

Cook Once, Eat for a Month!

Leader's Guide

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Introduction

Family mealtimes are slowly becoming a thing of the past. In today's society, the family makeup has changed from a two-parent household being prevalent to a variety of other family structures. In 2006, the percentage of children under the age of 18 living in a two-parent household was 67 percent, a decline from 85 percent in 1970, according to statistics gathered by the Child Trends Databank. This change in family structure often means that children reside in households where the adult(s) work full time and do not have the time to plan a healthy and nutritious home-cooked meal every evening. As a result, family mealtimes happen less frequently.

The benefits of family mealtimes are many. When families eat together, kids perform better in school. They develop larger vocabularies and better language skills. They also show stronger academic achievement and are better able to positively adapt to change. Teens are less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, and smoke marijuana. Girls are less likely to have unhealthy eating habits and problems such as anorexia or bulimia.

The Cook Once method not only helps families create more family mealtimes, but it also helps families save money and provide a more nutritious meal. This lesson will teach the basic steps involved in this style of cooking and give participants tools they need to help them be successful.

Objectives

After the lesson participants should:

- understand the basic steps involved in the Cook Once method,
- have a better understanding of the importance of family mealtimes,
- be able to adapt this method of cooking to suit their family's needs,
- gain an understanding of basic food safety principles,
- acquire knowledge of what recipes will freeze well, and
- have experienced an example of preparing at least one meal for the freezer.

Intended Audiences

This lesson was written for those primarily responsible for preparing meals in the household. The goal is to help them get organized to prepare and freeze several main dishes at one time, which will simplify family mealtimes.

Before the Lesson

Review the materials in this leader's guide and the fact sheet (MF3049). A slide show is also available by email request from jdrake@ksu.edu. The slide show outlines the materials in the fact sheet and could be used for guiding a group through the material.

There are various methods for delivering this lesson. Two methods have been outlined in this leader's guide. Select one of the two suggested methods or adapt them to suit your needs. Based on the time available, one method has the leader guide participants through making 10 recipes together. In the other approach, the leader prepares one recipe for the

Resources

- Child Trends Data Bank. (n.d.). *Living Arrangements of Children 1970-2010*. Retrieved Dec. 12, 2011, from <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/231>
- K-State Research and Extension. (2010). *At home safe food handling: It's in your hands*. Retrieved Jan. 27, 2012, from <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/mf2465.pdf>
- Morrison, P. (2008). *Making Family Mealtime Fun and Easy*. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Extension Service
- Rathbun, Jamie. (2011). *Cash in With Coupons, Fact Sheet*, MF2985. K-State Research and Extension. <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/famec2/MF2985.pdf>
- Temple, J., Uthoff, S., Clark, N., Anderson, P. (2008) *Healthy Meals in a Hurry — 14 Recipes for now and Later*. Iowa State University Extension. <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=12727>
- University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. (2002). *Preserving food: Freezing prepared foods*. Retrieved Dec. 12, 2011 from <http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/FreezingPreparedFoods.pdf>
- United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service. (n.d.). *Freezing and food safety*. Retrieved Dec. 12, 2011, from http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Freezing_and_Food_Safety.pdf
- When and how to wash your hands*. (2008). Retrieved Dec. 12, 2011, from http://www.servsafe.com/Foodsafety/resource/downloads/posters_quizzes/poster_04.pdf
- Wilson, M. and Lagerborg, M.B. (2007). *Once-a-month cooking*. New York: St. Martin's Press
- Wilson, M. and Lagerborg, M.B. (2009). *Once-a-month cooking family favorites*. New York: St. Martin's Press

participants sample. Either method will require planning and preparation time before delivering the lesson.

