

## UNIT TWO: GRADES 3 - 5

### LESSON ONE: Reading about Hunger



#### The GOALS

of this lesson are to:

- develop an awareness of what hunger is by reading a story about hunger (READING AND LISTENING SKILLS)
- increase awareness among children about the prevalence and causes of hunger (SOCIAL STUDIES)
- foster and promote community values and empathy among children

This lesson has three components: **READING** a story about hunger; a **DISCUSSION** of the story and more broadly about hunger and giving; and an **ACTIVITY** which reinforces the lessons from the story and discussion.



#### READING

Read *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* or another selection from the suggested reading list (see Appendix D).



#### DISCUSSION

Discuss the book you choose. Below are some suggested questions:  
*What happens in this book? What do we learn from this story?*  
*How does that apply to our own community?*

Following the discussion of the book, have the class discuss hunger and giving. Use the following questions as guidelines for the discussion:

*What does it feel like to be hungry?*

*Why do you think people are hungry?*

- no money to buy food
- no kitchen to cook in (homeless)
- no transportation to buy food
- physical limitations (especially elderly)

*What are some of the reasons people don't have money for food?*

- can't stretch money they have to pay for rent, utilities, food
- can't work because they are ill or need to care for small children
- can't find a job

*What kind of people do you think are hungry?*

- children, elderly, adults, people in cities and suburbs
- people of all colors and ethnic backgrounds

*Where do you see hunger?*

- discuss TV images of hunger

*How many kids in our state do you think are hungry?*

- one out of every five children in Massachusetts under the age of 12 is at risk of hunger. That's over 200,000 kids. (How many people in the class or group would that be?)

*What problems do some hungry children have?*


- they get sick more often, can't concentrate in school, become tired, get headaches, don't grow right, brains don't develop properly

## NOTES

*Where can hungry people go for food?*

- Teachers can help children get breakfast and lunch at school.
- People can call the FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333. The Hotline will find a place nearby where a family can get a bag of groceries or a hot meal. The Hotline can also tell a family how to apply for public programs that help hungry people.

## ACTIVITY

 Have each child in the class write (and illustrate, if time allows) a story about a child who is hungry, being sensitive to the reality that some children in the class may, in fact, be hungry. Provide a framework for the story and some questions or suggestions to help guide the story. You may also want to divide the class into small groups and have each group together write and illustrate a story.

Have the children in the class sit in a circle. Provide the first sentence or two of a story about a child who is hungry. Then, go around the circle and have each child add a sentence to the story.

Ask the class, “What does it feel like to be hungry? What does it feel like to be well fed?” Have the children make a drawing of each feeling and talk about the differences.

## LESSON TWO: Research Lesson on Societal Changes in Food/Eating Habits



### The GOALS of this lesson are to:

- develop an awareness of how obtaining enough food to eat has always been a challenge for people in America (SOCIAL STUDIES)
- increase awareness of how historical changes have impacted how people get enough food (SOCIAL STUDIES)
- increase awareness among children about how the prevalence and causes of hunger have changed over time in this country (SOCIAL STUDIES, HISTORY)
- conduct and report on the results of a group research effort to look at societal changes in food/eating habits (RESEARCH, WRITING AND PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS)

This lesson has two components: a research **PROJECT** which should be assigned to small groups in advance of the lesson; and a **DISCUSSION** of what each group learned, and what the class as a whole learned from the project.



### RESEARCH PROJECT

*Assignment:* Give this assignment a week or two in advance of the lesson. You will want to allow class time to do the research prior to this lesson.

Divide the class into small groups, so that you have at least one group researching each of the following time periods in American History: Colonial times, Civil War Era, Industrial Age, present day. Have the groups address the following questions:

- How did people get food during this time?
- How much did people raise or grow their own food? Where else did they get their food from?
- What were the major food challenges in this era (transportation, crop failures, war)?
- How much hunger was there during this time? How did the country respond?

Have each group prepare a written report of what they learned. Have them also prepare to present their findings back to the class, with different members of the small groups presenting different parts of the research.



### DISCUSSION

Have each small group report their findings back to the full class, beginning with Colonial times and working up to the present day. After all of the reports have been presented, discuss:

- What was the same and what was different about how people obtained food at different times in our country's history?
- Has our country gotten better at feeding the hungry?
- What problems might there be in obtaining enough food to feed everyone in the future?

## NOTES

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Assign different roles to the members of each small group (i.e. farmer, store owner, innkeeper, factory worker) and have them present an oral report (and/or prepare a written report) on how they get food, what they eat, and their role (if any) in feeding others.

