

Lesson Plan: Keepunumuk and the Three Sisters Garden

Subject: Literacy, Science, Social-Emotional Learning

Age Group: 4-6 years old

Student Name: Jenelle

Estimated Time: 30-40 minutes

Learning Objectives

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

- Identify corn, beans, and squash as the "Three Sisters."
- Explain one way the Three Sisters plants help each other grow.
- Create a craft representing the Three Sisters garden.
- Connect the story to the idea of being thankful (Keepunumuk).

Materials Needed

- Book: *Keepunumuk: Weeâchumun's Thanksgiving Story* by Danielle Greendeer, Anthony Perry, and Alexis Buntin
- **For the Craft:**
 - 1 paper plate
 - Brown crayon or paint for the "soil"
 - Green construction paper or craft sticks for corn stalks
 - Green pipe cleaner or yarn for bean vines
 - Green or yellow construction paper for squash leaves (or large pom-poms)
 - Glue or tape
 - Scissors (for adult use or with supervision)
- **For the Snack (Optional):**
 - Cooked corn, beans (like kidney or black beans), and pieces of cooked squash (like zucchini or butternut) to taste.

Lesson Procedure

Part 1: Introduction - Friends Who Help (5 minutes)

1. Hook: The Helper Question

Educator says: "Hi Jenelle! I have a question for you. Do you have friends that help you? How do friends help each other?" (Listen to her answers, acknowledging ideas like sharing, playing together, or giving hugs).

Educator says: "That's wonderful! It's so good when friends help each other. Did you know that

plants can be friends and help each other, too? Today, we are going to read a special story called *Keepunumuk* about three plant sisters who are best friends and help each other grow big and strong."

2. State Learning Objectives

Educator says: "By the end of our fun time, you will be able to:

- Tell me the names of the Three Sisters.
- Show me how they help each other in our craft.
- Talk about what it means to be thankful for our food."

Part 2: Body - Story, Craft, and Snack! (20-25 minutes)

1. I Do: Read the Story (10 minutes)

Educator says: "Let's get cozy and read *Keepunumuk*. This story tells us about the Wampanoag people and their special name for the harvest time, which means 'time of harvest.' It also tells us the story of the Three Sisters."

- Read the story aloud with expression. Point to the pictures of the corn, beans, and squash.
- Pause during the story to ask simple questions (formative assessment):
 - "Look how tall Sister Corn is standing! What do you think will happen next?"
 - "Who is wrapping around the corn? That's right, Sister Bean! She's giving her a big hug to help her stay strong."
 - "Who is on the ground? Look at Sister Squash's big leaves! They look like a blanket for the soil, keeping it safe and wet."

2. We Do: Make a Three Sisters Garden Craft (10 minutes)

Educator says: "That was a great story! Now, let's make our very own Three Sisters garden so we can remember how they are friends."

Success Criteria: "A successful garden will have all three sisters: the tall corn, the climbing beans, and the shady squash leaves."

1. **Step 1 (I do, You do):** "First, let's make the soil. Take your paper plate and color it brown. This is the earth where our seeds will grow." (Model coloring on a spare plate or the corner of hers, then let her color her own).
2. **Step 2 (I do, You do):** "Next, we need Sister Corn. She is the tall, strong one. Let's glue our green paper stalks standing up in the middle of our garden." (Model gluing one or two stalks, then she does hers).
3. **Step 3 (I do, You do):** "Now for Sister Bean. She needs the corn to climb on. Let's take our green pipe cleaner and gently wrap it around the corn stalks. She's giving her sister a hug!" (Model wrapping the pipe cleaner, then she does hers).
4. **Step 4 (I do, You do):** "Last is Sister Squash. Her big leaves protect the soil. Let's glue our big squash leaves on the brown soil, all around the bottom of the corn." (Model gluing the leaves, then she does hers).

3. You Do: Taste the Three Sisters (Optional, 5 minutes)

Educator says: "Our garden looks amazing! The Three Sisters aren't just friends in the garden, they are also yummy food that helps us grow strong. Let's try them!"

- Present the cooked corn, beans, and squash on a plate.
- Encourage Jenelle to touch, smell, and taste each one.
- Ask simple questions: "Which one is sweet? Which one is soft? Do you have a favorite?"

Part 3: Conclusion - Show and Tell (5 minutes)

1. Summative Assessment: Garden Story Retell

Educator says: "Jenelle, you did such a fantastic job. Can you use your beautiful garden craft to tell me the story of the Three Sisters? Point to each sister and tell me what she does."

- Listen for her ability to identify the three plants and describe at least one helping action (e.g., "The beans climb the corn," "The squash covers the ground.").
- Provide prompts if needed: "Who is this tall one? And what does the bean do to her?"

2. Recap and Reinforce

Educator says: "You are an amazing storyteller! So today we learned that the Three Sisters are **Corn, Beans, and Squash**. They are best friends because they **help each other grow**."

Educator says: "The story also taught us about *Keepunumuk*, which is a time to be thankful for the harvest and for all our food. What is something you feel thankful for today?" (Listen and validate her answer).

Differentiation and Adaptability

- **For Scaffolding/Simpler Version:** Pre-cut all the craft pieces. Focus on just identifying the three plants and the simple idea that they are "friends." Use simple sentence starters for the retell, like "This is the corn. It is..."
- **For Extension/Advanced Learning:** Ask a deeper question, like "Why do you think the squash leaves covering the ground is helpful?" (It keeps the sun from drying the soil, blocks pesky weeds). You could also move to planting actual bean seeds in a cup to watch them grow.
- **Classroom/Group Adaptation:** This lesson works well in a small group. Children can work on their crafts individually after a group story time. The "Show and Tell" can be done by having a few volunteers share their craft and story with the group.