

SO YOU WANT TO HELP MIGRANTS

Handbook for Volunteers



The Migrant Ministry
National Council of Churches
Division of Home Missions
257 Fourth Avenue
New York, New York

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
What To Do	
Before The Migrants Arrive	1
When The Trucks Roll In	3
Some Ways Of Helping	6
When The Trucks Go Up The Road	12
Resource Lists	
Films	14
Music	15

WELL—YOU CAN—

In many communities, whenever the migrants come to pick the crops, there are people of goodwill who want to befriend them. Sometimes it is hard to know where to begin or what to do. Because of your concern, this pamphlet has been written to outline some of the ways by which you and the other volunteers in your community can show your interest in practical ways, giving the migrant people a sense of welcome and helping them to help themselves.



BEFORE THE MIGRANTS ARRIVE

YOU MUST WORK WITH OTHERS

If there is a Migrant Committee in your area, you must be sure to work closely with it in order to fit into the over-all plan. If there is no migrant program nor committee, the State Council of Churches or the State Council of Church Women will have the name and address of the Regional or Area Director. Your minister can help you make these contacts. The Director can help you in countless ways - in planning, training and supervision, so be sure to turn to him for guidance. He can show you how to make your program a part of the Migrant Ministry.

Your Director's name and address are:

YOU MUST FIND THE FACTS

For general information, send for copies of "No Work Today" - Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 190, 22 East 38th Street, New York 16 New York (25¢)

For specific information about your area choose one person in your group to get the facts as efficiently as possible.

He will need to find out from the

1. Employment Service and employers:

How many migrant workers are expected
When they may arrive and how long they may stay
Where they will live
The type of workers - Spanish-speaking, Negro, Anglo; family groups or single men

2. Growers and processors:

Whether they are willing to let you carry on programs in the camps

3. Departments of Health and Welfare:

What services are available for such things as first aid, hospital and prenatal care, X-rays, blood tests, inoculations, etc.

What welfare services migrants can get when they are in trouble

4. Whether local schools have made provision for migrant children: transportation, class room space and teachers.

YOU MUST PLAN YOUR WORK

After you have found answers to these questions, you will need to decide what services you can provide. This is not always easy to do in advance, as you do not know the special interests and needs of the people. These will vary somewhat, but in general, it has been found that migrant workers welcome programs which bring them spiritual help, recreational activities, educational opportunities, health services, and a sense of belonging to the community near which they are working.

YOU MUST TRAIN YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Through workshops and training sessions which must be held before the migrants arrive, some of the needed skills can be learned. Enlist the services of leaders in such organizations as Boy and Girl Scouts, 4H Clubs, YM and YWCA, the Extension Service, the schools and the churches. The State or Area Director can help you in planning your training courses.



WHEN THE TRUCKS ROLL IN

YOU CAN TRY TO UNDERSTAND

First of all must come understanding of the people themselves. Though they may be of a different color, speak a different language or have clothes and customs unlike those of the people in your town, their deepest needs are the same as your own. But they

have many more fears - the fear that there may not be enough work, that there may not be money for food, and, above all, fear that they may not be welcome.

Like all of us, they need a faith that gives meaning to life, the warmth of friendship, a sense of belonging to a group, and a chance to give to others. But migrants need these experiences more than most of us because of their way of life. At first, shyness and reticence may prevent them from meeting you half way but when you go to them in a spirit of sincere friendship, of helpfulness and humility, in the end the doors will be unlocked.

When you meet situations of which you disapprove, try to understand the pressures of migrant life, accept each person as he is, without being shocked, and begin your work right there.

If conditions under which the migrants live and work seem intolerable to you, try to take the long range look and remember that this is a many-sided problem which no one intentionally created. Meantime, consult with the State Director or local Migrant Ministry staff member on the most constructive procedure to follow.

You can help others to understand, too. If there is a local radio or television station in or near your town, volunteers can use it for making the whole community aware of the migrants and their needs. Local newspapers, too, can be of great help in photographing and writing up your program. The approach should always be constructive rather than critical.

