

MEXICO

Lessons for Mission Minded Kids

Lesson 3

Mexico Today



Mexico

Lesson 3: Mexico Today

Goals for Lesson 3:

- Children will learn about the Mexican people and Mexican culture.
- Children will begin to recognize Matthew 5:16 and understand its significance in their own lives.
- Children will understand that the people living in Mexico need to see the Light of Jesus shining through the lives of the Christians who live there.

Verse for Mexico:

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- Read through the verse, jotting down some ideas for signs that would go with various words. These are only ideas, to be used if everyone is stumped. As a class, you will be designing your own signed version of the verse, and it is important that it be the work of your students, and not just you having them memorize something you made up. Bring some blank index cards to class so that you can illustrate each sign and attach it next to the word it applies to.
- Write verse on a large sheet of poster board, leaving adequate space between words to attach cards with motions. You will keep this “charade board” to review your verse in signs during each lesson.
- Make copies of the handouts you will use, according to your students abilities and the time you will have.
- Gather pencils, crayons, markers or colored pencils for students to do activities in class.
- Locate a map of the United States that shows Mexico and Mexico City.

Lesson Plan:

- Begin your lesson time with a brief group prayer. (5 min.)
- Explain that you will be designing your own class verse charade. Verse memory involves deeply understanding the meaning behind the words, not just being able to quickly repeat a meaningless string of words. Today, you will work together to develop your own group's sign language, expressing the words and meaning of the verse. This is not an exercise in learning American Sign Language. Even if you or someone else knows the "proper" signs for these words, make up your own charade that reflects the age and "personality" of your group. If the children design their own version, they will feel an ownership of it, and remember it because they designed it themselves. Begin by saying the verse together as a class, pointing to each word as you say it, to help your non-readers to associate the words on the board with what they are saying. Then brainstorm ideas for signing the word "light". When you have decided on one as a class, illustrate the sign on an index card so you will not forget it (or have one of the older students do this). Attach the card on the poster board next to the word "light". Continue with the word "shine", and so forth, making up a sign for each major word in the verse. When you are all done, sign your way through the verse a couple of times, saying all of the words, and signing the ones you made a charade for. Put the poster board in a safe place, and bring it out for review for each subsequent lesson. The signs will help the non-readers remember the words better, and since memory is now incorporating hearing, sight, speaking and movement, the verse has now become more interesting and much more memorable. If you are planning a children's program, the verse charade is a wonderful thing to share with adults. (20-30 min.)
- Tell or read the story part of the lesson, explaining or discussing as necessary. (15-20 min.)
- Finish your lesson time with a few minutes of prayer. Write the word "MEXICO" down the vertical side of a black board. Together, come up with short prayers for each letter ("M" can stand for "Men", "E" can stand for "Enough" food, water and shelter, and so on through the word.). After each letter, have one child say a simple sentence prayer for the (Men) of Mexico, that the children would have (Enough), etc. (8-10 min.)
- Lay out markers, crayons or colored pencils and allow children to do several of the activities during class time. Discuss the colors of the flag, the location of Mexico, and the answers to the crossword puzzle together, allowing older children to help younger ones as needed. You can also save some of these activities to use another day when you have extra time. (8-10 min.)

Lesson 3 Story: Mexico Today

Just across the Rio Grande River from the United States, you will find our southern neighbor, Mexico. Our states of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California share a border with Mexico. **(show children map)** Mexico is a large country about three times the size of Texas. It is divided into 31 states, much like our own 50 states. The capital city, Mexico City, is the fourth largest city in the world, with almost 22 million people. Mexico City and many of the other large cities and towns in Mexico are very modern, with much traffic, large buildings, and many restaurants, stores and conveniences. Many of the rural towns and villages, however, are still very much as they were 100 years ago. Many have no running water or paved roads, and many of the people live without electricity or any of the modern conveniences. This is particularly true of the southern states, where there is a higher concentration of indigenous people.

