

## **La Causa study guide**

**Objective:** Through the viewing of and participation in the live presentation of *La Causa*, as well as the use of this packet for pre and post performance exploration, students will gain a greater understanding of the work of Cesar Chavez and the migrant farm worker's movement, labor issues, and the impact of prejudice and discrimination. Students then will be able to draw parallels between this movement and other historical events, particularly the other major social movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Story synopsis**

*La Causa* is the story of Marta Hernandez and her life-changing involvement in the Farm Workers Movement, led by Cesar Chavez.

Marta is growing up in a Mexican-American migrant farm family in the 1960s. Her mother came to the US from Mexico with her family as a child. She never went to school, having spent her entire life working in the fields. Her father is a first-generation American: his parents were born in Mexico and immigrated to Texas as adults. Marta's father's parents were doing well running their own business until the Great Depression, when they lost everything and were forced to move to California and become migrant farm workers. As a young man, Marta's father enlisted in the Navy to escape the fields. He returned home from World War II and married Marta's mother, but they are unable to escape from migrant labor. Marta and her twin brother Ruben are born in 1950.

Wherever they go, the Hernandez family endures unfair working environments and subhuman living conditions. Marta and Ruben begin doing field work themselves when they are young. Being migrant laborers means moving around constantly, so Marta and Ruben change schools often, if they are able to go at all. When they do attend school, Marta and Ruben face prejudicial treatment from both students and teachers.

Not long after Marta, Ruben and her father are accidentally sprayed with pesticides by a crop duster, they meet Cesar Chavez and become involved in his work with the CSO (Community Service Organization). Mr. Hernandez takes the children with him as he travels door to door doing voter registration. When their father becomes seriously ill, Marta and Ruben quit school to work full-time: in the fields and for la causa.

Marta and Ruben become active members of the new farm workers union, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). Marta applies her interest in writing by becoming a reporter for the underground farm worker's newspaper, *El Malcriado*—despite the resistance she faces from many of the men involved. In 1965, the Mexican-American NFWA joins the Filipino-American Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) in what becomes the 5-year long Delano Grape Strike. The two groups merge to form the United Farm Workers, as Filipino-American and Mexican-American grape pickers strike, picket and organize boycotts against Delano area grape growers.

The efforts of the movement intensify, and Marta and Ruben are deeply involved in all of them. Marta is among a group of women arrested on a picket line and spends 3 days in jail. They both participate in the 300-mile march from Delano to Sacramento. Then Ruben is hit by a car while striking; his leg is badly broken. Even more family responsibility falls to Marta.

In the summer of 1967, the UFW targets Giumarra Vineyards, California's largest grape grower. When Giumarra begins shipping their grapes under other grower's labels, the UFW initiates a grape boycott against all California grapes. As the fight expands, violence follows. In February 1968, Chavez goes on his first hunger strike to renew the UFW commitment to nonviolence.

In the summer of 1968, Marta is recruited by Chavez to help organize the boycott in Philadelphia. Marta's mother does not think it is appropriate for her to go, but her father supports her. Away from her

family and California for the first time, Marta works with another young worker named Jessie to convince shoppers and grocery stores to stop the sale and purchase of grapes. Marta and Jessie hold their own fast to draw attention to the problems of the farm workers and gather support for the boycott; in time, none of the major grocery chains in the area are buying grapes, and the “Delano girls” are well known in the community for their work. But Marta’s time in Philadelphia is cut short by the news that her father has been diagnosed with cancer as a result of his lifelong exposure to pesticides. He dies shortly after Marta returns to California to see him.

Soon after Mr. Hernandez’s death, the union finally achieves the long-awaited signing of the grape growers’ contract, agreed upon by Giumarra and 29 other growers. It is a success, but the victory is bittersweet, as Marta knows that there are many more battles still to come. Marta commits her life and her writing to the movement. She has her first article published in a local newspaper, describing her experiences during the boycott. A Spanish version is published in *El Malcriado*. She plans to use the article to teach her mother to read.

