

Session 1

Here we are



Where in the world is Nicaragua? Can you find it on a globe? What do you notice about where it is? Nicaragua is pretty far away from the UK – 8,310 km (5,164 miles) – which means it takes more than 11 hours to get there by plane. It's located in Central America, with a mountainous border with Honduras to the north, and Costa Rica to the south. Roughly triangular in shape, with each side about 310 miles (500 kilometers) long, it is also bordered by the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Its name comes from Nicarao, chief of the American Indian tribe that lived in part of Nicaragua during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The largest city in the country is the capital city, Managua, and other important cities include León, Masaya, and Granada. Nicaragua is known as 'the land of lakes and volcanoes'. The country has many lakes and lagoons, plus 50 volcanoes, although most of these are not believed to be active. Out of all the 88 star constellations, 86 can be clearly seen the night sky over Nicaragua. Is Nicaragua bigger or smaller than the UK? How many people live in the UK?

This is the Coat of Arms of Nicaragua. This version has been used since 1971. It is made up of a gold-bordered triangle with five volcanoes behind a lake with a rainbow above, and a type of hat called a Phrygian or liberty cap. In a circle around the triangle it says 'Republic of Nicaragua – Central America'. The five volcanoes represent the five states that make up the Republic of Central America, and the sun's rays and rainbow represent a bright future. You can see the coat of arms on the country's flag, together with two blue stripes representing the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and a white stripe symbolising peace. You can listen to the Nicaraguan national anthem at youtu.be/J3C4dwc9vRw.



Nicaragua has a population of six million, and is the second-poorest country in Latin America. Almost 80% of the population live on less than £2 per day. It is one of the countries most affected by climate change in the world and is one of the most diverse countries in Central America. Many people are descended from the indigenous groups of the region – the people who first lived there. There are also people of African, European and Asian origin. Most live in the lowlands to the west, between the Pacific coast and Lake Managua. The local people call themselves Nicas, while people from other countries tend to refer to them as Nicaraguans.

The main exports of the country are crops, especially coffee, tobacco, sugar cane and bananas. Can you find any products of Nicaragua in your local supermarket? The currency is the córdoba.

Nicaraguan weather is hot and tropical, with average temperatures of 27°C year-round. There are two seasons of weather in Nicaragua: from May to November is the rainy season, while the rest of the year is the dry season. How does this compare with the UK? Along the eastern coast, the Mosquito Coast area gets the most rain in Central America, at 254–635 cm a year!

The official language in Nicaragua is Spanish. The majority of people, 97%, are Christian, with Roman Catholics in the majority. Most adults, 86%, can read, and the average lifespan is 69 years.

Many exotic birds and animals are found in Nicaragua: bull sharks, boa constrictors, monkeys, wild boars, toucans, jaguars, sloths, manatees, sea turtles, and a dozen species of poisonous snakes. The national bird is the **guardabarranco**. Can you find some pictures of these animals and birds? There are more than 70 protected areas in the country, which help preserve the habitats of many endangered species. What do you think might threaten wildlife in Nicaragua? Is it the same in the UK?



Prayer

We thank you, God, that you have created a world full of diversity and variety – different countries, different seasons, different people, different animals, birds, plants and crops, different landscapes. Thank you for the opportunity to learn more about our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world such as Nicaragua. Help us to understand that, even though we are far apart, we have much in common and can do things to help each other. Remind us that we are all your children and loved by you. Amen.

Active prayer

Make a paperchain of people, and decorate them to reflect a wide range of clothing, age, ethnicity, appearance etc. Join everyone's paper chains together and form them into a circle, standing up, around a globe or a map of the world in the centre. Say "Thank you that, whoever we are and wherever we come from, we are all one family in you. Amen".

Bible link Acts 17:26-28 (New International Reader's Version)

- *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.'
- I wonder what it means to live and move and exist in God?
- I wonder why God didn't make everybody the same?
- I wonder when and where you feel closest to God?

Game

Use pictures of the wildlife found in Nicaragua. Have two identical pictures of each thing. Cut one of each picture into six pieces and jumble all the pieces together, then spread them round the room. Give each team a complete picture and see which team can find all six pieces for their picture quickest. There are some pictures on the resources page on our website.



Greta wonders... Why is it good to find out about other countries?

What would you ask a child in Nicaragua about their life or their country if you were able to talk to them face to face?

Why do you think Nicaragua is described as a poor country?

What does the Nicaraguan flag tell you about what's important for that country? If you designed a coat of arms for your country, what values would you want to represent?



Action point

Nicaragua is one of the countries most affected by climate change. What we do each day is having an impact on the lives of children and adults who live many miles away. Discuss together some of the things that we can do to help our environment, and set a target to do things in your group that help reduce your impact on the environment. This might be things like not wasting water or electricity, recycling and reusing things, or perhaps walking or riding a bike instead of going by car. Design and make a badge that could spread the message about protecting the environment.

Activity

Learn some words in Spanish.

hola = hello

adios = goodbye

me llamo... = my name is...

amigo/amiga = friend (m/f)

Look at how earthquakes affect buildings. Fill a tray with jelly, and place a piece of greaseproof paper over it to stop things sticking. Then construct your buildings using marshmallows, cocktail sticks or wooden skewers, and squares of cardboard. Be clear about behaviour with pointed sticks, and ensure an adult is on hand to make holes in the cardboard and the marshmallows. Stand your buildings on the waxed paper, and shake the tray gently – see how it affects the building.

