

A stylized illustration of a farmer wearing a grey suit, a blue tie, and a yellow and black hat. The farmer is holding a yellow folder or book. The illustration is rendered in a halftone or dithered style.

The Farmer's Story

Day One: The Hard Soil

**Mission Arlington / Mission Metroplex
Rainbow Express Spring Break 2005**

Day One Opening Time

Pre-Rainbow Express Gathering

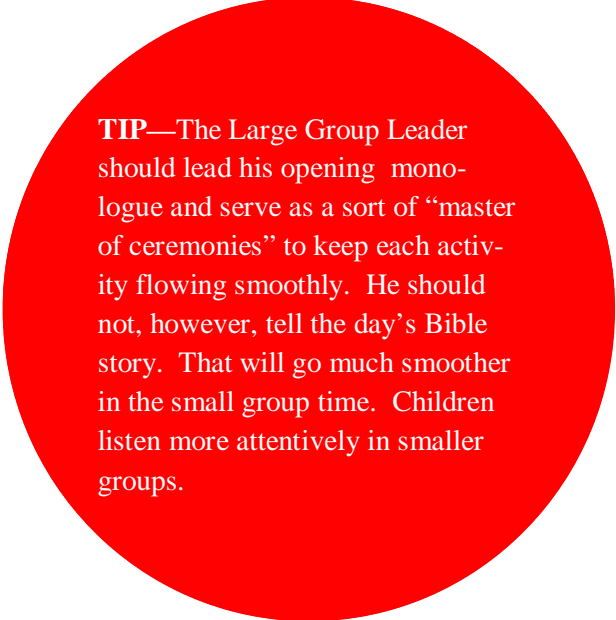
You will begin each day by knocking on doors and then playing games to help attract children to your Rainbow Express.

Song Time/Puppets

When it is time to begin your activities, have all the children sit down in a large group. It would be helpful to bring a tarp for them to sit on. When the children are together and seated on the tarp, begin your song time.

The Song Leader will come to the front of the group to lead songs. One or two others may also want to come to the front to help show motions. Be sure to have several songs ready to sing and that everyone in the group knows the songs.

During this time you will also have the puppets sing their song(s). Doing the puppet show in between songs can help keep the children's attention. You are provided with one song for each day. If the children are responding well and enjoy the puppet music, it is okay to perform more than one of the songs and repeat the songs from day to day.



TIP—The Large Group Leader should lead his opening monologue and serve as a sort of “master of ceremonies” to keep each activity flowing smoothly. He should not, however, tell the day’s Bible story. That will go much smoother in the small group time. Children listen more attentively in smaller groups.

The Farmer

Each day the Large Group Leader (playing the part of the Farmer) will welcome the children and provide an introduction to the day’s themes and activities. The more creative and engaging the character of the Farmer is, the more interested and involved the children will be during the large group. Prepare ahead of time by making the Farmer a costume. Consider using props such as a bag of seeds, a shovel, or a watering can.

The Large Group Leader will come to the front of the group and explain the day’s theme before the children divide into their small groups. The next page is a guide for the day’s opening. *Do not simply read from this page.* The children will quickly lose interest if the Farmer just reads. Read through the discussion guide repeatedly and be able to lead it from memory. Do not feel that the Large Group Leader has to memorize and recite this page. It is not necessarily intended to serve as a script. Rather, use it as a suggestion to help you know how lead the opening time.

The Farmer's Opening

Hello. Thank you for coming to Rainbow Express this week. We're going to have a lot of fun this week learning about Jesus and how much He loves us. Allow me to introduce myself. I am the Farmer.

Who knows what farmers do? I help grow plants that people can use for food. I need you to help me this week. You see, I've been having some problems on my farm. When I plant my seeds, the plants aren't growing.

I think my problem is soil. Soil is what farmers call dirt. You have to have good soil to grow plants. This week, you're going to help me learn about soil.

(Hold up a "seed". You can use a real seed like a bean, sunflower seed, or pumpkin seed. Or use any small object like a pebble.)

This is a seed. When a seed is in good soil, it grows up to a plant. Then that plant can produce more seeds. Those seeds produce more plants, and it just keeps going. One seed in good soil can produce lots of good plants over time. That's how it's supposed to work.

My soil is not doing its job. The soil is supposed to let the seed in, then take care of it and help it grow. Bad soil doesn't do these things. No matter how many seeds you put in, bad soil won't make plants.

