

Olivia's Passport Plates

Teacher Read-Aloud Guide — Book One: One Brave Bite in Japan

For ages 4–8 · Grades PK–3

Before Reading

Show the cover and ask: What do you think Olivia will try in Japan? Invite children to share a food they have never tried. Then open to the map and locate Japan together.

During Reading — Discussion Prompts

- Why does Olivia feel unsure about trying onigiri?
- How does Kenji help Olivia feel brave?
- What does Olivia learn about saying yes to new things?
- What sounds, colors, and smells can you imagine in Kyoto?

After Reading — Activities

- Recipe: Follow the recipe card on the next page to make simple onigiri together. Assign small jobs: washing hands, shaping rice, placing filling.
- Word List: Practice Olivia's Japan words: itadakimasu (let's eat), onigiri (rice ball), arigato (thank you), baachan (grandmother).
- Map Stamp: Have children draw Japan's flag in their passport book and write one food they want to try.
- Family Connection: Send home a note asking families to share a food from their heritage.

Curriculum Links

- Social Studies: Geography, cultural traditions, family roles
- Health: Trying new foods, nutrition, kitchen safety
- Literacy: Story sequencing, vocabulary, read-aloud comprehension
- Social-Emotional Learning: Courage, kindness, friendship

Olivia's Onigiri Recipe

A simple, kid-friendly recipe to make at home or in class

Ingredients

- 2 cups cooked short-grain rice (cooled slightly)
- 1/2 tsp salt (mixed with a little water)
- Your choice of filling: cooked salmon, pickled plum, or seasoned tuna
- 1 sheet nori (seaweed), cut into strips
- Water in a small bowl for wet hands

Steps

1. Wet your hands with water so the rice does not stick.
2. Take a small handful of rice and make a small dent in the center.
3. Add a tiny spoonful of filling, then fold rice over it and shape into a triangle.
4. Wrap a strip of nori around the bottom for a handle.
5. Say itadakimasu and take one brave bite together.

Tip: Onigiri is best eaten the same day. Let children shape their own — imperfect triangles are part of the fun.