



Lizzie McGuire “Inner Beauty”

A Disney Channel Program for Cable in the Classroom

Ages 10-13

Program Summary

Though bright and attractive, Lizzie’s friend Miranda has a self-image problem. She’s ashamed of the “B” she got in a science test, and thinks looks fat and ugly. She’s especially concerned about how she’ll appear in the music video she’s making with Gordo and Lizzie. Miranda decides there is just one thing to do—diet.

Much to Lizzie’s surprise, Miranda begins starving herself. It’s not until Miranda nearly collapses during rehearsal of the music video that everyone, including Lizzie’s mother, begins to realize something is seriously wrong.

Lizzie tries to express her concern to Miranda while they are out shopping at the local mall. But, Miranda refuses to listen and leaves the mall in a huff. Later, when Miranda shows up for the videotaping, Lizzie apologizes for what happened at the mall. “It’s your business,” she tells Miranda. “I just said that stuff because I really care about you, and you’re scaring me.”

Miranda confides in Lizzie that she feels as though her life is out of control—“Things that used to feel so easy now seem so hard.” Eating is the only thing she feels she has some control over. Lizzie and Gordo agree that they feel the same kinds of pressures. But they have each other’s friendship, and that’s really important. For Miranda, knowing how much her friends care about her is a turning point.

The story ends on an upbeat note as the kids watch a smashing performance of their video. Miranda is happy with the way she looks and decides she’s really pretty cool after all.

Objectives:

The student will:

- Identify pressures that young teenagers commonly experience;
- Give reasons why it’s okay not to be or look “perfect;” and
- Analyze and discuss factors that contribute to good nutrition and physical health.

Previewing Questions:

- What are some things that help people feel good about themselves?
- Why do you think some people don’t feel good about themselves?
- Do you think there’s a “perfect” look for teenagers and young adults? What kind of people do you think look “perfect”? Why do you think so?
- What problems can people have if they think they have to be “perfect?”
- What do diet and exercise have to do with looking and feeling good?



Post-Viewing Questions:

- Why is Miranda feeling bad about herself?
- Why do you think Miranda has these feelings?
- How do we know that Miranda doesn't have an accurate idea of how she looks?
- What does Miranda do to try to feel better about herself?
- Why are Gordo and Lizzie worried about Miranda?
- Gordo says that Miranda believes what ads and magazines say about being physically perfect, but he doesn't. Why do you think he doesn't? What are some differences between the two of them that make it easier for Gordo not to "buy in" to what ads and magazines say about physical attractiveness?
- How do Gordo and Lizzie help Miranda?

Vocabulary:

Self-image, self-esteem, overreact, nutrition

Language Arts

Activity #1: Understanding Definitions

Find definitions for the vocabulary words and discuss why they are important to understanding the program. Discuss: What is the difference between self-image and self-esteem? Why are both important to growing up healthy?

Activity #2: Problem-Solving Story

The video presents a story in which one of the characters (Miranda) has a problem and the others (Lizzie and Gordo) help her solve that problem. A common technique in story writing is to create a plot that follows this pattern:

Beginning = Someone has a problem

Middle = Others become aware of the problem or the main character realizes what the problem is

End = The problem is solved

Have the students work individually or in small groups to create brief story lines that follow the same problem-solving pattern. Each story should have a distinct beginning, middle and end. Have the students tell their stories to the class.

Activity #3: Subplots

A subplot is a story within a story that enriches our understanding of the main plot. In the program the story of Matt's budding career as an artist is an important subplot. Discuss:

- Why is the subplot about Matt's artistic efforts important to the main plot about Miranda's problem?



- Describe how the subplot follows a similar problem-solving pattern of beginning, middle, and end (see Activity #2)
- What is Matt’s “problem,” and how is it resolved?

Activity #4: Media Influences

Many teenagers are influenced by advertisements that show teens and young adults who look “perfect.” But advertisements are far from being the only influence. Have the students give examples of other media that strongly influence our attitudes. Examples:

- TV sitcoms
- Magazine articles
- Movies
- Music videos

Discuss: Which media do you think have the largest influence in the lives of young teenagers? Why?

Social Studies

Activity #1: Advertising Everywhere

Commercial advertising has become one of the most pervasive influences in society today. Have students work in small groups to do one or more of the following activities to increase their understanding how society is influenced by advertising. Have each small group verbally present their findings to the class, or create a display illustrating what they’ve learned.

- Identify and describe the many different ways advertisers communicate their message. Examples: magazines, TV commercials, billboards, radio commercials, etc.
- Research the role of advertising in different historical eras—for example, 50 and 100 years ago. Compare advertising today with advertising in these different periods in history.
- Compare and contrast the types of advertising found on different types of TV shows that appeal to different audiences. Examples: clothing, movies, and acne creams on programming aimed at teenagers; household products and beauty products on programming aimed at women.

Activity #2: Advertising—Good or Bad for Us?

Organize a classroom debate in which students take “pro” and “con” positions on the following statement:

Resolved: Commercial advertising is such a negative influence on young people that it should be banned from radio, TV, and billboards.



Have the students who are not part of the “pro” and “con” teams participate in the debate as judges. At the conclusion of the debate, call on the judges to determine which side “won” the debate. Have judges present clear reasons based on their observation of the debate and their judgment about the power of the various arguments.

Activity #3: Talking Back to Advertising

Have the students create their own advertising slogans (e.g., for billboards, posters, or magazines) that “talk back” to the kinds of ads that play on teenagers’ need to feel accepted and “perfect.”

