



Spoons Curriculum - Lessons on Hunger

In an effort to develop awareness among children about the issue of hunger in our communities, we have developed the following activities to complement your participation in the Holiday Spoons Project. Please see detailed curriculum options on the following pages:

Lesson 1: Who is Hungry? – A creative writing exercise where students write the stories of hungry people.

Lesson 2: What's for Dinner? – A math exercise that helps students understand how affording healthy food can be difficult.

Lesson 3: The Tortoise and the Hare – A story-telling exercise using the classic fable to explain the importance of a healthy breakfast.

Lesson 4: Reading about Hunger – An opportunity to read and discuss stories of people who are facing hunger.



Lesson One: Who is Hungry? Creative Writing

There are many reasons that people are hungry. This exercise will help the student understand how people find themselves in need of help. Students can do this exercise individually or in small groups, with one student writing the story.

Distribute the topic slips, on the next page, to the students (if the students are working individually, more than one student can write about the same character).

The students will create a story about how their character became hungry. The stories should address the following topics:

1. What problems do they face?
2. What can they do?
3. How can we help?

When they have finished writing, ask a few students to share their stories. Use these stories to begin a discussion about how people can find themselves needing help.



Lesson One: Who is Hungry? Creative Writing Prompts

1. You are retired and take care of your two grandchildren. Your bills keep going up each month, but your monthly check stays the same.
2. You are married and have two children. You recently lost your job and after paying your mortgage and your other bills you do not have enough money left to afford food for your family.
3. Because of health problems, you have had to miss work and cannot pay your rent.
4. You are a single parent with two children. One of your children becomes ill and you have to stay home from work to take care of him. You only get paid the days you can go to work, but your bills stay the same.



Lesson Two: What's for Dinner? Math and Nutrition

We all want our family to have healthy, nutritious food to eat. Unfortunately, healthy foods often cost more than foods that are not as good for us. This exercise will help students understand how difficult it can be to buy healthy food of a family of four.

Lead a brainstorming session about what makes a healthy meal. Emphasize fruits, vegetables, and whole grains as healthy foods and steer the students away from foods high in sugar, fat, and salt.

Hand out the worksheets on the following page and ask the students to add the cost of the healthy meals and the unhealthy meals. Close with a discussion of how eating healthily can be difficult on a limited budget. Remind the students how much easier it is to concentrate in class when you have a healthy breakfast.





What's For Dinner? - Worksheet 1

Unhealthy Shopping List

Breakfast	Fozen Waffles (10)	\$1.19
	Syrup (12 Fl.oz.)	\$1.89
	Fruit Drink (1 gallon)	\$2.78
Snack	Potato Chips (1 lb.)	\$2.46
Lunch	White Bread (1 loaf)	\$1.09
	Bologna (1 lb.)	\$2.18
Dinner	Pasta Sauce with Meat (1 lb.)	\$1.89
	Pasta (1 lb.)	\$0.89
Dessert	Ice Cream (1/2 gallon)	\$2.39

Total Cost: _____

Healthy Shopping List

Breakfast	Cereal (10 oz)	\$2.69
	Skim Milk (1 gallon)	\$2.79
	Orange Juice (1 gallon)	\$5.32
Snack	All Natural Popcorn (1 lb.)	\$5.31
Lunch	Whole Wheat Bread (1 loaf)	\$3.50
	Solid White Tuna (1 lb.)	\$3.44
Dinner	Chicken Breasts (1 lb.)	\$3.29
	Broccoli (1 lb.)	\$1.19
Dessert	Strawberries (2 lbs.)	\$6.98

Total Cost: _____



What's for Dinner? – Worksheet 2

1. Which shopping list costs more?
2. How much more did it cost?
3. Explain, in sentences, why hungry people often eat less healthy foods.



Lesson Three: The Tortoise and the Hare Nutrition

Food gives us energy to work, play, and learn. A healthy breakfast, especially one containing whole grains and fresh fruit, provides a steady source of energy that will last throughout the morning. This exercise uses the fable of the Tortoise and the Hare to show why eating a healthy breakfast is important.

Explain to the students that eating breakfast provides the energy we need. If you do not eat breakfast, you lack the energy you need. If you eat a breakfast that is high in sugar, you have energy for a short period of time, but you run out of energy long before lunch. A breakfast high in whole grains and fresh fruit releases energy at a steady rate all morning long.

Tell the students the story of the Tortoise and the Hare. Discuss how the slow but steady pace of the tortoise won in a race with the hare. Compare the healthy breakfast and unhealthy breakfast with the tortoise and the hare. Remind the students that many families cannot afford a healthy breakfast, and do not have the energy needed to stay focused all morning.

Ask the students:

“If you didn’t eat a healthy breakfast would you have the energy to play at recess?”

--do well in Physical Education class?”

--go to soccer practice?”

--concentrate in math class?”

Provide your students with information about your school’s breakfast program. Let them know how to participate and emphasize the importance of eating a good breakfast.



