

# **MEXICO**

## **Lessons for Mission Minded Kids**

### **Lesson 7**

#### **Mexico's Past**



**Ancient Aztec Temple**

# Mexico

## Lesson 7: Mexico's Past

### Goals for Lesson 7:

- Children will understand that people have lived in Mexico for thousands of years, and some of those ancient cultures and languages are still alive today.
- Students will realize that many people in Mexico do not have the Bible translated into their own native language, so they have to learn about God through a foreign language.
- Children will be able to recite Matthew 5:16 by memory, having internalized both the words and the message.

### 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.
- Make copies of activities you will be using, and gather pencils and crayons to be used in class.
- Write verse on the board, using only the first letter and a blank for each word. (L\_\_ y\_\_ l\_\_ s\_\_, etc.) Bring a beanbag to class to use in the Beanbag Toss. Make sure there is a space where everyone can sit in a large circle.
- Have a real Mexican Flag in your room, or the picture of the flag from Lesson 2. Prepare all pictures as power point slides, or back them with sturdy paper for stability.

## Lesson Plan:

- Begin your class time with a short prayer for all of the people in Mexico who don't yet know Jesus. (5 min.)
- Sit in a large circle on the floor. Play "Beanbag Toss" as follows. You begin by holding the beanbag and saying the verse out loud. Toss the beanbag to a student across the circle. That student must then say the verse (using the first-letter prompts on the board if necessary), and toss it to another student. Continue tossing until everyone has had a turn to say the verse. (10-15 min.)
- Return to chairs, or stay on the floor. Read or tell the story part of the lesson, showing the pictures as indicated, and stopping to discuss or answer questions as needed. (15-20 min.)
- Discuss Mae Royer and the other Christians who are letting their lights shine in Mexico. If a group of people does not have a Bible in their own language, discuss ways they might be introduced to the Light of Jesus. If most of your students are readers, hand out copies of the Wycliffe puzzle page and talk together about the huge number of people groups who live in Mexico who don't have a Bible in their own language. If you have a few non-readers, pair them with older students who will help them fill in the correct number of squares. This is a powerful visual picture of what the number 289 looks like. If you have all non-readers, you might consider using beans or beads to count piles of 289 and 91 and 2 to represent the number of languages in Mexico and the number who have a whole or partial Bible in their language. (30-40 min.)
- Depending on your students, choose the other activities you will do with them, or send home with them. You may also want to spend time finishing your Yarn Paintings from Lesson 6 if they are not done. (15-20 min.)
- Finish your time together with prayer for the Wycliffe Translators who are working on translating Bibles for the many people groups who still don't have even the New Testament in their language. (5 min.)

## Lesson 7 Story: Mexico's Past

Have you ever studied the powerful, ancient Egyptian civilization in school? Do you remember all of the pyramids and how they would prepare the pharaohs for burial by mummifying the body? All of this was happening in Egypt through the 3000 years before Christ was born. At the same time, far across the world in Mexico, there was another powerful, ancient civilization going on. The Mayan Indians had built an elaborate and highly sophisticated society. They had built beautifully creative cities with huge temples for worshipping their gods. They had developed trade routes and traded cacao, gold and other things with surrounding cultures, and they had their own writing system and could educate their people to learn how to read. They studied the stars and agriculture and mathematics, and they created intricate carvings and beautiful pieces of art, jewelry, pottery and clothing. Do you remember that most Mexican towns are laid out with a square plaza in the center, with churches and government buildings around the four sides? This model actually was started by the ancient Mayans. Their cities were all built in this way, and this model has become a national tradition. The ancient Mayan culture existed for many hundreds of years, and today many of the Mayan descendants still live in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and El Salvador. **(Show ancient Mayan ruins.)**

At the time when knights and castles ruled in Europe, there was another very sophisticated culture rising in Mexico. This was the Aztec civilization, whose capital city, Tenochtitlan, became the huge modern Mexican capital of Mexico City. For over 300 years, the Aztecs built beautiful floating gardens, pyramid temples and perfectly organized cities, traded with foreign cultures, developed an economy based on cacao beans, and created intricately crafted works of art. **(Show ancient Aztec pyramid temple.)** When the Spanish explorers came to Mexico, the great Aztec civilization soon crumbled. However, many remnants of this culture are still evident in Mexico and other parts of the world. Many Aztec descendants still live in the central part of Mexico. The traditional Aztec diet is still the accepted daily diet of most Mexicans today, and this "Mexican" food is served and admired throughout the world. The Aztec symbol of their original migration into Mexico

(the eagle sitting on a cactus, eating a snake) is now the national coat of arms and is proudly displayed in the middle of the Mexican flag. **(Show flag to children.)**

Although they were the largest and the most influential, the Aztecs and the Mayans were not the only people who were native to Mexico. Many other tribes of natives lived throughout Mexico, much as our Native Americans lived in the United States before the Europeans came. In the early 1500's, many European explorers made their way across the ocean in search of gold and new lands. People from Spain came to Mexico. They fought with the native inhabitants and took over their land. Mexico was under Spanish rule for 300 years. Spanish became the national language, and the Spanish intermarried with the natives, creating a large Mestizo population (people of mixed European and Indian ancestry).