Examples:

- “I Like the Way I Look—and I’m Not Perfect!”
- “Be Yourself—Be Happy”
- “It’s Okay to Be Who You Are”

Math

Activity #1: Advertising Tally

In connection with their discussion of the role of advertising in today’s society, have students do a tally of the number of different products commonly advertised during a typical evening of prime time TV (for the purposes of this activity, 7:30-9:30 p.m. or 8-10 p.m.). Examples: cars, beauty products, grocery stores, household appliances, etc. Have students create graphs or tables illustrating how frequently each product on the list is mentioned. Have them analyze and discuss the mathematical ratios of products advertised per hour of TV in prime time and of commercial minutes vs. minutes of entertainment programming. Discuss: What do these numbers tell us about the role of advertising on TV and the power of advertisers and their products to influence our attitudes?

Activity #2: Weekly Nutrition Log

For a one-week period, have students keep a daily log of the various foods they eat, including all snacks consumed between meals. Each student should track the portions of each food group as accurately as possible using the Food Guide Pyramid guidelines (see Health, Activity #1). The students’ task is to compile a personal profile of the percentage of foods from each of the major food groups in the Food Pyramid that he or she has consumed during the week. The final tally should be expressed as a percent of the student’s weekly food intake for each food group.

What is a serving? The recommended Food Guide Pyramid serving portions are listed below. If you eat a larger portion, count it as more than one serving. For example, 1/2 cup of cooked pasta counts as one serving in the bread, cereal, rice, and pasta group. If you eat 1 cup of pasta, that would be two servings. If you eat a smaller portion, count it as part of a serving.



Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal
- 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta

Vegetable

- 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
- 1/2 cup of other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw
- 3/4 cup of vegetable juice

Fruit

- 1 medium apple, banana, orange
- 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit
- 3/4 cup of fruit juice

Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese

- 1 cup of milk or yogurt
- 1-1/2 ounces of natural cheese
- 2 ounces of process cheese

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts

- 2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish
- 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans or 1 egg counts as 1 ounce of lean meat.
- 2 tablespoons of peanut butter or 1/3 cup of nuts count as 1 ounce of meat.

Health

Activity #1: Wacky Food Guide Pyramid Recipes

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed the “The Food Guide Pyramid” to serve as a guideline of what we should eat each day. It’s not a rigid prescription but rather a general guide that helps you build a healthful diet. The Pyramid calls for eating a variety of foods to get the nutrients you need.

Make photocopies of the Food Guide Pyramid below and distribute to each student. Working individually or in small groups, have students make up a variety of “wacky” recipes that would fulfill the daily requirements of the Food Guide Pyramid. Encourage students to have fun with this by mixing ingredients that might not normally be combined. After students have shared their wacky recipes, have them share their favorites.



Fats, Oils & Sweets
USE SPARINGLY

KEY

◻ Fat (naturally occurring and added)

◼ Sugars (added)

These symbols show fats and added sugars in foods.

Milk, Yogurt &
Cheese Group
2-3 SERVINGS

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans,
Eggs & Nuts Group
2-3 SERVINGS

Vegetable Group
3-5 SERVINGS

Fruit Group
2-4 SERVINGS

Bread, Cereal,
Rice & Pasta
Group
**6-11
SERVINGS**

Activity #2: Fast Food Pyramid Challenge

Have the students, working in pairs or small groups, develop menus for several days to a week that would rely exclusively on what is available at typical fast-food restaurants. The challenge: to meet the guidelines of the Food Guide Pyramid by consuming only what fast-food restaurants sell. Students will be better prepared to complete this activity if they visit fast-food restaurants and inquire about the actual nutritional contents of the foods served.

Activity #3: Trendy Diets (Not!)

Have students do an online or library investigation of as many different diets as they can find. Have them report to the class on the different kinds of diets. Discuss: What kind of diet, if any, is advisable for losing weight? Why is it especially risky for teenagers to go on fad diets?

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which developed the Food Guide Pyramid, the best and simplest way to lose weight is to increase your physical activity and reduce the fat and sugars in your diet. This still means it's important to eat at least the lowest number of servings from the five major food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid.



Resources

Fast food facts

<http://www olen.com/food/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Center

<http://www.nalusda.gov/fnic/>

Interactive Food Guide Pyramid

<http://www.nal.usda.gov:8001/py/pmap.htm>

National Council of Teachers of English teaching ideas:

<http://serv1.ncte.org/teach/>

Curriculum Standards

This guide addresses the following standards based on a compilation of K-12 standards nationwide from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). The complete review of standards is available online at www.mcrel.org.

Behavioral Studies

- Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity and behavior.

Health

- Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health.
- Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health.
- Understands essential concepts about nutrition and diet.
- Knows how to maintain and promote personal health.
- Understands the fundamental concepts of growth and development.

History

- Understands the historical perspective.

Language Arts

- Demonstrates competencies in speaking and listening as tools for learning.
- Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.
- Understands the characteristics and components of the media.

Life Skills—Thinking and Reasoning

- Understands and applies basic principles of logic and reasoning.
- Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences (compares, contrast, classifies).
- Applies decision-making techniques.



Life Skills—Working with others

- Contributes to the overall effort of a group.
- Works well with diverse individuals and in diverse situations.
- Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

Math

- Uses a variety of strategies in the problem-solving process.
- Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of the concept of numbers.
- Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of the concept of measurement.
- Understands the general nature and uses of mathematics.

Self-Regulation

- Performs self-appraisal.
- Maintains a healthy self-concept.
- Restrains impulsivity.