



Mary's Meals Lesson Plan
Food changes the story

**mary's
meals**
a simple solution
to world hunger

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Mary's Meals Coordinator:
An MMC is a contact available to you for questions, information, and to help guide your experience in teaching and learning about Mary's Meals. Your Coordinator may also be available for in-class or Zoom presentations and Q&A sessions. Please contact us at **800-385-4983 x3** or at **info.usa@marysmeals.org**



Why teach about the work of Mary's Meals in your classroom?

Mary's Meals is a global movement supported by people from many walks of life who come together in support of hungry children around the world. Our vision is a simple one: **that every child receives a daily meal in their place of education and that those who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things.**

Through this resource, your students will better grasp the connection between global hunger, education and poverty. They will begin to see food at school through a different lens and learn of ways to make a difference in the lives of these children around the world.

There is a connection and unity between the students learning about Mary's Meals and the students receiving meals. We invite you and your students to be a part of this global movement and help children in need.

We encourage you to watch one of the Mary's Meals films, [linked here](#), so you can see first-hand the impact you and your students can have.*

*Please note: some of the scenes within these videos depicting extreme poverty may be difficult for some students to watch. We leave it to the teacher's discretion to choose the appropriate content for their classroom.



~~There is nothing~~ you can ~~do to~~ change someone's life. There is ~~no~~ hope.

Food changes the story

Lesson One

How does food change the story?

General objectives:

Learners will be able to describe global issues such as hunger, poverty and education, and how introducing food and education into the life of a child has the potential to change everything.

Learners will be able to discuss a simple solution to world hunger, according to one charitable organization, and see the impact they can make from across the world.

“By introducing Mary’s Meals to my students, they now have a chance to connect with children around the world by learning about the realities and challenges they may face. When we bring these worlds together, we are helping our students to show empathy and compassion while teaching them that there is this big, beautiful world full of people who need our help.”

Preschool Teacher, Missouri, USA



Lesson Plan

How does food change the story?

Outcomes:
Learners will be able to:



Identify Mary's Meals as an organization that assists students at school through a food program.



State how much it costs to feed a child at school each year (\$25.20) and per day (13¢) with Mary's Meals.



Identify where Malawi, Africa is on a map.



Describe the realities of students around the world affected by a lack of food and education.



Explain how charitable organizations, such as Mary's Meals, can assist those in need.



Observe how food changes the story when children are served one daily meal at school.



Instructional materials:



- You'll need internet access and a smartboard or screen/television with internet capabilities. Simply click on the links within the plan to go to the recommended resources.

Resources and suggested materials for this lesson:



- Tape (or other material such as cardboard)
 - Reflection/challenge homework
- Brochures/flyers (these can be ordered in advance)



Lesson Plan

How does food change the story?

Classroom setup

Before students arrive, tape off the dimensions of a 12' x 12' square. This will be representative of a home in Malawi, Africa. This is where you will provide a visual for students that will later be elaborated on within the video lessons.

Optional - If space allows, move desks and chairs to have students sit on the floor for this lesson so that they can relate to students who may face challenges in their place of learning such as having no desk or chair, while acknowledging the privilege of certain comforts in their own school setting.

Teach



Video summary:

- These videos will introduce learners to the reality facing students their age in other countries.
- They will learn the economics of why some of these families need our help. They will see examples of living conditions exhibiting the differences between a developed country and a developing country.
- Food and education can change the story for children living in poverty. By receiving one daily meal in their place of education they are able to focus on learning and have greater hopes and ambitions for the future.

[Click to play videos](#)



Discuss



Some key points to discuss with your students:

1. How does food change the story for students like Lette in schools where Mary's Meals are served?

- Children that have very little to eat at home are guaranteed a reliable meal every day at school. This meal gives them energy to learn and focus on their hopes and aspirations for the future.
- The food provides much needed nutrition helping children to grow stronger and healthier. Children are incentivized to attend school instead of having to beg, scavenge or go out to work to help provide food for their home.
 - Children can just be children and look forward to a brighter future.

2. What differences are commonly seen within schools when a daily meal is provided?

Increased enrollment, improved attendance, better concentration, less anxiety / more happiness better grades, and the better general health of children. Read more in our [Impact Report](#).

3. Why are organizations like Mary's Meals important in the world?

At times, a bridge is needed between available food and impoverished communities. This simple solution to hunger helps to break the recurring cycle of poverty. Tens of millions of children face hunger or food insecurity. Many times, developing countries do not have safety nets like nonprofits or government assistance to support families.