For those 300 years, Catholic priests came from Spain and taught the Mexican people about Catholicism. They built Spanish Mission churches and Spanish style houses. To this day, most churches in Mexico are Catholic churches, and most people say they are Catholic.

Evangelical missionaries, like Mae Royer, have also gone into Mexico in recent years. Many people have given their lives to Jesus. They have begun to shine His Light through their good works, and now there are 13 E.C. churches and mission outreaches, and many other Evangelical churches in Mexico as well.

Even though there are many Catholic and Protestant churches in Mexico, there are also still many people whose ancestors were part of those ancient civilizations. Most of these people still speak their native language, even though the national language is Spanish. They still live very simply, following their traditional cultures, and many are very poor and don't have access to schools. There are 289 different native languages still spoken in Mexico, and only 91 of those groups have part of the Bible translated into their language. How will these people see the Light of Jesus if they don't have a Bible?































Ancient Mayan Ruins



## MEXICAN TAKE-HOME ACTIVITIES

The Mayan Indians of Mexico gave us 0! They used a shell to represent zero and sticks and stones for numbers.

								
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
								
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
								
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	

Our number system is based on 10. The Mayan system is based on 20. Use Mayan symbols to write the answers to these problems:

$$\dots + \text{---} = \boxed{\phantom{00}}$$

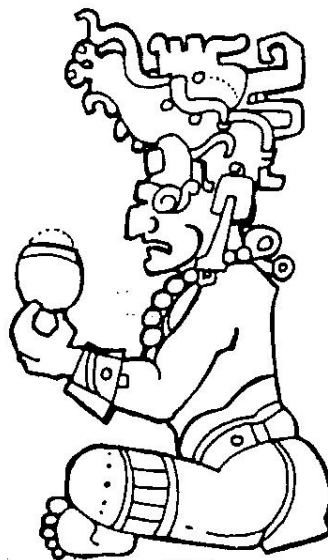
$$\text{---} + \dots = \boxed{\phantom{00}}$$

$$\text{---} + \text{---} = \boxed{\phantom{00}}$$

$$\dots - \text{---} = \boxed{\phantom{00}}$$

$$\text{---} - \text{---} = \boxed{\phantom{00}}$$

$$\text{---} - \dots = \boxed{\phantom{00}}$$



## Mexico

Mexico is a land of color and contrast. The country is covered with rugged <sup>1</sup>CH'ENTSIK, green farmlands, thick forests and dry deserts. Mexico is not a large country, but they help supply the world with <sup>2</sup>CAHPEL, corn, oranges and lots of <sup>3</sup>TAK'IN. Mexico City is the nation's capitol. It is one of the largest <sup>4</sup>CAJOB in the world and grows by more than 2,000 people every day! The population of Mexico City is over 20 million <sup>5</sup>ATIKLBTSIK. That is as many as all the people in New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles living in one place!

The original people in Mexico were Indians. About 400 <sup>6</sup>UNJABI ago armies from Spain invaded Mexico. Mexico was a colony of Spain for many, many years. Today Mexico is an independent, democratic nation, but the Indian heritage and years of Spanish rule have together created the Mexican culture.

In the past, the Indians believed that the <sup>7</sup>C'AC'U, rain, corn, trees, rocks, and other thing all had some living spirit or god in them. This kind of religion is called animism. When the Spaniards came, they introduced the Indians to the Roman Catholic religion. Today, most Mexicans belong to the Catholic <sup>8</sup>CH'ULNA and many of the national holidays are taken from the Catholic traditions. Mexicans love to celebrate holidays with fiestas. Fiestas begin with fireworks before the sun comes up. During the day the cities, towns or villages have <sup>9</sup>DESFILES, carnivals and dancing in the streets. There is always lots of good food and <sup>10</sup>T'ENLACH during fiestas. In some parts of Mexico the people watch cockfights (rooster fights) or bull fights during a fiesta. And everywhere in Mexico, children love playing the piñata game.