### **Chronology of the life of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers Movement**

Source: <http://www.ufw.org/cecchron.htm>

1927, March 31—Cesario Estrada Chavez is born on the small farm near Yuma, Arizona that his grandfather homesteaded in the 1880s.

1937—After Cesar's father is forced from his farm, the Chavez family becomes migrant workers in California.

1942—Cesar quits school after the eighth grade and works in the fields full time to support his family.

1944—He joins the U.S. Navy during World War II and serves in the western Pacific. Just before shipping out to the Pacific, Cesar is arrested in a segregated Delano, Calif. movie theater for sitting in the "whites only" section.

1948—Cesar marries Helen Fabela.

1952—Community organizer Fred Ross discovers the young farm worker laboring in apricot orchards outside San Jose, California, and recruits him into the Community Service Organization (CSO).

1952-1962—Together with Fred Ross, Cesar organizes 22 CSO chapters across California in the 1950s. Under Cesar's leadership, the CSO becomes the most militant and effective Latino civil rights group of its day. It helps Latinos become citizens, registers them to vote, battles police brutality and lobbies for paved streets and other barrio improvements.

1962, March 31—Cesar resigns from the CSO, moves his wife and eight small children to Delano and dedicates himself full-time to organizing farm workers.

1962, Sept. 30—The first convention of Cesar's National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) meets in Fresno, California.

1962-1965—Often baby-sitting his youngest children as he drives to dozens of farm worker towns, Cesar painstakingly builds up the membership of his union.

1965, Sept. 16—On Mexican Independence Day, Cesar's NFWA, with 1200 member families, votes to join a strike against Delano-area grape growers already begun that month by the mostly Filipino-American members of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO (AWOC).

1966, March-April—Cesar and a band of strikers embark upon a 340-mile Peregrinacion (or Pilgrimage) from Delano to the steps of the state Capitol in Sacramento to draw national attention to the suffering of farm workers. During the march and after a four-month boycott, Schenley Vineyards negotiates an agreement with NFWA—the first genuine union contract between a grower and farm workers' union in US history.

1966, Spring-summer—A boycott of the struck DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation forces the giant grape grower to agree to an election among its workers. The company brings in the Teamsters Union to oppose Cesar's NFWA. The NFWA and the AWOC merge to form the United Farm Workers and the union affiliates with the AFL-CIO, the national labor federation. DiGiorgio workers vote for the UFW.

1967—The UFW strikes the Giumarra Vineyards Corporation, California's largest table grape grower. In response to a UFW boycott, other grape growers allow Giumarra to use their labels. So the UFW begins a boycott of all California table grapes. Strikes continue against grape growers in the state.

1967-1970—Hundreds of grape strikers fan out across North America to organize an international grape boycott. Millions of Americans rally to *La Causa*.

1968, February-March—Cesar fasts for 25 days to rededicate his movement to nonviolence. US Senator Robert Kennedy joins 8000 farm workers and supporters at a mass where Cesar breaks his fast, calling Chavez "one of the heroic figures of our time."

1970, Spring-summer—As the boycott continues, most California table grape growers sign UFW contracts.

1970, Summer—To keep the UFW out of California lettuce and vegetable fields, most Salinas Valley growers sign contracts with the Teamsters Union. Some 10,000 Central Coast farm workers respond by walking out on strike. Cesar calls for a nationwide boycott of lettuce.

1970, December 10-24—Cesar is jailed Salinas, California for refusing to obey a court order to stop the boycott against Bud Antle lettuce. Coretta Scott King, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ethel Kennedy, widow of Robert Kennedy, visit Cesar in jail.

1971—The UFW moves from Delano to its new headquarters at La Paz in Keene, California. With table and wine grape contracts, and some agreements covering vegetable workers, UFW membership grows to around 80,000.

1972—The UFW is chartered as an independent affiliate by the AFL-CIO; it becomes the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO.

1972, May 11-June 4—Cesar fasts for 25 days in Phoenix over a just-passed Arizona law banning the right of farm workers to strike or boycott.

