

# Session 2

## Celebrating my Country



### Different Languages

Transcarpathia is the only Ukrainian region that borders four countries – Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. Languages spoken there include Russian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak and Polish.



### Sunflowers:

Ukrainians have always loved flowers. Flowers fill the yards of village houses and are woven into wreaths (*venki*) for girls to wear at celebrations.

Sunflowers are the Ukraine's national flower. Across every part of Ukraine, you will see fields of these yellow blooms. Sunflowers are embroidered on fabrics and painted on walls, wooden furniture, and household items in a folk art called *petrykivka*.

In the 1990s, when the world began to turn away from trans-fats, new sunflower oil quickly became popular – especially for frying crisps – and even more fields were planted, now covering much of central Ukraine and bringing joy, beauty, and tasty snacks to the world. Sunflower seed has become one of the Ukraine's most important crops, the country becoming the top global producer. The sunflower seed harvest was mostly processed or 'crushed' into meal and oil to produce higher-value products for export. Ukraine is the world's largest producer of sunflower seed products and is the major exporter in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

**Breadbasket of Europe:** Ukraine is often called the 'Breadbasket of Europe.' Why? Because it is a very fertile nation and boasts ideal conditions for growing sunflowers, corn, soybeans, wheat, barley and potatoes. It is among the top three exporters of wheat and other agricultural grain products in the world. Ukraine can provide enough food for half a billion people, or more,

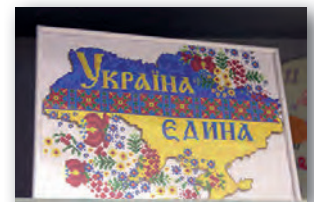
**RCT – Agriculture Project:** Under the pressures of war, food insecurity has grown. The Reformed Church in Transcarpathia (RCT) runs an Agriculture Project. The farm provides for the whole ecosystem of the area. It produces its own meat and milk, and produces its own vegetables, which are then

distributed. The 'Seeds of Hope' project provides an opportunity for members of the community and congregation to grow at least part of their foodstuffs and provisions to support the operation of the soup kitchens.



**National Costume:** Transcarpathia has ten regional variations to its traditional costume. However, pieces from the different regions are often worn together. In the part closest to Hungary, the costumes are easily recognisable as typically Hungarian.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, geometric embroidery in red and blue was used but more recently a floral style is most often used.



**Easter Eggs:** Ukraine is home to decorated Easter Eggs. In Ukraine the egg is called a *pysanka* and is traditionally coloured and patterned using wax and dye. In Ukraine, *pysanky* are typically made to be given to family members and respected outsiders. To give a *pysanka* is to give a symbolic gift of life. Watch this video for step-by-step instructions on how to



craft your own eggs: <https://bit.ly/4iTmrTs>

**Eurovision Song Contest:** Ukraine is considered a singing nation. It has entered nineteen times since its debut in 2003. It has won the contest three times, in 2004 with 'Wild Dances' by Ruslana; in 2016 with '1944' by Jamaia, and in 2022 with Stefania by Kalush Orchestra. They were the first Eastern European country to win the contest three times in the 21st century. Due to the war with Russia, they were unable to host in 2024, so the song contest was held in Liverpool instead.



### Bible Link: Psalm 19:1

'The heavens tell the glory of God. And the skies announce what his hands have made.'

When we see a pretty flower, or a bright rainbow, or a clear night sky, we can think about how amazing God is for making those things. Think about the amazing things that God has created where you live.

### Psalm 36:8

'We feast on the abundant food you provide.' God has given us a big variety of different foods to enjoy. What foods do you like to eat?

**Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for the beauty of creation that is all around – for blue skies, mountains, rivers, for trees, brightly coloured flowers, and animals. Thank you for providing fertile land in places like Ukraine, and for the rain and sunshine that helps to produce food for us to eat and enjoy in this country. Help us to share what we have with others. Amen.

### Active Prayer: Flower which opens in water

You will need coloured paper, scissors, pens/pencils, a container filled with water.

On a piece of paper draw a sunflower shape (<https://bit.ly/4hxgavJ>), with petals that you can fold later. On the paper flowers, write prayers for things that you want to praise and thank God for relating to the country you are from or to Ukraine. Colour in the sunflower then cut out the flower using the scissors. Carefully fold each petal into the centre of the flower. Be gentle, as if you crease the petals too hard, the petals will struggle to open.

Carefully place your folded flower onto the surface of the water in your container. Watch and see what happens. The petals on each flower should start to unfold, releasing your prayer to God.



### Activity: Ukrainian Apple Cake (Yabluchnyk)

This is easy to make. If you have a gas oven, use gas mark 5. This recipe serves eight portions. It is delicious served with cream! <https://bit.ly/4iGyZhr>



### Greta Wonders:

- How many uses can you find for sunflowers or its seeds?
- How many different languages are spoken in the area where you live?
- Can you find any produce in your local shops that originated in Ukraine?

**Activity:** Using Hama beads to create a typical embroidery pattern that you might see in Transcarpathia. If you google Transcarpathia embroidery patterns you will get lots of ideas. You could use it to make a fridge magnet or a coaster.



If you are reluctant to use plastic, why not use a cotton bud and paints to create a similar design on scrap card?



### Action Point:

- Can you learn to say or write 'Welcome' in Ukraine, Hungarian and Russian?
- Visit a nearby farm and find out what crops they grow, if any, and what happens to them.

