

LEADER HANDBOOK

Farm Worker Week



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
1312 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

February 13, 1976

Your Excellency:

The theme for Farm Worker Week, May 2-8, 1976, is "Speak to the Earth and It Shall Teach Thee." Following the action of the USCC Administrative Board taken in September, 1975, the USCC continues its participation in Farm Worker Week. The NCCB ad hoc Committee for the Spanish speaking, for which I serve as chairman, wholeheartedly supports the program for Farm Worker Week.

The Secretariat for the Spanish Speaking has been given the responsibility of preparing the multi-ethnic materials for this observance. They have prepared a poster, a leader handbook, liturgical and para-liturgical materials (in conjunction with the NCCB Secretariat on the Liturgy), and a prayer card for meals, all which are described in more detail in the enclosed brochure.

The program stresses that our land is a natural resource, second only to our people. If we will only listen to the earth and the people of that earth, we can reap great spiritual as well as material bounty from both.

It is my hope that your priests, religious and laity will be encouraged to join in the celebration of this week. We feel that through participating in this program we can learn more about farmworkers, ourselves, our sense of justice, Christian community and Christian commitment.

Please forward the requests for materials to the NCCB/USCC Secretariat for the Spanish Speaking.

With cordial good wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ James S. Rausch

Most Rev. James S. Rausch
General Secretary



INTRODUCTION

Farm Worker Week Leader:

You will be instrumental in determining the success of Farm Worker Week in your diocese, parish or school. Therefore, this Leader Handbook is designed to provide ideas, organizational models and resource materials which might be of value in your preparations.

The Leader Handbook is meant to be a supplement to your local efforts for Farm Worker Week. How best to merge the Handbook suggestions with your own ideas will depend on your specific needs and goals. With a little imagination, however, many of the Handbook suggestions can be adapted to a variety of audiences and situations. Be inventive.

You will note throughout that the Leader Handbook places consistent stress on the Farm Worker Week theme, "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee," and on the multi-faceted purpose of the week:

- To commit ourselves once again to the crucial values of justice and human dignity as they relate to the farm workers and to the Church as a calling of Christian community.
- To recognize the critical life-giving role of farm workers in America and to celebrate with them a reverence for nature which supports us all.
- To affirm the farm workers' right to a decent wage, adequate food and shelter and education.
- To focus on the farm workers' values of unity and family and on their belief in self-determination, resourcefulness and hard work.
- To acknowledge that farm workers include all major ethnic groups in America and that they are a valued human and national resource. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few."
- To confirm that true Catholicity is not uniformity but a fully respected diversity within unity. "We are all the people of his pasture and the sheep of his land."

This theme and purpose can not only help you determine the "method" of your support for Farm Worker Week. It can be your "message" as well.

For your convenience, the Leader Handbook is divided into two sections:

- I. Specific suggestions for DIOCESE, PARISH, SCHOOL
- II. RESOURCE MATERIALS, including a list of possible organizational contacts, brochure suggestions, a sample pledge card, bulletin insert suggestions, an outline of media procedures, a list of some available print and audio/visual materials

You might browse through all three parts of Section I before choosing those ideas which best complement your own. The sample time frame for a major event, for example, appears under the DIOCESE subheading, but could be modified for parish or school use.

I. CELEBRATE FARM WORKER WEEK

DIOCESE

A. Multiply your Efforts

The skills and enthusiasm inherent in the following organizations, among others, might be invaluable to your Farm Worker Week preparations:

- Farm Worker Organizations (see RESOURCES)
- Interfaith/Ecumenical Groups (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish)
- Diocesan Offices, *including Communications Office, Catholic Charities, Campaign for Human Development*
- Parish Councils
- Priest Senate
- Church Fraternal
- State Catholic Conference
- Men Religious
- Diocesan Council of Women Religious
- CYO
- School Superintendents/Supervisors; Campus Ministry
- Civic Service Organizations

B. Activities

The following suggestions for Farm Worker Week all lend themselves to coordination on the diocesan level. Of special note is the central event, an outdoor ecumenical celebration. To allow flexibility, numerous options and a suggested time table accompany the description of this all-diocesan observance.

