

Lesson Plan: The Story of Keepunumuk and the Three Sisters

Materials Needed

- Book: "Keepunumuk: Weeâchumun's Thanksgiving Story" by Danielle Greendeer, Anthony Perry, and Alexis Bunten (Optional, but highly recommended)
- Construction Paper (brown, yellow, green, orange)
- Scissors (adult use) and glue stick
- Green pipe cleaner or green yarn
- Crayons or markers
- **For the Snack Activity:** A bowl, popcorn (for corn), roasted edamame or chickpeas (for beans), and roasted pumpkin or squash seeds (for squash). Please check for any allergies before preparing the snack.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Jenelle will be able to:

- Name the "Three Sisters" (corn, beans, and squash).
- Explain one way the Three Sisters help each other grow.
- Use a craft to retell the main idea of the Keepunumuk story in her own words.

Lesson Plan

Introduction (5 minutes)

Hook: A Question About Helping

Educator says: "Hi Jenelle! I have a question for you. When you build with your blocks, does it help to have a friend hold a tall tower so it doesn't fall over? It's nice when we help each other, right? Today, we're going to learn about a special time called Keepunumuk (kee-puh-nuh-muk), which is a Wampanoag word for the harvest time. We will learn about three special plant sisters who are experts at helping each other!"

State Objectives in Kid-Friendly Language

Educator says: "Today, our job is to become plant detectives! We will learn the names of the Three Sisters, find out their secret for helping each other grow big and strong, and then we will tell their story together with a special craft!"

Body (20-25 minutes)

Part 1: The Story of the Three Sisters (I Do - 7 minutes)

(If you have the book, read it aloud. If not, use this simplified story.)

Educator says: "A long, long time ago, the Wampanoag people learned a special secret from the Earth. They learned that three plants loved to grow together like sisters in a family. They are called the Three Sisters!

The first sister is **Corn**. She stands very tall and straight, reaching for the sun. She's like a strong, tall big sister." (*Stand up tall to demonstrate.*)

The second sister is **Bean**. She loves to climb! But she needs something to hold onto. So, she gently wraps her vines around her tall sister, the Corn. The Bean helps make the soil healthy for everyone!" (*Use your arm to pretend to be a vine climbing up your other tall arm.*)

The third sister is **Squash**. She has big, wide leaves and she grows low on the ground. Her big leaves are like a cozy blanket, keeping the ground shady and moist so weeds can't grow. She protects her sisters!" (*Crouch down and spread your arms out wide like big leaves.*)

They all work together. Corn gives Bean a pole to climb. Bean makes the soil healthy. And Squash protects the ground. When we help each other like the Three Sisters, we all grow strong! This is a very important story about Keepunumuk, the harvest."

Formative Assessment (Quick Check): Ask simple questions like, "Who is the tall sister?" (Corn!) "Who likes to climb?" (Bean!) "Whose leaves are like a big blanket?" (Squash!).

Part 2: Three Sisters Garden Craft (We Do - 10 minutes)

Educator says: "Now, let's make our own Three Sisters garden so we can remember their story! I have all the pieces right here."

1. **Step 1: The Soil.** "First, let's take our brown paper. This is the rich soil where our garden will grow. Let's glue it to the bottom of our big paper."
2. **Step 2: Sister Corn.** "Next comes the tall sister. Who is that? Yes, Corn! Let's glue our yellow paper standing up tall in the soil." Jenelle can draw lines on the corn to look like kernels.
3. **Step 3: Sister Bean.** "Now for the climbing sister. Who needs the corn to grow? Right, Bean! Let's take our green pipe cleaner and twist it around the corn stalk. See how it's climbing?"
4. **Step 4: Sister Squash.** "And who protects everyone on the ground? Squash! Let's glue our big orange circle at the bottom, and we can draw big green leaves around it to be the blanket."

Success Criteria: "Our garden looks amazing! A successful garden has the tall corn, the bean climbing the corn, and the big squash leaves on the ground."

Part 3: Retell the Story (You Do - 5 minutes)

Summative Assessment

Educator says: "Jenelle, your garden is beautiful! Can you use your picture to tell me the story of the Three Sisters? Show me the corn and tell me what she does. Now show me the bean... and the squash. How do they all help each other?"

(*Listen for her ability to name the plants and describe their relationship in simple terms, e.g., "The bean climbs the corn," "The squash is a blanket."*)

Conclusion & Extension (5-10 minutes)

Recap and Reinforce

Educator says: "You did a fantastic job today! You learned about Keepunumuk and the Three Sisters: Corn, Bean, and Squash. What was the most important thing they do for each other?" (Answer: They help each other.) "Just like the Three Sisters, it's wonderful when we help our family and friends. It helps everyone grow happy and strong."

Extension Activity: Three Sisters Snack Mix!

Educator says: "Since we learned all about the Three Sisters, let's make a snack to celebrate them!"

1. Put the bowl on the table.
2. "Here is the **popcorn**. Which sister is this?" (Corn!) "Let's add it to the bowl."
3. "Here are the **roasted edamame**. Which sister is this?" (Bean!) "Let's add them in."
4. "And here are the **pumpkin seeds**. Which sister are they from?" (Squash!) "Let's put them in too."
5. Gently mix it all together. "Look! We made a Three Sisters snack mix. They are all together in one bowl, just like they are in the garden." Enjoy the snack together.

Differentiation

- **For a Simpler Version:** Focus only on naming the three plants. Pre-cut all the craft pieces and simply have Jenelle glue them in place while you tell the story.
- **For More Challenge:** Encourage Jenelle to draw the sun and rain in her craft picture. Ask her to think of another group of things that help each other (e.g., "The pencil helps the paper by drawing on it," or "The cup helps the water by holding it."). She can also help count and measure the ingredients for the snack mix.