YOU CAN GIVE AND RECEIVE FRIENDSHIP —

All the giving will not be on your side, for your life will be enriched by many of the

migrant people as they become your friends. You will feel humble before their deep faith in God, their courage in the face of constant uncertainty, their patience in facing a life of drudgery, and their laughter in spite of discouragement.

YOU CAN—

INTRODUCE MIGRANTS TO YOUR TOWN

AND YOUR TOWN TO MIGRANTS

Communities have tried many different ways of making the migrants welcome and helping them to adjust to the town. Here are some suggestions which you may want to follow:

You can arrange with the growers to have leaders in your community - the mayor, ministers, the school superintendent and the Public Health officer - visit the camps and give an informal welcome. It is helpful to take a map of the town showing the locations of the churches which will welcome migrants, the moving picture theatres, post office, the hospital and Doctors' offices, drug stores, dry cleaning establishments, garages, etc. If you are sure that recreational facilities such as a baseball diamond or swimming pool will be open to the migrants, it is important to include these on your map.

The mayor or some other community leader can interpret some of the local customs and answer any questions the migrants may ask.

In one town, storekeepers, school teachers, and volunteers take Spanish lessons before the harvest season begins, in order to have more understanding and be more helpful when the migrants arrive.

Sometimes, as they come into town, hand-

bills printed in English and Spanish given to them. These include a warm welcome and information about the location of community facilities.

AND THEN WHAT?

First of all, make definite arrangements for the opening of your program with employer, camp manager, field man or leader. At your first visit to the camp it is helpful to have one of these people introduce you to some of the people to whom you will be going. Let them know about your coming.

Go to the camp in a spirit of learning, it is from the people themselves that you will find out what special kind of program they need and want. Whether you are a man or woman, wear simple clothes and take a friendly attitude to visit. The mothers, who are always eager to have help for their families, will be the women volunteers though they may be shy with the men. Women volunteers should not go into camp alone.

Your program should be one of mutual giving and receiving, so be sure it offers the people you serve this chance to grow. Let them help to make plans, assume leadership and develop their abilities through doing the things they really want to do, their work will have lasting meaning for them.

You must not be discouraged if at first the number of people who turn out is limited. As confidence and interest grow, the group will increase in size.

SOME WAYS OF HELPING

Religious Services

If Vacation Church Schools, Sunday Schools and the churches in your town are ready

give a genuine welcome to the migrants, it is always best to encourage them in every way possible to come to the local churches. If, on the other hand, there is any doubt about this welcome or the camps are too far from town, you can take religious services to them, always trying to relate them to an ongoing church life. Ask the local ministers to help as much as you can.

In your services, the material must be very simple. The New Testament is usually best for all ages, with emphasis on the life of Jesus and on the love and forgiveness of God.

Types of services may include:

Church services and Sunday Schools.

If Sunday is a work day or there are too many camps to serve on Sunday, these may be held during the week.

Prayer Meetings.

Campfire Meetings.

Vesper Services

Vacation Church Schools.

Family Prayers.

Hymn Sings.

Informal services where the group shares in music, Bible readings, and requests for prayer.

Programs with religious films, slides or filmstrips.

It is good to have definite days and times for your services. Weather and crop conditions may mean occasional changes but regularity in your program will strengthen it. You must be sure always to come at the time agreed upon, as failure to keep your promise to the people undermines their faith in your sincerity.

Begin on time, not waiting for a crowd to gather. If you have a record player or a church bell, these will help to call the people together.

If there is a sermon, it should be short not over fifteen minutes. Plan to have members of the migrant group take as much part in the service as they can. Be sure to limit each contribution so that many will have the experience of sharing and no one person will monopolize the time. Use the hymns or spirituals which they know. Do not expect them to read the words in the hymn books or the Bible.

In large camps, be sure to clear with those responsible for management about the time for religious services. Usually they will agree to reserve time for you, closing other distracting activities during the services.

