**Healthy Ever After: Kids!**  
 Torrance Memorial Medical Center

and Torrance Unified School District

Prepared by Emily Parker, MS, RD

**Session 2c: “Fabulous Flavor!”  
 – Kindergarten through Fifth Grade**

I. **Objectives:** Following this session, students will be able to:

1. (All) Identify at least two herbs and/or spices
2. (All) Discuss flavors and how herbs/spices are used in cooking/baking
3. (All) Name a goal for trying a new herb or spice at home
4. (Grades 3-5) Name a health benefit of eating herbs and spices
5. (Grades 3-5) Name a health benefit of decreasing sodium intake (repeated from Lesson 1c)

II. **Instructor:** Classroom teacher and/or parent docent

III. **Target Audience:** Torrance Unified School District elementary school students

IV. **Setting:** Classroom or Multi-Purpose Room

V. **Materials:**

1. “SPICES and culinary herbs” poster
2. Visual Aid Sheets/PowerPoint Slides
3. Herb/Spice Samples in small Ziploc bags (Basil, Cinnamon, any others you would like to bring).
4. Snack Items
   * 1. Apples and cinnamon
     2. Napkins (one per child)
     3. Vinyl gloves for teacher/docents

VI. **Total Session Time:** 45 minutes

1. **Lesson Time:**  20 minutes
2. **Activity Time:** 15 minutes
3. **Snack Time:** 10 minutes

VII. **Preparation**

1. Review notes, practice lesson
2. Collect/compile materials
3. Snack preparation
4. Docents/teachers/children need to wash their hands before handling food—docents/teachers must wear vinyl gloves when preparing food for the children
   * 1. Have napkins available for each child

VIII. **Lesson Outline**

1. Introduction
   * 1. Instructor introduction(s)
     2. Today’s topic: “Fabulous Flavor!”
     3. Explain that we are going to talk about what we can add to foods to make them taste great: herbs and spices! (Show “Fabulous Flavor!” slide)
2. Review Lunch Lesson, Transition to Flavor Lesson
   * 1. *“But first, let’s review our lesson from last time. Who can remind me what we talked about?”* (Allow children to respond) *“That’s right. We talked about how to choose a healthy lunch. Have you tried any new healthy lunch foods lately?”* (Allow children to respond.) “*Wonderful!”*
     2. *“Do you remember one of the tips we mentioned during the lunch lesson, about sugar and salt? Should we have less or more sugar and salt?”* (Let kids respond) *“Of course, that’s right. LESS.”  
          
        3rd-5th Only: “The reason why we want to have less sugar and salt in our food is that eating extra sugar makes us more likely to have health problems like diabetes or heart disease in the future. Eating extra salt, also called “sodium,” makes our blood pressure rise, and eating extra sugar can hurt an organ in our body called the liver.”* (Show heart, liver, and diabetes slide) *“As you might guess, when we eat less sugar and salt our organs stay healthier.”*
     3. *“But, salt and sugar taste SO good? How is our food going to taste good if don’t add much sugar or salt?”*
3. **FLAVOR** (Show FLAVOR slide)
   1. “*Well, the good news is that nature has LOTS of healthy flavors to offer, besides sugar and salt. You may have even tried some of them, or eaten them without knowing it. Just based on this picture, what do you think we will be talking about today?”* (Allow children to respond) *“Yes. We are going to talk about herbs, spices, and more! So, as we go, we will look at our beautiful SPICES poster, and some other pretty pictures.*

3rd-5th Only: *“Besides looking really interesting and tasting good, herbs and spices are also good for our health. When we eat herbs and spices, our bodies are filled with good chemicals that protect our health – they may even help prevent cancer, improve diabetes, and protect our hearts and brains. AMAZING!”* (Source:Tapsell, L. (2008). Dietary guidelines for health-where do herbs and spices fit?. *Nutrition Today*, *43*(4), 132.)

