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Making the Farm Connection





Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is building a movement of rural and urban people to foster family-scale agriculture that cares for the land, sustains local economies and promotes social justice.

For more information about CAFF please contact us at:

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YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED! DONATE TO OUR FARM VISIT FUND!

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers is a member-based organization. We have been actively engaging communities for nearly 30 years about the importance of regional food production. Our Farm Visit program is just another way we are helping educate future generations about the importance of family farming. Help us continue our efforts by sending us a tax deductible donation today.

Donation checks should be mailed to:

Attn: Membership Services — Farm Visit Fund
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NOTES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I

Making the Farm Connection	4
Suggested Activities	6
What to Bring	10
Planning Your Visit	11
Safety & Group Management	15

Section II

The Specifics	17
In-Class Visit	18
Selected Relevant Curriculum	20
Farm Fresh Foods	23
Farm Biographies	24
Farm Visit Waiver	26
Post-Farm Visit Activities	29
Farm Visit Evaluation	30



SECTION 1

MAKING THE FARM CONNECTION

NOTES

This manual is designed to let farmers know what to expect when hosting a farm visit, and to prepare teachers and classes so that they may get the most out of their visit. Both teachers and farmers play active roles in creating a positive farm experience for students. The farm visit concepts outlined in this manual are best suited for students between second and sixth grades. Children younger than second grade also benefit from farm visits, although these visits are generally less structured and involve mostly hands-on activities. The curriculum and activities for students older than the sixth grade are not addressed in this manual but the concepts may be applied to all age groups in consideration of preparation, payment and other logistical information.





NOTES

WHY FARM VISITS?

What people do not understand, they do not value; what they do not value, they will not protect, and what they do not protect, they will lose. — Charles Jordan

Hands-on experiences

Farm visits provide an opportunity for students to use all of their senses while incorporating curriculum and agricultural based connections. The more they touch, smell, and taste the things they are learning about, the more deeply they understand and remember lessons. In this way, on farm experiences provide sensory explorations that not only teach, but that also connect students more intimately to food production and agriculture. Harvesting or helping with chores are time-honored activities, but both the farm and students get things done if they are weeding, turning compost, gleaning, transplanting etc. In fact, we've found that the students love helping out the hosting farm! They really enjoy contributing and having a sense of responsibility for getting work done. Making farm visits work for both the farm and class are an important part of planning for visits. See the "General Activities" section for specific hands-on activity ideas.

Explaining activities and follow up are as essential as the hands on nature of a visit. They are important to the depth of the lessons learned and how the activities of the visit fit into the bigger farm picture. If students understand that digging prepares beds to be planted, weeding reduces the need for pesticides and reduces competition for harvestable plants etc. then they are able to see the purpose behind the activity. Specific follow up activities are



SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Below is a list of potential activities during the visit that can accomplish the goal of getting work done on the farm while providing students with meaningful experiences. Curriculum connections are outlined later in the manual.

Planting/Transplanting: This lesson expands their knowledge of the amount of time and effort for plants to produce food. It's a great experience that is reinforced if students are then able to take seedlings or plantings home or back to school to revisit daily. Supervision is required. Older students may be able to plant in the field. If they do take starter plants home with them, they must be told how to care for them.

Equipment: Seeds, starter plants, or bulbs, plastic cups, markers for labeling. Some students may know very little about a greenhouse or that many plants begin there and then make their way to the field.

Harvesting: Students love to harvest! They love harvesting to feed themselves and they love harvesting when they're helping the farmer fill an order. There are many lessons to be learned while harvesting, including identifying parts of plants, plant functions, seasonality, when different plants are ripe and life cycle lessons. Having each student participate is essential.

Equipment: Harvesting implements, if needed. Be cautious of sharp implements.

5. Additional comments or suggestions about your visit?

6. Is there anything that could be done to make your visit more educational and useful?

7. Would you be interested in going on another visit in the coming year?

8. What follow up activity do you plan on doing with your class? (Follow up activities are an important element to a visit and further reinforce lessons learned)

9. How have your students/visitors related to their farm visit? What were key take home lessons?

10. Other comments?



FARM VISIT EVALUATION

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers would like to make these visits as educational, easy and as fun as possible. Evaluation forms offer the host of the visit feedback about the level of effectiveness of farm visit components. This evaluation may be modified to evaluate the effectiveness of your visits.

