

Name _____

Date _____



Cesar Chavez & Community Organizing

¡Si se puede!

Cesar Chavez was born in Arizona in 1927 into a Mexican-American family with a ranch and a small grocery store. He would later become an iconic labor leader and civil rights activist. This is his story.

Raised on a farm near the Mexican border,
In Yuma, Arizona next to California.
When he was a kid, his family was scammed,
Cheated out of their livelihood and land.
So they left; left everything behind,
Searching for a new life.
They worked the earth as migrant farmers,
Following the weather and the harvest.
This meant a lot of moves and a lot of schools,
Which was hard for him, because one of the rules:
“You’re not allowed to speak Spanish!”
Made it hard for him to manage.
Many different schools, nearly 36,
But by eighth grade said, “I’m not doing this.”
Not everything that happens in this life is good:
A lesson that he learned from his childhood.

¡Si se puede! It can be done!

(4x)

Life experiences motivated him,
And by 25, he had started working in
A Latinx civil rights organization,

Improving community relations.

10 years later, in 1962,

Chavez made plans to build something new.

He co-founded a group with Dolores Huerta

To make the working conditions better.

The National Farm Workers Association,

They later renamed it.

They lobbied for better pay,

Unemployment insurance for when the jobs went away.

And collective bargaining rights,

Determining terms that make a job nice,

Like wages, hours and perks,

So that employees felt good about going to work.

¡Si se puede! It can be done!

(4x)

In California, workers picking grapes

Weren't satisfied with what they were paid.

And they weren't allowed to unionize,

Which made it harder to improve their lives.

In the '60s, Chavez partnered

With these Filipino-American farmers.

They planned marches and strikes,

Anything to achieve what they felt was right.

And though their ways were tireless,

They never turned to violence.

In the middle of the harvest one day,

Thousands of workers refused to pick grapes.

They walked off the field, then called a strike,

Might have lost their jobs, but not the fight.

'Cause their activism wouldn't stop,

Next Chavez planned a grape boycott.

"Don't buy the grapes," he spread the word,

"Until our voices are heard."

After many years, their hard work succeeded,

And their demands for justice were heeded.

After many demonstrations, registration drives, fasts, boycotts, protests and appeals, the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act was signed in 1975. It guarantees justice and collective bargaining rights for farm workers. It's Floca, now you know...

¡Si se puede! It can be done!