Today, my problem has been hard ground. When the ground is hard, no plants can grow. I throw out the seed, but it can't go down into the soil. It just sits there on top. It would be like trying to grow food in your sidewalk. The seed never gets to grow. Birds come and take it, or dogs eat it. There are no plants.

What do you think? Is hard soil good? I have too much hard soil around here. Now, I can't grow enough plants.

Did you know that Jesus said people are like soil? Good soil takes the seed, and gives plants. Some people listen to what God wants them to do, and then obey it. Those people are like good soil. They help others and obey God. That's the kind of person I want to be.

Some people are like the hard soil I have here. They just don't do what they're supposed to do. They don't listen. They don't learn. They don't obey what God wants. I don't want to be like this hard soil.

God loves us so much. He wants us to love Him too. The most important way that we love God is by inviting Him to be a part of our lives. After we do that, one good way to show Him how much we love Him is by obeying what He wants us to do. We're going to work together to learn a part of the Bible that tells us that.

Memory Verse Activity

When the Farmer finishes his opening time, the Memory Verse teacher will come to the front to lead the memory verse activity. The large group memory verse activity for day one is "Memory Verse Teams." See the back of the packet for instructions for this activity.

Day One Small Groups

Divide Into Small Groups

When the Memory Verse Teacher finishes leading the large group Memory Verse activity, divide the children into small groups. One teacher or a teacher/helper pair will sit with each small group. Make the groups as small as possible to allow for the maximum possible one-on-one time. As the groups are formed, spread out so that each small group can sit in a circle. Let each group be at least several feet apart from each other to cut down on noise and other distractions. As the groups sit down to begin their activities, the Craft Coordinator and the Memory Verse Teacher need to make sure that each small group has the craft supplies they need and a copy of the one page memory verse poster.

Small Group Story Time

When you tell the story use as many interactive elements as you can. You are going to be outside talking to kids with short attention spans. Keep them involved so they will hear the story! Remember that involving the children will help them pay attention. Use hand motions and sound effects. Have your children repeat things back to you. Ask questions.

DO NOT READ TO THE KIDS. TELL THEM THE STORY! Even though you will be telling and not reading the story, have your Bible open to the story in your lap. This will help the children recognize that the story comes from the Bible and is not simply a fairy tale or something we have made up.

Helpers: While the story teller is teaching, sit with the children and be a good example by listening to the story. Watch for children who need special attention.

Today's Story: Peter and the Leaders—Acts 3:1-10, 4:1-10, 13-22

This week in our small groups we're going to talk about the story the farmer is telling us. Today, the farmer told us about the hard soil. What can you remember about the hard soil? Could the farmer grow any plants in the hard soil? Nothing could grow there. The ground was too hard. The seeds could not go in to the soil.

God says that we're like that sometimes. God tells us that He loves us. He wants to be a part of our lives. The Bible says that God's love is like the farmer's seed. God gives His love to everybody, just like the farmer throws his seed everywhere. Just like some soil is too hard and won't take the seed, some people don't listen. They don't want to have God's love in their lives.

We make a choice. We can make a bad choice to be like the hard soil. If we make that choice, we don't listen to what God tells us. We don't obey what God tells us. If we make that choice, we don't let God's love get to us. It's no different than the hard soil not letting the seed in. Thankfully, God loves us very much. God offers us a good choice. We can choose to listen to God and obey Him. When we listen to God and obey Him, it makes God very happy.

I'm going to tell you a story about some people that had to make this choice. This story is about a man named Peter. Peter lived a long time ago. He was a good friend of Jesus. Peter traveled all over the country with Jesus. He learned about God and God's love.

Then, when Jesus went back to Heaven, Peter became one of the leaders of all the people who believed in God.

One day Peter and his friend John were going to church to pray. There was a man sitting outside the church. This man could not walk. His legs did not work. Every day this man sat outside the church. He asked the people coming into the church to give him money so he could buy food. The man asked Peter and John for some money.

Peter looked at the man. He felt sad that the man's legs did not work. "I don't have any money to give you," Peter told the man. "But I do have something else I want to give you." Peter took the man by the hand. "Jesus has power to heal people. Now stand up and walk."

