



Fair Food Curriculum

Kindergarten-Fifth Grade

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Elementary school girl protests with her family in Lawrence, KS for fair wages for farm workers. Her tomato sign reads “a just wage.”

Focus Statement: To act justly by walking as partners with farm workers.

Scripture: Micah 6:8

Preparation & Materials:

- **Large Group**
 - tomato
 - Chalkboard, chalk (options: canvas paper, paint, paintbrushes/ dry erase board, dry-erase markers)
 - Bag of M&Ms
 - Real child’s letter to McDonald’s http://ciw-online.org/a_childs_letter_to_Mclds.html
- **Small group**
 - Paper, pens and crayons
 - Copies of parent letter

Gathering:

- Separate into groups of six to eight kids with one leader per group.
- Ask kids about their week. Find out if any of them had fast food this week.
- Read Micah 6:8 together. Say, “**Today we’re going to talk about justice. Does anybody know what *justice* means?**” (Sample responses: *judges, court, lawyers, deciding what’s fair*)
- Say, “**In the large group, we’re going to learn how to act justly.**”
- Gather all the groups together for the large group presentation.

Introduction and engagement with the content:

- Hold out a tomato and ask kids to name it. (*Tomato!*) “**Yes! Where do you think I got this tomato? (*Grocery store*) That’s right! I’m going to draw a picture of a grocery store right here. (Draw grocery store on chalkboard.)¹ Okay, but where was the tomato before it got to the grocery store? (*Farm, garden*) Yeah, actually it came from a really, really, big farm where they grow lots and lots of tomatoes,**
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and we call the owner of those really big farms a grower. (Draw picture of a big field with several tomato plants.) **But how do the tomatoes get from the plant to the grower?** (*Farm workers pick them!*) **That's right! Now can we have a volunteer to be a farm worker?** (Bring one child up and stand him/her next to the picture of the field.) Tell the child, **"I need you to pretend to pick tomatoes really fast because I'm going to give you a cookie by how many tomatoes you pick.** (looking at all the children) **We need a volunteer to be the grower right now and make sure that name of "farm worker" is picking as fast as possible. Whenever he/she slows down, shout, "Pick faster!" Got it?**

- While student is pretending to pick, say, **"What time do you guys wake up in the morning?** (Take responses) **Well, today, farm worker woke up at 4:30 in the morning to work at the fields.** (pause to watch the farm worker pick for a moment) **Okay, what time do you guys go home from school?** (Take responses while student keeps picking) **Today, the farm worker doesn't get to go home until much later, after the sun goes down.** (Pause to watch student picking for a moment before telling her/him to stop.) Ask the farm worker, **"How do you feel?"** (*tired*) Bring the student in front of the picture of the field. **Now that (name) has picked all these tomatoes, where do they go? First, the grower puts them into a big box and then puts the boxes in a truck.** (Draw picture of a truck between the grower and grocery store.) **OK volunteer grower. Pretend to put the tomatoes into a box and onto the truck.** (Have the volunteer stand in front of the truck.) **This truck can go to the grocery store** (point to grocery store) **or in what other places do we find tomatoes in our food?** (*restaurants, McDonalds, Burger King, Taco Bell, Subway*; draw a picture of McDonalds arch and a Burger King crown) **Now we need another volunteer to be Burger King.** (Pick volunteer and stand her/him by the picture of Burger King. You can even give her/him a crown to wear) Take a bag of M&Ms and say, **"I'm hungry. I want a hamburger with tomatoes from Burger King, so I'm going to pay you this bag of M&Ms for one hamburger.** (hand the bag of M&Ms to the child playing Burger King.) **Now, the grower helped me get the hamburger, too, so Burger King gives some of their M&Ms to the grower. How many M&Ms do you think they should get?** (Take responses) **Actually, they get three. Now, the grower should give the farm workers some M&Ms, too! How many do you think they should get?** (Take responses) **Well, you know what? The farm workers get this much.** (take one M&M from grower, bite off a little bit and give it to farm worker.) **How does that make you feel, (name)? Do you think that's fair? Why or why not?** (After responses, allow applause for volunteers. Have the kids sit back down.)
- **Who can tell me what the word *justice* means?** (*being fair, doing what's right*) **Right, and what happened to (name of farm worker) wasn't very fair, was it?**

Discussion

- **Why was it not fair?** (*because Burger King got the most M&Ms and farm workers who worked very hard should have received more M&Ms*) **So who's responsible for being unfair to the farm workers?** (*Burger King, Growers*) **Okay, now think about who gave them the M&Ms. Who was the one who ate at Burger King?** (*You!*) **That's right! It was me! But how many of you guys have eaten at Burger**

King or other fast-food restaurants? Probably most of us have, and we didn't realize that we were part of this chain that leads back to the farm workers. We were also being unjust – even though we didn't know it.

