### Purpose
Youth show they care about the people with whom they share meals by setting the table and demonstrating mealtime manners.

### Facts to Know

**Suggested group size:** six to eight children per adult volunteer  
**Time frame:** group meeting 30 to 60 minutes  
**Recommended ages:** 5- to 7-year-olds (kindergarten through second grade)  
**Materials:**
- Cloverbud handout – Napkin Folds  
- Cloverbud handout – Secret Table Manners  
- Cloth napkins (one per member)  
- Plastic tableware (plates, forks, spoons, knives and drinking glasses)  
- Paper napkins  
- Meal or snack of your choice for members

### Background Knowledge
Setting the table shows we care about the people who will sit down to eat with us. It’s an act of dignity, respect and love. Table setting today has become an art. This art even has a name, “tablescaping.” The art of arranging eating utensils and dishes for serving and eating has varied across cultures and a history that goes back before the medieval era.

Table setting is a task that any member of a household can help with before mealtimes. The eating utensils and dishes for serving and eating are called tableware. The arrangement of tableware for an individual is called a place setting. The way place settings and tableware are arranged around a table is called table setting.

In this lesson, members will practice setting a table for “everyday” meals and “formal” meals.
Here are three great tips for helping members remember the order of plates and utensils for a basic table setting:

1. Picture the word “FORKS.” The order, left to right, is: F for fork, O for the plate (the shape), K for knives and S for spoons. (OK, you have to forget the R, but you get the idea!)

2. Holding your hands in front of you, touch the tip of your thumb to the tip of your forefinger on each hand. This will make a lowercase “b” with your left hand and a lowercase “d” with your right hand. This reminds you that “bread and butter” go to the left of the place setting and “drinks” go on the right.

3. Some other things to know:
   a. Knife blades always face the plate.
   b. The napkin goes to the left of the fork or on the plate.
   c. The bread and butter knives are optional.

(Basic Table Setting, 2012)
Do: Looking Within
Napkin Folding (15 minutes)

[Cloverbud Handout – Napkin Folds]
For the most part, setting the table means following rules. But one place you can be creative with is arranging napkins. Pass out the Cloverbud handout showing napkin folds and a cloth napkin for each member. Lead the group in folding one or both of the patterns. Use the following directions:

Pyramid Napkin Pattern
1. Lay the napkin face down in front of you.
2. Fold the napkin in half diagonally to make a triangle, the folded side toward you.
3. Fold the right corner of the napkin up to meet the point at the tip of the triangle.
4. Fold the left corner of the napkin up to meet the point at the tip of the triangle.
5. Turn the napkin over. Be sure to keep the open end facing toward you.
6. Fold the top tip of the napkin over to meet the tip closest to you.
7. Fold the napkin away from you, along the center seam to form a pyramid.

Diamond Napkin Pattern
1. Lay the napkin face down in front of you.
2. Fold the napkin in half with the open end facing you.
3. Fold the napkin into quarters.
4. Turn the closed point toward you and fold the first layer of the napkin toward the closed point nearest you.
5. Fold the next layer of the napkin a little lower than the first fold.
6. Fold the next layer of the napkin a little lower than the second fold.
7. Fold the last layer of the napkin a little lower than the third fold.
8. Tuck both right and left ends of the napkin under and up to form a diamond shape.
Reflect/Apply

Reflect: Bringing Closure

A Rude Meal (30 minutes)

[Cloverbud Handout – Secret Table Manners]

Just as table settings vary across cultures and history, so, too, do table manners. Ask the members for examples of table manners used in their homes. The Secret Table Manners card handout provides several examples. Explain to members that they will be playing an opposite game while they all sit down to share a small meal or snack. If using a snack, the snack item should take several steps to prepare; for example: frosting cookies, making trail mix or making ice cream sundaes.

1. Ask all members to help set the table for the meal or snack.
2. Ask all members to stand and come take a Secret Table Manners card from you.
3. Each member will need an adult to read the card to him or her and share which table manner he or she received. Members are not to share their table manner with other members.
4. For this activity, members will do the exact opposite of the good manner suggested by the card. For example: “Elbows do not belong on the table.” This member would keep his or her elbows on the table throughout the entire meal or snack.
5. Once each member understands his or her table manner and its opposite action, use the following directions:
   a. Opposite table manners can begin from this point forward. You may do your opposite table manner as often as you’d like.
   b. Please find your seat at the table.
   c. Please say a short table thanks. For example: Rub-a-dub-dub, thanks for the grub, yaayyy “Friendly Clovers” 4-H Club!
   d. Please take a small helping from one of the serving dishes in front of you and pass the dish to another person.
6. Once each member has filled his or her plate or built his or her snack, enjoy!
7. At any time, members may act out their opposite table manner. Ask the adult helpers to keep the meal moving along. The object is to have fun but not to let the activity get out of hand.
8. At the close of the meal, ask members to guess which poor table manner each of the other members was demonstrating.
9. Members can help to clear the table and store leftover food items.

Apply: Going Beyond

1. Make a tablecloth or placemats (12 by 18 inches) from pieces of fabric. A burlap fabric works well. Pull strings at the edges to make a fringed edge.
2. Make themed centerpieces. Use materials found inside or outside of the home, such as flowers, weeds, pine cones, evergreens, vegetables, fruits or holiday decorations. Plan around a theme such as Valentine’s Day, Thanksgiving or outer space.
3. Set up a relay race. Teams race to build a basic table setting with plastic tableware. Divide the plastic tableware (plate, fork, spoon, knife, drinking glass) and napkin among the members of each team. Each participant runs to the table to set one item in place and runs back to tap the next person to run and set his or her item in place. The teams continue until all the tableware is placed. Check to see if the table settings were set appropriately.

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Resources


For more information, see www.ndsu.edu/4h