What shape does it have? How does it smell? How does it feel? Does it make a sound? (Be gentle!) Okay, now you're ready to taste it! Take a medium-sized bite, not so tiny that you don't get a good taste, and not so big that your mouth is completely full! Carefully taste the food. How would you describe its taste - salty, sweet, savory, bitter, sour? How does the food feel against your tongue? Many people are surprised to find out that they actually love new foods that seemed strange or different! Remember, if you discover you don't like the food, we don't say, "Ewww, yuuucckk!!!" Someone worked hard to make this special food and they are sharing it with you! It's polite to say, "Thank you for sharing this with me, but I don't think it's for me." It helps show gratitude and respect for the person who made or is sharing their food with you!