1973, Spring-summer—When the UFW's three-year table grape contracts come up for renewal, growers instead sign contracts with the Teamsters without an election or any representation procedure. That sparks a bitter three-month strike by grape workers in California's Coachella and San Joaquin valleys. Thousands of strikers are arrested for violating anti-picketing injunctions, hundreds are beaten, dozens are shot and two are murdered. In response to the violence, Cesar calls off the strike and begins a second grape boycott.

1973-1975—According to a nationwide 1975 Louis Harris poll, 17 million Americans are boycotting grapes. Many are also boycotting lettuce and Gallo wine after winery workers strike the Modesto, California-based producer.

1975, June—After Jerry Brown becomes governor, the boycott convinces growers to agree to a state law guaranteeing California farm workers the right to organize and bargain with their employers. Cesar gets the landmark Agricultural Labor Relations Act through the State Legislature.

1975, September -January 1976—Hundreds of elections are held. The UFW wins the majority of the elections in which it participates. The Agricultural Labor Relations Board, which enforces the law, briefly shuts down after running out of money and pro-grower lawmakers refuse to approve an emergency appropriation.

Mid-to-late 1970s—The UFW continues winning elections and signing contracts with growers.

1977—The Teamsters Union signs a "jurisdictional" agreement with the UFW and agrees to leave the fields.

1978—The UFW calls off its boycotts of grapes, lettuce and Gallo wine.

1979, January-October—In a bid to win decent wages and benefits, the UFW strikes several major lettuce and vegetable growers up and down the state. Rufino Contreras, 27-year old striker, is shot to death in an Imperial Valley lettuce field by grower foremen.

1979, September—After a strike and boycott, the UFW wins its demands for a significant pay raise and other contract improvements from SunHarvest, the nation's largest lettuce producer. Other growers also soon settle.

1980s—With election victories and contract negotiations, the number of farm workers protected by UFW contracts grows to about 45,000.

1982—George Deukmejian elected California governor with \$1 million in grower campaign contributions.

1983-1990—Deukmejian begins shutting down enforcement of the state's historic farm labor law. Thousands of farm workers lose their UFW contracts. Many are fired and blacklisted.

1983—19-year-old Fresno-area dairy worker Rene Lopez is shot to death by grower agents after voting in a union election.

1984—Cesar declares a third grape boycott.

1986—Cesar kicks off the "Wrath of Grapes" campaign to draw public attention to the pesticide poisoning of grape workers and their children.

1988, July-August—At age 61, Chavez conducts his last—and longest—public fast for 36 days to call attention to farm workers and their children stricken by pesticides.

Late 1980s-early 1990s—After recovering from his fast, Cesar continues pressing the grape boycott and aiding farm workers who wish to organize.

1990, April 23—Cesar signs the IMSS agreement with the Mexican government, allowing Mexican farm workers in the US to provide medical benefits to their families in Mexico.

1992, Spring-summer—Working with UFW First Vice President Arturo Rodriguez, Cesar leads vineyard walkouts in the Coachella and San Joaquin Valleys. As a result, grape workers win their first industry-wide pay hike in eight years. In the Salinas Valley, more than 10,000 farm workers, led by Chavez,

stage a protest march in support of better conditions in the fields.

1993, April 23—Cesar Chavez dies peacefully in his sleep at the home of a retired San Luis, Arizona farm worker while defending the UFW against a multi-million dollar lawsuit brought against the union by a large vegetable grower.

1993, April 29—40,000 mourners march behind Cesar's pine casket during funeral services in Delano.

1993, May—Veteran UFW organizer Arturo Rodriguez succeeds Cesar as union president.

1994, March-April—On the first anniversary of Cesar's death, Arturo Rodriguez leads a 343-mile march retracing Cesar's historic 1966 trek from Delano to Sacramento. Some 17,000 farm workers and supporters gather on the state Capitol steps to help kick off a new UFW field organizing and contract negotiating campaign.

1994, August 8—President Bill Clinton posthumously presents the Medal of Freedom—America's highest civilian honor—to Cesar Chavez. Helen Chavez receives the medal during a White House ceremony.