Older towns or villages in Mexico have a similar layout. In the center is a plaza, like a town square with fountains and flower beds. On one side of the plaza is a church. The other three sides are framed with shops or government buildings. The plaza is a gathering place where the people can come together as a community. There is often an open-air market where local farmers and craftsmen are selling their wares, and festivities are held here to celebrate holidays with fireworks, mariachi bands, singing and dancing.

Just like the layout of the town around the plaza, traditional middle class Mexican homes are built as an open square around a courtyard or patio. A gate allows entrance from the street, and individual rooms open off the central patio, which is usually full of potted flowers, trees, and vegetables. The family gathers to play and visit in this central courtyard, similar to our back yard or porch. Poorer families have homes made of adobe, a type of mud/clay mixture. It may be left natural color, or whitewashed. Many Mexican homes have tile roofs and tile floors, with very colorful walls.

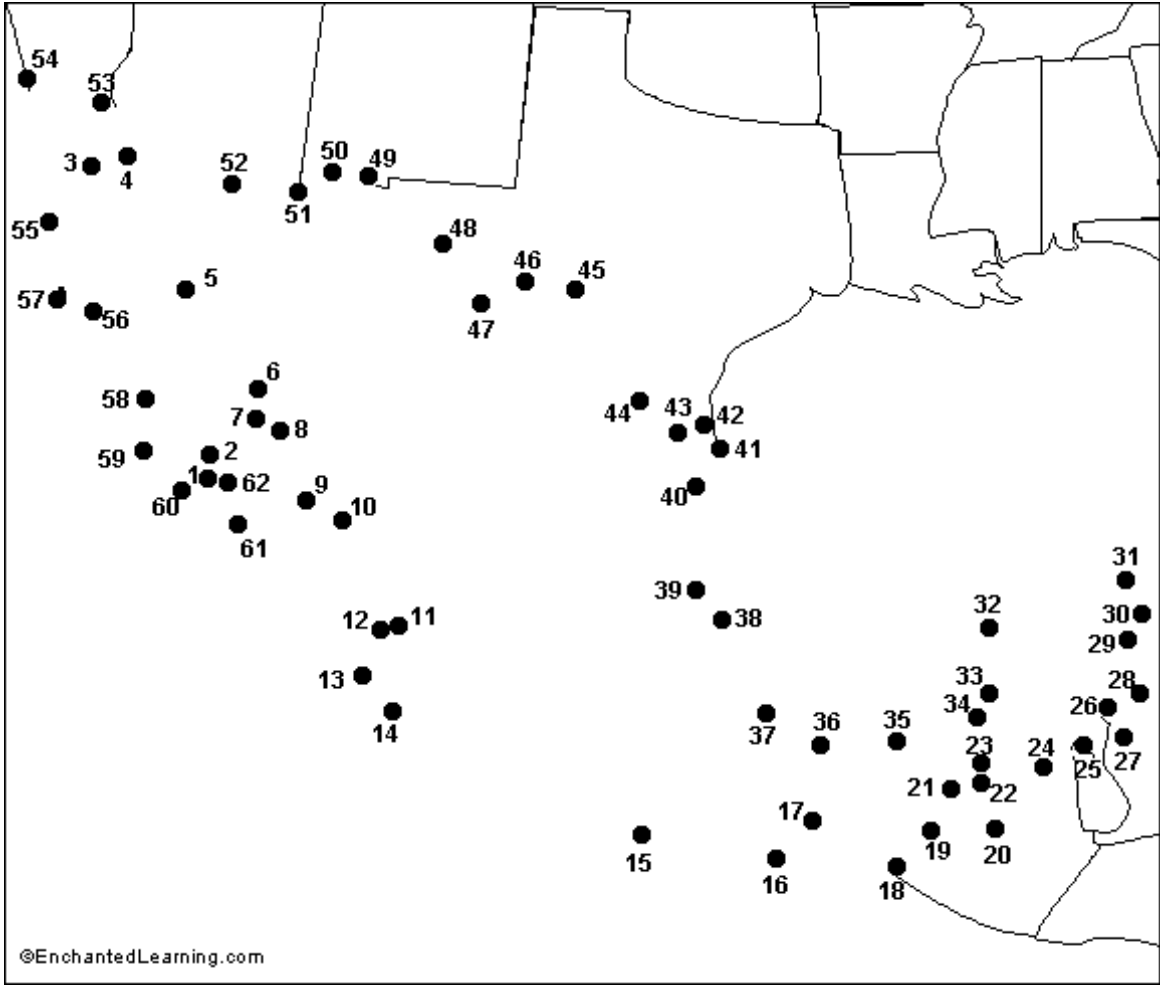
Mexico has many different types of climates. The hot, dry desert lands are in the north, near our U.S. border. The lush, tropical rainforests and jungles are in the southern part of the country. The warm, sunny beaches, a favorite tourist attraction, are along the coasts, and the cool, sometimes rugged Sierra Madre Mountains cover the central part of Mexico.

