



Fair Food Curriculum

For Families

By Richard Osmer and Noelle Damico

Families from churches near Chicago march with the CIW. McDonald's and the CIW now work together to ensure fair wages and working conditions for farmworkers.

Focus Statement: To become more aware of the campaign by farm workers for better wages and treatment by fast-food companies and to become partners with the families of farm workers in working for justice.

Preparation: Bibles, crayons, pencils, and paper, a copy of the *PBS NOW* Video from May 2005 (available by contacting the Coalition of Immokalee Workers at workers@ciw-online.org or calling 239-657-8311), postcards (similarly available from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers), and access to the internet.

1. From the Tomato Fields to Your Table—Do you know where those tomatoes come from?

- a. View the PBS Video produced by NOW.
- b. Different scenes and images of the NOW video show parts of the production process of the tomatoes you and your family eat on hamburgers and salads at fast-food restaurants. See if you can trace the process from the fields all the way to your dinner table.

Questions for Discussion

Where do farm workers fit into the process?

When you saw the farmworkers picking tomatoes in the NOW video, what was your response?

Find Immokalee, Florida on a map, either an atlas or on-line

Locate where you live.

What does the farmworkers town look like? How is it different than your home town? Take a “virtual tour” of Immokalee at www.ciw-online.org (see the upper left hand side of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers’ home page).

2. We Are All God’s Children: Farm workers Are People Like You and Me

Here is the story of a farmworker. Her name is Francisca Cortez. She is also known as Pancha. She grew up in Mexico, but as a teenager, she traveled all the way to Immokalee, Florida to work and earn money to help support her family in Mexico.

When Pancha works in the field, she has to pick two tons of tomatoes (2,000 pounds) to make just \$50 in one day. This is as much as a medium size car weighs. Pancha has trouble paying for her clothing, food, rent, and other expenses. Every time she goes to the doctor and needs medicine, it costs her more than she makes in an entire day, even if she picks tomatoes for 12 hours.

Questions for Discussion

As a family, talk about your history. Have any of your family members in the past or present ever had to travel far away to help support their family? What sorts of sacrifices has your family had to make in order to survive and have a decent quality of life?

In your family, do your Mom and Dad make enough money for you to live together and to meet your needs? Pancha had to leave home to support her parents and brothers and sisters. What do you think it would be like to live apart from your family? What are some of the things that would be difficult without your family nearby?

Draw a picture of how Pancha might feel after such a long day of work. Draw another picture of how she might feel if she had to spend an *entire* day's wages on a visit to the doctor and medicine when she is sick.

3. Partner with Farm workers for Justice

Pancha picks tomatoes that are purchased by Burger King and other fast-food companies and super markets. While the fast-food companies make a lot of money from their hamburgers, Pancha doesn't get paid very much for her work. She and other farm workers don't think this is fair. They are asking fast-food companies like Burger King to make sure the workers get fair wages for the tomatoes they pick and are used in the food these companies sell. They also are asking the fast-food companies to make sure that farm workers who work for their suppliers are treated with dignity while they work and have a decent place to sleep. If these changes were to happen, Pancha would make enough money to support herself and to help her family. Some day she might even be able to return to Mexico and be reunited with her family.

Pancha and other farm workers have joined together to call on Burger King and other fast-food companies to improve the wages and living conditions of workers who supply them with tomatoes. In the past, the farm workers were successful in negotiating an agreement with Taco Bell, which improved the lives of the workers in their supply chain. Then in April of 2007 they did the same with McDonald's. In May of 2007, Taco Bell's parent company, Yum! Brands, voluntarily extended their agreement with the farmworkers to all of their brands: KFC, Pizza Hut, Long John Silver's and A&W

Restaurants. As the workers now call on other fast-food companies to adopt new standards for the wages and fair treatment of workers in their supply chains, they are inviting others to become partners in this struggle.

Questions for Discussion

Why should Christians join the farm workers in their struggle for fair wages and treatment?

Read Micah 6:8. What are some of the most important words in this passage? Explore what these words mean and what they tell us about why Christians should become partners with the farm workers.

One of the important words in this passage is *justice*. The farm workers are struggling for justice, not charity. Discuss together what this might mean. What is the difference between becoming a *partner* in the farm workers' struggle for justice and a provider of charity?

4. Family Activities

Your family can become a partner with Pancha's family and with the families of many other farm workers. Here are some things that you might do:

-Draw a picture of a farmworkers picking tomatoes. Send it to John Chidsey, the CEO of Burger King, and ask that Burger King work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to make sure that farm workers are treated fairly and paid a more just wage. His address is Mr. John Chidsey, CEO

Burger King Corporate Office
5505 Blue Lagoon Dr.
Miami, FL 33126

-Write a prayer that your family will use when you eat together. Ask God to bless the hands that picked the food you are about to eat.

-View together the video, *Con Estos Manos/With These Hands* available on-line at www.ciw-online.org (in the right margin). Pray silently as a family for the farm workers represented in the video.

- Send a postcard to Burger King asking them to work together with the CIW contact the CIW for postcards at workers@ciw-online.org or 239-657-8311. You can send your own postcard or letter to the following address:

Mr. John Chidsey, CEO
Burger King Corporate Office
5505 Blue Lagoon Dr.
Miami, FL 33126

-Participate in the farmworkers' periodic Truth Tours. Visit www.ciw-online.org and www.pcusa.org/fairfood for the latest information on these and other actions.

-Spread the word. Tell friends and neighbors about the farm workers' struggle for justice and encourage them to become involved. Tell them they can find more information at www.ciw-online.org and www.pcusa.org/fairfood . At these sites you can also sign up to receive periodic updates that will keep you informed about the latest developments.

-Ask your pastor to read about the Campaign for Fair Food and the CIW farmworkers' struggle for justice and dignity in the fields at www.pcusa.org/fairfood and www.ciw-online.org. Encourage him or her to preach on this issue and to designate a special worship service for Farm Worker Sunday in order to honor the hard work of farm workers.

-Support a boycott *if the farm workers call for it*. This means you stop eating food at Burger King or another fast-food company. The farmworkers called for a boycott of Taco Bell in 2001 and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s General Assembly voted to support that boycott in 2002. The boycott brought pressure upon the company by letting them know that their customers wanted them to ensure human rights for the farmworkers who harvested their tomatoes. The boycott led to the very successful and ground-breaking agreement the farmworkers made with Taco Bell in March 2005 and is now over.