

TuTTie's Place Culinary Summer Camp Lesson Plan
By Amy Dell and Hannah Greene

This is the lesson plan we created prior to our presentation. Comments about the presentation and tips for upcoming presentations are denoted with brackets. The TuTTie's Place summer camp is a culinary camp for low-income children and teens aged 5-17 in West Baltimore, Maryland.

Purpose

a. Who We Are

[This section worked well. Everyone was listening while we talked about who we were.]

- i. Introduce ourselves
- ii. About The Vegetarian Resource Group
 1. VRG provides scientific, evidence-based information about vegetarianism and veganism. We also have a blog with recipes and advice for vegetarians or people who want to try a vegan lifestyle.
 2. VRG works with mainstream businesses and organizations so it will be easier for you to be vegan.

b. Our purpose:

- i. to talk about veganism and why some people choose to be vegan.
- ii. To share information and empower you to make decisions on your own-- about food, and about everything else

Introductory Questions

10 minutes

[This section also worked well. It was good to see how many of the students had seen a presentation from our group before. It was also interesting to see if they had any connections to vegetarians.]

c. Ask the following questions:

- i. "Have you been to this camp before? Raise your hand if you were here last year.
- ii. What do you think of when you hear the word 'vegetarian'?
- iii. What does *vegetarian* mean? What does *vegan* mean?
- iv. Do you know anyone who is vegetarian or vegan?
- v. Why do you think people go vegetarian or vegan?"

d. Our definition of what veganism is

- i. Vegetarianism is not eating meat, fish, chicken, or other birds. That means that vegetarians don't eat animals. They still eat vegetables, fruits, grains. Some vegetarians eat eggs and dairy products.
- ii. Vegan means that we don't eat anything that comes from animals. We don't eat any meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, or honey, and we don't buy leather, suede, or wool products.
- iii. Vegans are a type of vegetarians. Not all vegetarians are vegans.

Getting-to-Know-You Game 15 minutes

- e. Learn names of students
- f. Have fun so they trust us

[We only did the Spider Web game because the group was small. We were expecting 40-50 kids and only 16 were there. We did the Spider Web game with everyone together. If I were to do it again, I would still split the groups up, even though there were so few of them. The game did seem to start off the day on a good note, and we were able to remember some of the kids' names.]

g. **Younger Kids – Bounce the Ball**

- i. Gather in a circle. The first person tosses the ball to someone across from them (anyone not directly next to them) and says his/her name and something about themselves (decide this ahead of time): favorite fruit, favorite vegetable, favorite animal, dream job, etc.) Pass to a new person each time for the first round.
- ii. Play 2-3 rounds with different subjects (favorite ____, dream job, etc.)

Older Kids Game – The Spider Web Game

- iii. Pass the yarn ball to someone across from them. Share one detail from their life (can be any detail, or a specific: favorite fruit, dream job, etc.).
- iv. Play until a yarn spider web has formed and everyone knows each other's name/ feels comfortable together.

Go through timeline of what to expect for the day . . .

- v. Split into groups
- vi. Talk about The Vegetarian Resource Group's *My Vegan Plate*
- vii. Talk about why people go vegan
- viii. Play a game
- ix. Regroup and discuss what we learned
- x. Food sampling

2. Split into groups

[We kept the kids together for the entire presentation. We thought that there would be too few kids in the groups if we split them up, but looking back, I would recommend splitting them up. The age range was just too large, and the little kids couldn't pay attention.]

