Sower in the Field

Do those who plough for sowing plough continually...? When they have leveled its surface, do they not scatter dill, sow cumin, and plant wheat in rows and barley in its proper place...? For they are well instructed; their God teaches them. Isaiah 28:24-26

He will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and grain, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. Isaiah 30:23

Introduction

Planting and growing food can be a lot of work! The soil has to be prepared, the seeds planted and watered, weeds removed, and finally, after much anticipation and patience, the vegetables and fruits harvested and enjoyed. The people who grow and harvest our food – the farmers and the farmworkers – are a special group of people to work so hard to feed the rest of us! And, because of all the care that goes into bringing forth food from the Earth, those who garden and farm really show that these are important acts of love and nurturing. They are also acts of faith. Even though we humans know a lot about how to make things grow, we still don’t understand everything (and probably never will!), so every time we plant a seed, we do so with the understanding that it takes a little bit of a miracle to make it grow. God has taught us from the earliest times the best ways to garden and farm, and when we follow God’s instructions to plant in a way that respects the Creation, we are usually rewarded with enough food to eat. That we don’t always make sure it is shared with everyone has more to do with problems that humans have created than with nature. And that the very people who grow our food are often those who don’t have enough healthy food to eat themselves is something that we need to work to change. In the meantime, we can remember the farmers and farmworkers in our prayers, and be grateful to them and to God for providing so much for us.

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Prayer

Prayer for Those Who Produce Our Food

O God, we thank You for the food and friendship we share today.

The food which nourishes our bodies is Your gift to us.

It comes to us through the labor of many farmers, farm workers, and others who work very hard to bring Your bounty forth from the Earth.

Please be with their families who support them.

Please let them know how much we appreciate them.

May we be mindful of the effort and love that goes into growing our food.

And when we eat, may we remember to take our time and consider the people who grew our food. The food they produce enables us to be healthy and full.
Song

The Seed Cycle Song
(sing to the tune, The Farmer in the Dell)

The farmer sows his seed, the farmer sows his seed, heigh ho the derry o, the farmer sows his seed. *(Children can act out a seed curling up.)*

The wind begins to blow, the wind begins to blow, heigh ho the derry o, the wind begins to blow. *(Children can wave their arms like the wind.)*

The rain begins to fall, the rain begins to fall, heigh ho the derry o, the rain begins to fall. *(Children can hang and flutter their fingers like falling raindrops.)*

The sun begins to shine, the sun begins to shine, heigh ho the derry o, the sun begins to shine. *(Children can walk slowly with their arms circled overhead.)*

The seeds begin to grow, the seeds begin to grow, heigh ho the derry o, the seeds begin to grow. *(Children start to rise up by standing straighter.)*

The farmer cuts his grain, the farmer cuts his grain, heigh ho the derry o, the farmer cuts his grain. *(Children swing their arms back and forth as if cutting with a scythe.)*

The farmer binds his sheaves, the farmer binds his sheaves, heigh ho the derry o, the farmer binds his sheaves. *(Teacher touches three children at a time, who stand back in a tight circle, facing outward, as if bundled sheaves.)*

And now the harvest's in, and now the harvest's in, heigh ho the derry o, and now the harvest's in. *(Everyone else skips around the sheaves, hands joined.)*
Barnyard Hanger

Time Needed: 1 hour

Materials:
- Clothespins
- Colored craft foam
- Craft glue
- Google eyes
- Twine

Instructions:
1. For the animals, cut out shapes beforehand that the children can assemble to create cows, pigs, chickens, or horses. If you’re working with younger children, you can assemble the animals beforehand or find foam animals in a craft store. This project could also be done with paper instead of foam if the hangers are to be used indoors.
2. Glue one clothespin to the back of each foam cutout animal.
3. Hangers are useful for: organizing seed packets, hanging kids smocks or garden gloves, hanging small garden items like string or wire, displaying students’ artwork, and much more! Simply stretch some twine or clotheline between two points in the classroom, and use the hangers as you wish.
Fruit Salad Game (5 – 7 year olds)

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Materials:
- Carpet squares or cushions

Instructions:
1. All of the children sit on a carpet square or cushion except for one.
2. Choose four or five fruits and assign each child the name of one fruit. Multiple students should have the same type of fruit.
3. The child not on a carpet square or cushion stands in the middle and calls out a fruit. Everyone who has that type of fruit name must swap places. A new child doesn’t have a seat, and s/he calls out another fruit name.
4. In addition to the individual fruits, the person in the middle can call out “fruit salad” and everyone must find a new seat.

Adapted from GamesforYouthGroups.com
Food Group Relay (8 – 11 year olds)

Time Needed: 30 minutes

Materials:
- Five Hula-Hoops
- Food cards (see pages H-7 to H-9). Print these and cut them out beforehand. They can also be taped or glued to index cards to make them more durable. Each team will need a set of cards.

