



## High-Speed Hand Washing

Hand Washing Lesson for Youth  
Pre-curriculum lesson for food safety  
Length of Lesson: 30 minutes

**Objective:** Youth will understand when and why hands should be washed and practice effective hand washing technique. Classes will be able to wash all hands in about 5 minutes with practice.

**Supplies:** GloGerm-type kit with black light (with extra battery), and special lotion. Also bring hand soap in pump dispenser. **Stop Germs: Wash Your Hands** (EC-1551-E or EC-1551-S-E (Spanish version) or EC-1551-R-E (Russian version)). Laminate or put in table-top plastic poster holders. Towel for floor, if it gets wet. Stopwatch.

**Handouts:** **We Wish You Well** (SP50-771 or SP50-771S (Spanish))

**Before you begin:** Make sure there is a place for the youth to wash their hands that has hot water, soap and paper towels. The classroom usually has a sink. If there is a boys and girls lavatory close by the teacher may be willing to send groups of students there. This lesson does not require multiple sinks to be successful. Ask your teacher to help you divide the class into groups that will go to the sink(s) together. While the youth are washing their hands, the teacher or other adult will need to “direct traffic” to use proper technique and to move quickly through the line. Arrange for academic support activity or music for dancing (physical activity break) for students who are waiting for turns.

**Opening** (5 min): “Germs are everywhere. Some germs are good for you, but some are not and they can make you sick. If you have had a cold, the flu or food poisoning it was caused by harmful germs. There are some things you can do to help keep yourself, and your family and friends safe from harmful germs.

- 1) Cough into your shoulder, not your hands. (Demo)
- 2) Don't share your drinks, gum or food with your family or friends.
- 3) Don't double dip when tasting or eating food also served to others. (Mime cooking and tasting incorrectly – “use a clean spoon for each taste, not your finger”)
- 4) Wash your hands before you prepare or eat food, after you go to the bathroom or take out the garbage, touching hair (Mime) , face (Mime ears, nose, mouth, eyes) or body/clothes (Mime pulling up sleeves, hands in pockets); after handling food that will be cooked before eating (potentially hazardous food) – ask youth for examples, sneezing or coughing (Mime sneezing in hands), or eating (Mime eating a burger, licking fingers).”

**Activity** (20 min): How to wash hands.

1) Explain and show pictures from handout. Use the steps in **Stop Germs: Wash Your Hands**.

2) Then mime or demo how to wash hands.

*Washing hands properly takes about a minute. Having the whole class wash their hands one at a time can take a long time, but there is a trick that we can use to make this whole process take only 5 minutes for the whole class!*

3) Explain how the High-Speed Hand Washing method works: A group of 6 youth can quickly wash hands:

- a. With an adult to encourage quickness, Youth #1 wets hands, shakes off excess water, applies soap, then goes to the end of their group line to lather up. Youth sings Row, row, row your boat or Happy Birthday song while lathering hands. Sing twice (20 seconds) while lathering.
  - b. Repeat with other youth. (They may be able to do a round!).
  - c. When Youth #1 gets to front of line again the youth rinses well, and then gets a paper towel (also handed to them by an adult).
- 4) Show youth the special lotion. Explain that “we are going to pretend that these are the germs that are on your hands.” “It does not have harmful germs in it. This special lotion will glow in the black light and show you how well you wash your hands.”
- 5) Dispense lotion to each youth. Rub it on like regular hand lotion. Have each youth look at their hands under the black light keeping their group together as they line up to look at their hands.
- 6) The group(s) then goes to the sink(s) as directed by their teacher when they finish at the black light. It works well to have the teacher or other adult supervise them during the process. When one group is finished, the next group starts. Have youth do an academic support activity or dance while waiting their turn.
- 7) Look at hands under black light again. Have them self-evaluate. Many will need to return to the sink. Encourage them to use hot water and lots of soap.

**Closing** (3 minutes) Congratulate the youth on their successful hand washing. Encourage them to practice this coming week at school and home. When you come back next week with a food to taste, they will be able to show you how fast the class can wash their hands! Show them handouts that they can take home to share with their family. (Let teacher hand out with their regular system). A stopwatch can encourage quickness.

**Notes:** Older students may have done this before. Tell them that they can do a self evaluation and check to see how well they are washing their hands now.

Use this lesson before the Start Smart Eating and Reading (SSER) curriculum. Additionally, teach the song in the SSER, Chapter 5, Dairy section. Teach one verse each week starting with the first chapter. Have the youth sing each verse twice (about 20 seconds) while lathering hands that week. Enlist teachers to have class practice.