



Sample Lesson Plan 1: Human Rights from Field to Fork

For children 13 and up.

Note: This lesson plan is adapted from a longer workshop of the same title for adults, which is available online at uusc.org/ccf/fieldtofork. A version for younger children is also available at http://www.uusc.org/RE_resources.

Objectives

The students will do the following:

- Learn about the various workers who are involved in getting food from farms to their plates
- Learn about the injustice of the current food system
- Reflect on why workers deserve fair work conditions and pay
- Understand some of UUSC's economic-justice work and how they can be involved in supporting it
- Plan how to share what they learn with the rest of the congregation

Materials

- Blackboard, whiteboard, or flip chart to record food items and brainstorm
- Markers, chalk, or dry-erase markers

For Activity Option A

- Anything you need to get students started on planning their specific fundraising project

For Activity Option B

- Map of the United States and Latin America (one per student)
- Pushpins (about five per student)
- Yarn (enough to connect pushpins on maps for each student)
- Cardboard backings for maps, if a bulletin board is not available
- Cards describing the paths of different foods, from field to fork (see below)

Additional optional materials

- Pictures of food-chain workers to put up during discussion, as they are mentioned

- A laptop with Internet connection or with a web browser open with the relevant video fully loaded
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, for Closing Option B

Focusing activity (5 minutes)

Ask students to share what they ate for breakfast that morning. (If any students did not eat breakfast, they can instead say one item they ate at their most recent meal.) Write a list on a blackboard or flip chart. Tell the students, “Today we will learn a bit about all the workers who helped get this food to us.”

Discussion (15 minutes)

Explain that many workers are involved in getting our food to us. Using the list of breakfast foods, discuss what kinds of workers helped get food to their plates. Ask the students to come up with ideas, and write a list.

Some examples:

Fruit

- The farmers and farmworkers who grew and harvested the fruit
- The workers who cleaned and packed the fruit
- The worker who drove the truck to ship the fruit from the farm/packinghouse to a warehouse and then to the grocery store or restaurant
- The grocery-store workers, including those who unload food, stock the shelves, clean the store, and handle the money for your purchases

Meat

- The workers who raised the animal
- The workers who transported the animal to the slaughterhouse
- The workers who killed the animal and then cleaned, cut, and packed the meat
- The workers who transported the meat to a warehouse and then on to a grocery store or restaurant

We can see that all these workers are important — without them, food would not reach us! In the United States, over 20 million people work in the food system.

Unfortunately, these workers are not always treated fairly.

[For older children, you may wish to ask if they have worked in any of these food-related jobs and if they have any experiences to share.]

There are many forms of injustice that workers face. [Ask the students if they can think of any injustices, and mention some of the information below. For this section, you may wish to reference the handouts mentioned below in the section on further information.]

- Food-sector jobs are some of the most dangerous and lowest-paying in the United States, and they are often taken by immigrants who have no other options.
- Many food-system workers are actually excluded from basic workers' rights, such as overtime pay and the right to form a union.
- Three out of five farmworker families have incomes below the poverty level, and 400,000 farmworkers are children.
- More than 1 in 10 workers in meatpacking plants suffer injury and illness, double the rate for all U.S. manufacturing.
- A recent report found that 23 percent of grocery workers were paid less than the minimum wage, and 65 percent were not paid overtime. Young workers ages 16–24 hold nearly one-third of grocery-store jobs.

You may wish to show one of these videos to illustrate some of the issues:

- “One Penny More” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VURs-rsi_KQ): two-minute video by Coalition of Immokalee workers about their campaign to pay farmworkers in Florida one cent more for each pound of tomatoes
- Commentary from Katie Couric (http://www.youtube.com/user/chinoliva357#p/f/2/_e5jr1ISjgA): one-minute statement about restaurant workers serving while sick because they don't have paid sick time

Introduce UUSC's work (10 minutes)

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is a group that works with people around the world to improve lives. It does this by helping people defend their human rights.

One of UUSC's four main programs is the Economic Justice Program, which supports the rights of workers, especially the right to unionize and to receive a fair wage. UUSC believes these rights are critical to all workers, but they focus on those who are most marginalized, e.g., people who are affected by racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination. The Human Rights from Field to Fork campaign is an effort to raise awareness and to mobilize UUSC members and supporters in support of the rights of workers in the food sector.

You can help food-chain workers protect their rights by raising money to fund UUSC's work with them. [Introduce the specifics of the project your congregation is using or transition to Option A below by telling the students that they are going to plan something to help these workers.]

Activity (20 minutes)

Option A: Plan a project

You may wish to use this time to have the youth actively plan for their fundraising project. First brainstorm possible activities or events, and then determine which option they will plan.