1. Pastoral letter
2. Press release to Church/secular newspapers
3. Speakers, such as farm worker representatives and Church leaders, on local Church TV/radio news and talk shows
4. Fund drive or walk-a-thon in support of local farm workers' organization(s)
5. Brochure (see RESOURCES)
6. All-diocesan celebration

All-Diocesan Celebration

Support Farm Worker Week by planning a diocesan-wide family event—an outdoor ecumenical celebration—to be held in a centrally located park or sports area.

Invite leaders of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities as well as farm worker representatives to speak on a topic which explores the unique relationship between farm workers and the bountiful harvest they produce for a predominately urban society. The climax of the program might be a three-faith proclamation supporting the Farm Worker Week theme and goals.

Options

Theme

You might substitute "Farm Worker Family and Unity" or "Justice and Human Dignity."

Speakers

An even broader-based effort might be attempted by inviting civic officials and community service leaders to participate. A caution, however: four to five short speeches in one afternoon is probably sufficient.

Activities

Use appropriate paraliturgical materials prepared by the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish participants (for a start, see RESOURCES).

Organize a walk-a-thon or other fund-raising event for local farm worker organization(s) which concludes at the outdoor celebration.

Arrange for a family picnic featuring "a simple meal" or multi-ethnic foods as part of the afternoon's activities.

Screen an appropriate film at dusk (see RESOURCES).

Incorporate multi-ethnic music and dance into the program.

Hang colorful outdoor art and banners proclaiming Farm Worker Week and your theme from trees and speakers' platform.

Alternative Event

You might plan a "March for Justice" to the state capitol or county court house to increase awareness of the farm workers' situation in your state. Speeches would emphasize political and legislative issues concerning field laborers.

TIME FRAME

All-Diocesan Celebration

If you choose to observe Farm Worker Week from May 2-8 and you want to initiate the week with the outdoor ecumenical celebration or a similar observance on Sunday, May 2, this time frame provides a handy checklist of "things to do."

March 21-27

- Contact local farm worker organization, ecumenical and other interested groups within Church, Protestant, Jewish and civic organizations; schedule a meeting.
- Schedule radio/TV for May promotion on talk shows and news/interview programs.

March 28– April 3

- Meet with Church, farm worker, ecumenical and civic representatives to choose site, theme, speakers; divide responsibilities, set deadlines.
- Contact speakers.
- Reserve meeting place.
- Make arrangements for music/dance/film/transportation/food, if any.
- Alert parishes of planning to date.

April 4-10

- Contact schools for art work/banners.
- Compose ecumenical liturgy.
- Arrange for civic proclamation, if any.

April 11-17

- Include all relevant information in all releases, brochures, bulletin inserts being prepared for parishes.
- Check on tables and chairs/speakers' platform/food preservation facilities/transportation, if any.

April 18-24

- Prepare press releases to Church/secular press.
- Send courtesy reminder note to speakers.

April 25– May 1

- Contact news media to cover event.
- Check sound system, lighting, film and any other equipment to be used on Sunday.



PARISH

A. Enlist, Delegate, Succeed

To insure your planning process has maximum input, you might engage the expertise and active support of the following groups, among others:

- Farm Worker Community
- Diocesan Director
- Clergy (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish)
- Parish Council
- Church Fraternal
- School Administrators
- Civic Service Organizations

B. Activities

The celebration of "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee" can involve the entire parish community. The key word is "celebration," a mingling of joy and reverence, a participation in the many positive spiritual and social values inherent in Farm Worker Week. These activities are suggested as ways parishioners might learn more about the relationships among the Church, the farm workers and themselves. Of special note is the "checklist" accompanying "Farm Worker Sunday."

1. Organize an ecumenical communion breakfast with farm worker, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish groups.
2. Invite a farm worker representative to speak at parish council/fraternals.
3. Provide some mechanism whereby parishioners can volunteer time/donation to local farm worker organization(s).
4. Prepare a brochure for distribution on Farm Worker Sunday (see RESOURCES).
5. Display student art work/projects in church foyer and sanctuary, libraries and meeting rooms.
6. Set up a special resource table with display of relevant literature in library or church foyer (see RESOURCES).
7. Develop a series of bulletin inserts based on the six-part purpose of Farm Worker Week.
8. Observe Farm Worker Week Sunday.

