



# Learning TO GIVE

## What Is My Plate?

[www.learningtogive.org](http://www.learningtogive.org)

Go online to get the associated handouts, standards, and latest version of the lesson plan: <http://www.learningtogive.org/units/helping-others-feed-themselves/what-my-plate>

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the USDA Food Guidelines and motivate the students to seek good nutrition.

### **Duration:**

One Forty-Five Minute Class Period

### **Objectives:**

The learners will:

- respond to *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food*.
- discuss prior knowledge about good nutrition.
- identify food groups of the USDA nutrition guidelines.

### **Materials:**

- *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food* (see Bibliographical References), by Jan and Stan Berenstain and/or another book from the bibliographical references

- Materials from the USDA website <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> and <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids/ActivitySheets.html>

### **Home Connection:**

Send a note home explaining that the children are learning about nutrition and that their homework is to pay attention to the elements of their evening meal (see Attachment One: Making Healthy Food Choices Family Letter).

### **Bibliography:**

- Berenstain, Jan and Stan. *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food*. New York: Random House, 1985. ISBN: 0394872177
- Leedy, Loreen. *The Edible Pyramid: Good Eating Every Day*. Scott Foresman, 1996. ISBN: 0823412334
- Riccio, Nina. *Five Kids & A Monkey Solve the Great Cupcake Caper: A Learning Adventure about Nutrition and Exercise*. Creative Attic, 1997. ISBN: 0965395510
- Sharmat, Mitchell. *Gregory, the Terrible Eater*. New York: Scholastic Trade, 1989. ISBN: 0590433504

### **Instructions:**

1. *Anticipatory Set: Show students the book *Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food* by Stan and Jan Berenstain. Ask them to tell you what junk food is. Find out what they already know about junk food. Ask the students to reflect on the question: “What if you ate too much junk food?” Read the book. After reading, discuss the lesson that the bears learned. Ask the students to raise their hands if they eat well. Ask the students to explain what is wrong with junk food.*
2. Put up a poster or drawing of the Food Guide and tell the students that this is the daily food guide recommended by the USDA. The guide shows us what foods we need each day and in what proportions.
3. Explain that people, like all animals, need food for energy. We need the right amounts of good food to keep our bodies healthy so we are able to play and work at our best.
4. Explain the different food groups and call attention to the sizes of the sections of the My Plate diagram. Help the students understand that the recommended amount to eat from each food group is represented by the amount of space it is given on the plate.

5. Ask students to name foods that they enjoy from each of the food groups.
6. Emphasize that the plate is a guide that helps us make choices. Ask the students to recall choices they have made about eating that either had positive or negative consequences.
7. Play a game called “name that food group.” To play, divide the class into two teams. Have one person from each team come to the front of the room at a time. Place a bell between the two players. When you name a food, the first player to ring the bell names the food group to which the food belongs. If he/she cannot name the food group, the second team gets a chance to name the food group. The team whose player correctly names the food group receives a point. Play continues with new players until each child has had a turn. The team with the highest number of points wins the game.
8. Divide the class into small groups and give each group an activity sheet from the USDA website. As they work, they can talk about the healthy foods they like. Have each student name at least one nutritious food he or she has eaten today and name the food group from which it comes.
9. Tell the students that tomorrow they will learn how to put together a balanced food menu. Ask them to pay attention to their dinner meal tonight and be ready to discuss it tomorrow.

**Assessment:**

Observe student participation in the food group game and in the building (and discussion) of the food pyramid puzzle. You should also assess their understanding from their response to the Berenstain Bears book.