

Texture Up!

Objective: Children will learn how to add texture and visual interest to a cake as an alternative to icing it smoothly.

Recommended Ages: 9 years old and up

Time required for project: 1 hour

***Leaders should determine ahead of time how many adult helpers are needed. Depending on the age of the group, 1 adult for every 6-8 children should be enough.**



Overview

This project is designed to introduce children to working with icing and creating texture techniques using everyday kitchen tools. They will learn the following:

- How to adjust icing consistency for texturing.
- How to add color to icing.
- How to rough ice a cake without getting crumbs in the icing.
- How to create icing texture and pattern designs.

Supplies

Wilton Items Needed:

- ✓ Creamy White Decorator Icing, 4 lb. tub (1 per 3 children) – optional
- ✓ 9 in. Spatula (1 per child) – optional
- ✓ 10 in. Cake Circle (1 per child) – optional
- ✓ Turntable - optional
- ✓ Icing Colors (to be shared) - optional
- ✓ Sprinkles - optional

Additional Kitchen Supplies (either leader can provide, or children can bring their own):

- ✓ Two 8 in. round cake layers, stacked with icing between the layers – do not ice the top and sides of the cake once stacked (1 per child)
- ✓ Teaspoon, 1 per child
- ✓ Fork, 1 per child
- ✓ Butter knife, 1 per child (if not using spatula)
- ✓ Straw, 1 per child
- ✓ Large plate for cake, 1 per child (if not using 10 in. Cake Circles)
- ✓ 1 one-gallon resealable plastic storage bag per child (to transport dirty tools home)
- ✓ Toothpicks (to be shared)
- ✓ Lazy Susan, 2-3 to be shared (if not using turntable)
- ✓ Bowl or container large enough for 3 cups of icing, 1 per child
- ✓ Small bottle of water (to be shared)
- ✓ Paper towels (to be shared)
- ✓ Container to carry home decorated cake (1 per child)
- ✓ If not purchasing Wilton Creamy Decorator Icing, make thin consistency icing using the recipe on pg. 8 (approximately 3 cups per child)
- ✓ Package of confectioners' sugar (shared)

- ✓ Apron, 1 per child

Project Outline

1. Introduction
2. Buttercream Basics
 - a. Icing Consistency
 - b. Coloring Icing
3. Ice the Cake
4. Texture Techniques
 - a. Straw
 - b. Spoon
 - c. Fork
5. Decorate Cake
6. Clean-up/Wrap-up

INTRODUCTION

***Leader – Provide a quick overview of the project.**

BUTTERCREAM BASICS

Icing Consistency

***Leader - If using the Wilton icing recipe, be sure to convert it to thin consistency. Briefly explain that icing for icing a cake must be thin consistency. If using the ready to use Wilton Creamy Decorator Icing, the consistency should not need adjusting for this project.**

- Icing consistency is the thickness/stiffness of icing. *Thin* consistency is used for icing the cake.
- To change icing consistency from stiff to thin, add water, a few drops at a time, until it is easy to stir.
- Just a few drops of liquid can make a big difference in results, so make sure you don't add too much water to start. If icing becomes too thin, add a small amount of confectioner's sugar to make it thicker.
- It takes approximately 2 teaspoons of water per cup of icing to change stiff consistency down to thin.
- Thin consistency icing should be easy to stir, and a spatula stuck in the icing will fall over, but the icing should not be so thin it would pour out of the cup.



***Leader – Assist the children with adjusting the consistency of their icing if necessary.**

Coloring Icing (optional)

***Leader - Explain the difference between liquid food coloring and Gel Icing Colors, then demonstrate how to color icing.**

- Liquid food coloring found in the baking aisle at the grocery store can be used but has limitations:

- Color options are usually limited to just 4 base colors, limiting the color combinations you can create.
- Because food coloring is liquid, it can affect the consistency of your icing, especially when you need to add a lot to create an intense color.
- Gel Icing Colors
 - Because Icing Colors are a gel form and the colors are concentrated, they do not change the consistency.
 - Wilton Icing Colors are available in 25 colors.
 - To use:
 - Dip a toothpick into the Icing Color jar, then swirl it in the icing.
 - Stir the icing with a spatula to blend in the color.
 - Add a little at a time, until you achieve the shade you want, using a fresh toothpick each time you add more color.
 - Colors will intensify as they sit.