1994-2002—Since the new UFW organizing drive began in 1994, farm workers vote for the UFW in 18 straight union elections and the UFW signs 24 new or first-time agreements with growers. UFW membership rises from around 20,000 in 1993 to more than 27,000 in 2000. The Cesar Chavez-founded union organizes and bargains on behalf of major rose, mushroom, strawberry, wine grape and lettuce and vegetable workers in California, Florida and Washington State.

### **The Rise of the UFW**

Source: <http://www.ufw.org/ufw.htm>

For more than a century, farm workers were denied a decent life in the fields and communities of California's agricultural valleys. Essential to the state's biggest industry, but only so long as they remained exploited and submissive, farm workers had tried but failed so many times to organize the giant agribusiness farms that most considered it a hopeless task. And yet by the early 1960s, things were beginning to change beneath the surface. Within another fifteen years, more than 50,000 farm workers were protected by union contracts.

#### *The Bracero Program*

The Bracero program, an informal arrangement between the United States and Mexican governments, became Public Law 78 in 1951. Started during World War II as a program to provide Mexican agricultural workers to growers, Public Law 78 stated that no bracero (temporary workers imported from Mexico) could replace a domestic worker. However, this provision was rarely enforced; in fact, the growers wanted the Bracero program to continue after the war precisely in order to replace domestic workers.

The small but energetic National Farm Labor Union, led by organizer Ernesto Galarza, found its efforts to create a lasting California farm workers union in the 1940s and 50s stopped again and again by the growers' use of braceros. Over time, however, farm workers led by Cesar Chavez were able to call upon allies in other unions, churches and community groups affiliated with the growing Civil Rights movement to put enough pressure on politicians to end the Bracero Program by 1964.

But some things didn't change. Grape pickers in 1965 earned an average of 90 cents per hour. State laws regarding working standards were simply ignored by growers. At one farm the boss made the workers all drink from the same cup; at another ranch workers were forced to pay a quarter per cup. No

ranches had portable field toilets. Workers' temporary housing was strictly segregated by race, and they paid two dollars or more per day for unheated metal shacks with no indoor plumbing or cooking facilities. Farm labor contractors played favorites with workers, selecting friends first, sometimes accepting bribes. Child labor was rampant, and many workers were injured or killed in easily preventable accidents. The average life expectancy of a farm worker was 49 years.

### *New Organizations*

Two organizations attempted to represent and organize the farm workers. In 1959, the AFL-CIO formed the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). It was an outgrowth of an earlier farm worker organization, the Agricultural Workers Association (AWA), founded by Dolores Huerta. AWOC was mostly composed of Filipinos, Latinos, Anglos and African-American workers. The Filipino workers in particular had experience organizing unions in the fields and with strikes. Two of its early leaders were Larry Itliong, a Filipino, and Dolores Huerta, a Latina.

The National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) was started by Cesar Chavez in 1962. Chavez, the son of a family of migrant farm workers, had risen through the ranks of the grassroots Community Service Organization (CSO) to become its national director. The CSO worked with communities to solve problems through organizing and direct action. But when the CSO chose not to concentrate its efforts on organizing farm workers, Chavez left to found the NFWA. From his base in Delano, he traveled for three years from town to town in the central valleys of California, meeting with groups of farm workers in their homes, building an organization he hoped would one day become an effective union. His co-founder was Dolores Huerta, one of the CSO's farm worker activists.

### *Early Strikes*

Two short strikes occurred in the spring of 1965. Eighty-five farm workers in a McFarland rose farm asked the NFWA to help them gain a wage increase. Assisted by Chavez and Huerta, the workers struck. After a few days the growers agreed to the wage increase but not to union recognition. The workers accepted the money and returned to work.

Around the same time, AWOC led a walkout of hundreds of Filipino and Mexican grape pickers in Coachella Valley. Although the Bracero program had officially ended the year before, a new US/Mexico agreement allowed growers to import Mexican workers, if they were paid \$1.25 an hour and never paid more than domestic workers. When Coachella grape growers attempted to pay the local workers less than the imported workers, the Filipinos, many of whom were AWOC members, refused to work.

