



“GROW YOUR OWN!”

LESSON SIX

FARM TO TABLE

Local Food & Farmer Visit



Lesson Overview:

This lesson introduces children & youth to local farmers and local farms. It will also give participants information about why it is important to support our local producers, and where they can get local food from.



Lesson Objectives:

Participants will meet a local farmer who uses sustainable practices on their farm. They will learn about organic farming practices.



Introduction

It is time beat the summer heat! This lesson does not require much preparation, other than contacting a local farmer to come and speak about their farming operation and the practices they use on their farm. We would like children to be introduced to organic & sustainable agriculture that is happening in their community, and learn about farms close to where they live! Highlighting both urban and rural farming is another opportunity to discuss the changing trends in food production, and grow their interest in local food.

The second part of the lesson is inviting the participants to create farm-themed projects & food. Get them in the kitchen (especially with produce from their own garden, if possible), read farm themed books, and have them dream about what living on a farm would be like.

Organic Farming

Invite local producers – urban or rural farmers – who use organic practices on their farm. Encourage them to answer the following questions in their presentation:

- Where is your farm located?
- Why do you use organic practices?
- What do you do on your farm (what do you produce, what animals do you have)?
- How long have you been farming?
- What are your favorite parts of being a farmer?
- Do you employ anyone at your farm?

EXPLORE ACTIVITIES

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Materials:

A table and tablecloth. Ask your farmer or producer if there is anything else they would like you to bring and have available for them. Printed handouts with their information or pictures from their farm are always fun.

Activity: Farmer Talk (All Ages)

Invite a local farmer to visit your garden site. Ask them to bring products from their farm & talk about what they do on their farm and where they sell their products. Get participants thinking about the various places they could find food from their local farmers.

Materials:

To Market to Market	by Nikki McClure
All in A Day	by Nikki McClure
Before We Eat from Farm to Table	by Pat Brisson
The Ox Cart Man	by Donald Hall
How Did That Get In My Lunchbox?	by Chris Butterworth

Activity: Reading! (Ages 3 - 10)

Materials:

A Tale of Two Tomatoes Handout

Activity: A Tale of Two Tomatoes (Ages 10 - 18)

Read through the Tale of Two Tomatoes handout & have a discussion.

Farm to Table MOVE ACTIVITIES

Summer/Autumn

The Big Garden Children & Youth Sustainable Ag Curriculum

Activity: Tour of the Garden (All Ages)

Put our newfound knowledge to the test! This is an opportunity for participants to give a garden tour to their friends, teachers, family, or visiting farmers. By this time the garden should be well-labeled, things should be growing, and there have been a few weeks of harvesting from the garden. Invite the children & youth to share a new skill they have learned in the garden, or point out their favorite part of the garden.

Materials:

Put our newfound Laminated signs for each station with pictures (or just words if they are old enough to read) “Plant the seeds,” “Water the seeds,” “Harvest the crop,” “Wash the crop,” “Pack the crop for the store or farmer’s market,” “To Market,” a table (to represent the farmer’s market stand), 6 large square bins, seeds, watering cans, produce that can easily stand upright in a bucket of potting soil (like radishes, beets, carrots, turnips, potatoes, sweet potatoes or head lettuce), 2 waxed produce boxes, twist ties, produce bags, plate with place setting (placemat, knife, fork, spoon, cup, etc.)

Activity: Farm to Table Relay Race (All Ages)

Did you ever wonder how our food gets from the farm into our belly? In this activity participants will learn the process that it takes for our food to get from the seed into our bellies. The first thing you will want to do is read through each part of the process, showing the laminated signs and explain it. Then explain the game — Participants will go through the different processes a farmer takes through a relay race. There are two ways to do this — you can have the participants go one at a time through each station or you can have one or two participants remain at each station and act like a daisy chain (passing the items along), so that they only do one of the activities, then switch so that everyone gets to experience each part of the chain. You will need 3 buckets or bins for

each relay team (so 6 total if there are two teams).

First station - Plant the seeds

Use a bucket or bin of potting soil. Have seeds nearby.

Second station (participant uses the same bin) - Water the crop

They need to water the seeds that were just planted with watering cans

Third station - Harvest the crop

Have turnips, beets, carrots, lettuce heads — some produce item stuck in a bin of potting soil. They will need to harvest the different items.

Fourth station - Wash the crop

Have a bucket or bin of water, they need to wash the produce at this station & if it is an item that needs to be bunched or bagged (like loose greens) tie it with a twist tie or bag it.