***Leader - Assist children with coloring their icing.**

ICE THE CAKE ([video](#))

***Leader - Demonstrate how to cover the cake with icing and have the children work along with you on their own cake.**

- Using a spatula or butter knife, place a dollop of icing on the center of the cake top.
- Spread the icing across the top.
- To keep crumbs from showing on the finished surface, always keep icing between the cake and the spatula. Roughly smooth the top.
- Apply icing to the sides of the cake as on the top. Roughly smooth the sides by holding the spatula against the side of the cake, with a slight angle pointing away from the cake.

Note: If using a butter knife, hold the straight side of the blade (not the cutting side) against the side of the cake to achieve a smoother look.

- Slowly turn the cake base without lifting the spatula from the icing surface.
- Return excess icing to the bowl. Repeat until the sides are slightly smooth.
- Slightly smooth the top of the cake last, using the edge of the spatula.
- Sweep the spatula edge from the rim of the cake to its center.
- Lift it off and remove excess icing.
- To finish, rotate the cake slightly and repeat the procedure, starting from a new point on the rim.



TEXTURING TECHNIQUES

Demonstrate each technique with the children following along on their own cake. Children can either divide their cake surface into quarters and do a different technique in each quarter or they can ice over a technique after trying it and replace with the technique(s) of their choice to complete their cake.

- Texturing techniques should be done on a freshly iced cake before the icing has time to crust.
- If children prefer to try a technique, then ice over it to replace with a different one, they should “erase” the texture by smoothing over the surface with a spatula or knife immediately after finishing the technique they wish to remove. This way, the icing will not have a chance to crust over.
- Depending on the thickness of the icing layer originally applied to the cake, a small amount of additional icing may need to be re-applied after erasing the texture.

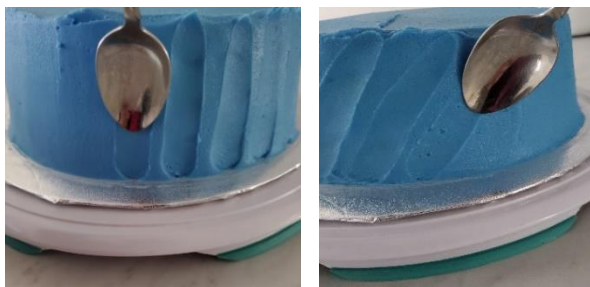
Straw

- Insert the end of a straw into the icing to imprint tiny circles, being careful not to insert through the entire thickness of the icing to expose the cake.
- Wipe off any excess icing that builds up on the outside of the straw. Use a toothpick periodically to clean out the icing build up inside the straw.
- Position the circles to create a pattern or cover the entire surface.



Spoon

- Ribbons
 - Beginning at the bottom edge of the cake and using light pressure, drag the rounded side of a teaspoon up the side of the iced cake so that it creates a deep impression without touching the cake underneath.
 - Remove any excess icing on the spoon before starting the next line and leave a very small space between the swipes to keep the look of a ridge.
 - Create vertical lines or diagonal lines, depending on the look you want to achieve.



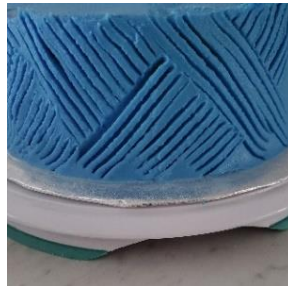
- Swirl
 - Place the rounded side of the spoon on the center of the cake top. Use your free hand to turn the base of the cake while simultaneously moving the spoon outward towards the edge of the cake. Stop when you reach the edge.

Note: This technique is easier to do if the cake is on a turntable or a lazy Susan.

