

**Source:** J.L.Scott Marine Education Center and Aquarium, Biloxi, Mississippi. Used with permission.

## 24. RECIPE FOR A HAPPY REEF

Write the following list of ingredients on the chalkboard:

### Recipe for a Happy Reef

**sunshine** *corals flourish in lower latitudes where sunlight is intense*

**shallow water** *corals ordinarily do not grow below 40 meter depths*

**clarity** *corals cannot thrive in water that is clouded with suspended particles*

**salt** *corals require high salinity, ideally between 34 and 37 parts per thousand salt*

**warmth** *reef-building corals grow best between 25 and 31 degrees Centigrade*

**hard bottom** *corals prefer a firm footing to a shifting sand seafloor*

Here is another recipe for a happy reef that will make your students happy too.

2 envelopes Knox plain gelatin

2 boxes blue Jello

½ cup sugar

1 ½ cup boiling hot water

½ cup cool water

2 cups cold water with ice cubes

2 or 3 sugar cookies

assorted candies

frosting or peanut butter

gummy fish

whipped cream

Place cookies in the bottom of a large (1 ½ quart) glass bowl or jar. Cover the tops of the cookies with candies, creating a “coral reef.” Use frosting or peanut butter to cement the candies in place. In a separate dish, sprinkle plain gelatin over ½ cup cool water and let stand for one minute before adding 1 ½ cups hot water, blue Jell-O and sugar. Stir until dissolved. To this mixture, add 2 cups cold water with ice cubes. Continue stirring until the gelatin is just beginning to thicken. Immediately remove any remaining ice and pour the “seawater” around the “coral reef.” Add gummy fish. Refrigerate for one hour. Before serving, add whip cream “waves.” Serves 8 - 10.

**Correlation to National Standards from McREL ( <http://www.mcrel.org> ) :**

### Life Sciences

6. Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment

### Geography

8. Understands the characteristics of ecosystems on Earth's surface