Many people in the rural areas of Mexico still dress in traditional clothing, especially for their fiesta holiday celebrations. This is especially true of the various Indian tribes. The men may wear ponchos (slit blankets, worn like a coat), sombreros (wide brimmed hats), and huaraches (wahr-ATCH-ays) (leather sandals, often with tire tread soles). Women may wear rebozos (colorful fringed shawls used to cover their heads and carry things, including babies and young children), and beautifully embroidered blouses and long, full skirts. For special fiestas or dances, men may dress up in charro (Mexican cowboy) suits and women may wear a china poblana costume (colorful red and green long, full skirts and embroidered blouses), which are the national costumes of Mexico.

The flag of Mexico is red and green and white, the national colors of the country (**show picture of flag or a real cloth flag**). The green (left band) stands for hope, the white (center band) stands for the unity of the Mexican states and the red (right band) stands for the blood of the heroes who fought for the country. In the center of the flag is the Mexican coat of arms which is an Aztec pictogram for Mexico City, their capital.

About 5 million Indians native to Mexico still live there and speak their own Indian languages. However, most Mexican people speak Spanish today. Many words we use in our English vocabulary originally came from Mexico (like corral, lasso, rodeo, stampede, canyon, and patio.)

Lots of people from the United States travel to Mexico each year. Because it is so close to us, it is very easy for people to drive or fly across the border. Many North Americans like to enjoy the beautiful sunny beaches of Mexico, or visit the ancient ruins of the native civilizations that were thriving in Mexico long before the Europeans found them in the 1500's. Mexico has a rich history and many beautiful sites to offer tourists. Maybe you have been to Mexico, or maybe you know some people who have been there. We must remember though, that even though Mexico attracts thousands of tourists each year, many of the Mexicans who live there are very poor and don't know about Jesus. Please pray for the Mexican people and the Christian workers who live among them, helping them and teaching them who Jesus is.