Reading about Hunger

Reading about hunger allows students to get a better idea of how people who do not have enough to eat struggle to get by. Choose books from the following list to read with your class. Discuss what life is like for the characters, how people treated them, and what the students can do to help.

No Place to Be: Voices of Homeless Children by Judith Berck. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.

A good overview of the issues of poverty and homelessness. Includes excerpts from interviews with homeless children, poems, and photos.

Living Hungry in America by Larry Brown and H.F. Pizer. MacMillian, 1987

The Family Under the Bridge by Natalie Savage Carson. Harper Trophy, 1989 reissue edition.

Armand likes his life as a Parisian hobo, but the day he meets three small homeless children and their mother, who take up residence in his spot under a bridge, his life changes.

Changing Places: A Kid's View of Shelter Living by Margie Chalofsky. Gryphon House, 1992.

Children ages 8 to 13 give readers a first-hand look at life in a shelter. Children learn that even though these children live in a shelter, their wants, needs, likes, and dislikes are the same as all children's.

Gettin' Through Thursday by Melrose Cooper. Lee and Low Books, 1998.

Today is report card day, the same as Mom's payday. Mom promises a party if Andrew makes the honor roll, which he does. Can she keep her promise?

Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by Dy Anne Di Salvo-Ryan. Mulberry Paperback Book, 1991.

A good introduction to emergency food programs and other endeavors to fight local hunger. Grades K-2

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America by Barbara Ehrenreich. Henry Holt & Co. 2001.

Interesting investigative report on people trying to live on low wages in service jobs. Grades 6-8

Soup Kitchen Suspicion (Cinnamon Lake Mysteries 6) by Dandi MacKall. Concordia Publishing House, 1998.

Someone leaves a mystery message with a large donation for the local soup kitchen. Who was it, and why is the money disappearing?

Rosie the Shopping Cart Lady by Chia Martin. Holm Press, 1996.

Rosie, who lives in the streets, receives gifts of kindness from people she encounters.

The Lady in the Box by Ann McGovern. Turtle Books, 1997.

Children are introduced to the world of homelessness when Ben and his sister befriend Dorrie, a homeless woman.

Home: A Collaboration of Thirty Distinguished Authors and Illustrators of Children's Books to Aid the Homeless (A Reading Rainbow Book) by Michael Rosen and Franz Brandenburg. Harper Trophy, 1996.

This collection of work that celebrate the joys of having one's own special place dramatizes the deprivation of homelessness. It's a wonderful book for generating thoughtful discussion among teachers and children.

Famine and Hunger (Repairing the Damage) by Lawrence Williams. New Discovery, 1992.

This book discusses the causes of hunger and famine in both developed and developing countries and some of the ways of dealing with these problems.



Hunger & Nutrition Information Online Resources

These websites are great sources of information on hunger, poverty, and programs aimed at relieving hunger. Many include information about kids' nutritional needs, as well as activities and resources for teachers.

Project Bread – The Walk for Hunger.....www.projectbread.org

Information for anyone interested in meeting the needs of hungry people across Massachusetts. Site contains information about childhood nutrition and elderly outreach, hunger facts, public policy information, opportunities to get involved, and information about our annual Walk for Hunger.

24 Carrots Press.....www.nutritionforkids.com

Excellent site for anyone interested in nutrition and kids. Very balanced approach to a range of topics. Has lots of links for teachers, parents, nutrition professionals and consumers. Users can subscribe to "Feeding Kids" bimonthly newsletter. Great activities for teachers.

Just for Kids Hunger Education.....www.cfb.org/kids/index.html

The Contra Costa Food Bank has an interactive educational tool for children to learn about hunger and how they can help put an end to hunger.

United Nations Food Force Game.....www.food-force.com/index.php/teachers

Students can head off on an online video game mission to deliver and distribute emergency food.

America's Second Harvest.....www.secondharvest.org

Information about charitable hunger-relief organization. Second Harvest solicits and distributes food and grocery products through a nationwide network of food banks.

My Pyramid Blast Off Game.....www.mypyramid.gov/kids/kids_game.html

Kids can learn about nutrition via an interactive online computer game. Ages 6-11.

Food and Nutrition Information Center.....www.nal.usda.gov/fnic

A site on many nutrition topics, including the Dietary Guidelines, Food Guide Pyramid, and Food Composition Tables. The main menu includes "Resource Lists," which, when searched using the words "hunger" or "school breakfast," yields a wealth of information.

CNOP.....www.meals4kids.org

The Child Nutrition Outreach Program (CNOP) is a service provided by the Massachusetts Department of Education and administered by Project Bread. The Outreach Program works with community members to increase participation in both the School Breakfast and the Summer Food Service Programs.

The Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy.....hunger.tufts.edu

Tufts University site that provides research articles on hunger and poverty topics, including hunger and food security, family and economic security, and food and nutrition programs. There is also a page telling the history of the study of hunger in the United States since the 1960's.

Bread of the World.....www.bread.org

Nationwide Christian movement that seeks justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying U.S. decision makers. Current and archived publications.