Teacher's Name: _____

Name of Farm: _____

Date of Visit: _____

1. What was the most useful element of your visit?

2. What was the least useful element of your visit?

3. Do you feel that your class was prepared for their farm visit? How long before your visit did you begin talking to your class about their trip?

4. What could better prepare your class for their visit?

Tasting: Tasting is only part of what students can experience but there is no doubt that this is a favorite of students young and old. You'll be surprised at how daring they are to try new things and will even eat things like onions, garlic greens and other produce items that are not thought to be kid friendly and ones that they may not be familiar with at home. Fruits are popular because they are sweet. Introducing students to ripe produce and fruits may be one of their most remembered experiences. You can also make a salad, tea, or provide these items for a snack or during lunch. Make comparisons between crops in the same family. Have them notice what is different and what is similar. Make the connections from seed to table. Have them identify parts of the plant they are eating (i.e. leaf, stem, root, fruit, seed, etc).

Equipment: Water to rinse produce; hose for kids to rinse their hands; a knife if needed and a serving container.



Composting / Soil Exploration It is great to have students see the different stages of compost, and it is possible to involve them in helping a farm build its compost pile! Annie Main at Good Humus Produce created a year round farm visit theme based on compost, following the composting cycle from vegetable scraps back to the field. These activities explore nitrogen and carbon cycles as well as decomposition.

Equipment: Digging tools.

A yearly schedule around compost:

January: Preparing soil for planting in the greenhouse.

February: Planting/seeding in the greenhouse with compost.

March: Weeding the garden and starting to build the compost piles.

April: Weeding the garden and building compost piles.

May: Building and turning the compost piles. Active compost (worms, bugs, etc.).

June: Turning the compost piles. Planting the seedlings into the garden. Active compost (worms, bugs, etc.).

July: Turning the compost piles. Cultivating the seedlings. Active compost (worms, bugs, etc.).

August: Turning the compost piles. Cultivating plants and watering. Active compost (worms, bugs, etc.).

September: Applying compost to the garden.

October: Harvesting pumpkins and winter squash.

November: Mulching the garden.

December: Slow compost time. Not much activity.

POST-FARM VISIT ACTIVITIES

We suggest that each class try the following activities after participating in a farm visit in the Sacramento Valley. Follow up activities help ensure that the lessons learned on the farm visit are reinforced. The evaluation helps us assess our success and what needs to be changed for future visits.

Follow up activities with your class

Please pick one of the following;

1. Have each student in the class write a letter to the farmer they visited, detailing what they liked / learned about the visit.
2. Have a follow up food day. During a class, talk about what different farm products the students are eating.
3. Visit the Crunch Lunch salad bar and look at some of the local produce highlighted on the salad bar.
4. Review Relevant Curriculum: Language Arts, for more great ideas.
5. Be creative! Have an art day about your class farm visit!

Evaluation of Trip

All teachers must complete our evaluation form (pg. 30).





FORMA DE PERMISIO PARA VISITAR LA GRANJA

La clase de su hijo/a planea un paseo a una granja. El paseo es parte del programa “De la granja a la escuela” de Community Alliance with Family Farmers (Alianza Comunitaria con Familias Agricultoras) El programa informa a niños/as sobre los ciclos de vida de frutas y verduras, desde la semilla a la mesa. El programa ademas, fomenta la importancia de practicar diariamente una dieta saludable.

La participación de Padres y Madres es muy importante. Si Usted desea acompañarnos en este paseo, favor de indicarlo en el formulario de permiso. Así será una experiencia aun mas divertida para todos.

Favor de completar y devolver el permiso del distrito escolar y el permiso para las fotografias. Avisenos si su hijo u hija tiene alguna condición de salud como el asma. Si Usted tiene preguntas o quiere participar en el programa “De la granja a la escuela,” comuniquese conmigo al (530) 756-8518 ext 18.

Durante el paseo, sacaremos fotos o haremos filmaciones. Favor de firmar abajo si podemos usar fotos de su hijo/a.