* 1. Flavor from Plants(Show Flavor From Plants slide)   
     *“The first thing to notice about nature’s healthy flavors is that PLANTS are the main source of flavor. Just like this picture shows, the different parts of different plants (fruit, seeds, leaves, bark, and roots) contain different tastes. As we move through the lesson today, we will point out what part of the plant is providing each flavor. Any questions so far?”* (Allow children to respond.)
  2. Cooking is Like Art (Move to slide showing paints and girl cooking)

“*The fun thing about cooking is that it is like painting! We can use different herbs and spices like tasty “paints”, “glitter”, or “crayons” to create beautiful delicious food! Cooks can fill their drawers and cupboards with different herbs, spices, not to mention some fruits and vegetables too, so they are ready to make delicious creations. Let’s learn about some of the different flavors we can use for our kitchen art – maybe you will see something your family uses to make tasty food!”*

1. **Examples of Flavor:**
   1. **Lemon/Lime** (move to Lemon/Lime slide)

*“Oooo. First we are going to talk about ZESTY citrus fruit! Lemons and limes! Has anyone ever tried lemon or lime? How do you are your family eat them?”* (Allow children to respond) *“Yes. Lemons and limes have a zing-y, bright, sour flavor. They smell fresh and they look so bright – just beautiful! Lemon tastes great with fish or squeezed into water. Lime juice is great on fish tacos!”* (Show any lemons or limes you have brought in, allow children to discuss as appropriate.)3rd-5th: *“Do you see that yellow stringy stuff? That is called “lemon zest” – when we scrape the peel off a lemon, lime, or even an orange, we get “zest” which is used to add flavor to rice, pasta, cookies, cakes, and breads. Isn’t that a fun word? “ZEST!”*

* 1. **Spice It Up!** (Show “Spice It Up!” slide)

*“Speaking of zippy and zesty, what about SPICY?! Does anyone like spicy food?”* (Allow children to respond, acknowledge that it is okay if people prefer not to have spicy food – hot spices are for fun and we can be healthy without eating super spicy food) *“Did you know that that SPICY flavor comes from the fruits, seeds, bark, and roots of different plants? These chili peppers* (point to chilies on slide) *are a fruit; they are VERY spicy.”*

*“And, these peppercorns* (point out) *are seeds. Look at the different colors – amazing. We grind peppercorns and add them to our food for spice.”*

*“The green plant and root is* ***wasabi*** *– isn’t that a neat word?* ***WASABI!*** (If appropriate have children practice saying WASABI) *“Has anyone ever tried wasabi before?”* (Allow children to respond) *“Yes. We often eat it with sushi. Wasabi has a strong flavor and it makes your nose feel funny. Some peoples eyes even water when they eat wasabi!”*

* 1. **Cinnamon** (Move to Cinnamon slide – share cinnamon sample with children)

*“The next spice is* ***cinnamon****! Cinnamon comes from the bark of cinnamon trees, like the bark this farmer is peeling from a branch (point to picture). The strips of bark dry and roll up into little tubes. Then we grind up the dried bark and use it to flavor foods like oatmeal, toast, muffins, apples and much more. It makes things taste sweet and warm. Have you ever had cinnamon? What words would you use to describe its flavor?”* (Allow children to respond. Possible words are sweet, a little spicy, warm, yummy.)

* 1. **Nutmeg** (3rd-5th, and younger kids if they are engaged; move to Nutmeg slide, share nutmeg if you have it)

*“You know what goes great with cinnamon? NUTMEG! Nutmeg is a seed that is dried and ground. It is another warm spice that smells sweet and deep. Has anyone ever had nutmeg?”* (Allow children to respond) *“Nutmeg is used to flavor hot coffee drinks and eggnog. It goes great with pumpkin in pies and muffins. Sometimes we add it to meat or mushroom recipes.”*

* 1. **Ginger** (3rd-5th, and younger kids if they are engaged; move to Ginger slide, share ginger (ground, pickled, fresh) if you have it)

*“Next up is* ***ginger****. Mmm-mmm. I just LOVE ginger. Has anyone tried it? How did you eat ginger?”* (Allow children to respond.) *“Well, ginger is a spice that comes from the root of the ginger plant. We can use fresh ginger root, dried and ground ginger root, or even pickled or candied ginger root for flavor. Ginger tastes good with sushi, in cookies, with Asian foods, with pumpkin, and with fruit like peaches. Some people use it to make tea. It is another warm, but brighter flavor. It is a little spicy and zing-y. YUM!”*