## LESSON THREE: Reviewing the Essentials of Nutrition



### The GOALS of this lesson are to:

- recognize healthy eating habits and the importance of a well-balanced meal to meeting the body's needs (SCIENCE)
- build an understanding of the biology of nutrition and the biological causes and effects of hunger (SCIENCE)



### DISCUSSION

Have a large copy of the Food Pyramid available as the basis for class discussion (see Appendix A).

Discuss the Food Pyramid and its different components: fats, oils and sweets; milk, yogurt and cheese; meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, nuts; vegetables; fruit; bread, cereal, rice and pasta. Discuss the recommended number of servings of foods from the different groups. Discuss why it is important to eat from all of the food groups, and what these different components do for the body (see Appendix B).

Ask the children to talk about their favorite foods. Have them name where their favorite foods fit on the Food Pyramid. Ask them if they would be eating a healthy diet if they just ate their favorite foods.

Ask the class, "What happens to children who don't eat enough or don't get the right kinds of foods?" Write their ideas down as they brainstorm. You may want to supplement what they say with what research has shown: that hungry children are more likely to have headaches, fatigue, colds, and other sicknesses; they have a harder time concentrating; and they are less able to learn.



### ACTIVITY

Once the Food Pyramid discussion has taken place, you can select from among the following activities:

Divide the class into six small groups, assigning a different food group to each. Have each group review what their food group does for the body and why it is important to eat from that food group. (Or, in the case of fats, oils and sweets, why it is important not to eat too much from that food group.) Have each group write and present to the class a poem about their food group. For example, "Carbohydrates give you lots of energy, That's why runners eat them, don't you see?" "Milk, yogurt and cheese make your bones strong, So you'll be able to walk all day long." Make and illustrate posters with the poems and put them up in the class and/or cafeteria.

Pick one or two students to tell the class about everything they had to eat so far that day. As they describe what they had, point to the appropriate food groups in the Food Pyramid. Have the class brainstorm together what other foods the students should eat for the rest of the day (for snacks and meals).

## NOTES

Have students keep a journal of what they eat for a week, starting with what they've eaten so far that day. Have them then report back on their eating habits, noting the extent to which their dietary habits conform to the recommendations of the Food Pyramid.

Have the students act out a healthy day of eating. Have five areas designated at the front of the room for each food group. One by one, each student should tell the class which food he/she is, and from which food group. Count the number of servings as each food group fills up, until the class has created a well-balanced day of eating (i.e. 2-3 servings milk, yogurt and cheese; 3- 5 servings vegetables, etc.).



## The GOALS

of this lesson are to:

- develop an awareness of hunger and of places hungry people can turn for help, such as a soup kitchen (SOCIAL STUDIES)
- build concern about, empathy for and identification with the hungry in our own and other communities
- emphasize that we all have a role to play in reducing the amount of hunger (SOCIAL STUDIES)
- give students an opportunity to take action against hunger within their own community
- learn how good it feels to make a difference in fighting hunger and building a better community

## LESSON FOUR: Learning Through Community Service

This lesson has two components: a **DISCUSSION** about what the group has learned over the past few classes about hunger and how they might make a difference in addressing the issue; and brainstorming/planning a Community Service **ACTIVITY** which the class can undertake.



### DISCUSSION

Begin by summarizing what the class has learned through the earlier lessons about hunger. Remind them that people of all ages, from all different parts of Massachusetts, are hungry, because they don't have enough money for food. When people don't eat well, they can have problems, like getting sick and having trouble concentrating.

Discuss the importance of the individual in solving society's problems like hunger. What can each person in the class do? What can the class do as a whole?



### ACTIVITY

The following are suggested activities, one or more of which the class can undertake as a community service project.

Have a speaker from a local food pantry or soup kitchen or from Project Bread talk with the class about hunger and what their organization is doing to combat hunger. The speaker may want to brainstorm with the class about a future project they could undertake together.

Have a can drive for the hungry. Have the students ask their parents and other adults for donations. Remind the students to keep in mind healthy eating and the Food Pyramid in asking for donations. If possible, plan a field trip to a local food pantry to deliver the food that has been collected.

Have the class make posters to put up in the school encouraging children to participate in the Walk for Hunger. Encourage the children to include sentiments about why this is important: "We can make a difference," "We want to help other children who don't have enough to eat."

## NOTES

Divide the class into small groups and develop a short script for the children to use in asking their friends and neighbors to sponsor them in the Walk for Hunger. Have the groups use what they have learned about hunger in developing their talking points.

Make food posters about the importance of eating well and/or where hungry people can turn for help. Hang the posters up in the classroom or cafeteria to remind students about healthy eating.