Community Alliance with Family Farmers (Alianza Comunitaria con Familias Agricultoras) tiene mi permiso para usar fotos o filmaciones de mi hijo/a, _____, tomadas mientras participó en las actividades del programa “De la granja a la escuela.” Entiendo que estas fotos o filmaciones serán usadas para compartir los logros positivos del programa “De la granja a la escuela.”

Firma Padre/Madre

Fecha de entregar

Escriba otra vez aca

Fecha

Farm Animals: “While it’s great to talk to kids about concepts like organics and sustainability, at a young age they take so much in through their senses and animals provide so much sensory input,” says Dru Rivers of Full Belly Farm. Contact with animals is without a question the favorite farm activity for most kids. Having students participate in the day-to-day care and management of animals is an excellent learning experience. During this activity nutrition can become a focus of the lesson to meet curriculum connections for students.

Equipment: Feed, hand washing station.

Gleaning: This enriching service learning project benefits all ages and teaches students about growing cycles and community projects. Even very young students can glean a remarkable amount in a very short time. Gleaned produce may be donated to a local food bank, soup kitchen or sent home with the volunteer group. This project really brings home the message of how much work is involved in bringing food to their table.

Equipment: Harvesting tools, boxes for produce.

Other Ideas for Activities

Salsa making, canning and preserving, dried flower arrangements, constructing a compost or vermicompost for the classroom, aquaculture activities, spinning or weaving, apple growing, harvesting and cider making, bee hive observation and lessons, bean sorting, milking goats or cows, learning about beneficial insects, watershed lessons, windbreaks and land management, tree care, cover cropping methods and reasons, set up a mock farmers’ market,



WHAT TO BRING ON YOUR FARM VISIT

The following are items are recommended that your students/visitors bring on their visit:

- Good sun hat
- Sturdy shoes
- Water bottle
- Wind parka or rain gear (if rain is likely)
- T-shirt
- Long pants, with shorts as an option
- Notebooks, art paper, pens
- Recyclable (reusable) eating utensils and plates
- A bag lunch (minimal waste please)

Children should be prepared for both hot and cool weather.

Things not to bring:

- Radios or other electronic items
- Dogs or other animals

Lunch, water and snacks:

If a farm is able, it is great to have a fresh farm snack for students. Whether or not the students will need to bring lunches should be predetermined so that students are prepared. Water is essential to ensure that students remain hydrated. Some days on the farm the students may wilt like plants due to the heat so it is imperative that they have a refillable water bottle with them throughout the day. Encourage reusable containers for the students lunches to minimize waste and bring garbage bags to carry your lunch waste (besides the compostable matter) out with you. Water is critical. If there isn't drinking water available, the teacher must know ahead of time. Handwashing stations are equally important.

Name tags

Using a visitor's name personalizes the experience for them. Ensuring that students, visitors, teachers, parents and chaperones all have name tags makes the day go smoother.



FARM VISIT WAIVER

Permission to Display Work, and or Image

Name for CAFF's purposes of Promoting Farm Visits and Education of Farms Through Outreach, Reporting and Promotional Activities

I understand that my son/daughter, _____, will be participating in a Farm Visit Tour provided by The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF). Information, photos and videos about this project may be utilized for advertising farm visits (something we provide free of charge to the school district), reporting, fundraising, Web, publicity and generally supporting CAFF's work. By signing below, I give my permission for my child's work, photo, name and/or video image to be utilized by The Community Alliance with Family Farmers and for his/her name to be presented with the work, photo or video image.

CAFF is a non profit organization. For more information on CAFF or if you have any questions, please call or visit us on the web at: (530) 756-8518 ext 18, temra@caff.org, www.caff.org

As the child's parent/guardian, my signature authorizes release of my child's work, image and name exclusively for the purpose described above.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Due Date of Form

Print Name Here

Date



WAIVER FORMS

The following two forms, one in English and one in Spanish may be modified and used as permission slips and photo release forms for your visits. In order to utilize any photos taken during a visit, the farm must get signed form giving permission to display photos. Without written consent, the farm may be held liable if utilizing without said permission. Students and classes need to have permission slips signed in order to leave the school during the day. Photo release can be incorporated into permission slips. Typically we print the following documents and waiver form examples back to back to address language differences.