- a. Younger group (5-10)
- b. Older group (11-17)

A. Younger Kids

- a. **Draw what they typically eat** for ____ (meal) using crayons/colored pencils on paper plates

- i. We should do this, too, in order to demonstrate what real vegans eat.
- b. **Talk about My Vegan Plate**
 - i. Pass out the My Vegan Plate (visit: <https://www.vrg.org/nutshell/MyVeganPlate.pdf> to print your own or contact vrg@vrg.org to request copies)
 - ii. Explain the different parts of the plate
 1. Protein from food is broken down in your body and rebuilt to make up muscles, hair, skin, and your organs. You can get lots of protein from beans, nuts, and soy products like tofu, and there's at least a little protein in all vegetables.
 2. Vegetables and fruits contain lots of vitamins and minerals necessary to keep your body working right. They help prevent diseases by strengthening your immune system. Some of my favorite fruits are apples and strawberries, and my favorite vegetable is green beans.
 3. Whole grains contain carbohydrates that are full of fiber. Carbs give you energy and keep you feeling full. Some common grains are rice, pasta, bread.
 4. Calcium is also very important. It helps strengthen your bones. You can get calcium from green, leafy, vegetables like collards, broccoli, and kale. It's also found in soy milks and juices that both say "Calcium added/enriched"

c. **Why** do people go vegan/vegetarian?

[It was good to see what the kids thought about this question before we answered it. When we went over the answers, the kids pushed us a little and asked why killing animals was different from killing plants. We had heartfelt conversations with them and explained how we felt. If you are met with these questions, ask the kids if they think stepping on grass is the same as stepping on a dog. Also explain that eating meat is causing more plants to die because the animals eat more plants than you would be eating, so veggie diets are causing the least amount of harm to animals and plants.]

- i. **Animals**
 1. A lot of people think it is wrong to hurt animals, and since meat is from killed animals, they won't eat it. Also, milk, eggs, and other dairy products can depend on huge factory farms that aren't always very nice to animals, so many people don't want to support that. It's like if your friend worked in a store and the bosses were super mean to their employees, you wouldn't want to go give them money.
 2. Leather, suede, and wool products also come from animals, so many vegans don't use these.
 3. This reason is also called "ethics-based," because the people who are vegetarian for this reason are doing it because of their morals.
- ii. **Environment**

1. To raise livestock, a lot of land is needed. Plus, the animals need food and water to live. So a ton of land is used to grow corn or wheat, and then people feed that to animals, which need even more land.
 2. For example, to make 1 kilogram of soybeans it takes about 2,000 liters of water. But for beef, it can take up to 43,000 Liters! And a lot of parts of the world suffer from not having enough fresh water.
 3. Raising animals like cows makes a lot of pollution, since they all have to go to the bathroom and a lot of chemicals, hormones, etc. are used on them.
 4. So eating only plants makes a lot less pollution.
- iii. Health
1. Eating lots of red meat is associated with an increased risk of diabetes and heart disease.
 2. Vegetarian diets are shown to decrease a person's risk of developing obesity, high cholesterol, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers (prostate).
- iv. Religion
1. Some religions promote either vegetarian diets or the respectful treatment of animals. These include Seventh-day Adventist Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. St. Francis of Assisi, a Catholic saint had boundless love for animals, and people honor him by blessing animals. For this reason, some religious people might be a vegetarian in order to better adhere to their spiritual beliefs.

d. **How could we veganize** your favorite food?

[The kids also pushed us on this topic. When we suggested fake cheese instead of milk-based cheese, they focused on the word "fake" and didn't seem impressed. Next time, try to avoid using the word "fake" and be sure to know lots of information about the food products you're mentioning. The kids were really interested in the origin and description of foods like tofu and agave. I would recommend using the terms "non-dairy cheese," or "cheeses made from nuts"]

- i. Ask for 3-5 favorite food examples from the group.
- ii. Work as a group to problem solve.
- iii. Some substitutes:
 1. Milk -- soymilk, almond milk, rice milk, hemp milk, oat milk
 2. Egg -- scrambled: tofu. Baking: use applesauce, 1 Tbsp flax seeds + 3 Tbsp water, egg replacement powder, puréed soft tofu, mashed bananas
 3. Butter -- veggie based margarine, olive oil, coconut oil,
 4. Cheese -- crumbled tofu, soaked raw nuts, nutritional yeast, non-dairy cheeses (e.g. Daiya brand)
 5. Beef or chicken stock -- veggie broth
 6. Ice cream, yogurt, sour cream, etc. -- many brands available

