The Three Sisters!

Description
Students learn about the companion-planting group known as the “three sisters,” and compare facts about these plants to Native American legends and stories that feature them.

Guiding Question
What foods have historically been grown in the Northeast?

Big Idea
We can use plants different characteristics to improve our gardens.

Learning Objectives
⇒ At the end of this lesson, students will be able to name the “three sisters” plants, and to compare factual information to legends about them.

Materials:
- Three sisters legend (http://quatr.us/northamerica/before1500/religion/threesisters.htm)
- Pictures of 3 sisters Appendix A
- Seeds of 3 sisters to plant
- Seeds of 3 sisters to match
- Cooked corn, bean, and squash
- Forks and tasting cups
- Blanket

Vocabulary
Legend - a traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but unauthenticated
Companion planting - the close planting of different plants that enhance each other's growth or protect each other from pests
Introduction

Raise your hand if you have heard of the three sisters in our garden? They are corn, beans, and squash. Today’s class begins with a story to explain why they are so important. *(Read story: The Three Sisters Myth)*

http://quatr.us/northamerica/before1500/religion/threesisters.htm

And that’s why the Iroquois and many other native people planted their corn, beans and squash together in the same field. When the story talks about the beans feeding the other two sisters, it is because it puts a very helpful nutrient in the soil called nitrogen that the other plants need to grow. Squash, in addition to shading the corn and keeping back weeds also keeps animals away because it has spiky leaves and stems.

Do you like to eat these foods? What is your favorite way to eat them?

Engage (10-15 mins)

*Station 1: Planting*

Teacher explains the design of the 3 sisters garden. Students observe seeds and identify which is which, then plant them in holes designated by markings. Prepare planting area before class.

*Station 2: Explore early season plantings*

Students check in on plants they planted the first week. They can measure the height of the peas and look for the tendrils. They will pick one radish to help thin them and see what stage that radish is in the growing term. They will also help water and weed.

*Station 3: Explore the Three Sisters*

Match seeds with pictures, learn the nutrients of the three sisters, taste them.

Evaluation:

Ask what students learned. Ask when they think we will harvest the three sisters? Invite them to check back throughout the summer with their families and to have a great year!

Common Core Standards

- Science K.ESS3.1 Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants and animals and the places they live
- Science 2.LS.1 Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats
- Science 4.LS.1 Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior and reproduction
- ELA K.RL.5 Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding
- ELA 1.SL.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- ELA 1.SL.4 Describe people, places, things and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly
- ELA 3.SL.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace
Appendix A

Lesson Adapted From *Eat. Think. Grow*

The Three Sisters
Corn... Carbohydrates
Beans... Protein/Amino Acids
Squash... Vitamins (A+C)