This man was forty years old. He had never walked before, because his legs did not work normally. Now, with Peter's help, he stood up. The man smiled. He could feel his legs becoming strong. He knew that God was fixing his legs. Slowly, the man started to walk around. He walked faster and faster. He started to run, then jump. Soon the man was jumping up and down. He yelled and thanked God for helping him.

All of the people of the church ran over to see what had happened. They were amazed. They recognized this man as the man whose legs did not work. Now he was running around. He jumped up and down like a little boy. Over and over again he thanked God for helping him. The people were excited to see this amazing thing God had done.

Peter spoke to all the people. He told them about Jesus. He told them that Jesus loves people and wants to help. He told them that Jesus died on the cross and then came back to life. Peter told them that all people need to decide to listen to God and obey Him. The people were happy to learn about Jesus' love.

It sounds like a neat day at that church, doesn't it? A man who never walked learned to run and jump. People that did not know about Jesus learned how much Jesus loves them. But not everybody was happy. There was a group of leaders that did not like what they saw at the church. These leaders did not believe in Jesus. They did not want Peter to tell people about Jesus.

While Peter was talking to the people, a group of soldiers came. The leaders sent these soldiers. They arrested Peter and John. The soldiers threw Peter and John into jail for the night. The next morning, the leaders had a meeting. They made Peter and John come to the meeting. "Whose power did this? Who made the man's legs work?" The leaders asked Peter and John.

Peter answered the leaders. "Leaders, you should not be angry. It is good that this man got help. But if you want to know who made him well, I will tell you. It was Jesus. Jesus was killed on the cross, but He came back to life. Jesus is the only way to go to Heaven."

The leaders were very angry with Peter's answer. They were like the hard soil that would not take the seed. They refused to listen to what Peter said. His words did not help them. The leaders gave Peter an order. "You should not ever talk about Jesus again. Do not say Jesus' name. Do not tell people that Jesus is the way to go to Heaven."

Peter did not like the leaders' order. "Which is more important," he asked them "to obey God, or to obey you? We are going to obey what God says. We can't stop talking about all the wonderful things God has done for us."

The leaders let Peter and John leave. What do you think Peter did? Did he obey the

leaders and not talk about Jesus? No, Peter never stopped talking about Jesus. He told everybody that they can choose to love and obey Jesus.

All of us need to choose too. We can love Jesus and obey Him. We can thank Jesus for dying on the cross for us. We can ask Him to be a part of our lives. If you want to know how you can ask Jesus to be a part of your life, talk to us and we will help you know how.

Prayer Time

Take this time after the story to pray with the children in your small group. Ask them for things they would like to pray about. Tell God how awesome He is. Ask Him to help you and the children in your small group to listen to God and obey Him. Pray that the children in your group will get to know God and feel the love He has for them.

Craft

While still in your small groups, lead the children in making the craft for the day. The craft time is not only a way to reinforce the lesson, but it also allows time to get to know the children in your small group. During this time, ask them questions about their families, friends, and school. Invest in their lives.

Memory Verse Chain.

Supplies: 1 double-sided page per child, crayons, scissors, tape or glue

Directions

1. Use this time to go over the verse and the story with the children as you do this craft.
2. Give each child 1 double-sided page with the whole verse and pass out the crayons. Once each child has a copy read the verse with the children. As they color the page, talk about how Peter obeyed God.
3. Cut out the strips. While you are cutting out the strips ask them how they can obey God. What kind of things can they do to show God they love Him?
4. Tape or glue the end of the 1st strip to the tab forming a ring.
5. Loop the next strip through the 1st ring and tape or glue it to form a 2nd ring.
6. Repeat this process for the remainder of the strips forming a chain with 5 rings. As you and the children are making the chains share that the more time they spend learning about Jesus the more their love for God will be able to grow because they will be learning how to obey God.

Memory Verse Activity

Each day the small group time will include a Memory Verse Activity. The Memory Verse time is one of the most important activities of the day. We want these children to

remember God's word and why it is important to them. A list of potential activities is included in the back of this packet. Use a different idea from that list each day to help the children learn the words of the verse and to explain why it applies to their lives. (Some require extra preparation, so be sure to review the list in advance.) The memory verse for this week is

1 John 5:3—Loving God means to obey His Word, and His Word is not hard to obey.

When all the small groups are beginning to wrap up their memory verse activities, begin to re-gather the groups on the tarp for large group .

