

# FOOD, FUN & CULTURE

## Tomatoes for Neela – OPTION 2 Vegetable Lesson

by Padma Lakshmi Illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

Countries Featured: India

**Nutrition:** Children will learn that different tomatoes taste different. Children will learn that most vegetables are high in Vitamin A and some in Vitamin C.

**Physical Activity:**

**Snack:** Tomato Tasting and Tomato Ladybug

**Lesson Objectives:**

Children will be able to do the following.

1. Learn it is important to eat a variety of foods in MyPlate to be healthy.
2. Know different colors of vegetables provide different vitamins and minerals.
3. Learn half of a plate should be fruits and vegetables

The lesson should be taught in this order:

- 1) Introduce food and nutrition concept and the culture showcased in book
- 2) Read a Children's story book
- 3) Talk about MyPlate vegetables group and the country India
- 4) Play a physically active game
- 5) Make and enjoy a healthy snack

**Required Materials:**

- *Tomatoes for Neela* book by Padma Lakshmi and Juana Martinez-Neal
- MyPlate poster or plate
- Inflatable globe ball
- Vegetable food models from Plastic foods models (play food inside clear tall

container with blue lid)

- Print and laminate Vitamin C shield page
- Small bottles of bubbles
- Optional: Sheer colorful dancing scarves- one for each student
- Ipad or other source to play Bollywood dancing
- Variety of tomatoes (cherry, roma, beefsteak, tomatoes on vine, yellow or orange cherry, etc.) and ingredients for Tomato Ladybug treats
- Photos of or cans of tomato soup, tomato sauce, pizza sauce, ketchup or other canned goods with tomatoes in it

**Teaching the Lesson:** Begin explaining you will read a book together, talk about the culture and languages showcased in the book, discuss MyPlate, play a fun physically active game and enjoy a healthy snack.

Sample Instructor Narrative: (in italics)

*“Today we will read a book together, talk about MyPlate, make a healthy snack, and play a fun physically active game. We are learning about vegetables.”*

*“First we are going to read a book “Tomatoes for Neela.”*

Show book.

*“A young girl named Neela is helping her mother buy tomatoes and make a yummy recipe. As I read the book I want you to listen closely to the different kinds of tomatoes they talk about as well as what recipe they are making.”*

Hold up inflated globe ball. Point to India.

*“Neela and her family are from India. This is where India is found. We will be doing some fun Bollywood dancing today which is an exercise done in India.”*

Hold up MyPlate poster or plate.

*“We will also be talking about MyPlate and in particular the vegetables food group after reading the book.”*

***Tips for reading to a group of Children:***

- Read the book ahead of time so you are familiar with it.
- Sit in a chair or on the floor in the center. Ask children to sit around you in a semi-circle. Ask kids to “sit on their pockets”.
- Hold book up high and slowly show it around the entire circle so all kids can see.
- Speak loudly with a clear voice – articulating voices for characters, etc., when it applies.

## Tips for Increasing Engagement While Reading the Book:

- Tomatoes for Neela is a long book. To keep children's attention paraphrase or tell the story rather than reading it. Focus on the different types of tomatoes, how Neela is helping make the recipe and the family history of cooking together with Paati (her grandmother). Read the page about Amma cooking so fast her bangles made pretty clinking sounds – this will tie in with the Bollywood dancing later in the lesson. It may be helpful to put paper clips on the top of pages you play to read.

## After reading the book:

Sample teacher narrative: (in italics)

*Do you remember how I asked you to listen closely for the different kinds of tomatoes in the book?*

Show page 10 and 11 in the book with different tomatoes.

*"We are going to look at and taste several different kinds of tomatoes today. Did you know there are 10,000 tomato varieties in the world? Let's take a look at a few."*

Show different kinds of tomatoes. Give each child a cherry tomato to taste. Optional – cut up and share small pieces with children.

*"Who here likes pizza sauce? How about spaghetti sauce? Ketchup? Tomatoes are in these foods and more. What recipe were Neela and her mom making in the book? Did you know tomatoes and other vegetables can be eaten either raw or cooked. Which do you like best?"*

Lay out vegetable plastic play food. Allow children to give some answers.