- **Let's see what the Bible has to say about that. Let's all turn to Micah 6:8. (read together) God tells us in the Bible that we are to do justice and to love kindness. What are some ways that we can show justice and kindness to these farm workers? (sample answers could be *pray for them, give them money*) Pointing to Burger King and Grower picture, We can also show that we care for the farm workers by talking to fast food restaurants like Burger King to act justly with the farm workers. How could Burger King do that? (*giving more M&Ms to farm workers*) And today, we have an opportunity to act justly with the farm workers in our small groups. Before we break into our groups, will you join me in prayer?**
- **Sample Prayer:**
 - **Dear God, thank you for all of the blessings that we have. We know that not everybody gets to enjoy what we have. Help us to act justly so that we can walk as partners with farm workers in their struggle to be treated fairly. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.**
- **Break into small groups.**
 - K-2 Pass out paper and crayons.
 - **One way to act justly is to let other people know that farm workers are being treated unjustly. Let's draw how we imagine the farm workers must feel. Afterwards, we're going to send them to the fast food companies so that they see what it feels like to be treated unjustly.**
 - Let children draw. Have them keep pictures for the closing time.
 - 3-5 Pass out pens and paper.
 - **One way to act justly is to let other people know that farm workers are being treated unjustly. Let's write letters to the fast food companies saying that we want them to treat farm workers more justly.**
 - **Sample letter:**
 - Dear Manager of _____, my name is _____ and I love your (whatever food they like). But I'm sad to hear that the tomato farm workers who make my food are being treated unfairly. I am asking that you pay the farm workers a fair wage for their work. We are very serious about this letter and hope that you would listen to us and the farm workers. We will not eat at your restaurant until you begin to treat the farm workers fairly.

In God's love,

_____.

Closing: (Same instructions for K-2 and 3-5)

- **Hand out parent letter. Tell the kids, We have our drawings/letters. We want to act justly like the farm workers in a place called Immokalee, Florida. They sent letters to fast-food companies and went to fast food restaurants to make their voices heard. We can walk with them in their fight for justice. This week, try to visit a fast food restaurant and give the manager your drawing/letter. And tell them with love that you think farm workers should be treated more fairly. In this way, we can do justice and love kindness as we have read in Micah 6:8. Let's hold our letters/pictures as we pray for the strength to do justice. Let us pray.**
 - **“Dear God, thank you for teaching us how to act justly. We pray that you would give us the strength to walk as partners with farm workers in their struggle for justice. Thank you for the opportunity to work for your justice and kindness in our world. Amen.”**

Evaluation:

- **Did children take their letters/pictures to any fast food restaurants?**
- **How many are conscious of the concept of justice?**
- **In subsequent lessons, see if any children begin sharing or helping one another as a result of learning about God's justice.**

(Sample) Parent Letter

Dear Parents,

Today in Sunday School, we learned about the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Campaign for Fair Food, an initiative which challenges all of us to work together with farm workers to make sure fast-food companies ensure the human rights of farm workers how pick their produce. Many fast food companies are taking unfair advantage of the workers who help make our meals possible, and we learned today that practices such as these go against God's plan for justice.

Today, the younger children drew pictures illustrating the plight of the farm workers who are being treated unjustly, and the older children wrote letters about how this unfair treatment makes them feel. In order to bring home the concept of God's justice, we suggest taking your children and their works to your local fast food restaurant and asking to speak to the manager; tell them about the Campaign for Fair Food, and let your children give their pictures and/or pictures to the manager. Managers are required to turn over such correspondence to the corporate offices. In this way, your children can be a part of a nationwide effort that, with one voice, is praying for fair treatment of farm workers by the fast food companies.

Because of the work of the PC(USA)'s Campaign for Fair Food and other allies of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (the farm workers), Taco Bell and McDonald's are already working with the farm workers to improve wages and working conditions. But

Burger King, Subway, Chipotle, and Wendy's have not done so. So we ask that you and your child drop the letter or picture off at one of these restaurants. For more information on the CFF, visit www.pcusa.org/fairfood.

Though their voices may be small, your children are an important part in this effort. Fast-food companies market heavily to children through toys, music, and movie promotions. This is a way for your child to let the company know what's important to her/him as a Christian. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. May all of God's people be as enthusiastic in bringing about justice as your children are.

In Christ's love...

Footnotes

¹ If you wish to extend this lesson over more than one week, you could have the children create a large mural instead of drawing on the chalkboard. As they paint or draw each section of the mural, you can provide them information on farmworkers, growers, and fast-food companies from the background information sections of this curriculum and www.pcusa.org/fairfood. For example: what pay and working conditions are like for farm workers, how growers have to meet the demands of fast-food companies for low cost tomatoes and the one place they can hold down costs is by not paying farm workers enough, and how the fast-food companies, that profit greatly from farm worker poverty can work together with farm workers to improve farm worker pay and working conditions in their own supply chains (see what McDonald's and Taco Bell have done). For photos of the farmworkers harvesting tomatoes visit www.ciw-online.org where you and your class can take a "virtual tour" of the fields. If you would prefer to show a dvd, the PBS NOW special which aired in May 2005 provides an excellent visual introduction to life in Immokalee and the Coalition's campaign. There is also an April 2007 NOW special which chronicles the McDonald's victory and includes brief shots from the fields as well. You may download these show for free from PBS at <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/317/index.html> or contact the CIW for a free dvd at workers@ciw-online.org or 239-657-8311.