- e. Movement Game - Print out labels with the names of the parts of the food plate (Grains, Protein, Veggies, Fruit) and put each label on one corner of the room [We completed this activity outside. It was great to get the kids moving and working together. Being outside was also good for a short time, but make sure it's not too hot or for too long. The kids enjoyed this activity a lot.]

i. OPTION 1

1. Give each student a food package -- on a string as a necklace, or just carried
2. Tell each child to run to the food group they belong in

ii. OPTION 2

1. Yell out and hold up photos/product labels/containers of foods and have the children run to the corner of the room where they belong

a. Foods to call out:

Strawberries	Grapes
Bread	Sweet potatoes
Chickpeas	Bananas
Tofu	Almonds
Green beans	Soy beans
Kidney beans	Peanut butter
Apples	Oatmeal
Peanuts	Orange juice
Pasta	Veggie burgers
Carrots	Soy milk
Tomatoes	Oranges
Black beans	Tempeh
Potatoes	Mushrooms
Peas	Broccoli
Corn	Cucumber
Wheat tortillas	Lemon

2. To teach which foods are and are not vegan, you could also call out non-vegan foods and specify that students should *only run if the food is vegan.*

f. Playing With Food

[The kids were really able to get creative with this activity. It was so cute to watch the little kids work hard to make their face out of fruits and veggies. I think the kids really enjoyed this activity.]

- i. Make faces, animals, flowers, etc. out of vegetables and fruits. For example, use the cut up melon as eyes, the carrots as a mouth, a grape as a nose, and broccoli as hair.

g. Mindful Eating

[I think this was an important exercise to include. It forced the kids to acknowledge where their food comes from and the kids enjoyed thinking critically and using all of their senses.]

- i. Distribute magnifying glasses and a variety of fruit and vegetable slices for each student.
- ii. Lead students through mindful eating of fruits and vegetables -- take the time to notice textures, flavors, feelings, smells, sound of chewing, up-close appearance.
- iii. Ask the students "How does the food feel? How does it smell? How does it look? Look at the different colors and textures through the magnifying glass. How does it sound? How does it taste?"
- iv. Talk to the kids about noticing when they're hungry, when they're full, and where their food comes from.

B. Older Kids

- a. Why do people eat meat?
- b. Why do people go vegan/ vegetarian?
 - i. Animals
 1. A lot of people think it is wrong to hurt animals, and since meat is from killed animals, they won't eat it. Also, milk, eggs, and other dairy products can depend on huge factory farms that aren't always very nice to animals, so many people don't want to support that.
 2. Livestock animals sometimes have to live in really bad conditions, and vegetarians/vegans don't want to make them suffer. It's like if your friend worked in a store and the bosses were super mean to their employees, you wouldn't want to go give them money.
 3. Leather, suede, and wool products also come from animals, so vegans shouldn't use these.
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 - c. My Vegan Plate
 - i. Distribute the Vegetarian Resource Group's My Vegan Plate (visit: <https://www.vrg.org/nutshell/MyVeganPlate.pdf> to print your own or contact vrg@vrg.org to request copies)
 - d. What does "healthy" mean?
 - i. What each nutrient is used for
 1. Protein
 - a. Amino acids for hair, nails, muscle, bones, skin, organs
 - b. Repair cells
 2. Carbs
 - a. Simple vs complex carbs
 - i. Simple (fruits) give you bursts of energy, complex (oatmeal) keep you full longer
 - b. Whole vs processed carbs
 - i. Whole grains have more fiber and vitamins than processed
 - c. Stores energy
 - d. Dietary Fiber
 - i. Makes you feel full
 - ii. Helps lower bad cholesterol and keep blood sugar levels steady
 3. Calcium (Mineral)
 - a. Bone health
 - b. Body functions
 4. Fats
 - a. Provide energy
 5. Vitamins
 - a. Many different types used for healthy vision, skin, immune system function, etc.
 6. Water
 - a. Hydration is important so that your body can keep its nutrient levels balanced.
 - ii. Why you need them

