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# GREGORY, THE TERRIBLE EATER

Author: Mitchell Sharmat

Illustrators: Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey

Publisher: Four Winds Press

## THEME:

A look at the specially prepared diets of the animals at the zoo shows the importance of a nutritionally balanced diet for people, too.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Gregory the goat is a very picky eater, wanting only fruits, vegetables, and eggs, and refusing the usual goat diet of shoes and tin cans. His parents become very worried, but eventually reach a compromise with Gregory, involving a diet of both healthy and “junk” foods. LeVar finds out that animals as well as people need a nutritionally balanced diet, when he goes to the San Diego Zoo kitchen and watches them prepare food for the animals. He also visits Billy and Nanny’s Barnyard Café for an unusual snack and joins three children cooking with a New York hotel chef.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

The story, *Gregory, the Terrible Eater*, has clear-cut problems and solutions. Have students identify the first problem (Gregory wants to eat healthy foods instead of foods that goats eat) and the solutions proposed by his parents (feed him foods that goats eat) and Dr. Ram (give him a few new foods each day until he likes everything). These solutions create a new problem (Gregory starts eating everything in the house). Have students identify this second problem and the solution (his parents brought him lots of junk from the dump so that he would learn not to eat everything). Discuss the fact that stories usually have a problem and a solution.

Pose the question, “What foods do people eat that animals also eat? (Several foods were mentioned in the program.) Make a list of the students’ ideas.

Discuss different places that people go to eat, such as a restaurant, fast-food place, diner, cafeteria, food court, sandwich shop, etc. (Students might also mention specific eating places by name, which they could categorize as to type of establishment mentioned above.) Talk about how these places are different such as, the way they look, how people are served, what the food choices are, and the cost of eating there.

Discuss the term “junk food” and what it usually means for people. What did “junk food” mean to Gregory and his parents?

## CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

After viewing the program, make a list of all the foods Gregory ate. Use the book as a means of checking and adding to the list. Sort the list into two categories: “real foods” and “junk foods.”

Have the class conduct a survey of favorite snack foods and graph the results. For a larger survey, include other classrooms in the school. (To make the survey and resulting graph more manageable, have students identify five or six snack foods that they think will be mentioned most often and make the survey a “forced choice” instead of entirely open-ended.)

Before watching the program, brainstorm a list of facts that students know about goats. After watching, add or delete from the list. Then, have students research additional information about goats and return to the list to make modifications. Once they have their facts, have half the class make a set of “fact” cards and the other half of the class make a set of “fiction” cards about goats. Provide two tin cans, one labeled “Fact” and the other labeled “Fiction.” Mix up the cards and make them available for an independent sorting activity.

When LeVar ate at Billy and Nanny’s Barnyard Café in the program, he was presented with some very unusual choices of foods, such as “a slice of bathmat,” “a shingle sandwich,” and “a cellophane salad.” Have students use their imaginations and write menus for Billy and Nanny’s Barnyard Café.

Divide a bulletin board in half. Label one side “Healthy Foods” and the other side, “Junk Foods.” Have students search magazines and newspaper advertisements for appropriate pictures to make a collage for each side. They might also use packaging materials (chips bags, candy wrappers, labels, etc.) to make the bulletin board three-dimensional.

As a class, including the teacher, have everyone agree to try at least one food she/he doesn’t like to eat. Set a time limit for these “experiments” (e.g., two weeks). Make a class chart with the names of everyone in one column. Make a second column that identifies foods that each person doesn’t like to eat. In a third column, list the food(s) that each one tried. Ask students if they were surprised by this experiment and discovered any foods that they enjoyed.

Have students use real materials (some actual “junk” and recyclables) to create a “meal.” Give everyone a paper plate to use as the “base” for the creations. Encourage students to be creative and provide an opportunity for them to describe their junk food meals with the class.

Arrange a field trip to a grocery store. Ask the store manager to talk with the students about the variety of jobs that workers do in a grocery store. Divide the class into teams according to basic food groups on the food pyramid. Have each team search for types of foods that belong in their food group and

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make a list of everything they find. When they return to the classroom, have them transfer their information to a chart-size food pyramid.

**RELATED THEMES:**

cooking  
healthy lifestyles  
farm animals

**RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:**

Program #118 — How To Make An Apple Pie And See The World  
Program #58 — Little Nino's Pizzeria  
Program #48 — The Robbery At The Diamond Dog Diner

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Mitchell Sharmat was encouraged by his father to write when he was in second grade, but he gave up when he could not think of any ideas. He was persuaded to try writing children's books by his wife, Marjorie Weinman Sharmat, author of **Reading Rainbow** feature book, *Gila Monsters Meet You at the Airport*. The idea for *Gregory, the Terrible Eater* came to him many years ago on a vacation when a young goat started nibbling on his son's coat. Mitchell and his wife live in Tucson, Arizona.

**ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATORS:**

Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey have collaborated on many books, as well as writing and illustrating books of their own. Jose was born in the Philippines and worked as a lawyer before turning to his true interest—drawing cartoons. That interest eventually led to illustrating books for children. Ariane Dewey grew up in New Jersey and recalls a love of art as far back as kindergarten. She worked as an art editor and a dancer before devoting herself to children's books. When Jose and Ariane work together on a book, he supplies the drawing and she adds the coloration.

**BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:**

MRS. PIG'S BULK BUY  
by Mary Rayner (Atheneum)

POEM STEW  
selected by William Cole, illus. by Karen Ann Weinhaus (Lippincott)

BETTER HOMES & GARDEN'S NEW JUNIOR COOKBOOK  
(Meredith Corporation)

**SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

GOATS  
by Jason Cooper (Rourke)

EATING THE ALPHABET  
by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt Brace)

MARGE'S DINER  
by Gail Gibbons (Crowell)

WHAT FOOD IS THIS?  
by Rosmarie Hausherr (Scholastic)

THE EDIBLE PYRAMID  
by Loreen Leedy (Holiday House)

IN THE DINER  
by Christine Loomis, illus. by Nancy Poydar (Scholastic)

THE BABY ZOO  
by Bruce McMillan (Scholastic)

700 KIDS ON GRANDPA'S FARM  
by Ann Morris, photos by Ken Heyman (Dutton)

WHERE FOOD COMES FROM  
by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent, photos by William Muñoz (Holiday House)

POTLUCK  
by Anne Shelby, illus. by Irene Trivas (Orchard)

THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF  
by Janet Stevens (Harcourt Brace)

MY FIRST COOKBOOK  
by Angela Wilkes (Knopf)



“Gregory, the Terrible Eater” is a fantastic book from the mind of Mitchell Sharmat along with illustrations by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey and it is about how a young goat named Gregory refuses to eat the junk from the junkyard that his parents tried to feed him. “Gregory, the Terrible Eater” is the perfect book for parents who want a solution to help their children stop being picky eaters. Mitchell Sharmat has done an excellent job at writing a story about how a young goat refuses to eat the “Gregory, the Terrible Eater” is a fantastic book from the mind of Mitchell Sharmat along with illus