Coachella grapes, grown in southernmost California, ripen first in the season. Getting the grapes picked and to market quickly is crucial to the Coachella growers' profits. After ten days the growers decided to pay everyone \$1.25 per hour. Once more, however, no union contract was signed.

### *The Great Delano Grape Strike*

At the end of that summer, the grapes were ripening in the fields around Delano. Many of the farm workers from the successful Coachella action had come north to Delano, trailing the grape harvest. Farm workers demanded \$1.25 per hour, and when they didn't receive it, nine farms were struck, organized by AWOC's Larry Itliong.

After five days, growers began to bring in scabs (strikebreaking workers who would cross the picket line) from the surrounding area. AWOC approached Chavez and asked the NFWA to join the mostly Filipino strike. At a meeting on September 16, the NFWA voted unanimously to strike too. Asked later when he felt his organization would have been ready to go out on a big strike, Chavez replied, "About 1968."

In joining the strike, the NFWA, with many more members than AWOC, took the lead. By September 20, more than thirty farms were out, with several thousand workers leaving the fields. Despite the large numbers of striking farm workers, however, they could not handle picket lines at all the ranches simultaneously. There were many fields strung across hundreds of miles. NFWA and AWOC set up a system of roving pickets, with different fields picketed each day. Fifteen or twenty cars full of pickets would go to a field where a grower was attempting to use strikebreakers. Striking workers, often harassed by the growers and police, sometimes violently, would try to get the scabs to leave the fields. Remarkably, they were successful much of the time in persuading workers to join the strike.

The growers made a mistake almost immediately. They had always been able to end strikes before with small wage concessions. Soon after the strike began, they raised wages to \$1.25 per hour. This time they were shocked to discover it wasn't enough. The raise merely encouraged the strikers to believe they were being effective. Now there had to be a union, too.

### *The Boycott*

Shortly after the strike began, Chavez called upon the public to refrain from buying grapes without a union label. Union volunteers were sent out to big cities, where they established boycott centers that organized friendly groups—unions, churches, community organizations—to not buy grapes, and in turn to join in publicizing the boycott.

The strikers' cause was boosted by other events in the nation at the same time. The Civil Rights movement had increased public awareness of the effects of racism, including lowered standards of living for the victims of prejudice in housing, employment, schools, voting, and other areas of daily life. The Civil Rights movement focused attention on the treatment of African-Americans in the South, but the situation in the fields of California proved similar enough that the largely Latino and Filipino farm workers benefited by the new public understanding of racism. As a result, millions of consumers stopped buying table grapes.

### *Early Success*

The two biggest growers in the Delano area, Schenley and DiGiorgio, were the most vulnerable to the boycott. Both companies were owned by corporations with headquarters far from Delano. For each company, grape growing was a relatively minor part of a larger economic empire. Schenley and DiGiorgio had union contracts with workers in many other parts of their business. The boycott had the potential to hurt sales in other product areas, and to harm labor relations with their other workers.

Schenley was the first to give in. Soon after the strike began, Schenley had sprayed striking workers with agricultural poisons. In protest, the NFWA organized a march to Sacramento. Seventy strikers left Delano on foot on March 17, 1966, led by Chavez. They walked nearly 340 miles in 25 days. Along the way they picked up hundreds of marchers and rallied with thousands of supporters. A Chicano theater group led by Juan Valdez, El Teatro Campesino, staged scenes about the struggle from the back of a flatbed truck every night. The march attracted media attention and public support. Arriving in Sacramento on Easter morning, Chavez announced to a cheering demonstration of 10,000 supporters in front of the Capitol building that Schenley had just signed an agreement with the NFWA.

Within weeks, DiGiorgio agreed to hold a representation election. But before the election could be held, a complication arose. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, ignoring the questions of social justice at the core of the farm workers' campaign for union recognition, offered itself to DiGiorgio as a conservative alternative to the NFWA/AWOC. The grower eagerly assented. Chavez and the NFWA, infuriated at this betrayal by another union, called for the workers to boycott the election. Heeding the call of the union, more than half the 800 DiGiorgio workers refused to vote.