4. Mary's Meals Facts:

- Mary's Meals relies on the local community to get involved in the school feeding program. Mary's Meals provides the food, local volunteers cook and serve the meals and, whenever possible, the food is purchased from local farmers.
 - It costs just \$25.20 to feed a child with Mary's Meals for a entire school year.
- Porridge, known locally as likuni phala, is served at school in Malawi, Africa. It is made from corn or maize.
- Mary's Meals serve more than 2.4 million children in 18 countries every school day as of January 2023.

In-class activities

1. Food changes the story – **Bean activity**

Beans are a nutritionally rich food and help curb hunger. They are often included in the daily meal that children receive through Mary's Meals.

Instructions:

Have students read the statements on how food insecurity can negatively impact a family's ability to prioritize a child's education. Using beans, have students cover up certain words to create a statement of hope. By donating to Mary's Meals, food changes the story from one of despair to one of hope.

Click the link above for more details about this interactive activity.

2. Compare and contrast the life of a child before and after receiving a daily meal

Watch Lette's Story**Suggested discussion questions about Lette:**

What was life like for Lette and other children before receiving a meal at school every day?

What is life like after receiving that daily meal? Imagine that you are the student without food at school and walking miles on an empty stomach.

What would life look like for you before receiving a meal (grades, focusing on studies, playing, working, stomach pains, health, impact on your family, etc.) and after receiving one meal everyday because of Mary's Meals?

3. Create a poster: "School + Food = Hope"

Ask students to creatively depict the Mary's Meals slogan, "School + Food = Hope."

Consider these points:

Who needs Mary's Meals? What is Mary's Meals? How much does it cost to feed a child every day for an entire year at school? What does life look like before or after receiving a meal at school? How does food change the story for millions of children around the world thanks to Mary's Meals? Who makes it possible to receive meals at school?

4. Map activity

Using the map as a guide, ask student to pick three countries that serve Mary's Meals.

Instructions:

Ask students to research those countries to learn about the weather, economy, crops, jobs, cultural holidays, clothing, traditional food, and currency. Find out what they are eating every day at school. Compare the three meals and how they are similar or different. In how many countries, and on which continents is Mary's Meals served? Are there any similarities?

5. Porridge Day

Porridge is the primary meal served in schools in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe by Mary's Meals.

Instructions:

Use the recipe and ingredients to make porridge. Ask students to describe the taste of porridge.

Consider these points:

How would this porridge help you to focus in school? Students that receive Mary's Meals eat the same meal every day at school. Why is this challenging? What meal would you like to eat every single day at school? Discuss why you wouldn't find students complaining about this meal or wasting it or tossing it in the garbage. Do you throw away leftovers at home? What do you think now about your own lunch, how much of it you choose to eat and perhaps thinking back to when you've complained about not wanting to eat something on your plate?



Take it home

Here are a few ideas to share with the class about how they can better connect with Mary's Meals outside of the classroom.

Food photo challenge



Ask students to find out how much the food on their dinner plate cost. Ask students to take a picture of food that totals up to \$21 and present to the class. They can look in their fridge or freezer and take out \$21 worth of food. Display the different photos that each student brings in, showing \$21 worth of food. Have a conversation about how far \$21 gets us compared to how far \$21 goes with Mary's Meals.

Consider these points:

How far does \$21 get you? A whole pizza, one take out dinner, a few basic meals?

Write a letter



Ask students to write a letter to a child in Malawi touching on what they have learned about their country, their school and Mary's Meals.

Consider these points:

What would you ask them?

Do you have some words of encouragement to inspire hope in your new friend?

How could you lend them a helping hand?

What have you learned about Malawi that you would want to share with them?

Change their story






Young people often have a passion to make a difference and changing the world doesn't seem like a far-fetched idea to them. After learning about hunger, poverty, education and how an organization like Mary's Meals is striving to make a difference, your students can change a child's story by helping to provide that daily meal.

What's next?

Have a brainstorming session where students share ideas on how they can raise awareness and funds to support Mary's Meals.

Encourage students in your classroom to come together to feed ten children (or your choice of number of children) for an entire school year. At \$21 per child per year, \$210 feeds ten children for one school year.

Here are a few ideas below:

		
Penny Wars	Walk-a-thon	Pancake Breakfast
Coin Jars	Car Wash	International Food Fair
T-shirt Sale	Dance Marathon	Silent Auction
Online Crowdfunding	50/50 Raffle	Gift Card Sale
Bake Sale	Outdoor Movie	Pizza Day
Dressdown Days	Garage Sales	Tricky Tray
Student Art Auction	Talent Shows	Teacher vs. Student Game

Contact your Mary's Meals Coordinator for questions and support [here](#).



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