FARM WORKER SUNDAY

You might initiate Farm Worker Week with a special Sunday Mass. The purpose, theme and relevant social issues can be integrated into the service, thereby setting the tone and parameters for the activities which follow in the week.

Some materials are included in the Information Packet and can be easily reproduced; other suggestions in the RESOURCE section can be modified for your purposes.

1. Liturgy (see Packet)
2. Prayer Card (see Packet)
3. Pledge Card (see RESOURCES)
4. Bulletin Insert (see RESOURCES)
5. Farm Worker Speaker
6. Homily developing Farm Worker Week theme and purpose; could encourage family discussions based on paraliturgical materials (see Packet)
7. Multi-ethnic music
8. Student banners, art proclaiming Farm Worker Week message

SCHOOL

A. A Chance to Speak to and Learn from the Earth

The serious social issues and positive values inherent in Farm Worker Week can provide excellent opportunity for discussion, study and activity.

The issues of justice and human dignity relate directly to farm workers of all ethnic backgrounds in America; other concerns include urbanization, ecology, world hunger and population.

The perennial bounty of the harvest, produced by so few for so many, is central to any investigation of these interrelated issues. So, too, are the farm workers' reverence for the earth and their values of unity and family.

In many instances, the suggested activities can be modified to encourage students to produce work which they can share with the school, parish or diocese as a whole.

B. Activities

1. Create an essay/poem/dance/drama/poster/art explication of "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee."
2. Invite a farm worker speaker appropriate for literature, history, social studies or civics class.
3. Choose one major group of farm workers (Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, White, Oriental, Indian) and study its impact on the farming industry in one section of the country (see RESOURCES).
4. Trace food production and distribution from the seed to the dinner table.
5. Plan a community service project involving farm worker children.
6. Run editorials, interviews, news/features, photo essays on farm workers in student newspapers.
7. Screen an appropriate film (see RESOURCES).
8. Begin a comprehensive study of farm worker legislation in your area or state, including research on voting records.
9. Encourage an all-school multi-artistic program of reflection and prayer centering on the themes of justice and human dignity (see RESOURCES and Information Packet).

II. RESOURCE MATERIALS

BROCHURE

Brochures are easy to make and effective communication tools. All you need is an idea, a typewriter and a ditto machine. Art work can help convey your message as well as make the brochure more attractive.

One or more of the following topics might be included in a brochure:

1. Local, regional, state social history of farm workers
2. A mini-feature story or an interview with a farm worker family
3. A recapitulation of local/state legislation
4. A checklist of diocese/parish/school plans to observe Farm Worker Week; could include TV/ radio scheduling, if known
5. Suggestions for school/family discussions regarding "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee"
6. History of farm workers (see RESOURCES)
7. Excerpts from pastoral letter; excerpts from Bishops' recent statement on farm worker legislation in California; excerpts from student writings on social justice and human dignity.

BULLETIN INSERT

Here are some suggestions:

1. Beginning next Sunday we celebrate Farm Worker Week. Why? Because our land is a natural resource second only to our people. If we will only listen to the earth and the people of that earth, we can reap great spiritual as well as material bounty from both.
2. Today we begin Farm Worker Week. Its theme is "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee." What might it teach? Lessons of family unity, appreciation of work, lessons of justice and Christian community.

OUTLINE OF MEDIA PROCEDURES

The Diocesan Communications Office has established contacts with the religious/secular media of your diocese. Be sure you check your promotion plans with the Communications Office, Radio and TV Office and diocesan newspaper to avoid red tape and duplication of effort.



FARM WORKER HISTORY

Farm workers in America—from Louisiana to Michigan, from California to New Jersey—have annually produced a bountiful harvest for Americans.

However, the exploitative wages, substandard living conditions and cruel social structures under which farm workers have labored have rarely reflected the historic dignity of working the land for the benefit of all.

Thus, the history of farm workers has been one of oppression and struggle. In the last five years, the fight for a measure of economic and social justice has culminated in the dramatic strike and boycott efforts of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers of America to bring collective bargaining rights to the 250,000 workers in California and to thousands of farm laborers nationwide.

