

Being Fair

Pre K – First Grade

Supplies

- Grocery bag
- Banana
- Tomato
- Carrot
- Photo of a tomato plant (or actual seedling)
- Photo of farmworkers' hands
- Photo of a farmworker family

For the optional exercise

- Sand bucket
- Two toy dump trucks (or large bins labeled as "truck")
- Sign or box or toy to represent the packing house
- Sign or box or toy to represent the grocery store
- Toy shopping cart
- Toy plate on a toy kitchen table (or regular table)

Lesson

I. From Field to Table

How many of you have gone to the grocery store with your parents to buy food?

There are lots of good things to eat that we buy at the grocery store. I went to [name of grocery store] and bought a few things for us this morning.

One by one, take the pieces of food out of a grocery bag and show it to the children.

Who can tell me what this is? [A banana] *Lay it on the table.*

Who can tell me what this is? [A carrot] *Lay it on the table.*

Who can tell me what this is? [A tomato] *Lay it on the table.*

Point to each fruit or vegetable in turn and ask:

Does a banana grow in the ground, on a plant, or up high on a tree? [Up high on a tree]

Does a carrot grow in the ground, on a plant, or up high on a tree? [In the ground]

Does a tomato grow in the ground, on a plant, or up high on a tree? [On a plant]

Show a photo of or an actual tomato plant

This is a tomato plant. This plant begins as a seed. The seed is planted in the ground. Sun and water help the seed grow. Finally, tomatoes grow from the flowers on this plant.

When the tomato is fully grown, does it just fly off the plant and zoom through the air to the grocery store? No, it does not just fly off the plant! Who can tell me how the tomato gets off the plant? [Someone picks the tomato].

That's right. Someone picks the tomato. Men and women who pick tomatoes are called farmworkers. Farmworkers pick the tomatoes that we buy at the grocery store.

OPTION – demonstrate the steps by which a tomato moves from the field to our tables by having the children do the “Field to Table” exercise. See the end of the lesson.

II. Who are farmworkers? What do they do?

Show a photo of farmworkers' hands

Just by looking at this photo, would you say that picking tomatoes is hard or easy? [Hard]

Is it work where you stay clean or where you get dirty? [Dirty]

Most of the tomatoes we eat in the winter come from the state of Florida. Have any of you been to Florida? Do any members of your family live in Florida?

Is Florida a hot place or a cold place? [Hot]

It's very hot. Picking tomatoes in Florida is very hard work. The buckets full with tomatoes farmworkers carry are heavy – they weigh 32 pounds! Some of you weigh 32 pounds! They pick many buckets a day in the hot sun. It is dirty, hard work. But if we're going to have tomatoes to eat, people must pick them! They won't just fly off the plant and into the stores.

Show a photo of farmworker family

Farmworkers have families like you and me. Mom or Dad works in the field, the children go to school just like you. But they do not always have enough food to eat or a nice place to live or new clothes to wear. Farmworkers' children don't have lots of toys or go on fun trips. This is because their parents are not paid well for picking tomatoes. Farmworkers do not earn enough money. They are very poor.

III. Exploring What is Fair

When we say something is fair, that means that people are treated well. It doesn't mean that everyone is treated the same: for example, grown-ups can do things that children can't do or shouldn't do. When something is fair, it means that everyone is treated well – whether you're an adult or a child, a farmworker or a firefighter.

To think about it another way, being fair also means that we treat others as we would want to be treated. Sometimes we call this "the golden rule": treat other people the way you would want to be treated. What are some of the ways that we are fair in our class? [Solicit examples; we share, we take turns, we include everyone...These are ways that we make sure that everyone in our class is treated well.]

Let's think some more about how farmworkers are treated. You get to decide whether you think how they are treated is fair.

What time do you get up in the morning? [various responses]

Farmworkers get up at 4:30 every morning to look for work. And they often work six days a week. But even though they work very hard to pick the tomatoes that we eat, farmworkers do not earn enough money to support their families.

Do you think it is fair for someone to work hard and not get paid well?

IV. The Grocery Campaign

Many people believe that the farmworkers should be treated better and should be paid more for the hard work that they do to bring us our tomatoes.

To show they care, they are asking grocery stores like [name of your grocery store] to pay tomato pickers a little more money for the tomatoes they pick. That extra money will help farmworkers get their families the housing, food and clothes they need. Does that seem fair to you?

V. The Fair Food Drawing Contest

[Pass out paper and crayons/markers/paints]

Now, thinking about this tomato and about what we've learned about farmworkers, we're going to take some time to each draw a picture of what being fair looks like. You can draw it in any way you wish. Perhaps you'd like to show what being fair would look like in the tomato fields, or what being fair would look like at the grocery store, or what being fair would look like in our families and farmworkers' families. Use your imagination and draw a picture of what fair food looks like.

VI. Closing Prayer

Dear God, help us always to treat others as we would want to be treated. Help us to be fair and to make sure everyone is treated fairly. Amen.

From Field to Table OPTIONAL EXERCISE

"A farmworker picks the tomato from the plant and puts it into a bucket. " Ask a child to take the tomato from the tomato plant and put it in a small bucket (like a sand pail).

Then the buckets are carried to a truck. Ask the child to carry the bucket to a big toy dump truck or box and places it in the back.

The truck takes the tomato to a packing house. Ask another child to move the truck or box to a building (could be a doll house or you could just put up a sign that says "packing house")

The packing house sorts out good tomatoes from tomatoes that are too small or that have spots on them. Then the tomato is put into another truck. Ask another child to put the tomato into another truck.

The truck carries it to the grocery store. Ask another child to wheel the truck to the grocery store. The grocery store can be represented by a sign or it could be a box or it could be

Then our families go to the grocery store and put it in our grocery cart. Ask another child to walk by with a toy shopping cart and to pretend to pay a cashier for the tomato.

After we buy the tomato, we bring it home and serve it in our meals. Ask the child to place the tomato on a plate on a different table.

Tomatoes are good to eat. Sometimes we eat them plain. Sometimes we put them in salads. Sometimes we place a slice of tomato on a sandwich. Now we know how a tomato comes from the field to be on our table. It all begins with farmworkers.