*"I need a few volunteers to come up and pick out their favorite vegetables."*

Children will pick up a vegetable. Ask them to say the name of the vegetable and how they like to eat it (cooked, raw, etc). Ask other children to raise their hands if they like that vegetable.

*"Today we read the book Tomatoes for Neela so we are going to focus on tomatoes. Let's talk about a main nutrient in tomatoes. It is called Vitamin C. Can you hold up your hand and curve it into a C? This will remind us of Vitamin C. Vitamin C does a lot of our bodies but one important thing is it helps to prevent*

*the spread of infection. Vitamin C can help protect your body and prevent catch colds and the flu. Would you like to see a demonstration on how it works?*

Hold up the poster with the shield with tomatoes and vitamin C.

*“Does anyone know what a shield does?”*

Let the kids respond or answer if no one volunteers.

*“A shield can be used to protect a person’s body from harm. Similarly, Vitamin C can help protect you. I need three volunteers.”*

Ask one volunteer to hold it in front of them. *Give the other two volunteers a small bottle of bubbles.*

*“Take the bubbles and blow them toward the shield. We are going to pretend that these bubbles are germs and the volunteer holding the shield will use it to protect his/her body. Make sure to hold the Vitamin C shield out nice and high and you can move it around if you need to. Thank you, volunteers. Please sit down. Vitamin C provides a shield for you body to help fight infection.”*

NOTE: Depending on the size of class you may want to ask for more volunteers. Print out more than one copy of the Vitamin C shield poster. Provide more bottles of bubbles. You can break kids into small groups.

Hold up the MyPlate poster or plate again.

*“Remember how we looked at MyPlate before? It helps us to know how to eat in a healthy way. It reminds us to eat healthy foods from each of the food groups each day. Do you remember which group are we talking about today?”*

(allow children to say vegetables)

*“That’s right! And we looked at all sorts of yummy vegetables.”*

Hold up or show plastic play foods.

*“What country was Neela from? India! Now we are going to dance Bollywood style which is popular in India.”*

## **Physical Activity: Bollywood Dancing**

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Ipad or laptop, overhead projector or tv to show video. Optional: Sheer colorful dance scarves- one per child.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zodMlu0\\_Cfl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zodMlu0_Cfl)

NOTE: Watch video several times ahead of time so you are comfortable teaching the moves.

Play the video once so children can see the moves and practice. Play it a second time. Optional: Use the scarves to throw up in the air during dance.

## Healthy Snack:

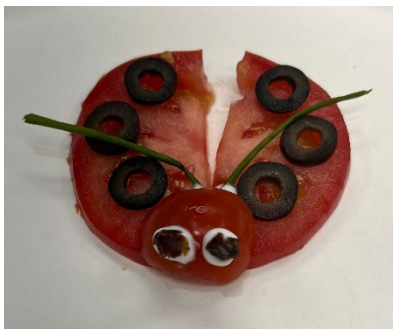
### Tomato Ladybug

Ingredients: Regular size tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, black olives, chives, Greek yogurt, and raisins.

Before lesson cut regular size tomatoes into slices. Cut down  $\frac{3}{4}$  of way in center of each slice. Slice cherry tomatoes in half. Cut black olives into slices. Cut chives into 2" pieces. Put Greek yogurt into ziplock bag or cake decorating bag. Cut raisins into tiny pieces.

Give each child on a plate: 1 regular size tomato slice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cherry tomato, 2 pieces chive, 6 black olive slices, 2 tiny pieces of raisin.

Show a picture of the tomato ladybug and encourage children to make their own. Cut a small hole in corner of Greek yogurt bag. Walk around and squeeze 2 small circles of Greek yogurt on cherry tomato for eyes on each child's tomato ladybug. Children can top with tiny pieces of raisin.



## While enjoying the snack review the lesson

Talk with children about Vitamin C and what it does for the body. Ask which tomatoes were their favorites. How can they incorporate tomatoes and other vegetables into meals?