Now such basic necessities as adequate wages, medical care, pensions, controls on the use of pesticides, institution of seniority systems and hiring halls are becoming a reality.

The 1975 landmark California Agricultural Labor Relations Act—the first labor law in the nation to specifically provide for the collective bargaining rights of agricultural field workers—has given new spirit and direction to the farm worker in the West and to field workers across America.

U.S. Bishops strongly endorsed the historic California law through their November 17 "Farm Labor Resolution," stating that the statute "might well serve as a model for parallel legislation in other key agricultural states as well as at the congressional level in Washington."

Your participation in Farm Worker Week will be a significant contribution to the continuing history of the farm workers and to the development of America's greatest resource—her people.

Suggestions for human interest stories about farm workers, special Farm Worker Week plans, editorials and photos are always helpful to the media.

Through your diocesan Radio and TV Office, you might investigate the possibility of interviews with farm worker and Church representatives on talk shows, magazine format shows and religious information programs.

SOME PRINT AND AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

The following are some of the most recent materials available:

Fiedland, William H. and Nelkin, Dorothy. *Migrant: Agricultural Workers in America's Northeast*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973.

Levy, Jacques. *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa*. Norton, 1975.

Taylor, Ronald B. *Sweatshops in the Sun: Child Labor on the Farm*. Beacon Press, 1974.

Weiner, Sandra. *Small Hands, Big Hands—Seven Profiles of Chicano Migrant Workers and their Families*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1970.

"The Migrant," 60 minutes, 16mm., color, 1970. Produced by NBC, narrated by Chet Huntley. (This NBC White Paper documents the socio-economic conditions of migrant workers in Florida ten years after Edward R. Murrow's famed TV documentary, "Harvest of Shame.")

"Why We Boycott," 17 minutes, 16mm., color, 1970. Distributed by El Taller Gráfico, Keene, California 93531. 805/822-5571. (A film which portrays the 1973 strike activities in the Coachella Valley in California.)

"Yo Soy Joaquin," 20 minutes, 16mm., color, 1970. Distributed by Canyon Cinema, Coop., Room 220, Industrial Center Bldg., Sausalito, California 94965. 415/332-1514. (This film is available for \$40.00 per showing, payable in advance.)

You might check local resource centers, because many libraries have available such film classics on farm workers as "Harvest of Shame," "Grapes of Wrath," "Huelga," "Decision at Delano," "Migrant" and such books as Peter Matthiessen's *Sal Si Puedes: Cesar Chavez and the New American Revolution*, Ronald B. Taylor's *Chavez and the Farm Workers* and Mark Day's *Forty Acres*.

SAMPLE PLEDGE CARD

I speak to the earth that it might teach me. About justice, human dignity, farm workers and the Church as a calling of Christian community.

I acknowledge the critical life-giving role of the farm workers in America. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few."

I affirm their right to a decent wage, adequate food and shelter and an education for them and their families.

I share the farm workers' values of unity and family and their belief in self-determination, resourcefulness and hard work.

I pledge _____



RESOURCE CONTACTS

Organizations

**Campaign for Human Development
United States Catholic Conference**
Fred Perella
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
202/659-6694

**Housing Assistance Council
Migrant Housing Specialist**
Moises Loza
1601 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Sixth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20009
202/483-1426

**Juarez-Lincoln Center
National Migrant Information
Clearinghouse**
Brian Craddock
715 E. 1st Street
Austin, Texas 78701
512/474-5061

Migrant Legal Action Program
Rudy Arredondo
1910 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
202/785-2475

**National Education Association
Migrant Project**
Roy Fuentes
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202/833-4135

National Farmworker Ministry
Rev. Wayne C. Hartmire, Jr.
1430 W. Olympic Blvd.
Los Angeles, California 90015
213/386-8130

National Land for People
George Ballis
1759 Fulton, Room 7
Fresno, California 93721
209/233-4727

**United Farm Workers of America
National Headquarters**
Cesar Chavez
La Paz, California 93531
805/822-5571

**Secretariat for the Spanish Speaking
United States Catholic Conference**
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Persons

For your convenience, the following contact persons are listed by state.

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