Governor Pat Brown appointed an arbitrator, who ordered another election. This time the NFWA beat the Teamsters decisively. The two largest growers in Delano were employers of union labor.

### *La Huelga Continues*

However, the strike dragged on at dozens of grape farms throughout the Delano area. In the past, a farm workers' union would have been unable to survive such a long conflict, but there was strength in worker solidarity. NFWA and AWOC merged during the summer, just before the DiGiorgio election. On August 22, the two organizations became the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO. The new union received organizing funds from the AFL-CIO, as well as strike support from other unions consisting of food, cash, and office equipment.

Despite the continuing Teamster alliance with the growers, the UFW organized steadily in the fields, and the grape boycott gathered even more momentum in the cities. By 1970, the UFW got nearly all grape growers to accept union contracts and effectively organized most of that industry, claiming 50,000 dues paying members—the most ever represented by a union in California agriculture. Gains included a union-run hiring hall, a health clinic and health plan, credit union, community center and cooperative gas station, as well as higher wages. The hiring hall meant an end to discrimination and favoritism by labor contractors.

In cities around the country, UFW support became stronger. As Chavez had envisioned, the UFW had become both a union and a civil rights movement, and this was the key to its success. The dual character of the farm workers organization gave it a depth of moral pressure and sense of mission felt by members and supporters alike. It seemed as if the farm workers of California had finally created a union that would last.

"The philosophy of the UFW is the practice of NON-VIOLENCE."

("La filosofía de la UFW es la practica de NO VIOLENCIA")

### **United Farm Workers Achievements**

Source: <http://www.ufw.org/ufwach.htm>

Under the leadership of Cesar Chavez, the United Farm Workers made historic achievements for farm workers. Among them are:

- The first genuine collective bargaining agreement between farm workers and growers in the history of the continental United States, signed with Schenley Vineyards in 1966.
- The first union contracts requiring rest periods, clean drinking water, hand washing facilities, protective clothing against pesticide exposure, the ban of pesticide spraying while workers are in the fields, and the outlawing of DDT and other dangerous pesticides.
- The first union contracts eliminating farm labor contractors and guaranteeing farm workers seniority rights and job security.
- The first comprehensive union health benefits for farm workers and their families through the UFW's Robert F. Kennedy Medical Plan.



- The first and only performing pension plan for retired farm workers.
- The first functioning credit union for farm workers.
- The first union contracts restricting the use of dangerous pesticides, lengthening pesticide re-entry periods beyond state and federal standards, and requiring testing of farm workers on a regular basis to monitor for pesticide exposure.
- The first union contracts regulating safety and sanitary conditions in farm labor camps, including banning discrimination in employment and sexual harassment of women workers.
- The first union contracts providing for profit sharing and parental leave.
- The abolishment of El Cortito, the infamous short-handled hoe that crippled generations of farm workers
- State coverage for farm workers under unemployment, disability and workers' compensation, as well as amnesty rights for immigrants and public assistance for farm workers.
- The National Farm Worker Service Center Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt organization separate from the UFW, which operates Radio Campesina, a network of Spanish-language farm worker-run radio stations in three states and builds quality single-family homes and rental complexes for low-income farm workers and other residents.

## What are rights?

**Human rights** are those rights that belong to individuals simply for being human. Human rights are inherent: they do not have to be bought, earned or given. They are universal: all human beings are entitled to equality, regardless of race, gender, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin. Human rights are indivisible: all human beings are entitled to freedom, security and decent standards of living at the same time. Human rights are inalienable: no one has the right to take away or deprive another person of their human rights for any reason. People still have human rights even when governments or others violate or do not acknowledge them. Included in human rights is the expectation that each individual has responsibilities to respect the human rights of others.

**Civil rights** are the personal and property rights recognized by governments and guaranteed by constitutions and laws. Civil and political rights are freedom-oriented and include the rights to life, liberty, privacy and security of the individual; the right to own property; freedom from torture and slavery; freedom of speech, press and religion; and freedom of association and assembly. These rights ensure that all citizens receive equal protection under the law and equal opportunity to enjoy the privileges of citizenship regardless of race, gender, religion, or any other arbitrary characteristics.