PLANNING YOUR VISIT

The following items are important in planning a farm visit. They include logistical planning items that are important to having a successful visit. A first step from the farm after sending out an initial solicitation for hosting visits is to find out if the responding classes have been involved in farming or gardening activities. This way the visit can be appropriately structured. Some farms create one model to a visit and adhere to that model. For example, an apple farm may do a tour, show visitors an apple processor or let them do a tasting. Farm visits may vary from one to several hours depending on the complexity and coordination available.

Seasonality

Building lessons around harvest seasonality is particularly beneficial to students and the farm. Knowing when certain foods come into harvest is an important lesson for visitors that will build a deeper understanding of what farms produce.

The simplest way to incorporate the concept of seasonality is to talk about what is happening in the current season, what happened before it and what will happen on the farm during the consecutive seasons. Talking students through the whole cycle of the seasons and involving them in a hands-on way in the current season's activities is a useful lesson in the reality of food production. See Farm Fresh Foods (pg. 23), for an example of regional seasonality developed for the Sacramento Valley.



Timing

Solicitations for farm visits must generally go out to classes 2 - 6 months in advance for planning on a schools part. Tapping into your local community to host farm visits does not require as much lead time.

As mentioned previously, farm visits may take anywhere from one to four hours. While planning your visit, it is important to allow for flexibility during your visit. As Dru Rivers of Full Belly Farm (who has been holding farm visits for 15 years), says that one of the biggest mistakes she made in her first years of hosting educational visits was to plan each minute of the day. "There are always so many things to see and do on the farm, with some activities more exciting than others, that strict structure is unrealistic. It's good to leave flexibility in your farm visit schedule to reduce stress and to make sure that students get enough out of their visit by spending more time on activities that really resonate with them instead of rushing." The most important lesson is to not over plan!

Cost for a visit

While some farms offer visits for free, it is important to understand the value of a farmer's time in an educational setting. Not only is time taken out of the farm day, but there is also pre-visit planning and post-visit clean up that must be accounted for. Fees for visits may range anywhere from \$5 - \$10 per student/visitor depending on the length of the visit and what is given away during the visit. For example a one hour visit with tour, sampling and small take away item, \$5 is an appropriate fee. For a four hour visit with sampling and a snack, \$10 per student/visitor is appropriate. CAFF has partnered with local organizations to raise half the cost for the \$10 visit in some communities. Asking parents/visitors to pay \$5 for a visit is rarely objected. It is appropriate to not turn away any visitor for a lack of funds.

Eatwell Farm

At Eatwell Farm, Nigel Walker grows about 100 different kinds of fruits and vegetables on 60 acres of land. The farm is organic, which means they don't use chemicals for controlling weeds, bugs and diseases in their plants. He works very hard to take good care of his soil so that it will keep providing delicious food for a long time. Nigel likes to get to know his customers. "They are very appreciative of what we do," he says, "and that keeps me going on those cold, rainy days out in the field." Eatwell Farm sells directly to Davis folks through weekly boxes of fresh produce, at farmers' markets and to many restaurants in the region.



FARM BIOGRAPHIES

Providing students with an overview of the farm they will visit gives them some background information about what they will expect. This is also particularly useful for teachers and parent drivers.

Good Humus Farm

At Good Humus Farm, Jeff and Annie Main grow about 100 different kinds of fruits and vegetables on 20 acres of land. Their farm is organic, which means they don't use chemicals for controlling weeds, bugs and diseases in their crops. They work very hard to take good care of their soil so it will keep providing delicious food for a long time. They sell their produce at the Davis Farmers' Market and through their CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).

Pacific Star Garden

At Pacific Star Gardens, Robert and Debbie Ramming and their family grow a variety of different fruits and vegetables on 40 acres of land. Their farm is organic, which means they don't use chemicals for controlling weeds, bugs and diseases in their plants. They work very hard to take good care of their soil so it will keep providing delicious food for a long time. They know how to grow their crops so they will produce food weeks earlier than other farmers' crops. They sell their produce at several area farmers' markets and at their roadside stand near Woodland.

Full Circle Farm

Full Circle Farm grows a diversity of fruits and vegetables year round as well as raises chickens for eggs and heirloom turkeys. The farm is organic and sells its produce, meat and eggs through the local community and their CSA. The farm uses plants and animals to make the soil healthy and good.

