

How is a nutritionally well-balanced and tasty meal planned?

EDIBLE GARDEN PROGRAM (6-8)

Planning the Meal **(ILS 6D, 23B, 24B)**

Overview

The key question for this activity is, "How is a nutritionally well-balanced and tasty meal prepared?" And there is no better way for students to answer that than to grow and cook their own food. Using the garden and kitchen as the facilitators, they will inspire student inquiry and teach them about Sustainable Agriculture, specifically, local food production and consumption.

For the purpose of this curriculum sustainable agriculture shall be defined as follows: "Sustainable Agriculture is a system of food production, supported by consumers, where farming operations, practices and technologies *work in harmony* with the natural systems that sustain life on earth."

Suggested Grade Level

This curriculum is designed for middle school/junior high grade levels. The topics covered can be built upon in complexity throughout that age range.

Approximate Time

This activity requires 2, 45 minute sessions.

Objectives

1. The students will gain an overview about nutrition by planning a well-balanced meal using the produce from their garden.
2. The students will learn how to create a menu by reading recipes and using the Food Guide Pyramid.
3. The students will be able to classify menu ingredients according to the Food Guide Pyramid food groups and they will understand how the Pyramid can be used to help plan healthy meals.
4. The students will learn how to increase a recipe size to accommodate large numbers of people.

Activity Abstract

The class will plan a nutritionally well-balanced meal using the Food Guide Pyramid. The recipes used in the menu selected by the class will be increased to feed the entire class.

Background Information

The food pyramid can be found in Appendix A of the "Knowing Nutrition for Meal Planning" activity in this curriculum.

Planning a meal using the produce the students have grown over the summer can be an extremely rewarding experience. Before they can successfully plan a meal the students must review the Food Guide Pyramid, which presumably was taught in earlier grades. Use the Food Guide Pyramid as a starting point for menu planning. It provides a good guide to make sure you get enough nutrients. Make choices from each major group in the Food Guide Pyramid, and combine them however you like.

Use plant foods as the foundation of your meals. There are many ways to create a healthy menu and they all should start with the three food groups at the base of the Pyramid: grains, fruits, and vegetables. Eating a variety of grains (especially whole grain foods), fruits, and vegetables is the basis of healthy eating. Enjoy meals that have rice, pasta, tortillas, or whole grain bread at the center of the plate, accompanied by plenty of fruits and vegetables and a moderate amount of low-fat foods from the milk group and the meat and beans group. Go easy on foods high in fat or sugars.

Keep an eye on servings. Use the Serving Size worksheet included in this Activity to guide the students with menu planning. Make sure the menus contain items from several food groups. For example, a sandwich may provide bread from the grains group, turkey from the meat and beans group, and cheese from the milk group.

Choose a variety of foods for good nutrition. Since foods within most food groups differ in their content of nutrients and other beneficial substances, choosing a variety helps you get all the nutrients and fiber you need. It can also help keep your meals interesting from day to day.

The menu the students create should include the following, using the above considerations:

- Food items from each Pyramid food group, identified on Menu
- As many items from their garden as possible
- At least a main dish, a side dish and a drink
- Recipe book name and page containing recipe.

Materials

- Recipe books, Magazines with recipes, etc.
- Poster of the food pyramid
- Copy of the Food Pyramid worksheet for each student (See Appendix A in the “Knowing Nutrition...” activity.)
- Lesson paper for each student to create own menu
- 1:7 adult ratio
- Nutrition Expert - A parent or Certified Dietician (optional)

Procedure (Session 1)

1. **Tap Prior Knowledge.** Review the “Knowing Nutrition for Menu Planning” Activity.
2. Tell the students that they are going to design a menu for a meal they will prepare that includes at least one serving of food from each Food Guide Pyramid food group.
3. **Hands-on Experience.** Explain the menu planning considerations, writing them on the board as reminders.



4. Pass out recipe magazines and books and the Food Guide Pyramid Handout for the students to use.
5. Provide some time for the students to work. Be available to answer any questions.
6. Have the students identify which of the food groups each of the ingredients belongs to.
7. Have the students complete the menus at home. Return the menus for the final phase of this Activity, making sure there are NO NAMES on each menu.

Menu Planning Considerations:

1. Use plant foods as the foundation of your meals.
2. Keep and eye on servings sizes.
3. Choose a variety of foods for balanced nutrition.
4. Food items from each Pyramid food group. Identified the groups on the Menu
5. Use as many of the children's garden items as possible
6. At least a main dish, a side dish and a drink.
7. Recipe book name and page number for recipe selected.

Procedure (Session 2)

1. Post all of the students' menus on the wall or bulletin board.
2. Have the students review each other's menu and make comments.
3. Have the class vote on one menu for the class to prepare in the kitchen. The vote must take into consideration the number of garden items required and nutritional value. You want the students to prepare a nutritious meal using the produce from their garden.
4. Using the selected menu and respective recipes used to create the menu, write the recipes on the chalkboard.
5. Discuss the recipes and extrapolate the ingredient quantities to feed the entire class and any guests that will be invited.
6. Use the menu and respective enlarged recipes to develop the menu shopping list in the Shop for the Meal Activity.

References

FOOD GUIDE PICTURE. At this site you can get a black and white picture of the Food Guide Pyramid by typing in the Search "Picture of the food guide pyramid". The Search will give you a selection. Select "Food Guide Pyramid Coloring page." This site looks like a fun place for the students to learn about the Food Guide Pyramid.
<http://kidshealth.org/Search01.jsp>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education --
Under "Nutrition" look at "Using the Food Guide Pyramid: A Resource for Nutrition Educators". This is an excellent source of information and ideas relating nutrition to serving sizes and menu planning. <http://www.ericsp.org/pages/healthpe/index.html>