1. Balanced diets help you make sure that your body has all the materials it needs to perform its daily functions

- iii. Disease and health relationship to food

[We didn't end up talking to the kids about diseases much. The kids were bored by this point, and we took a break to play a game instead. I don't know if there's a fun way to talk about diseases, but maybe a matching game or something would hold their interest longer.]

1. Bad cholesterol vs good cholesterol

- a. Cholesterol is used in your cells, your body naturally makes it.
- b. Meat can raise your bad cholesterol - cholesterol that builds up in your veins.
- c. High cholesterol can lead to heart disease and stroke.

2. Some diseases can come from not eating enough of certain vitamins

- a. Important to eat fruits and vegetables because they're high in vitamins and minerals that your body needs

- e. What do you usually eat each day?

- i. How can we veganize your favorite foods?

- f. Movement Game: Opinions

[This activity led the kids to acknowledge that they were interested in eating a healthier diet and I think that's the first step to making a change.]

- i. Not a quiz; stand if you agree with these opinion statements

1. Statements:

- a. I enjoy Meatless Mondays.
- b. I feel like I eat a healthy diet right now.
- c. I am interested in eating a healthier diet.
- d. I don't like the idea of killing animals.
- e. I might consider cutting back my meat consumption.
- f. I understand why some people might choose to eat a vegetarian diet.
- g. I feel empowered to make decisions about what I eat.
- h. I might want to go to the grocery store more often so that I can have input into what my family buys.
- i. Cooking is fun for me and I enjoy it.
- j. I'm interested in learning more about different types of foods and their health benefits
- k. I think I would be able to veganize my own foods if I was given the ingredients.
- l. I might consider eating vegetarian a couple of times a week.
- m. I might consider eating a vegetarian diet.

- g. Food Categories Game

[We moved this activity up in the schedule when the kids got bored. This helped them reinforce what they had learned, and was fun.]

- i. Have a giant My Vegan Plate on a tablecloth
- ii. Pile packages of simple vegan foods (i.e. beans, fruits, tofu, etc.)
- iii. Ask the group to work together and place each item in the category where it belongs

C. Regroup from playing with food

a. Activism discussion

[We connected veganism to activism and showed how we were being activists by what we chose to eat. We talked about how every person matters and how they all make an impact. The kids weren't as eager to talk about what they care about, so we asked specific questions about protests and what they see in their community.]

- i. What do you care about?
 - ii. How do you see people speaking out/ taking action for these issues?
 - iii. Have you done any activism?
- b. Why do people go vegan?
- i. Activism through food
 - ii. Each person matters
 - iii. Empowerment

D. End/ Closing

a. Making banana nice cream

[This was their favorite part. The kids were surprised that the crumbled cookies were vegan.]

- i. Use YoNanas machine (purchase at <http://yonanas.com/>) or blender/food processor to blend peeled frozen bananas and make ice cream. Top with crushed cookies, cherries, chocolate syrup, and sprinkles.
- b. Coloring books
- i. Distribute "I Love Animals and Broccoli" Coloring book. (request copies by emailing vrg@vrg.org, see sample: www.vrg.org/family/lessonplan.htm)
- c. Questions
- i. What did you learn?
 - ii. What was your favorite part of today's presentation?
 - iii. Will you apply this to the rest of your life? How?
- d. Distribute recipe books, pamphlets, contact info
- i. Closing comments:
 1. We hope you were all able to take something away from this talk, and that you now feel more empowered to make your own choices about what you eat.

For more information, contact The Vegetarian Resource Group, PO Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203; (410) 366-8343; vrg@vrg.org; www.vrg.org