Number of visits

Farming is a busy occupation and hosting farm visits does restrict farm activities. Each farm should decide how often they are willing to host farm visits and at what time of year. Farmers in CAFF's Sacramento Valley Farm Visit Program typically hold a maximum of six in the spring and prefer to have one class at a time (approximately 20 students) come out to the farm, every other week. The four hour duration of these visits is partly why they do not host more. Number of visits depend on how long they are, the farmers availability, and number of classes interested.

Size of group activities

We recommend dividing a class into smaller groups of 4 to 6 for specific activities. Group size is determined by how many adults are available to help lead and supervise activities, and the age and energy level of the group. There should be one parent or chaperone per group of students. Small groups ensure that everyone gets a chance to get their hands dirty, are easier to move around the farm and stay focused better. Classes often have predetermined groups or you can create them upon the groups arrival. Small groups become especially important when working with implements such as hoes, hoses, shovels etc. This ensures that each student will be able to get their senses around on what it is like to farm through participation.

Language

Whether visitors are English speaking, bilingual or Spanish speaking must be considered.

Weather

Make sure visitors are prepared for all types of weather. Determine if you will have a rain day for the farm visit. Does rain cancel the trip? Make sure to distinguish who is responsible for monitoring weather.



Transportation

In some schools teachers are accustomed to finding parent volunteers to drive for field trips. Others may use buses but this increases the overall cost of the visit. The most simple way for a farm to receive visitors is to have transportation arranged by the planned group. If they decide to bring a bus it is important to make sure that there is ample turn-around space to drop off and load students at the farm. Bus companies may require proof of this before going on the trip.

Insurance

If you're hosting school visits, contact the school district office and make sure that it is aware of your farm visit schedule or have the teacher of the class do this. District officials will notify their insurance company. Field trips that take place during the school day fall under the school's insurance policy. However, the parents and chaperones are not covered by a school's insurance. For this reason farms are recommended to have a separate policy for when they open their farm for visits. This policy will protect them in case someone gets hurt while on their visit.



FARM FRESH FOODS

Below is an example seasonal calendar of fresh foods. Students should know where their food comes from, the five main agricultural groupings (fruits and vegetables, meat, dairy, grain and fiber) and also the difference between fresh foods and processed foods. Highlighting fresh and seasonal products at school in connection with school lunch or meals helps students and visitors alike see how integral farming is to their daily life. As Wendell Berry, an American poet, novelist, essayist, philosopher and farmer has so eloquently and simply stated, "Eating is an agricultural act," which may be the grandest of all take home lessons.

Spring:	Summer:	Fall:	Winter:
Apple	Apricot	Pear	Apple
Pear	Fig	Grape	Pear
Kiwi	Nectarine	Melon	Persimmon
Mandarin	Peach	Peach	Nectarine
Tangelo	Plum	Plum	Kiwi
Grapefruit	Broccoli	Cherry tomato	Arugula
Chard	Corn	Cucumber	Broccoli
Spinach	Cucumber	Red pepper	Cabbage
Arugula	Summer		Chard
Lettuce	squash		Lettuces
Snap Peas	Tomato		
Broccoli			



Language Arts

- Write brief narratives based on their experience that move through a logical sequence and describe the setting characters, objects, and events in detail
- Write a friendly letter complete with date, salutation, body, closing, and signature
- Research — Understand the use of reference materials (maps)
- Organize a presentation that maintains a clear focus



SAFETY & GROUP MANAGEMENT

In the Sacramento Valley we visit each classroom before the field trip to prepare the students. In this class time we tell the children what to expect from the visit, give them tips on how to dress and what they should and should not bring. We have adopted a set of rules to ensure a safe and fun farm visit. Farms are working places, so it is essential to make students aware of potential hazards. Farmers can do this when the class/visitors arrive or have the teacher prepare the class by going over these rules.

Setting the rules

Rule #1 – No running, unless it is stated that it is ok.

Rule #2 – Listen. Listen to the chaperones and the farm guides. Listen to the farm and the sounds you may not usually hear if you live in a city. When appropriate, listen to each other. Other students/visitors may see or hear things that you may overlook.

Rule #3 – Look before you leap! Watch where you're stepping, walking etc. Farms are working places with different dangers. Stay with your group and pay attention to what is going on around you.

