

# Thanks a Bunch! Activity

**Overview:** Thanks a bunch for my lunch! From field to table, we rely on so many different people to grow and prepare the food we eat each day. Help young gardeners better understand our food system by encouraging them to brainstorm ways to express their thanks to these very special and essential people in our lives.

## Materials:

- Chart paper and/or a dry erase board
- Paper or cardstock
- Colored pencils, markers or crayons
- Scissors (optional)
- Old magazines or seed catalogs (optional)
- Glue (optional)



**Approximate Time to Complete:** 30+ minutes

**Location:** Indoor or Outdoor

**Ages:** K to 6th Grade

**Season:** Any season

## Instructions

1. Before a meal, how often do we actually stop to think about how many people helped bring our food to our plate? As we teach kids about the path from field to table, do we focus more on the “where” (farm, processing facility, grocery store, restaurant, etc.) instead of the “who” (farm workers, factory workers, trucker drivers, grocery store employees, chefs, waitstaff, school food service employees, and many, many more!)? Engage your young gardeners in a brainstorming activity to create a list of all of the people who help produce the food we eat and then pick out one or two from the list and find a way to say thank you!
2. Using a real meal (from your school’s cafeteria, your home, a local restaurant, etc.) or a sample meal that you create, ask kids to trace back the different people who helped the meal arrive at your table all the way back to the beginning. For example, if you have applesauce, your list may look something like this:
  - cafeteria staff who put the food on your plate
  - district food delivery staff who distribute food to your school
  - district food service staff who order and receive food
  - truck driver who delivers the food to the district food office
  - applesauce factory workers who turn the apples into applesauce
  - truck driver who delivers apples to the applesauce factory
  - farm workers who clean and send the apples to the applesauce factory
  - farm workers who harvest apples
  - farmer or farm worker who cares for the trees
  - farmer or farm worker who plants the apple trees
  - fruit tree nursery workers and breeders who grow the apples trees for planting

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You can adapt the amount detail included in your brainstorming to match the age and skill of your audience.

3. After completing your brainstorming, step back and ask kids, “How many people are involved in preparing our food? Was this list smaller or bigger than you thought it would be? How important is it to have all of these people doing their jobs?”
4. Next, ask kids to select one of these people on the list and craft a thank you card for them. They can simply use paper or cardstock along with crayons, colored pencils, and markers, or they can create colorful collages using food pictures from magazines or fruit and vegetable photos from seed catalogs.
5. Deliver your cards and spread some joy and gratitude! Your recipients will feel appreciated and, even more importantly, your young gardeners will gain a better understanding and respect for the complexity of our food system and how many people work so hard to get our food to our plate.

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