**Facts to Know**

**Group size:** two to three children per adult volunteer

**Time frame:** group meeting 30 to 60 minutes

**Recommended ages:** 5- to 7-year-olds (kindergarten through second grade)

**Purpose**

Youth learn to classify foods by group and prepare healthful snacks that are fun to eat using the food groups.

**Materials:**

- Small paper plates (one per member)
- Large paper plates (one per member)
- Bananas (one per member)
- Kiwi (one per member)
- Mandarin oranges or clementines (one per member)
- Pine nuts or soy nuts (1 teaspoon per member)
- Paring knives (for adult helpers only)
- Cutting boards
- Paper towels
- Standard muffin tin, 12-cup
- Serving bowls and plates, assorted sizes
- Teaspoon measuring spoons, several
- Food samples (see activity No. 1 for ideas)
- Ethnic food samples (see activity No. 4 for ideas)
- Two large cardboard boxes, at least 6 by 6 inches
- White or brown craft paper
- Large black marker
- Music CD with fun activity/dance music (optional)
- CD player (optional)
Learning Activities

Do: Getting Started
Food Group ID (20 minutes)

For this activity, members will be able to sample foods from different food groups and try to guess the food group where they belong. You’ll need food samples from each of the food groups: protein, dairy, fruits, vegetables and grains. Food samples should be edible at room temperature. For example, raw eggs would not be a good food sample. However, raw pine nuts would be a good sample.

1. Have all members and adult helpers wash their hands.
2. Using an empty muffin tin, place a small sample of different foods in each cup. Some ideas for food samples include tangerine, star fruit, pine nuts, soy nuts, cheese, hazelnut spread, snap peas, asparagus, sun-dried tomatoes, fresh basil leaves, hummus, pumpkin puree, sourdough bread, pita and popcorn.
3. Try to have at least one sample food for each member in the club. For large clubs, two or three muffin trays with samples might be necessary.
4. Invite members to be a food adventurer and try one of the samples. After they’ve tried the sample, ask, “Which food group did your sample belong to: protein, dairy, fruit, vegetable or grain?”
5. Have the members talk about which food groups have similar characteristics. Try asking questions to encourage members to think about how something tastes and feels in their mouth. For example: Are all the whole grains soft, or crunchy or dry? Are all vegetables crunchy? Are all fruits sweet and juicy? Are all dairy foods rich and creamy?

Background Knowledge

When you’re tired and rundown, and your energy level is low, you may be just plain hungry. The right kinds of snacks will tide you over to the next meal but will not spoil your appetite for later. Healthful snacks can be selected from each of the food groups. The best snacks come from a variety of places. A true food adventurer is someone who is willing to try something new.

Are there any foods you did not like the first time you tried them? The foods you eat every day might be very different from the foods children in other parts of the world eat. For example, have you eaten seaweed, raw fish, insects, soured milk or beaver?

During this lesson, let’s try to be food adventurers by tasting a new food that we’ve never had before!
**Do: Digging Deeper**

**A Tropical Snack (30 minutes)**

For this activity, have the members help with preparing the food. All hands must be washed prior to handling any food. Use clean, food-safe surfaces for food preparation.

1. Have all members and adult helpers wash their hands.

2. Give each member a small paper plate on which to construct their tropical beach scene snack.

3. Design the beach first. Each member should place several clementine or mandarin orange slices across the bottom of the plate. Members can help peel clementines or arrange canned mandarin oranges on paper towels and pat them dry.

4. Next, build a palm tree trunk with bananas. Have members peel a banana. Then, with an adult’s help, cut the banana in half the long way. And then cut it again in half the short way. Each banana will yield four palm tree trunks cut this way. Adults may cut palm tree trunks into slices if members would like.

5. For palm leaves, an adult can help peel and slice kiwi fruit in wedges. Members can arrange several kiwi wedges as leaves on the palm trees.

6. Finally, because every beach should have some sea shells, members can sprinkle 1 tsp. of pine nuts on the beach for sea shells. Members with nut allergies might try soy nuts instead. Then enjoy!

7. Ask members, “Which food groups are in this snack?” The answer would be fruit and protein.

**Do: Looking Within**

**Food Group Fun Dice (10 minutes)**

Prior to the meeting, make a pair of Food Group Fun Dice. Wrap two large boxes (at least 6 by 6 inches) with white or brown craft paper. On one of the dice write the following moves in large print: 1) Blueberry Bounce, 2) Strawberry Stretch, 3) Squash Squats, 4) Dairy Dance, 5) Tortilla Twirl, 6) Beef Bend. On the other dice write the numbers 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13.

1. Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Have the members stand in a large circle with enough room to swing arms and wiggle around without bumping their neighbor. Optional: You might want to play a fun music CD for background music during this activity.

2. Explain to members that the object of this game is to do whatever activity the dice lands on for the number of times shown on the other dice.

3. Ask one member to give the activity dice a big toss into the middle of the circle. When the dice land, all the members in the circle must do the motion for the number of times shown on the dice.

4. Repeat the game until everyone has had a turn.
Reflect: Bringing Closure

A Global Minifeast (30 minutes)

1. Prepare a minifeast with foods from around the world. Explain to members that they will be food adventurers. They will sample some common, and some not so common, foods from around the world.

2. Ask all the members and the adult helpers to wash their hands. When they return from hand washing, have all the members find a seat at the table.

3. Ask adult helpers to help serve the foods in different bowls or on plates with appropriate serving utensils. Be sure adult helpers put enough out for everyone to sample. The foods can be served family style, passing bowls or plates around the table.

4. Ideas for foods to sample include hummus dip with carrots (Middle Eastern), cucumber slices with a yogurt dill dip (Greek), roasted pumpkin seeds (Mexican), pretzels and honey-mustard dip (German), chips and salsa (Hispanic), Nutella spread and Italian bread (Italian), parmigiano (Parmesan) cheese and honey to dip (Italian) and hard-boiled egg slices sprinkled with cumin (Moroccan).

Apply: Going Beyond

1. Plant a garden. Even small patio pot or window box gardens can provide fresh herbs or veggies all season long. Tomatoes, beans, peas, strawberries, basil, oregano, sage and rosemary are all plants that do well in small garden spaces.

2. Have a food safety relay race. Write simple food safety tasks on flashcards. Draw flashcards and have teams race to complete the tasks. Some ideas include washing hands for 20 seconds, washing fresh veggies and fruit, and keeping work surfaces clean with soap and water.

3. Become a Healthy North Dakota 4-H Club. Learn more about this 4-H group project at www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/4h/GroupProjects/Healthy4HLeadersGuide_01.pdf. This publication provides nutrition and physical activity ideas to get 4-H club members and leaders on the move to better health.

Yogurt Dill Dip

Makes 12 servings.

- 12 ounces nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. fresh dill, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients in a bowl and refrigerate for at least two hours. Serve with chopped veggies or crackers.

Hummus

Makes 12 servings.

- 1 (15.5-ounce) can chickpeas (or garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. cider vinegar or 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ to ½ c. nonfat plain yogurt

Optional spices (1 tsp.: cumin, cayenne pepper, hot sauce, chopped parsley)

Puree peas, oil, vinegar or lemon juice and garlic in blender or food processor. Add ¼ c. yogurt and blend. Add more yogurt, if necessary, until desired consistency is achieved. The final product should be thick and smooth. Eat within two days for best quality and safety. Avoid letting hummus set at room temperature for more than two hours.

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For more information, see www.ndsu.edu/4h