

# Lesson #7: Just Say Yes to... Easy Meal Planning!

## Lesson Materials

- *Half Your Plate* JSY poster/display
- Grocery bag of food (from pantry or planned ahead) (optional)
- Giant flip pad & markers (optional)
- Ingredients and supplies to prepare and serve JSY recipe

## Duration of Lesson

Welcome:	2 minutes
Icebreaker:	5 minutes
Introduction:	10 minutes
Activity 1:	15 minutes
Activity 2:	15 minutes
Recipe:	20-40 minutes
Closing:	5 minutes

## Take Home Items

- *Family Meals Easy, Tasty and Healthy* handout (*Loving Your Family...Feeding Their Future*) or *Meals Made Easy* JSY handout
- *Basic Foods* JSY handout
- JSY recipe
- JSY incentive

## To Find Out More

- [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)
- *Loving Your Family...Feeding Their Future* USDA curriculum

## Objectives

At the completion of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Identify healthy meal planning strategies.
- Name at least 2 benefits of planning meals and snacks.
- Plan an easy, healthy main meal using low cost, readily available foods.

## Welcome

- Greet participants as they enter workshop area.
- Introduce yourself and JSY program.
- Explain what the workshop will be about and how long it will take.
- Define workshop ground rules:
  - This is a safe learning environment.
  - No one will be called on. Participants have a "voice by choice."
  - Please stay until the end, complete survey and receive incentive.

## Icebreaker

- Ask participants to raise their hand if they consider themselves a "planner" when it comes to meals. Ask for a show of hands if they consider themselves to be more "spur of the moment."
- Have participants work in pairs and brainstorm with their partner some of the benefits of planning meals and snacks ahead of time. Ask participants to also brainstorm some reasons that it is difficult to plan meals and snacks.
- Invite participants to share with the whole group some of the things they talked about. As an option, the nutritionist can record responses on a flip pad grouping them as pluses (+) or minuses (-).

## Introduction

- Use the Icebreaker responses to highlight some of the benefits of planning meals. Be sure to include how it can save money, improve nutrition, and save time.
- Distribute *Family Meals Easy, Tasty, and Healthy* handout for mothers' or parent groups or *Meals Made Easy* JSY handout and review tips with group:
  - Plan ahead—Make meals simple. Cook when you have more time. Do some tasks the day before.
  - Fast family meals—Invite participants to share their own meal ideas.
  - Shop for time savers—Discuss cost versus benefits of convenience foods.
  - Save time in the kitchen—Invite participants to add their own time-saving kitchen tips.

## Planning Main Meals (Activity 1)

- Prepare a bag of groceries. (You can use food from the food pantry, or prepare the bag ahead of time. Alternative: Prepare a list of foods or a poster of food pictures).
- Unpack the bag and describe each food (or review list of foods). Explain to the group that they are going to use these foods to plan healthy main meals.
- Show participants the *Half Your Plate* visual. Explain that this represents a healthy meal with half the plate being fruits and/or vegetables, one quarter meat, and one quarter grains.
- Ask the group to pair up and create as many different healthy main meals as they can using the foods you have displayed.
- Invite a few pairs to share their meal ideas with the whole group. Discuss any foods you might add to round out the meal (ex. low-fat milk for a beverage, fruit for dessert, etc.).

## Take Away Task

- Invite participants to share with the group or write down which main meal idea they will try at home.

## A Well-Stocked Kitchen (Activity 2)

- Ask the group to think about their “typical” week. How often do they have a full sit down meal at home? Invite participants to share if they wish.
- Explain that having some healthy foods on hand can make eating a balanced diet throughout the day easy and economical no matter what their lifestyle is.
- Distribute *Basic Foods* handout and review with group. Alternative: Have a display of pictures of staple foods.
- Ask the group to look over the list of staple foods. Have participants call out ideas of how they could use those items to make easy, healthy snacks, breakfasts, packable lunches, etc. (Note: You can survey the group with a show of hands and see how many eat breakfast, pack a lunch or eat snacks. Focus on meals that are most relevant to your group).

## Take Away Task

- Invite participants to share with the group or write down some staple items that they will keep in their kitchen to prepare healthy, easy meals and snacks.

## Demonstrate a JSY Recipe

- Announce JSY allergy disclaimer.
- Discuss all steps in preparation.
- Explain how to select and store the fruit or vegetable used in the recipe.
- Offer samples to participants.

## Suggested Recipe Talking Points

- Select an entrée type recipe using some foods from the grocery bag in Activity 1.
- Discuss different forms of fruits and/or vegetables that could be used in the recipe and which ones might be most cost-effective.
- Ask participants if they already have any of the recipe ingredients on-hand at home. Are there substitutions they could use?
- Ask participants if or how they might change this recipe at home for their families.

## Closing

- Summarize key points in lesson.
- Ask participants, “What are your questions?”
- Distribute JSY Surveys. Assist participants with completion, if needed.
- Give a JSY Nutrition Education Incentive to each participant as they hand in their survey.
- Thank participants.

Clean and pack up workshop space.