

Session 1

Nicaragua – Here we are



Nicaragua is in Central America, with Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the Caribbean Sea to the east.

Nicaragua is home to six million people, and is the second poorest country in Latin America – one of the countries most affected by climate change in the world.

About 80% of the population depends on agriculture for survival.

It is a republic with a socialist government, where education and healthcare are free, unlike the countries like the US, for example.

About 97% of the population identifies as Christian, with the majority being Roman Catholic.

The population of Nicaragua is particularly diverse. The Caribbean coast is home to six different ethnic groups speaking four different languages. Can you find out how Nicaragua's history has led to so many different ethnic groups?

National Anthem

Listen to the Nicaraguan National Anthem youtu.be/J3C4dwc9vRw

Hail to thee, Nicaragua (English translation)

Hail to thee, Nicaragua! On thy land
roars the voice of the cannon no more,
nor does the blood of brothers now stain
thy glorious bicolor banner.
Let peace shine beautifully in thy sky,
and nothing dims your immortal glory,
for work is thy well earned laurel
and honor is thy triumphal emblem!

This current version of the national anthem was written in 1918 by Saloman Ibarra Mayorga, who won a public competition to produce new lyrics for the national anthem. One requirement of the competition was that the lyrics could only mention peace and work, as the country had just come to the end of a period of conflict and civil war. The lyrics were approved in 1939, and were officially adopted in 1971.

Nicaragua quiz

Print out the questions below on separate sheets of paper. Print out all of the answers on separate pieces of paper and hide them around the room. Ask participants to find the answers, and match them to the correct questions.

1. What is the capital city of Nicaragua? **Managua**
2. Which two countries border Nicaragua? **Costa Rica, Honduras**
3. Where is Nicaragua located? **Central America**
4. Which five symbols are on the Nicaraguan flag? **Volcanoes, Rainbow, Triangle, Phrygian cap, Sun rays**
5. What is Nicaragua's currency? **Cordoba**
6. What colours are the two stripes on the Nicaraguan flag? **Blue, White**
7. What is the official language in Nicaragua? **Spanish**
8. How many million people live in Nicaragua? **Six**
9. How many volcanoes are on the Nicaraguan flag? **Five**
10. Which two oceans or seas border Nicaragua? **Caribbean, Pacific**



Getting to know Nicaragua

Take some time to look up towns and cities in Nicaragua on Google Street View. What do the places look like? What things stand out to you? What are the similarities and differences between Nicaragua and the UK? Try looking up the following places: Managua, Granada, Jinotega, the San Cristobal volcano, San Juan del Sur.



Bible link Acts 17:26-28 (NIRV)

From one man he made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. And he decided exactly where they should live. God did this so that people would seek him. And perhaps they would reach out for him and find him. They would find him even though he is not far from any of us. 'In him we live and move and exist.' As some of your own poets have also said, 'We are his children.'

Diversity: Reflect on the diversity of people and communities across the world. What similarities and differences can you see? God made each of us unique, with our own gifts and talents – what skills and talents do you think God has given to you, and to other group members?

Thriving: The passage talks about how God had made us to thrive. What are some of the challenges that might stop people and communities from thriving? Are there any challenges for communities in Nicaragua? What actions can we take to help others to thrive?

Finding God: Where do you see God in your day-to-day life? How do you find God in the difficult times?

Make a difference

Identify three social justice issues that are important to you: one local/personal, one national, and one global. Share your thoughts with the group. Are there any common issues raised? Think about the practical steps that you can take to help solve these problems. Commit to taking one small action before you next meet together.



Popcorn prayer

Corn is a staple food in the Nicaraguan diet. Use some popcorn to reflect and pray.

Hard kernels: Hold an unpopped kernel in your hand. Reflect on how, before it pops, the kernel is hard and inedible. For a long time, the hard kernels are not doing anything, yet inside them they contain something special, and the potential to transform into something very different. Give thanks to God for the people in our lives who support and help us to grow and reach our potential.

Popping kernels: When we heat the kernels, suddenly they explode and transform into something very different. Make some popcorn. Listen to the popping noises, and think about the different people, places and situations that suddenly pop into your thoughts. Shout out these thoughts, and pray for them.

Tasting Kernels: Taste the cooked popcorn and think about the transformation that has taken place. Pray for situations in which you would like to see transformation; for yourself and for others.