Day One Closing Time

Closing Time

When the small groups are finished with their activities, lead everyone back to the large group area for a closing time. Each day the Large Group Leader (playing the part of the Farmer) will end the day's program by reviewing what has been learned. The closing time will involve a short skit/object lesson featuring the Farmer and two helpers, played by other members of your group. The more creative and engaging the characters are, the more interested and involved the children will be during the large group. Prepare ahead of time by making costumes. Consider using props such as a bag of seeds, a shovel, or a watering can.

Following is a guide for the day's closing skit. Do not simply read from this page. The children will quickly lose interest if the Farmer just reads. Read through the skit repeatedly and be able to perform it from memory. Do not feel that the actors have to memorize and recite this page. It is not necessarily intended to serve as a script. Rather, use it as a suggestion to help you know how lead the closing. In this script the two helpers are simply referred to as Helpers 1 and 2. Using names will help the children identify more with the characters and the concepts being presented.

Skit/Object Lesson

I want to thank everybody again for coming to visit my farm today. I hope you will come back every day and help me learn more about soil. Today, we learned about hard soil. Hard soil doesn't do its job. It won't let the soil in. We learned that people do that too. Jesus loves us and wants to be in our lives. Some people don't let him in.

Now I need your help again. I have two new helpers on my farm. I have to teach them about soil too. I want them to be good farm helpers. You're going to help me teach them how to work on the farm.

(Have the two helpers come to the front. Give each one a bean, an empty cup, a cup of water, and a spoon or spade. The farmer should stand behind the two helpers.)

I'm going to give these two new helpers some instructions. I want you all to watch them. Let me know if they are being good helpers or not.

(As the farmer begins to give instructions, the two helpers must react very differently. Have Helper #1 follow all the instructions correctly. Have Helper #2 make a humorous, exaggerated show of messing up each step. If he is supposed to hold the cup in his right hand, he should balance it on his head or hold it in his feet. Have Helper #2 do the opposite of what the farmer says at each step in the process.)

All right helpers, are you ready? We're going to plant a seed. First, I want you to take the empty cup in your right hand. Look in it. Make sure it's clean and ready. Now, we need to put some soil in the cup. That's what will help the seed to grow. Pick up some soil from the ground. Put it in the empty cup. Be very careful so that you don't make a mess.

Now, put the seed in the cup. Use your tool to put it under the dirt. Don't bury it too deep, or it won't grow. Make sure you cover the whole seed with dirt. The seed is going to need some water to drink. Pour just a little bit of water into the cup. Don't pour too much, or the seed won't grow. Now, use the tool to pat everything down.

Our seed is going to need food too. Seeds use sunlight for food. Put the cup in a place where the seed will get lots of sunlight. Now, we just wait for the plant to grow. If we did eve-

rything right, that seed will make a plant.

Now, what does everybody think? Let's see if my helpers did a good job. First, let's talk about Helper #1. How did he do? Did he follow my instructions? Is he going to be a good farm helper? What about Helper #2? Did he do everything I said? Did he listen to my instructions? Will he be a good farm helper?

What was different between Helper #1 and Helper #2? Why did one do better than the other? (Let the children explain that one did poorly because he did not follow instructions.) When somebody gives us instructions, we need to listen and obey. My second helper didn't listen. He did not obey what I said. This helper is like the hard soil and like the leaders in our story. He did not do what he was supposed to do.

Jesus does not want us to be like hard soil. He wants us to be good soil. He wants us to love Him and obey what He teaches us. The most important thing we need to do is let Jesus be a part of our lives. He wants to forgive us for the bad things we do and help us every day. I want all of you, my friends here, to be like the good soil. If you want to know how to let Jesus be a part of your life, talk to us today.

Game Time/Snacks/Wrap-Up

When you are finished, pray together and be ready to play games until the end of the Rainbow Express program. After the game time, pass out snacks, clean up the area, and walk everyone home. Return to Mission Arlington to turn in your materials and attendance sheet.

Loving Good means

Glue Here

to obey His Word,

Glue Here

and His Word is not

Glue Here

too hard to obey.

Glue Here

1st John 5:3

Glue Here

Nosotros demostramos
que amamos a Dios cuando

Pega aquí

obedecemos sus mandamientos,
y obedecerlos no es difícil.

Pega aquí

1 JUAN 5:3

Pega aquí