MyPlate Bracelet Lesson Plan — Grades K – 4

Adapted from Maricopa Agriculture Center by Helen Idzorek, Rita Abel and Katie Garrity

Objective:

Students will understand the components of a balanced diet using beads to represent MyPlate.

Materials Needed:

- Beads (red, green, purple, tan, blue, orange, and clear); enough beads will be needed for each student to make a bracelet.
- Scissors
- MyPlate handout – a guide and explanation of a balanced diet.
- For younger students, pipe cleaners will be used to put the beads on for the bracelet.
- For older students, a thick string can be used to put the beads on for the bracelet.
- Bead colors
  - Fruit: red – 3 for each student
  - Vegetable: green – 3 for each student
  - Protein: purple
  - Grain: tan
  - Dairy: blue
  - Physical activity: orange
  - Water: clear

Lesson and Discussion

“What kinds of foods do our bodies need to grow and be healthy?”

1. Vegetables = Green. Half our plate should be vegetables and fruit. Vegetables have vitamins, minerals, and fiber. “Can you name different vegetables? Which kinds do you like to eat?” Eat lots of colors: dark leafy greens, orange and yellow carrots and squash, red tomatoes, and white cauliflower.

2. Fruit = Red. Half our plate should be vegetables and fruit. Fruit is naturally sweet and juicy. Fruit is full of vitamins, fiber, and water. “Fruit is sweet and delicious. What kinds of fruits do you eat? What colors are fruit?” Eat a rainbow of fruit. Orange oranges, red strawberries, green apples, purple plums, blue blueberries, yellow pineapple and bananas.

3. Grain = Tan. Eat lots of whole grains. Grains provide your body with energy, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. “Can you name some whole gran foods?” Grains are foods like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain tortillas, brown rice, oatmeal, and whole-wheat pasta.
4. **Protein = Purple.** Go lean. Protein foods build strong muscles. “**Which protein foods come from animals? What kinds of protein foods come from plants?”** Protein foods include beans, nuts and seeds, game meat, chicken, lean beef, fish, and pork.

5. **Dairy = Blue.** Choose non-fat and 1%. “**Do you know why our bodies need dairy foods?”** Dairy foods have calcium and help our bones grow strong and help our teeth to be healthy. Dairy foods include milk, cheese, and yogurt. Other foods that provide calcium are soymilk, tofu, and almond milk.

6. **Physical Activity = Orange.** Moving our bodies is called physical activity. This is not a food, but just as important for our health. We need to move our bodies every day for 60 minutes. “**What are your favorite ways to move your body?”** We can jump, run, dance, ski, sled, walk, swim, and play ball games.

7. **Water = Clear.** Drink water instead of juice or soda. Water helps us stay healthy and grow. “**Do you know how much of our body is water?”** Our bodies are made of 60% water. That is more than half of what our body is made of. Drink water every day to help replenish what is in our bodies.

**Activity**

“Now we are going to create a bracelet. We will use the different colored beads to represent the various food groups.

What colors will half of our bracelet be?” We will use three of each of the following colors: vegetables – green bead, fruit – red bead. This shows that our plates should be half vegetables and fruit. We will use one bead for each of the following colors: purple, tan, blue, orange, and clear.

Have the beads in small plastic bags or a divided bead box.

Encourage students to help each other find the appropriate colors for each category of MyPlate.

**Review**

After completing a bracelet, review each bead and what it represents. Have younger students point to the correct spot on their MYPlate mini poster.

Then ask students to wear their bracelets home and share with someone what each bead represents/means.

For younger children, use pipe cleaners to string the beads. For older children, thick string can be used.