For additional information and recipes, the leader may want to purchase *Once-A-Month Cooking* or *Once-A-Month Cooking Family Favorites*, both by Mimi Wilson and Mary Beth Lagerborg, or visit their website at www.once-a-monthcooking.com. These books provide tips and recipes to help you prepare for either a short lesson or a workshop. Another good resource is Iowa State's publication *Healthy Meals in a Hurry — 14 Main Dishes for Now and Later*. It is available from the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach store.

There are a variety of other websites and blogs available on the Internet that offer recipe ideas and other helpful tips that can add to the lesson.

Copy and distribute the evaluation on page 4 for participants to complete after the lesson.

Introduction Suggestions

Capture your audience's attention by having a sample of a main dish ready for them to try at the beginning of the lesson. This main dish should be one they will either prepare in the workshop or the leader will show them how to prepare in a shorter lesson. Get some discussion started by asking questions such as:

- How long do you think it took me to prepare this dish?
- How many hours do you think I work in a typical week?
- Do you think this is a nutritious meal?

Once the audience is engaged, explain that the bulk of the preparation was done weeks ago and it only took 20 minutes (or the required amount of cooking time) to prepare this healthy main course.

10-Recipe Workshop

Select 10 recipes, following the guidelines outlined in the fact sheet for selecting recipes and outlining preparation steps. (Respect copyright laws if copying recipes for participants out of a cookbook.) Provide each participant with a copy of a cookbook, figuring the cost of the cookbook into the cost of the workshop. Cost for the workshop can be figured by calculating the cost of ingredients for one person. Ingredients can be shared among participants. Include the cost of storage bags and containers if provided. To help keep participant costs down, consider asking them to bring some of the pantry items such as pepper, salt, and sugar to share with the group and to provide their own storage bags and containers.

An ideal location for the workshop would be a church kitchen, fair building kitchen, or other facility that has ample cooktop space, counter space, and electrical outlets. Depending on the recipes selected, it is often helpful to have extra electric skillet available to reduce congestion around cooking areas. Other items the leader will need include:

- extra measuring cups and spoons,
- plastic gloves,
- mixing bowls,

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- cutting boards, knives, and food choppers,
- an extra person to help wash dishes, and
- healthy snacks for the participants.

Customize the total time of the workshop to best suit the needs of the participants. The workshop could start on a Friday evening with the PowerPoint presentation and then completing prep work like chopping vegetables and labeling storage bags. The workshop could continue on Saturday morning with the preparation of the recipes. Or the workshop could be done in one long day, starting in the morning and finishing late afternoon.

Never overestimate the cooking abilities of your participants. Review all recipes and preparation steps with participants before they move into the kitchen. This allows them a chance to ask questions and eliminates confusion before they start to cook.

Sample Recipe Lesson

Start the lesson by going through the fact sheet with the PowerPoint presentation as a guide. Select a recipe ahead of time to prepare in front of the group. Explain why the recipe was chosen, pointing out the qualities that cause it to freeze well. Point out steps that could be completed the night before, such as chopping an onion or cutting up a chicken. Prepare the recipe for the freezer in front of the group, and show how to label the finished recipe and seal it properly for the freezer.

Once the demonstration is complete, share samples of the prepared recipe with participants. This could also be done at the beginning of the lesson as suggested earlier for the introduction.

Handouts for Participants

In addition to the fact sheet, there are several other items that you may want to give participants:

- Copies of the recipe(s) and preparation steps. If you are conducting a 10-recipe workshop, put the recipes and preparation steps into page protectors for each group to use in the kitchen.
- *At Home Safe Food Handling: It's in Your Hands*, by K-State Research and Extension: <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/mf2465.pdf>.
- *Preserving Food: Freezing Prepared Foods*, by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service: <http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/FreezingPreparedFoods.pdf>.
- *Freezing and Food Safety*, by the United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Freezing_and_Food_Safety.pdf.
- *When and How to Wash Your Hands*, by ServSafe and the National Restaurant Association: http://www.servsafe.com/Foodsafety/resource/downloads/posters_quizzes/poster_04.pdf.