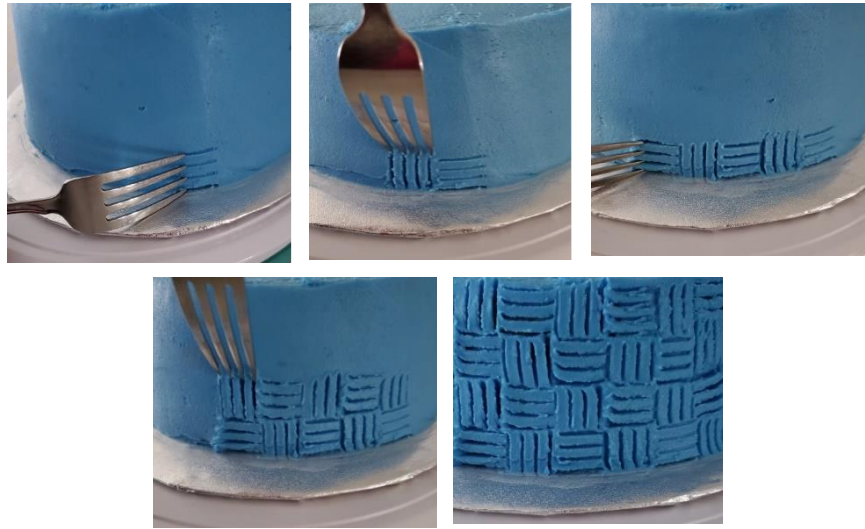


Fork

- Random Lines
 - Drag the fork tines through the icing randomly, being careful not to insert the tines through the entire thickness of the icing to expose the cake. Lines can be straight or squiggly and vary in direction. Children can experiment with creating different designs.
 - After each set of lines, clean off any icing that remains on the tines before inserting the fork back into the icing again.



- Checkerboard
 - Beginning at the base, angle the fork sideways to drag the tines horizontally in the icing, forming a square. Be careful not to insert the tines through the entire thickness of the icing to expose the cake.
 - Place the fork directly next to the first square, but this time angle the fork straight up and drag the tines vertically to form another square.
 - Repeat to form a row of squares, alternating with horizontal and vertical lines. When the row is complete, continue with additional rows, working upward until reaching the top edge of the cake.



DECORATE CAKE

***Leader – With the time remaining, have the children use the textures of their choice to complete decorating their cakes.**

- To add color, top with sprinkles if desired.

Discussion Questions – Encourage the children to talk about the techniques they learned using these questions:

- Which technique is your favorite?
- What other kitchen tools might you be able to use with icing to create texture?
- What other treats besides cake could you apply these texturing techniques to?

Now that your Girl Scouts have been introduced to working with icing, encourage them to learn more by going to <http://classpromo.wilton.com/girlscouts>. You'll find more easy-to-follow leader guides there.

CLEAN-UP AND WRAP-UP

INSPIRATION



Wilton Buttercream Icing

NOTE: This recipe is for stiff consistency buttercream, which is excellent for piping some flowers. However, it will need to be converted to thin consistency for this class by adding approximately 4 teaspoons (20 ml) of milk or water to a full recipe.

Makes: 2¼ cups

Ingredient	Volume	Weight	
	Measure	Ounces	Grams
Wilton flavorings (Imitation Vanilla, Almond or Butter) *	1 teaspoon	0.15 ounce	5 grams
Butter or margarine, softened	½ cup	4 ounces	113 grams
Solid vegetable shortening	½ cup	6.7 ounces	190 grams
Pure cane confectioner's sugar, sifted	1 lb. or approx. 4 cups	16 ounces	455 grams
Milk or water	7-8 teaspoons	4-5 ounces	132 grams

*Wilton flavorings may be used in any combination to suite your taste.

DIRECTIONS:

1. In large bowl, beat shortening and butter with electric mixer until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla.
2. Gradually add sugar, one cup at a time, beating well on medium speed. Scrape sides and bottom of bowl often. When all sugar has been mixed in, icing will appear dry.
3. Gradually add milk or water; beat at medium speed until light and fluffy.
4. For Pure White Icing (stiff consistency):
 - a. Omit butter; substitute an additional 1/2 cup shortening for butter and add 1/2 teaspoon Clear Butter Flavor. Substitute Clear Vanilla for Pure Vanilla Extract.

HINTS:

- Keep bowl covered with plastic wrap until ready to use.
- If using a hand mixer, beat shortening, butter (if used) and liquids first, then add sugar, as above. Make one batch at a time to prevent hand mixer from overheating.
- Depending on the humidity and climate, it may be necessary to adjust the liquid and the sugar in your icing. If icing looks dry, add small amounts of liquid (1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon at a time). If icing is too wet, add 1 tablespoon of sugar at a time. The key for both adjustments is adding small amounts until you achieve the right consistency.
- This recipe can be made with all butter by replacing the shortening with an equal amount of butter. An all-butter recipe will make a noticeably softer buttercream and will also melt faster than a recipe made with shortening.
- If you find that this recipe is too sweet, consider using a pinch of salt, which will help cut the sweetness. Let the pinch of salt dissolve in your liquid to avoid granules of salt in the buttercream. Try substituting some of the butter in the recipe with salted butter.
- Leftover buttercream can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Buttercream can also be frozen for up to six months. Before reusing, bring buttercream back to room temperature and rewhip using a paddle attachment until it is back to the correct consistency.

You can find recipes for several different buttercream icings at
<https://www.wilton.com/search/?q=buttercream&prefn1=contentType&prefv1=recipe>