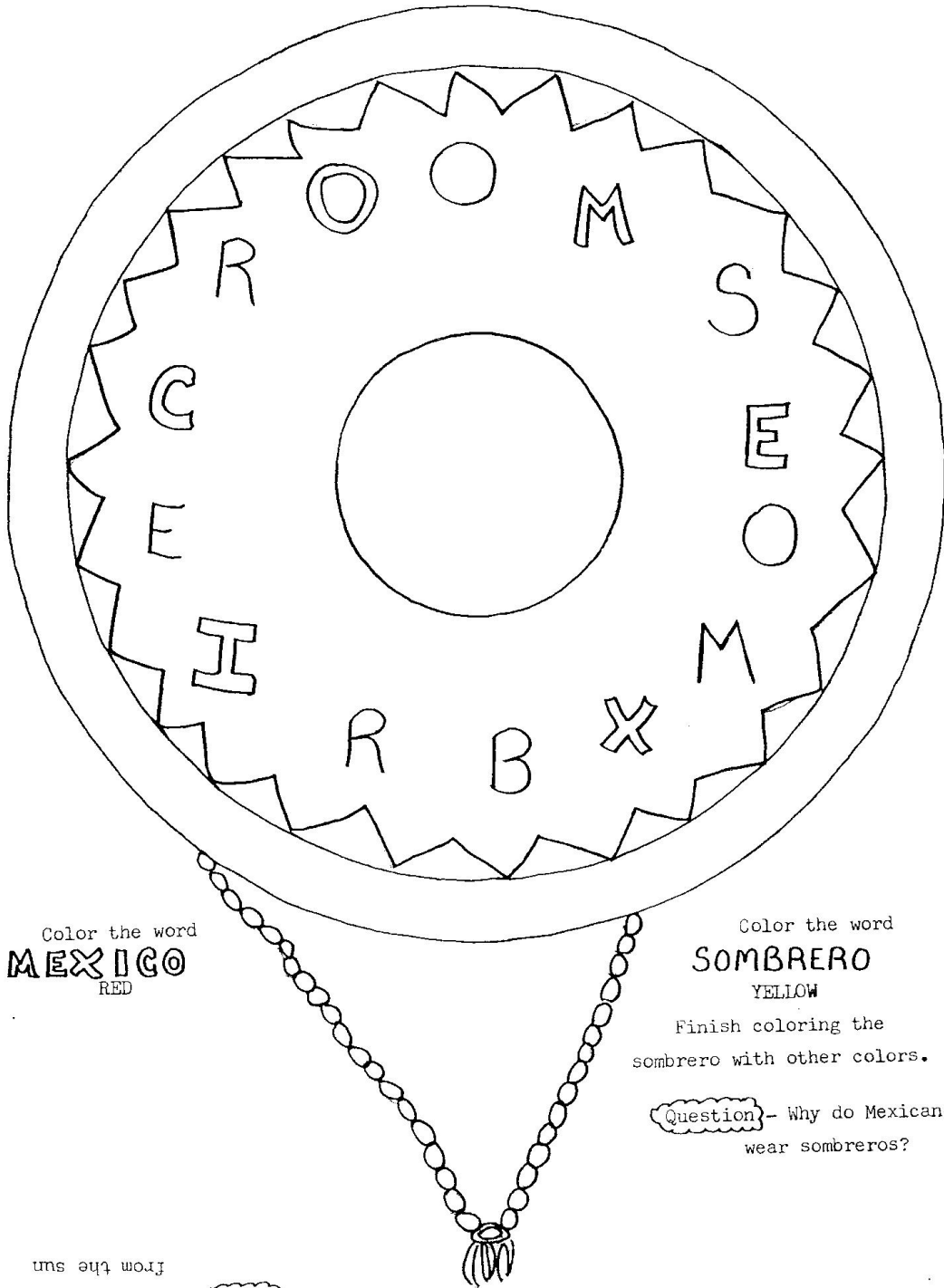


The Flag of Mexico





Name _____



Color the word
MEXICO
RED

Color the word
SOMBRERO
YELLOW

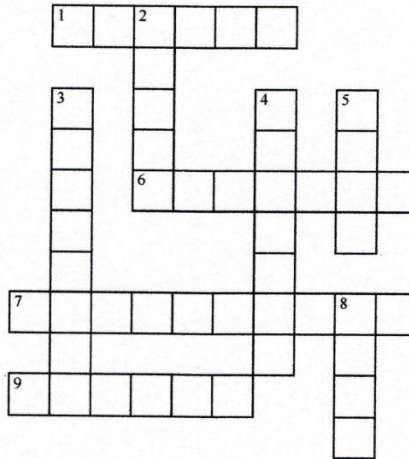
Finish coloring the
sombrero with other colors.

Question - Why do Mexicans
wear sombreros?

Answer - To protect them
from the sun

Custom Crossword Puzzle

Facts about Mexico



ACROSS

- 1 Ancient peoples that existed in Mexico
- 6 Language spoken in Mexico
- 7 Capital of Mexico (two words)
- 9 Favorite sport played in Mexico

DOWN

- 2 State that shares the border with Mexico
- 3 Famous hat worn in Mexico
- 4 Butterfly that migrates from the US to Mexico
- 5 Currency of Mexico
- 8 Mexican food enjoyed here in the US