Fifth station - Pack the boxes for the store or farmers market

Have a waxed produce box, they need to put the freshly washed produce in the box

Sixth station - Take the produce to market

Have a farmer's market table, they need to put the items on the table

Seventh station - Put the food on our plate

This participant will act like the customer at the farmer's market. They will take the produce items & put it on a plate/table setting. Farm to table!

Farm to Table

Summer/Autumn

CREATE ACTIVITIES

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Materials:

Large paper for drawing, drawing supplies like markers, pens, pencils

Activity: My Farm (All Ages)

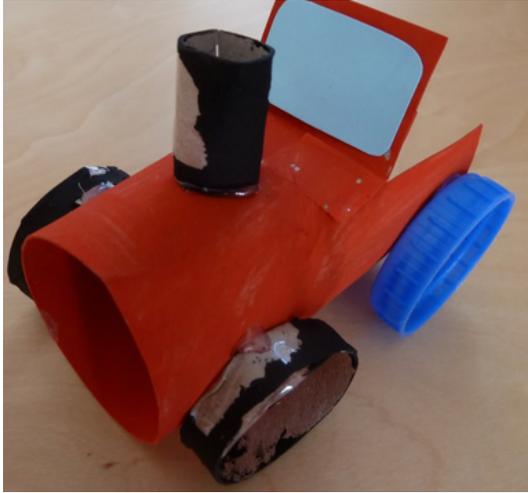
Have participants draw up their dream farm. What would they produce, grow, raise? What kind of barn or structures would they like? Where would they market or sell their products? This exercise works well with a group as well. Have all the participants work together to draw their dream farm.



Activity:

Small cardboard boxes, paper plates, white & red paper (or felt), black markers, colored markers, straw or yellow paper for bedding, feathers

Activity: Chickens & Chicken Coops! (Ages 3 - 8)



Materials:

Items from recycling (small boxes, milk cartons, aluminum cans etc.) and miscellaneous items (buttons, ribbons, yarn etc.) and glue.

Activity: Junk Tractors

Make their own tractor out of these items. When dried, the children can paint their tractors.

Materials:

Paints, Straw tied at the ends with yarn or twine, paper

Activity: Straw Art (Ages 3 - 6)

Provide lots of pieces of straw (hay) to paint with instead of brushes! When done, the children can glue the straw onto the paintings!

Materials:

Chicken Wire, tape, ribbon, yarn old blue jeans etc.

Activity: Farm Weaving (Ages 3 - 6)

Cut squares of small-holed chicken wire. Put masking tape around the sharp edges. Set out assorted lengths of natural raffia, gingham ribbons and narrow strips ripped from old blue jeans. The children weave them in and out of the holes.

Farm to Table

Summer/Autumn

EAT ACTIVITIES

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Food from the Farm (All Ages)

This will depend on what the farmers bring to share with the participants, but if you don't have a farmer visit scheduled there are many options for great local goodies to bring the kids! This could be samples of cheese, honey, produce, jams & jellies. If you do not have a farmer visit at your site try & provide local food items and do a taste test.

In our area here are some GREAT examples —

Goat Cheese from Does & Divas Dairy or Honey Creek Creamery

- Found at HyVEE

Greens & Vegetables from Shadowbrook Farms

- Found at Wohlner's Grocery

Yogurt, Cheese, and other Dairy items from Chisholm Family Farm

- Found at Daddy's Neighborhood Market

Produce from Botna Burrow

Produce from farms in Iowa & Nebraska

- Found at Daddy's Neighborhood Market

Local Egg Garden Frittata or Scramble (All Ages)

Let the participants taste the difference between store bought eggs and local eggs. Then cook up a veggie scramble on your outdoor hotplate or in the kitchen at the garden site with items from the garden!

Examples —

Egg scramble with basil, chives (or other herbs) & cheese

Egg scramble with zucchini & cheese

Egg scramble with green tomatoes & cheese

We can get local & certified organic eggs from Pin Oak Place in Harlan, Iowa or Big Muddy Urban Farm in Omaha.

Students could also do a blind taste test. It could be food from their garden or other dairy products. They could compare different flavors of yogurt or produce. Another possibility would be to taste different kinds of cheese, for example cow, goat and sheep cheese or cheddar, Swiss, mozzarella

Homemade Butter (All Ages)

Baby food jars, a big bowl of ice, whipping cream, small bowl to put the butter in the ice, spoon to press butter on the bowl, measuring spoons

Put 2 tablespoons whipping cream in each baby food jar. Put lid on tightly and shake as long as can. Remove lid and pour off excess liquid. Spoon butter into the smaller bowl and set this bowl in the bowl of ice. As butter chills, continue to press it again the side of the bowl to get rid of any remaining liquid. When ready...enjoy on some good bread or rolls! To speed up the process you can add a marble to the jar when shaking