

THE MEANING OF FOOD

Grades 3-12
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*Borrowed with permission from the
Atlanta Community Food Bank*



Time

10 Minutes

Materials Needed

Whiteboard or flipchart with markers.

Objective

By exploring the relationships among food, family and community, participants will develop a deeper understanding of the many different ways food impacts our lives.

Procedure

- Ask the group to identify different ways that food brings people together, or is the centerpiece of an activity, function or event. For example: Family meals, holiday celebrations, community gardens, parties, potlucks, cooking together, picnics, church dinners, etc.
- Build on the above by asking the group to reflect on all the different ways that food plays a role in their lives. For example, food provides: nutrition, energy, life, and is a way to express love and comfort. It also becomes a vehicle to express traditions, culture and faith.
- Feel free to use the discussion questions below to help launch the brainstorm and guide the discussion.
- Discussion Questions:
 - Do we eat food for reasons beyond nutrition? What are they?
 - Do you think that we ever express love with food? How?
 - Why do we bring food to families who are grieving- or celebrating?
 - Is food ever used to comfort? How?
 - Does your family have any special recipes? If yes, what are they? Who created them? Have they been passed down over more than one generation?
 - Is food one way that we express and share our family history? Can you share an example of that from your own family?
 - Tasting the food in a different country or region is often one of the first things we do when we travel. Why is that?
 - Do you have any special memories of preparing food with someone you love, or of a meal that was particularly delicious? If so, share what made the experience stand out.
 - How did our grandparents or great grandparents access and prepare food differently from the way we do it now?
 - How do you think that hunger can impact a person's sense of connection to their community?

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Possible Actions

- This activity was inspired by a PBS series called *The Meaning of Food*. To learn more about this series visit: <http://www.pbs.org/opb/meaningoffood>
- Create a fund drive- see *list of fundraising ideas* – or contact The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts for information & resources.
- Host a food drive i.e. peanut butter drive or canned tuna drive

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MA DOE STANDARDS FOR THE MEANING OF FOOD

Comprehensive Health

Nutrition

3.3 Recognize hunger and satiety cues and how to make food decisions based on these cues

3.7 Describe how food choices are influenced by availability, individual and family preferences, media, and background, and identify healthy foods within various social groups

Mental Health

5.7 Identify and describe the experiences of different feelings (such as elation, joy, grief, and rage) and how feelings affect daily functioning

5.19 Explain positive techniques for handling difficult decisions

Consumer Health and Resource Management

12.6 Describe how allowing time for healthy activities (such as exercise, preparing nutritious meals, getting adequate sleep) can improve health

History & Social Science

Individuals, Families, and Communities Now and Long Ago

(Grade 1) 1.9 Explain that Americans have a variety⁶ of different religious, community, and family celebrations and customs, and describe celebrations or customs held by members of the class and their families