

Session 2

Childhood in Nicaragua



Children in Nicaragua are just like children in the UK. They like to learn and explore, play and spend time with their friends and their family. Some things about their lives are very similar to yours, but some things are quite different.



‘When I grow up, I want to be a coffee farmer. I would also like to grow cocoa. I really like cocoa. I also like roses. I would also like to grow vegetables like cassavas and also bananas. I like living on a coffee farm, I like walking around it.’ Ariana Blandon, aged 5



Here are some typical streets in León, Nicaragua. What can you see that looks similar and what looks different?

I wonder what your school is like? You can watch a short film about a day in the life of a Nicaraguan child at youtu.be/QSRk1Bl2bf4.



Not every child in Nicaragua gets to go to school – sometimes they are needed at home to work or look after their family. Most children get to go to primary school, but only a few go to secondary school. In some schools, there are not enough teachers, so two classes might share a teacher, and not all schools have enough classrooms, so some children might even sit outside to learn. The children all help to keep their classrooms clean and tidy.



Things are changing, though. With the help of a local charity called Soppexcca and Christian Aid, local communities are forming cooperatives where

they help each other out. This enables them to build schools for their children that have the things they need to be both safe and good places to learn. What differences can you spot between the pictures of school classrooms, which are in Nicaragua?

www.urc.org.uk/go-with-greta-and-connect



Prayer

Thank you God for all the hard work that the people put into working together as a community. Thank you for organisations like Soppexcca and the way that cooperatives are helping children to learn. We pray for those communities who still don't have clean water or a proper school. Thank you for active hope that change can happen. Amen.

Active prayer

Using Lego or building bricks, put a label on each brick for each of the things you might thank God for. Read each label out loud as you build a wall or a tower with the bricks. Thank God for all those things that build up community, that build up life chances, that build children up, and that build us up as individuals.

Bible link 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (New International Reader's Version)

So encourage one another with the hope you have. Build each other up. In fact, that's what you are doing.

- I wonder if you can share a story of when you have been helped by somebody else?
- I wonder what you could say or do to help somebody else learn something new?
- I wonder what you would like to be when you grow up?

Game

Play a game of beetle, but to build a school instead of a beetle. Take it in turns to roll a die. When you roll a 6, you can draw 3 sides of a rectangle with no top as the school building. You can't draw anything else until you have drawn this. When you roll a 5, you can draw a roof on your school. Roll a 4 to draw a room next to the school to house a toilet. Roll a 3 to draw a teacher, and roll a 2 to draw a blackboard or whiteboard. Each time you roll a 1, draw a chair, until you have drawn five chairs. When your picture is complete, shout 'Time for School!'

Children in Nicaragua like playing baseball, and also like playing tag games. Can you make up a game of tag that is linked to our theme?



Greta wonders... Which aspects of a school are essential and which are just nice to have?

Why do you think it is important for children in Nicaragua to go to school?

What would you tell a child in Nicaragua about your life?



Action point

Many of the cooperatives where the community work together are helped to plant and grow coffee. The money they earn helps to build the new schools as well as feeding their families. The cooperatives are part of the Fairtrade organisation which makes sure that people are paid fairly for the things they produce. Visit your local supermarket and find out which types of hot chocolate have the Fairtrade mark. Does your church use fairly traded coffee? What about your school? Can you write a letter to encourage someone to swap to fair trade coffee?



Activity

All children have the right to learn and the right to play. Children in Nicaragua do not always get a lot of time to play, especially if they are girls, but when they do, they play more games outdoors than indoors. They are very creative, and find all sorts of things to play with, including making their own kites.

Can you use recycled materials to make your own kites? One method uses an old plastic bag or scrap paper, two sticks, string, tape, a toilet paper roll and ribbon. Cut out a square or diamond of plastic or paper and lay the sticks on it from corner to corner, crossing at the middle. Tape the sticks firmly in place. Make a small hole in each corner of your kite and tie pieces of string, slightly longer than the sticks, to join the top hole to the bottom and the right-hand hole to the left so that they cross in the middle. Tie the end of a very long piece of string to the point where the two strings cross so that they are all tied together. Roll the other end of your string around a toilet roll centre or a piece of cardboard so that you can control how much string you let out at a time. You could add a ribbon tail. Now let's see how high your kite will fly! Perhaps you could decorate it with a Nicaraguan flag design.