**Economic and social rights** are security-oriented rights, which call for a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and family, including the rights to work, education, a reasonable standard of living, food, shelter and health care.

**Environmental, cultural and developmental rights**, or collective rights, include the rights to live in a healthful and balanced environment that is clean and protected from destruction, the right to share in the earth's resources, and rights to cultural, political, social and economic development and self-determination.

**Links:**

<http://memory.loc.gov/const/bor.html>

The Bill of Rights

<http://memory.loc.gov/const/amend.html>

Other Amendments to the Constitution

<http://www.un.org/rights/50/decla.htm>

the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/laws/majorlaw/civilr19.htm>

<http://www.congresslink.org/civil/esscon.html>

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

**Integration Activities**

The following activities are designed and adaptable for students of all levels, in accordance with the Washington State standards for history and social studies. They aim to explore the issues and events of this production through a dynamic, hands-on approach. Students may address the following topics and questions through any of the suggested mediums or a combination of them:

*Writing:* write a story, a poem, a report, an article, a scene, a play, a song, a caption

*Art:* draw or paint a picture; create a collage, a sculpture, a comic strip; take a photograph; make a video

*Drama:* create a still image, a dance or movement activity, a series of images, an improvisation, a scene, a play

*Discussion:* partner or small group talk, oral report or presentation

1. Supplement a specific scene in the script with work in another medium.
2. Supplement a specific image from the video with work in another medium.
3. Interview a character from the piece.
4. Research historical documents to find a real person's description of an event from Marta's story (i.e. the first Farm Workers convention, the march from Delano to Sacramento, the signing of the grape growers' contracts, etc.). Share what you learn.
5. Read and explore selections from other fictional or first person perspectives (see bibliography for suggestions).
6. Read and respond to a piece of art or writing by a Mexican-American.
7. Re-create a scene from the piece from another character's point of view (i.e. Jessie's perspective of the fast, Ruben's perspective on Marta leaving for Philadelphia).
8. Create your own issue of *El Malcriado*.
9. Explore how the experiences of Mexican-Americans like the Hernandez family are/were similar to or different from American immigrants from other countries.

10. Choose a part of Marta's story that you'd like to know more about and research it. Share what you learn.
11. Explore a typical day in the life of a migrant farm worker in America. Compare it to a day in the life of another kind of worker.
12. Create a Bill of Rights for migrant farm workers or for immigrants.
13. Research another event in history and how it is related to this one.
14. Research the current activities and issues of the UFW.
15. Consider an issue or problem in your school or community. Following the UFW model, take action toward change.
16. Imagine you could get in touch with Marta. What would you want to tell her or show her about the future?
17. How did watching *La Causa* make you feel?

### **Supplemental drama activities:**

*Role-on-the-wall:* a character is represented in the form of an outline of a person, on which the group writes or draws information about that character: on the inside of the figure is written what the character thinks or feels about herself; on the outside, how she appears or how others perceive her. This activity can be repeated for multiple characters, including other fictional or real-life people. This activity can be used as a jumping point for further discussion and exploration of character choices, motivation, perceptions and prejudices.

*Still images/tableaux:* Image work can be used to explore any theme, idea or topic. It can be literal or symbolic, can depict actual events from the piece or imaginary ones, and can also focus on different points of view. Students may then select characters from the images to interview or scenes to bring to life or explore further in other ways.

*Voices in the Head:* students form two lines facing each other to make a path for Marta as she leaves for Philadelphia. As Marta passes through (played by the teacher, a student or series of students), students creating the path offer her a piece of advice. Alternately, or in addition, they may speak as her family, friends, acquaintances or personal thoughts and feelings.

#### *Forum Theatre:*

- a. In partners or small groups, students share personal experiences of racism or prejudice.
- b. For each personal story, students work separately to create their image of the situation (images may be visual or dramatic). The images are then shown to the whole group to compare and discuss.
- c. Situations are selected and played as improvisations, in which other members of the group can freeze the scene at a crucial moment, take on the role of the main character and experiment with different ways the scene could have happened.