Have the students repeat these rules after you have gone over them and again before leaving for the farm. You should review them upon arriving at the farm.

Staffing

There should be approximately one parent/chaperone per group of five to six students as mentioned earlier.



Safety considerations

Allergies, sun, insects, farm tools and snakes are all safety considerations to take into consideration. These issues should be addressed prior to the visit to give visitors time to prepare. This step is appropriate after scheduling a visit with a group. Ask the students/visitors to make sure they are prepared in case anyone has allergies to bees or pollen. Have sunblock available the day of the visit and put it on anyone who doesn't have it. Remind students/visitors that they must look before they leap (Rule #3!) to protect themselves from tripping and hurting themselves by going over the rules when they arrive for their visit.

Insurance (Page 14)



Examples of Second Grade Curriculum Connections

Social sciences: history of the farm, or farming in the region, interviews with the farmer, management of the farm, identifying consumers of the farm's products, environmental practices of the farm, mapping activities, directions, regionalism.

Vocabulary: agriculture, sustainable, diversity, habitat, cover crop, organic, CSA (community supported agriculture), compost, pesticides, farmers market, locally grown, herbicides, microorganisms, irrigation etc. Each grade level will have different comprehension abilities.

Social Studies

- See the connection between their lives and the lives of people in their community
- Understand the lives of actual people who make a difference in their everyday lives
- Study people who supply goods and services to understand our economy
- Determine the farmer's role in the food system
- Recognize the roles of buyers and sellers of goods and services
- Identify factors which affect people's choices in what they produce and consume (natural resources, finances, weather, etc.)

Science

- Life Cycles — Living things are diverse, interdependent, and evolving
- Environment — Understanding that all parts of an environment are interrelated; therefore, changes to one part affect other parts



SELECTED RELEVANT CURRICULUM

General

Each grade level has different curriculum goals that teachers are required to meet. It is important to make farm visits as applicable as possible to ensure participation, interest and relevance to teacher's lesson plans. Farm visits can easily meet curriculum requirements based on the following concepts:

Life cycles

Watershed stewardship

Land stewardship

Habitat

Wind breaks

Seasonality of foods

Math: measuring, problem solving and counting

Science: understanding pH, life cycles, water, nitrogen, carbon and sun cycles

Language arts: writing activities about being on the farm, vocabulary and concept development, listening and speaking strategies, thank you letters

Art: drawing, sketching, collage making

SECTION II: THE SPECIFICS

This section of the manual will walk you through a farm visit for Sacramento Valley. After reading this section, you will have a better idea of what work goes into a well-planned farm visit from start to finish. We hope that this section will answer some more specific questions that you may have about how and what should go on before, during and after a farm visit.



IN-CLASS VISIT

In-class visits are an important element of school farm visit as it lets students know what to expect and what is expected of them. They are informed about where the farm is, what to bring/wear, rules of conduct and the importance of our local farms.

Here is the In-class Visit Lesson Plan used for some CAFF farm visits. Teachers or farmers can use this as an outline for visit preparation.

In-class visits (45 minutes)

Arrive at class – 9:00

Questions to ask students:

Who has been on a farm?

What kind of things do you find on a farm?

Make the food connection

What do you eat that comes from a farm?

What are the 5 farm products (fruits & vegetables, grains, meat, dairy, fiber)

Rules of the visit

Rule #1 – No running! There may be a time when you can run but we will tell you when

Rule #2 – Listen: To the farm, to each other

Rule #3 – Look before you leap/ Turn your brain on. Don't put yourself at risk (ie. hurt yourself)

Dangers on farms

Animals (snakes, spiders, etc)

Farm equipment

Holes, hose, tripping

Name Tags (should be made at this time)

What to wear on the visit

Wear old clothes

Shoes that can get dirty

No shorts

No sandals (closed toes only)

Bring a warm layer

What to bring

Snack

Lunch (reusable containers)

Water

Sunblock (or wear some)

Day of visit (typically the following morning)

Review rules

Review what to bring/wear before leaving class

Example itinerary:

9:00 Leave school

9:45 Arrive at Farm

Activity (Name game or Nutrition lesson)

10:00 Snack

10:30 Activity (Tour farm or other)

11:30 Lunch

12:30 Activity (Tour farm or other)

1:30 Leave farm

