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# What Is a Balanced Menu?

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-balanced-menu>

In order to strengthen their understanding of nutrition, the students will plan a nutritionally balanced menu for one day.

**Duration:**

One Thirty-Minute Class Period; Homework, Fifteen-Minute Review

**Objectives:**

The learners will:

- identify foods from the different categories of the food guide.
- plan a menu for one day that follows the recommendations of the USDA. The menu should include three meals and snacks.

**Materials:**

- Pictures of different foods from various magazines
- Paper plates, one for each student
- Scissors and glue
- Copies of Attachments One-Six: *Homework--Planning a Menu*

**Home Connection:**

Interactive Parent / Student Homework: Students plan and illustrate a menu for an entire day. They should include nutritious foods from the food groups. See Attachments One-Five: *Homework--Planning a Menu*.

**Bibliography:**

- "Great Nutrition Resources for Children." Guide to Nursing Schools. <http://www.guidetonursingschools.com/library/childrens-nutrition> This site is full of up-to-date facts, information and activities for different ages, and links to interactive sites.

**Instructions:**

## 1. Instructional Procedure:

*Anticipatory Set: Ask for volunteers to recall what we learned in our previous lesson. (Students should mention how My Plate helps us to know what we should eat in order to stay healthy. They should also mention that food is our body's source of energy and that it helps us to be able to play and work.) Ask the students to think about what they ate last night for dinner. Have them turn to a neighbor and discuss what food groups their dinners included the previous night. Have a class discussion about the number of food groups represented in some of the meals. Discuss what made the meals nutritious and balanced.*

2. Tell the students to find pictures in magazines that represent foods from each of the food groups and paste them on a paper plate. Each student's paper plate should have a balance of nutritious foods from the different groups.
3. When the students are finished, ask for volunteers to share their "meals" by explaining which food groups are represented by each food.
4. Ask the class if they enjoy snacks throughout the day. Have volunteers name some of the snacks they enjoy and name the food group which each snack represents.
5. Tell the class that their homework is to plan a menu for an entire day. (They may get started in class so you can help with any questions that arise.) They should choose a variety of foods and include the recommended number of servings from each food group throughout the course of three meals and snacks. For each meal, they will draw the foods (and/or use magazine pictures) and indicate the food groups represented. See Attachments One-Five: *Homework--Planning a Menu*.
6. When the students return their menus to class, help them tally and record the total number of servings for each food group. Record their totals and evaluation on Attachment Six: *Review—Planning a Menu*.

### **Assessment:**

Observe the balanced paper-plate meal to assess their understanding of the food groups before sending home the homework. Assess the students' comprehension of the homework assignment, particularly their comments on the review page.