

Lesson A

Three Sisters Together – Taste the Colors!

Objective

Children who participate in this activity will learn to:

- Identify fruits and vegetables that have the same colors as the *Three Sisters*.
- Try a bite of an unfamiliar fruit or vegetable.

Participants

Children, ages 3 to 4

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Decorate the learning area with the United Tribes Technical College *Eat Smart. Play Hard.™* poster and *MyPyramid for Kids* poster.
- Gather supplies for tasting: plate or tray to display the food, cutting board, small knife, and paper napkins.
- Gather and arrange three colors (orange, green, yellow) of cut and/or uncut fruits and vegetables on plates so you can talk about how they look on the inside and the outside.
- Consider fruits and vegetables that are in season or locally grown.

- Make copies of the two-page family handout *Together at Home...Let's Try New Foods!*

Tips for Leaders

- Offer a familiar food and a new food at the same time.
- Offer a new fruit or vegetable when a child is hungry.
- Talk about the color, shape, feel, smell, sound, and taste - not about liking or disliking the food.
- Offer tiny tastes. Cut foods for tasting in bite-size pieces.
- Encourage at least one bite, but let them decide if they want to taste. Avoid forcing a child to taste.
- Be a role model. Taste fruits and vegetables together.
- Try again since a child may be cautious. Children may need to try a new fruit or vegetable 6 to 12 times before accepting it.
- Respect differences. A child doesn't need to taste or like every food.
- Be sure children have clean hands before they handle or taste food.
- For a comprehensive list of fruits and vegetables by color category and for

words to describe fruits and vegetables, refer to *Fruits and Vegetables by Color Category*, in *Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More*. To view and download:

www.teamnutritin.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html.

Attention Grabber

- **Ask:** What are the colors of: corn (yellow), squash (orange), and beans (green)?
- These are known as the *Three Sisters*.
- They have been planted by Native American gardeners for hundreds of years.
- They are planted together to help each other grow.

Linking Native Culture

Note: There are many versions of the traditional Native American Indian story about the *Three Sisters*. The following story represents a brief account of the Native American tale.

- Tell children the story of the *Three Sisters*:
- **Corn** is the tall grandmother who gives the beans a pole to climb up;
- **beans** climb the corn and feed the soil for the corn;
- **squash** keeps the soil moist for the thirsty beans and

corn, and keeps away raccoons and other pests with its prickly stems.

- The *Three Sisters* are a good way to illustrate how we can work together for the good of everyone.
- The corn, beans and squash also represent healthy foods.
- **Ask:** What are the colors of the *Three Sisters*?
- You can further the importance of storytelling by asking the children to retell the story.

Note: Emphasize that in the Native American family structure, older siblings take care of the younger ones. Siblings are not limited to biological brothers and sisters but include extended family.

Movement Activity

- Have the children sit in a circle. Go around the circle and tell each child which seed (corn, bean, or squash) he/she represents.
- **Seeds** - begin by having all the children curl up like a seed lying beneath Mother Earth. Explain that it is dark, and they can feel the warmth of the sun. Feel the raindrops falling on the ground above.

- **Sister Corn** is the first seeds to rise. Have children, who are corn stand tall, arms reaching toward the earth. They are looking down to see Sister Bean beginning to grow.
- **Sister Bean**, rise and twine around and around the corn.
- Bean and Corn stand together now. They watch Sister Squash reach for the light.
- **Sister Squash** move from a sitting position and lie down across the ground around Corn and Bean's feet.
- Now the children are **Three Sisters** in the garden growing together protecting and nourishing each other.

Teaching Activity

1. Introduce the tasting party... to get children thinking about the fun of trying fruits and vegetables.

- Explain that today they will have fun with a tasting party. They will taste some colorful fruits and vegetables as part of the fun!
- They will taste fruits and vegetables that are the same colors as the *Three Sisters*.

- **Ask:** What are some other colors of your favorite fruits and vegetables (blue/purple, red, and white).
- The bright colors tell us that they are full of good things our bodies need to be healthy.

2. Bring out the fruits and vegetables.

- Give children time to look (color, shape, size), feel, and smell.
- Practice the names of the new foods as you explore them together.
- **Ask:** How does this food: Look? (green, orange, yellow round, skinny, oval, tiny, huge) Feel? (fuzzy, smooth, bumpy, prickly, soft, hard, hot, icy) Smell? (sweet, sour)
- **Ask:** How are these foods alike and different?

3. Taste the colors... give children the chance to be food explorers and taste one or more fruits and vegetables that are new.

- Getting children to try new foods is not always easy. Children explore new foods and learn that trying something new can be an adventure!

- Look at the cut fruits and vegetables. Talk about the inside color, any seeds or sections, and how they smell.
- Invite children to try just one small bite of the food. Join the one-bite club with them. Trying just one bite is enough to talk about the taste. However, some children may not want to taste.
- Invite children to have another taste.

Activity Review

- Review by asking: What colors did we taste today?

At-Home Activities

- **Give each child** the two-page handout, *Together... Let's Try New Foods!* One side of the handout has tips for parents on helping children try new foods, and the other side has an "I tried it" chart to keep track of new foods the child tastes.
- **Read about fruits and vegetables...** Visit the library together to find children's books about fruits and vegetables (such as, *The Carrot Seed* by Krauss, *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits*

and Vegetables from A to Z by Ehlert, *Blueberries for Sal* by McCloskey, *Cherries and Cherry Pits* by Williams, and *Plate Full of Color* by Georgia Perez. Talk about the story and the pictures. Have children re-tell the stories in their own words. Plan to taste the foods you read about.

- **Plant a tasting garden.** Encourage parents to plant vegetables or herbs in their backyards or in pots. For young children, a two-foot garden or a single pot is big enough. These are some easy vegetables and herbs to grow: cherry tomatoes, lettuce, onions, bell peppers, and zucchini...and basil, chives, parsley, mint and rosemary. For help with gardening, give parents these handouts:
 - *Gardening Together*, from The USDA Team Nutrition Calendar Companion: www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/calendarcompanion.html
 - *Team Nutrition Days...and Beyond*: www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/howtokit.html

Useful Resources

- Additional Eat Smart. Play Hard. TM Resources
www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard
- Making Nutrition Count for Children
www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/nutritioncount.html
- Tickle Your Appetite for Child Care
www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/tickle.html
- Nibbles for Health
www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles.html
- Sense-ational Food poster
www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/sensational.html

These materials were adapted from the Eat Smart. Play Hard. TM Campaign, an educational program of the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA. For more information on the USDA initiative, go to www.fns.usda.gov.

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