* 1. **Paprika** (move to Paprika slide, share paprika if you have it)

*“Here is a spice that comes from a pepper (which is the fruit of a plant (it has seeds):* ***paprika****! These sweet red peppers are dried and ground to make a beautiful powder that adds amazing color and flavor – it’s not too spicy, just a nice warm and rich taste. Has anyone ever tried paprika?”* (Allow children to respond.) *“We can sprinkle paprika on vegetables like zucchini squash. It tastes great with chicken. And, lots of people like to add it to deviled eggs. Did you know that some orange or red colored foods like cheese crackers are sometimes colored with paprika?”* (Source: <http://www.foodcolor.com/paprika-oleoresin-color>)

* 1. **Roots and Leaves** (Move to Garlic, Onions, Leeks slide – share/pass around any garlic or onions)

*“Okay so we have some of the spices down, now let’s talk about some roots and leaves that are “****Aromatics****” – that means they smell really strong and good (hear the word AROMA in there – that means a smell or scent). Aromatics also provide a lot of taste to foods. Garlic (a root), Onions (bulb = root, green onions are leaves), and leeks (leaves) are all examples of aromatics. Has anyone ever cooked with garlic or onions? Or maybe you have seen someone use them in the kitchen?”* (Allow children to respond.) *“If we make a soup, vegetable of meat dish without aromatics it might taste flat, boring, and plain. You’ve probably tried aromatics without knowing it!”*

*“For example,* (move to “Why does it taste so good?/Basil” slide) *why does pizza taste so good? Well, the sauce usually has garlic in it! It also has a delicious herb called* ***basil*** *in the sauce, and sometimes on top. Lots of Italian food has basil and garlic in it. Basil goes great with tomatoes.”*

*“The leaves of the basil plant are very sweet. Lots of people like to grow basil plants at home so that they can use fresh basil leaves when cooking. Or, we can buy dry basil leaves to add to our foods.”*

* 1. **Mint** (3rd-5th, and younger kids if they are engaged; move to Mint slide, share mint if you have it – this slide is optional for all)

*“Another leaf that is delicious is* ***mint****. I bet you have had mint before!”* (Allow children to respond.) *It is used to flavor tea, candy, jelly, chewing gum, toothpaste, and it tastes good in salads, and even with melon! Some people like mint when they eat the meat called lamb. Mint tastes and smells fresh, bright, and sweet. Very refreshing!”  
  
“Mint plants grow very easily in the garden, but be careful, they will grow into a huge bush very quickly – you might end up with more mint then you planned for!”*

* 1. **Why does it taste so good?** (Move to ranch dressing slide)

*“Anyone like ranch dressing or dip? Well, the secret flavors of ranch are garlic, parsley and chives! Delicious! Today you get to take home a recipe for making your own ranch dressing with garlic, parsley and chives. Maybe you and your family can give it a try!”*

* 1. **And SO many more…!** (move to “And SO many more…!” slide)

“*There are SO many other amazing flavors that we can use to create delicious food in the kitchen, all without having to add salt or sugar. Just like we see on our SPICES poster, herbs and spices come in many shapes, colors, forms and flavors. Today we talked about just a few – maybe you can learn more on your own*.” (Move to “What would you like to try at home?” slide.) “*Does anyone have an idea of herbs or spices they want to use to cook at home?*” (Allow children to share.)

IX. **Activity**: Let’s Pretend: It’s Time to Cook!

Move through slides and give children time to talk about what they would add to each food item. Use SPICES poster and herb/spice samples to support activity and discussion. Children can write or draw on “What would you add for FLAVOR?” activity sheet as you go. Note: Water is not on K-2 activity sheet.

* “*Great job everyone! You are all so creative. Now we are going to enjoy a flavorful snack that contains the spice cinnamon – and we will enjoy this spice with some fresh apples!”*

X. **Snack:** Distribute and enjoy the snack! Discuss flavor and herbs/spices in snack.