Instructions:
1. Place the Hula-Hoops five feet apart on the ground. Explain that each Hula-Hoop is for a different food group: vegetables, fruits, dairy products, protein, and grains. Here is a listing of the different foods, by food group, represented by the cards:

   **Vegetables:** broccoli, eggplant, bell pepper, spinach, bok choy, beets, zucchini
   **Protein:** black beans, garbanzo beans, steak, chicken, eggs, red beans, white beans
   **Fruits:** peach, apple, dragon fruit, raisins, orange juice, cherries, banana
   **Grains:** Os, barley, elbow macaroni, tortillas, wheat, bread, flour
   **Dairy:** milk, yogurt, ice cream, cottage cheese, cheese, chocolate milk

2. Divide the students into equally sized teams and have the teams line up in single file lines facing the Hula-Hoops, about 50 feet away from them. Give each team a set of food cards, but place them face down on the ground in front of the team.
3. To begin the race, say “On your marks, get set, go!” Each team then sends one member to the Hula-Hoops with the top card. The participants must sort the cards into the Hula-Hoops based on the food groups. If a team member puts a card in the wrong Hula-Hoop, they must do 10 jumping jacks. The first player must tag the hand of their teammate before the next player is allowed to run to the Hula-Hoops, and so on. The team that finishes first wins! You can play multiple times.

Variations: If this is too easy for the students, the participants can sort whole grains and refined grains, legumes and meats, or processed foods and raw foods.

*Used with permission from the Milwaukee Center for Independence*
Vegetable Creatures

Makes 10 servings.

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Ingredients:
- 1 head of cauliflower, cut into pieces
- 1 head of broccoli, cut into pieces
- 2 cups cherry or grape tomatoes
- 3 carrots, sliced and/or shredded
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- 10 pieces of string cheese
- Other vegetables or foods that can be eaten raw to use as body parts
- Raisins (for eyes)
- Toothpicks

Instructions:
1. Wash vegetables and arrange on plates or a clean working surface for the kids to use.
2. Allow the kids to build animals or other figures with the vegetable pieces and any other foods added for decoration, including string cheese (could make great hair).
3. Once the creatures are finished, have the students share their creations before they eat them!

COMPLETE THE MEAL:
Serve with yogurt or a whole-grain mini-bagel.
Farmers' Market Activity

Time Needed: 1 hour

Materials:
- “Fruit Bucks” (see page H-12)
- Produce (see Fruit Salad Recipe, page H-14)
- Tablecloths and tables (or whatever space is available)
- Construction paper and markers

Instructions:
1. Some children will be farmers and some will be customers. The customers will buy the fruit to make the “fruit salad” recipe for lunch. Select groups of three students to be farmers. (In other words, select nine, 12, or 15 students and divide them into groups of three). Each group of farmers should have the produce they have grown on their farm and materials for their farm stand. Tell the farmers they need to make signs for their fruits, which should include prices.
2. The rest of the students will be the consumers. They should each get four “fruit bucks.” While the farmers are preparing their signs for market, the consumers should make a shopping list of which fruits they will need at the market and how much they are willing to spend.
3. When the farmers have set up their produce and farm stands, allow the consumers to shop at the market. The shoppers are allowed to barter with the farmers if they want to. Encourage the shoppers to examine all the choices before they decide which produce to buy. Encourage the farmers to explain why the food costs what it does (e.g., does it take a lot of time to grow? labor? etc.) The farmers can take money for the fruit and store it in a cash box, which can also be made from construction paper.

Adapted with permission from Growing Minds Farm to School, a program of ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project). For more Farm to School lessons and resources, please visit: http://growing-minds.org
Greek Pasta Salad

Makes 10 Servings.

Time Needed: 30 minutes

Ingredients:
- 2 cups whole wheat or tri-colored wagon wheel pasta
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 to 3 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 20 black olives, sliced
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup green onions, chopped
- 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:
1. Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the package. Drain well.
2. Mix the pasta, olives, and cherry tomatoes in a bowl.
3. Mix the olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper.
4. Pour the vinaigrette over the pasta, olives, and tomatoes. Gently add the feta cheese and green onions.
5. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

COMPLETE THE MEAL:
Serve with Fruit Salad (page H-14), hummus and pita, and 1 cup of milk or milk alternative.
Fruit Salad

Makes 10 Servings.

Ingredients:
- 2 apples (cored and cut into bite-size chunks)
- 2 cups strawberries
- 2 bananas (peeled and sliced)
- 2 cups grapes
- 2 cups cantaloupe (seeded and cut into bite-size chunks)

Time Needed: 10 minutes

Instructions:
1. Mix the fruit together in a large bowl.