Other congregations have planned projects and events such as the following:

- A bake sale at coffee hour

- An ice-cream social
- A pancake breakfast
- A presentation to the congregation led by the youth
- A table at coffee hour and an announcement during the service

This is an opportunity for the students to be creative and to learn about how to plan a successful and fun event. It's also a way for them to share what they've learned with the larger congregation.

Here are some possible ways to involve the youth in the planning:

- Scribe: write the brainstorm or plans on a blackboard or flip chart
- Publicity: draw posters or plan how to share event information with the congregation
- Public speaking: one or more students can prepare a statement to tell the congregation about the Human Rights from Field to Fork campaign during announcements or whenever appropriate for your congregation
- Logistics: assign students to talk with necessary people in the congregation regarding project logistics (for example, reserving table space for coffee hour or requesting inclusion in the order of service)

Option B: Make a web

Give students maps of the United States and Latin America, along with pushpins and yarn. Give each student a handout describing the path of a particular food item from the farm to their plate. Students should put pushpins in the maps at the appropriate locations and then connect them with string. (They can either loop the string around the pushpins or press the pushpins through the string.) If you have a bulletin board available, students can put up their work there. Alternatively, you might give them cardboard backing for their maps, so that the pushpins stay in. During or after the activity, ask the students what UU principle or source this reminds them of. Guide discussion to how helping food-chain workers shows respect for the interdependent web and how they are connected to the people at the places on their maps.

Closing (5 minutes)

Option A

Have the students close their eyes and imagine the path that food travels to reach them, visualizing workers in safe and well-paid jobs helping the food on its way.

Option B

Suggested readings from *Singing the Living Tradition*: 567 ("To Be of Use") and 584 ("A Network of Mutuality"). Have the students take turns reading and then reflect silently for a moment.

Further information

UUSC and the Food Chain Workers Alliance have produced some handouts to accompany the adult workshop on which this lesson plan is based. You may wish to read them and bring a few copies

for reference or to share with the group if you have older students. You can access those handouts by going to uusc.org/ccc/fieldtofork and downloading resources from the section entitled “Justice for workers who harvest, process, serve, and sell food.”

What Is Human Rights from Field to Fork?

Human Rights from Field to Fork is an effort to raise awareness and mobilize people to support the rights of workers in the food sector, who often face discrimination and dangerous working conditions. UU congregations that pledge to Choose Compassionate Consumption work with UUSC and grassroots partner Food Chain Workers’ Alliance to help food chain workers defend their rights through organizing, political lobbying, training each other, and building their own capacity as workers and organizers.


You can read more at uusc.org/ccc, uusc.org/ccc/fieldtofork and uusc.org/economicjustice.

Cards Describing the Paths of Different Foods (for Activity Option A)

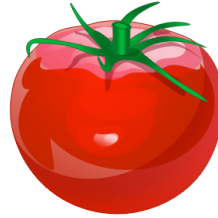
Notes for religious educators: Before printing and cutting out the cards, please insert the name of your city and/or a nearby city with a grocery store (where the students’ families are likely to shop) as the last locations on each card. Prior to giving the students the maps, be sure that you have either a) printed out your own reference map showing the locations of all the cities listed below or b) written in the cities on the students’ maps.

Tips:

- Clip art or other images can help your visual learners better understand the food’s path!
- To make the exercise more challenging, you might wish to cut out each step, so that students must put the process in the correct order prior to making their webs.

| | |
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| <h1 style="margin: 0;">Chicken</h1>  | |
| Ft. Smith, Arkansas | Chickens are born at OK Foods Hatchery. |
| Surrounding areas | Chicken farmers are subcontracted by OK Foods to raise the chickens. When the chickens are at mature age, subcontracted chicken catchers load trucks full of live chickens. |
| Rogers, Arkansas | Chickens are sent to Southeast Poultry (which is subcontracted by OK Foods) to be slaughtered and processed by workers on the production and slaughter line. |
| Rogers, Arkansas | Workers load trucks with processed chicken and send it to the warehouse and distribution center. |
| Rogers, Arkansas | From the warehouse it is sent to various grocery stores around the country; truck drivers deliver the food. |
| [town, state with grocery store] | Consumers purchase prepared chicken at grocery stores; cashier and other grocery-store workers assist. |
| [your town, state] | The chicken arrives on your plate! |

Tomato



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|----------------------------------|--|
| Coloma, California | Tomatoes are grown and, when ripe, harvested by workers. They are also packaged for transport. |
| Pittsburg, Pennsylvania | Packaged tomatoes are sent to a warehouse. |
| Pittsburg, Pennsylvania | Workers load the tomatoes into trucks, and truck drivers deliver the fruit to grocery stores across the country. |
| [town, state with grocery store] | Consumers purchase tomatoes at grocery stores; cashier and other grocery-store workers assist. |
| [your town, state] | The tomato arrives on your plate! |