

Lesson Plan

Objectives

- Discuss the importance of family in preparing for adult life.
- Participate in a family experiment.
- Evaluate the benefits of sharing time together as a family.

Materials

- Computer with Internet access
- Library or media center resources

Procedures

1. Explain to students that they are going to participate in a one-week experiment called "Let's Do Dinner." Family participation will be key in making the experiment work, so you should write a letter to parents explaining details of the assignment.

Here's the idea: Over the course of one week, your students should sit down to dinner with their family on at least three evenings. It's important that the whole family participate. The TV and radio should be off, and no one can bring games, music, office papers, books, or homework to the table. If the phone rings, no one may answer it. Be sure to give families at least a week or more to prepare, as schedules may have to be rearranged and meals planned. The idea is for the entire family to spend some time together and realize the value that time can bring. To help families make time for their dinners, consider assigning less homework during the week and schedule the experiment at a time when there aren't many school activities to conflict.

2. Students are to make observations about their dinners in a journal (handwritten or on a computer). Even children of families that routinely eat together will benefit from evaluating the experience. In their journals, students should report the following:

- Their expectations before the experiment began

- The topics of conversation

- If it was difficult to find something to talk about

- Something they learned from a family member

- The funniest thing that happened during a dinner

- What they like and dislike about sitting down together for meals

How they feel about continuing to share family meals more often
What they learned from the experience brain

3. Finally, ask students to do some research to find out about the importance of eating together as a family. They may be surprised to learn that there is an official day set aside every September just for family mealtime. Ask them to add a final entry in their journals about the benefits of eating together as a family. These Web sites contain lots of good information:

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Family Guide, page on the Importance of Family Mealtime

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http://family.samhsa.gov/get/family_time/mealtime.aspx

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, page on Family Day

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<http://www.casafamilyday.org/>

Putting Family First, page with numerous links about family mealtime

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<http://www.familylife1st.org/html/links.html>

Family Education Network's "Family Dinners: The Recipe"

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<http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,1-5187,00.html?relinks>

SheKnows Network's "Family Mealtime Associated With Healthier Diets"

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<http://sheknows.com/about/look/2490.htm> Abuse

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions and wrote thoughtful, well-written journal entries.
- **2 points:** Students participated in class discussions and wrote adequate journal entries.
- **1 point:** Students participated minimally in class discussions and wrote cursory or incomplete journal entries.

Vocabulary

abuse

Definition: Physical violence or emotional distress inflicted upon someone in a relationship

Context: One form of emotional abuse is when one partner in a relationship belittles the other.

extended family

Definition: Family in which relatives other than parents and their children live together

Context: Joe's extended family included his grandparents and an aunt.

intimacy

Definition: Physical and emotional closeness with another person

Context: Many teens realize too late that sex is not the same as intimacy, which is characterized by kindness and care.

STD

Definition: Sexually transmitted disease

Context: Practicing safe sex techniques, such as using a condom, can prevent STDs.

Academic Standards

National Academy of Sciences

The National Science Education Standards provide guidelines for teaching science as well as a coherent vision of what it means to be scientifically literate for students in grades K-12. To view the standards, visit <http://books.nap.edu>.

This lesson plan addresses the following science standards:

- Life Science: Reproduction and heredity
- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal health; Risks and benefits

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media; Writing: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Credit:

Same credit as other Reality Matters LPs