COMPLETE THE MEAL:
Serve with Greek Pasta Salad (page H-13), hummus and pita, and 1 cup of milk or milk alternative.
My Farm Web

Time Needed: 1 hour

Materials:
- Printed copies of pages H-16 to H-24 (laminate if you wish to reuse them)

Instructions:
1. Tell your students they are going to learn about some of the “things they use every day.” Ask them: “What things do you use every day?” You should get answers like: food, clothes, books, paper, computers, balls, water, TV, etc.
2. Explain that the items we use every day are either grown or mined (with a few exceptions, like the sun!) If the item is grown specifically for people, it is a product of agriculture.
3. Ask students: “Where do we get the things we use every day?” Most will say: “At the grocery store!” Some might say: “A factory.” Tell students that the store is a distribution center where we buy things and that the factory is a place where “raw” ingredients, grown for us (wheat for bread) or provided by nature (petroleum for fuel or plastic), are put together to make products.
4. Tell students that agriculture begins on a farm and that there are all kinds of farms. Cattle ranches, for beef and leather; dairy farms for milk and all the things that come from milk; orchards that grow fruit to make juice and pies; pig farms for pepperoni, bacon, and ham; grain farms that grow corn for fuel or corn syrup for soda and wheat for bread; cotton farms for blue jeans; and tree farms for paper and landscaping. In fact, there is a different kind of farm for nearly every type of product. Farms specialize in what they grow based upon their location (climate and soil), and farmers often choose only a few crops, especially if their farm is very big, because the type of equipment used to plant and harvest each crop is very expensive.
5. Inform students they are now going to create a “farm web” to help them understand agriculture and where the things they use every day come from.
6. Agriculture begins in the soil on the farm. Place the farm picture in the center of the floor.
7. Mix up the remaining pictures and pass a picture to each student. Ask the students which pictures will go closest to the farm picture? Answer: the pictures of things that are grown or raised on a farm. Children with pictures of things grown or raised on a farm should place them near the farm picture.
8. Students with products made from what is grown on the farm should place their pictures onto the web after the farm-raised item is placed.
9. Ask each student to place her/his picture into the right place on the web and discuss or use “linking phrases” such as “dairy cows make milk” after each picture is placed. (The word “make” is the linking word). When all the pictures have been correctly placed, review the linking phrases and ask students if they think other pictures could be added to the web.

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**How Did That Get in My Lunchbox?**
*The Story of Food*
*by Chris Butterworth*

The best part of a young child’s day is often opening a lunchbox and diving in. But how did all that delicious food get there? Who made the bread for the sandwich? What about the cheese inside? Who plucked the fruit? And where did the chocolate in that cookie get its start? From planting wheat to mixing flour into dough, climbing trees to machine-squeezing fruit, picking cocoa pods to stirring a vat of melted bliss, here is a clear, engaging look at the steps involved in producing some common foods. Healthy tips and a peek at basic food groups complete the menu.

**Mortimer’s First Garden**
*by Karma Wilson*

Upon overhearing the story of how springtime rain and sunshine nurture little seeds to grow into great big green plants, Mortimer Mouse is skeptical but decides to plant one of his seeds, just to see if such a miracle really can happen. Mortimer finds a perfect sport to plant the seed, and then...he waits. And waits. And waits. Impatient, Mortimer thinks nothing is ever going to happen to the little seed. But then something does happen. Something wonderful. Something divine. Something green!
Rainy Day Option: Making Butter

Long ago, making butter took a long time using a churn. In this activity, however, making butter is as fast as shake! shake! shake! This activity is fairly active and can even be tiring, but allowing every child a turn makes it doable. Also included is a short chant that children will have fun singing while they shake. Makes about 2 cups of butter.

**Time needed:** 45 minutes

**Ingredients:**
- Quart of heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Herbs from the garden for seasoning (optional)

**Utensils:**
- Jars with tight fitting lid
- Toothpicks

**Instructions:**
1. Fill jar almost to the top with the cream and screw the lid on tightly.
2. Start shaking! Sing the *Butter Boogie Song* while shaking to make it more fun (see below). Pass it around to different students as they get tired.
3. You will see the butter start to form in about 30 minutes. It will pull away from the glass in a definite cream.
4. You can stop here and stir in a pinch of salt, or eat it as is, or add a little dill or some other herb. Taste and experiment!
5. Whip it up with a fork. This will leave the buttermilk mostly still in the mix, and makes a very creamy, spreadable butter. You may have to pour off some of the buttermilk that separates out after refrigeration.
6. If you wish for a harder butter, keep on shaking until a lump of butter forms in the jar, surrounded by buttermilk.
7. Scoop the butter into a container with a lid and refrigerate, if you are not eating right away. (You can pour off the buttermilk and save it to make pancakes!)

*Butter Boogie Song*

*Shake it up, Shake it down,
Shake it, shake it all around.
Shake it high, Shake it low,
Shake it, shake it to and fro.
Shake it over, Shake it under,
Pretty soon we will have butter!*

Adapted from the *My Montessori Journey Blog*
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