

FARM TO PRESCHOOL HARVEST OF THE MONTH ACTIVITY PACKET

Spinach



November 2009

Read Aloud Books and Activities

Week 1 Theme: Find the Numbers

Week 2 Theme: I Eat Spinach

Week 3 Theme: Spinach Flower



HARVEST OF THE MONTH ACTIVITIES

Spinach Week 1

Find The Numbers

Book: From the Garden by Michael Dahl

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to spinach as a vegetable.
- Students will identify the fruits and vegetables from the story and how they grow.
- Students will learn where spinach grows and it's different varieties (ways it's leaves can look).
- Students will find the hidden numbers in the illustrations from the story.

Materials:

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable photo cards

Directions:

1. Read From the Garden, by Michael Dahl. Ask the children to identify the fruits and vegetables from the story and how they grow. Use the **fresh fruit and vegetable photo cards** to reinforce each fruit and vegetable they identify. List **spinach**, if not mentioned.
2. Talk about **spinach**: it can have smooth or wrinkled leaves; it grows in California through the whole year, but likes the weather to be cooler (in the fall and winter); California produces the most spinach out of any other state; in California, spinach can grow in the desert or on the coast (near the ocean). Spinach can be bought fresh at a farmers' market or at a farm stand. It can also be bought at the supermarket, but usually it comes from farms further away from where we live. We eat both the leaves and the stems.
2. Tell the children that you have a surprise for them in the book. On each page there is a number hidden in the picture. Have them look at each page of fruits and vegetables and try to find the hidden number.
3. Have them recite the following poem (see next page):

Poem:

Vegetables

**Give me vegetables
They're good for me
I'll eat carrots
And I'll eat peas
Give me vegetables
And no more sweets
All I want
Are vegetables to eat!**

HARVEST OF THE MONTH ACTIVITIES

Spinach Week 2

I Eat Spinach

Book: I Eat Vegetables by Hannah Tofts

Objectives:

- Students will describe spinach.
- Students will watercolor spinach.
- Students will describe ways to stay healthy and be strong.

Supplies:

Picture of spinach on white paper (provided) with several sheets stapled

Fresh fruit and vegetable spinach photo card

Markers

Directions:

1. Read I Eat Vegetables by Hannah Tofts. Discuss with the students the different vegetables pictured in the book. Explain that in the book there is not a page for spinach and you need the students' help in creating one.
2. Interactive Writing: show children the sheet with a drawing of spinach. Staple several other pieces of paper to it like the pages of a book. Encourage the children to help you write the words for the book (see below).
3. Open the "book" and encourage children to help you think of words that would describe something about spinach. Examples include: leaf, stem, bunch, green, yummy, etc. Children can also draw pictures for the other pages of the book, drawings that related to spinach or other vegetables.
4. Discuss why eating vegetables, such as spinach, is healthy for you and can help you stay strong.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH ACTIVITIES

Spinach Week 3

Spinach Flower

Objectives:

- Students will describe the vegetables they like in a salad.
- Students will participate in this month's **Food Experience**.

Materials:

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable photo cards

Food Experience ingredients: bunch spinach, bunch or bag carrots, ranch dressing

Directions:

1. Review the vegetables talked about the book From the Garden from Week 1.
2. Ask the children to share which vegetables and fruits they like in a salad. If they are unfamiliar with salads, the teacher can share his/her healthy favorites (e.g. lettuce, apples, avocado, carrots, radish, **jicama**, **beets**, **spinach**, tomatoes). Show the **photo cards** for each vegetable and fruit talked about. Use **spinach** as one of the examples. Tell the children they will get to try a spinach and carrot "flower" salad in class.
3. Prepare for the "Spinach Flower" **Food Experience** and have children try the recipe. Ask them questions about it, such as those on the sheet "Conducting An In-Class Taste Test."

Food Experience Calendar

Week 3

**Spinach Flower
Taste Test**

Optional

Spinach Dip

Optional

**Veggie Tortilla
Roll-Ups**

FOOD EXPERIENCE RECIPES

Week 3

Spinach Flower Taste Test

- 1 bunch fresh spinach
- 1 bunch fresh carrots or 1 (1 pound) bag of baby carrots
- 1 cup of low-fat Ranch dressing (1/2 TBSP per student)

Directions:

1. Rinse spinach leaves and pat dry with paper towels. Place in a bowl.
2. Place 2 baby carrots and 4 spinach leaves on each student's plate.
Demonstrate how to make a flower by making a stem with the baby carrots and petals with the spinach leaves.
3. Serve with ½ TBSP of low-fat Ranch dressing.

Makes 20 Taste Tests

Other Materials:

20 paper plates

Developed by *Network for a Healthy California-Merced County Office of Education*

Optional

Spinach Dip

- 1 (10 oz) packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 1 ½ cups fat-free sour cream
- 1 cup fat-free mayonnaise
- 1 (4oz) package dry vegetable soup mix
- 1 (8 oz) can water chestnuts, finely chopped
- 3 green onions, finely chopped
- 1 (2 pound) bag of baby carrots

Directions:

1. Defrost spinach overnight in the refrigerator. Drain liquid and wrap the spinach in paper towels. Squeeze the spinach to remove excess water.
2. In a medium bowl, stir together spinach, sour cream and soup mix.
3. Add finely chopped water chestnuts and green onions.
4. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
5. Serve with baby carrots for dipping.

Makes 20 taste tests (3 Tablespoons each)

Other Materials

Bowl

20 paper plates

Recipe adapted from Knorr (www.knorr.com)

FOOD EXPERIENCE RECIPES

Optional

Veggie Tortilla Roll Ups

6 whole wheat tortillas

9 tablespoons non fat or reduced fat cream cheese

3 cups shredded fresh spinach.

1 ½ cups diced tomato

¾ cup chopped cucumber

1/3 cup diced green chilies

1/3 cup sliced black olives

1/3 cup chopped red onion

¾ cup chopped bell pepper (red, green, orange and yellow or mixture of all

Directions:

1. Spread each tortilla with 1½ tablespoons of cream cheese.
2. Top tortillas with equal amount of vegetables.
3. Roll up tightly to enclose filling.
4. Slice each roll up into four pieces.
5. 24 taste tests of ¼ roll each

Makes 24 (1/4 roll up) Taste Tests

Other Materials

24 paper plates

Recipe adapted from www.harvestofthemonth.com toolkit, Cycle I educator newsletter

