



Who's Hungry?

Objective: Students will think about the imbalance of food distribution.

Summary: One-fifth of the class will receive a hearty lunch, three-fifths will get rice and broth, the remainder get water. A discussion will follow.

Time: 40 minutes

Grouping: Entire class

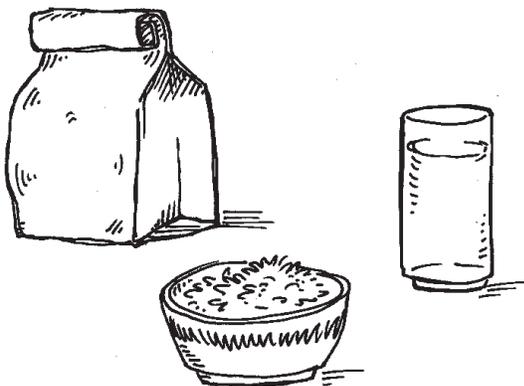
Materials: For a class of 30, six (one-fifth of total class) will each receive a large lunch (for example, a sandwich, fruit and milk, or a burger, chips and soda); 18 students (three-fifths) each receive one cup rice and broth; six students (remaining one-fifth) each receive water. Equal-sized (approximately 3" x 5") slips of paper of different colors in numbers corresponding to the food groupings (i.e., six blue slips, 18 red slips, and six green. See "Preparation" for further explanation.).

Background Information: An estimated one person in 10 in lesser developed countries dies from a lack of nutrition, while in the more developed countries 15 out of every hundred people suffer from overeating (diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease, intestinal cancer). World food consumption can be broken into three groups. At the bottom are the 630 million poorest people who don't have enough to eat. At the mid level of nutrition are 3.4 billion grain eaters who eat sufficient calories to maintain health through plant-based diets. At the top of the caloric intake ladder are 1¼ billion people who eat substantially more red meat than the other 4 billion on our planet. In the U.S. there are an estimated 32 million people who cannot afford an adequate diet.

Marin Facts: In 1990 the number of homeless was estimated at 2,500, up from 200 in 1982. Today the number is around 4,281 people, with an additional 4,266 households at imminent risk of losing their housing. Community service agencies and churches serve over 450,000 meals annually to those in need. The following analogy is startling. If the world were a town of 1,000 people, there would be 570 Asians, 210 Europeans, 80 Africans, 140 in the western hemisphere, 500 hungry, 700 illiterate, and 800 in sub-standard housing.

Preparation:

You may want to send a note to parents letting them know you will be serving food as part of your lesson. Make up slips of paper, some labeled "Most Developed Countries" (enough for one-fifth of the class) another color of paper marked "Developing Countries" (enough for three-fifths of the students) and some marked "Less Developed Countries" (enough for one-fifth of the students). These slips of paper will tell students which group they are in and can be pasted on a sheet of paper to create a visual graph of the population groups. If serving a lunch is not practical, you can use a snack to do the activity at any time in the school day. Provide one-fifth of students nuts, raisins and juice; three-fifths receive bread and milk; the last group receives only water. In each case you will explain to your students that these lunches/snacks represent the meals of more and less developed countries of the world.





Procedure:

1. Assign one to three students the task of taking notes on reactions throughout the activity.
2. Distribute slips of paper and tell students to get into the appropriate groups. The "More Developed Countries" group should be seated comfortably in desks or tables. The "Developing Countries" group can sit on chairs with no table surface. The "Less Developed Countries" group can stand or sit on the floor.
3. Distribute the food and encourage students to interact.
4. Tell students that these meals represent the type of nutrition available to people in different parts of the world.
5. Offer seconds to the developed country representatives. Make sure reactions are noted so they can be brought up in discussion.
6. Have students paste their groups' slips of paper onto a larger sheet of paper, pasting one above the next so each group's size can be compared (see illustration).
7. Discuss the activity with the students. Be sure each student has an opportunity to express his or her feelings and thoughts.

Questions for Discussion:

- How did it feel to have plenty to eat when others had so little?
- How did it feel to have so little to eat when the others had so much? What could you do about it? (Did anyone try to buy or trade for the other's lunch? Did anyone volunteer to donate some of their lunch?)
- What are the effects of an inadequate diet upon people?
- Talk about the world food situation today. What are some possible solutions?
- Discuss: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Extensions:

- Have students collect newspaper articles that talk about food discrepancies around the world. Have them share the articles in class.
- Have student groups write out proposals for helping with food shortage problems abroad and at home.
- Set up a mock United Nations. Have students research different countries' populations and natural resources. Have a U.N. Council meeting in which the countries decide how to equitably distribute world food resources. Remember, three members of the U.N. Security Council (China, U.S. and the Commonwealth of Independent States) all have veto power.
- Contact a local Peace Corps, World Hunger and/or Save the Children organization for a guest speaker to talk about world food projects.

This idea is from "Manure, Meadows and Milkshakes."