Whether in large camps or in small ones, always choose a time convenient to the group itself. Often this will be late in the evening after the people have eaten supper.

When you are working in small or scattered camps, your services will be held outdoors. You will find it helpful to have a folding table, benches, and a worship center which can be packed easily and carried from place to place. A group of young people from the camp and the town may want to make them for you.

Post simple, clearly printed, dignified announcements in conspicuous places.

Your visits to families and weekly door-to-door invitations to services will help increase attendance.

Children's Activities

If the migrant children will be coming while schools are in session and plans have not already been made for their acceptance, you can help by arranging for transportation and bringing your influence to bear in having them admitted into the regular

school system. You may need, too, in some cases, to see that clothes and shoes are provided. If the children are with you in the summer months only, they will enjoy being included in programs in town as well as in those you carry on in the camps.

Remember that migrant children need as much chance to play as they can possibly get. They like to do all the things you liked when you were a child, but they have had almost no chance for the kind of play you had. Remembering what was fun for you and your children is the best guide in choosing what to do. So plan for a program that all children enjoy--with dolls, and child-size sinks and stoves and pots and pans; all kinds of games; simple puzzles, painting, working with clay, carpentry, music and crafts.

If there are many children in the camp, find out where they spend their days and whether a play program for the smallest ones and a day school or a vacation church school for the older ones would be welcome. You will need to find a place in the camp where you can carry on these activities. Perhaps it will be in the shade of a tree; perhaps not. You will need to make many adjustments, but your reward will be the joy of the children and their parents.

Migrant children are especially eager for the experiences which we take for granted but which are new to them: swimming and fishing parties, cook-outs, and overnight camping trips. So, try to plan for these adventures, too.

Teen-Agers Clubs

Teen-agers in the migrant group need the chance to learn vocational skills, to plan together for something they really want to do, and to have the fun which so many of them have missed. The girls enjoy making

clothes, and planning parties where they can learn something about setting tables, serving refreshments and acting as hostesses. Perhaps you can find someone to give a simple course in motor mechanics for the boys. Both boys and girls enjoy team games especially when tournaments are arranged with young people in town. The volunteer leader must be sure to keep competition from becoming so strong that it hurts rather than helps the spirit of friendliness. Refreshments directly after the game are a help.

Women's Groups

The mothers are tired by evening because they have been in the fields all day, but they may have free time when work is slack because of bad weather. They are often eager to learn new skills in sewing or in crafts, and to have the experience of getting together. In your community you will be able to find second-hand sewing machines and to supply patterns and remnants for a nominal sum. A Girl Scout or school recreation leader may be able to teach crafts. A nurse can teach very simple baby and child care.

Men's Groups

Athletic events are enjoyed by the men. If the employer can let you have a room in the camp to use as a carpentry shop, the men will appreciate it. You can often get donations of tools and wood from dealers in town.

When the men are from the outside the United States, they enjoy having snapshots of themselves to send home.

If they are illiterate, they are grateful for having letters written to their families, until they have learned to do this themselves.

Family Nights

These are always popular and easy to arrange. With the migrants you and your group can plan an evening of fun, with singing, the music of guitars and accordion, a camp fire (be sure to get permission ahead of time from the camp manager), and simple refreshments. Many of the people are gifted, especially in music, and they enjoy using these gifts for the pleasure of the whole group. If you have a tape recorder, they like using it and listening to themselves afterwards.

Literacy Classes

Migrant people have had little or no chance to go to school and often are eager to learn to read and write.

School teachers are often glad of this chance to help. They can work with only a few at a time and will need to teach very slowly and simply. Using the words which the people need to know in their daily lives is the best beginning. Your State Director can help you with word lists. Dr. Frank Laubach's "Streamlined English" is the best manual. Order copies from World Literacy, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

Films

If you can have the use of a portable screen and a movie projector, evening movie programs in the camps are always welcome. Health Departments and your State University, telephone and automobile companies can supply free educational films. You can get religious films through the companies listed in the back of this pamphlet. Cartoons and comedies can be rented at very low cost.

Thrift Sales

Some migrants appreciate sales of used clothing, provided it is clean, mended and really usable. Sales of kitchen utensils, pots and pans and other household goods are often welcome. Everything should be very inexpensive.



WHEN THE TRUCKS GO UP THE ROAD—

YOU WILL WANT TO SAY GOODBYE—

Many communities have a farewell party when the migrants leave. Sometimes the party is given by the migrants themselves for the growers and their families, or for all those whom they have come to know as friends during the summer. Community groups often gather with the migrants to thank them for their work and wish them Godspeed as they move on to the next crop.

YOU WILL WRITE A REPORT

An account of your work should be sent to your State Director at the end of the season, to be used as a guide for the next year. It should include:

Dates of your program

Names and addresses of:

Volunteers

Growers whose camps were served

Doctors, dentists and other cooperative individuals and groups

Churches and Sunday Schools attended

by the migrants
Health and Welfare services which were available, with names of officials
Schools attended, with numbers and grade placement of children
Programs in the camps:
Type, age groups, etc.
Evaluation, with reasons for successes or failures
Suggestions for next year.

YOU WILL LOOK FORWARD TO

ANOTHER YEAR—

After the last truck has turned the corner and the last waving hand has disappeared, you may sigh from fatigue, or from regret, or from a sense of satisfaction in a job well done. But you will look back on your volunteer work with gratitude and before you know it, you will be planning for Maria and the Garcia family, or for Jacky and the Smith family, or for the countless others, in the hope that next year they will come rolling back into camp and into your town.



American Bible Society -

Regional offices:

- East: 440 Fourth Avenue, New York
New York (Film Service)
- Central: 35 East Wacker Drive, Chicago,
Illinois
- West: 1445 Glenarm Place, Denver,
Colorado
224 McAllister Street, San
Francisco, California

Association Films

815 Broad Avenue, Ridgefield, New Jersey

Cathedral Films

149 North Hollywood Way, Burbank, California

Denominational Supply Houses

Your Director can give you the address

Council Films

50 North Main Street, Homer, New York

Family Films

8840 West Olympic Boulevard, Beverly
Hills, California

You can get free films from your State Department of Health, from the Extension Service of your State University, and from business concerns such as the Carnation Milk Company, Allis Chalmers Manufacturing Company, etc. Bus lines, automobile companies and railroads also have free films. Call your local offices and inquire.

Be sure to review each film yourself before showing it. Some are very good while others are a waste of time for migrants who may not understand them.

RESOURCE LIST FOR MUSIC

- Album P 426 - Spanish and Mexican Folk Music of New Mexico. Compilation of folk music including secular and religious - 12 inch, Long Playing, 33 1/3 speed. \$6.45
- Album FP 4 - Take This Hammer - with Leadbelly. Migrant and work songs, spirituals and dances. Popular with Negro groups - 10 inch, L.P., 33 1/3 speed. \$4.75
- Album FP 11 - Dustbowl Ballads. Migrant songs from Oklahoma - 10 inch L.P. 33 1/3. \$4.75
- Album FP 3 - Darling Corey - with Pete Seegar and banjo. Southern mountain songs. 10 inch. L.P. 33 1/3. \$4.75
- Album FP 40 - Smoky Mountain Ballads. Southern mountain songs. 10 inch. L.P. 33 1/3. \$4.75

Obtain all of the above either at your local record shops or Folkways Records, 117 West 46th Street, New York 36, New York.

- Album SLP 37 Canciones Jibaras. Typical Puerto Rican farm songs. 10 inch L.P. 33 1/3. \$3.25
- Album SLP 47 Tio Los Panchos. Mexican Rancheras and Boleros. 10 inch L.P. 33 1/3. \$3.25

Obtain these last two either at your local record shops or Seeco Records, Inc., 39 West 60th Street, New York 23, New York.