Most children in Mexico attend <sup>11</sup>ESCUELA through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Because the cities are so crowded, school programs run twice a day. Some children attend school from early in the morning until after lunch. Then they go home and another group of <sup>12</sup>JNOPTESWANEJ and children come to school. They begin classes in the afternoon and study into the evening. Students must pass special <sup>13</sup>PRUEBAS given in 10<sup>th</sup> grade if they want to go to college. Many children who live in rural areas (away from big cities) do not complete their education because they help their parents at home. Often they work in the farm fields with their parents, tending <sup>14</sup>BURRENGO and goats or helping to look after younger children in the family.

Like children everywhere, Mexican boys and girls enjoy playing games. <sup>15</sup>FUTBOL is played everywhere – in the fields and in the city streets – wherever there are kids. Basketball, baseball, jump rope and tag are also popular group games. In the villages and small towns boys practice their hunting skills with <sup>16</sup>JH MUCH' aimed at birds, dogs, lizards or tin cans. Rural children enjoy afternoon rides on burros, mules and horses.

Spanish is the official language of Mexico, but many Indian languages are also spoken. In fact, there are 289 different languages in Mexico. The New Testament has been written in over 90 of those languages; two languages have the whole <sup>17</sup>SK'OP DIOS. Bible translation work (writing the Bible into a language that does not yet have God's Word) is going on in about 100 languages. But there are still many groups of people in Mexico who do not have the Bible written in their own language. Thousands of people in Mexico need God's Word written in their own language so they can read it for themselves and understand the message of God's love for them.

**\*This story is to be used with the following activity page.**



Words from four different Indian languages were used in the story above. To understand the whole story, match the Indian word with the English word below.

English Word	Indian Word	Indian Language	English Word	Indian Word	Indian Language
EXAMPLE:			PARADES	9 _____	SPANISH
MOUNTAINS	1. <u>CH'ENTSIK</u>	HUASTEKO	MUSIC	10 _____	HUASTEKO
COFFEE	2. _____	TZELTAL	SCHOOL	11 _____	SPANISH
SILVER	3. _____	TOJOLABAL	TEACHERS	12 _____	TZELTAL
CITIES	4. _____	CHONTAL	EXAMS	13 _____	TOJOLABAL
PEOPLE	5. _____	HUASTEKO	SHEEP	14 _____	CHONTAL
YEARS	6. _____	CHONTAL	SOCCER	15 _____	SPANISH
SUN	7. _____	TOJOLABAL	SLINGSHOTS	16 _____	TZELTAL
CHURCH	8. _____	TZELTAL	BIBLE	17 _____	TOJOLABAL

Now find each English word in the word search below.

S	V	H	T	S	O	C	C	E	R
J	C	I	S	U	M	M	P	Y	D
S	M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N	S
C	E	B	Y	H	U	W	X	T	L
H	M	P	E	E	H	S	O	E	X
O	S	R	A	Q	A	H	R	A	W
O	P	E	J	R	S	R	Z	C	C
L	E	V	I	G	A	N	S	H	O
I	O	L	N	T	K	D	U	E	F
S	P	I	B	Z	I	R	E	R	F
H	L	S	W	I	C	C	A	S	E
S	E	U	R	H	B	M	D	I	E

# MEXICO

## TRUE OR FALSE?

- |   |      |       |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Mexico was once governed by Spain.                                       | True | False |
| 2. English and Spanish are the only languages spoken in Mexico.             | True | False |
| 3. About half the children in Mexico finish high school.                    | True | False |
| 4. Some Indians believe there are spirits in everything around them.        | True | False |
| 5. Every family in Mexico has at least one copy of the Bible in their home. | True | False |

LAND SIZE: ONE-FOURTH OF THE USA

POPULATION: ABOUT 100 MILLION

NATIONAL LANGUAGE: SPANISH

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES:  
289 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

COMPLETED NEW TESTAMENTS: 91

WHOLE BIBLES: 2



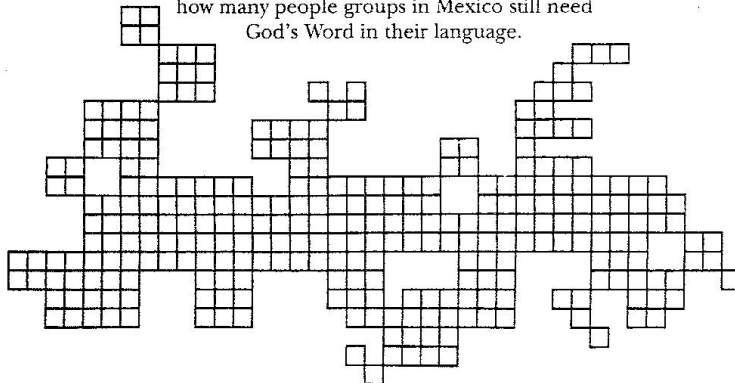
## ANSWERS:

millions of people in Mexico still do not have a copy of God's Word in their own language.

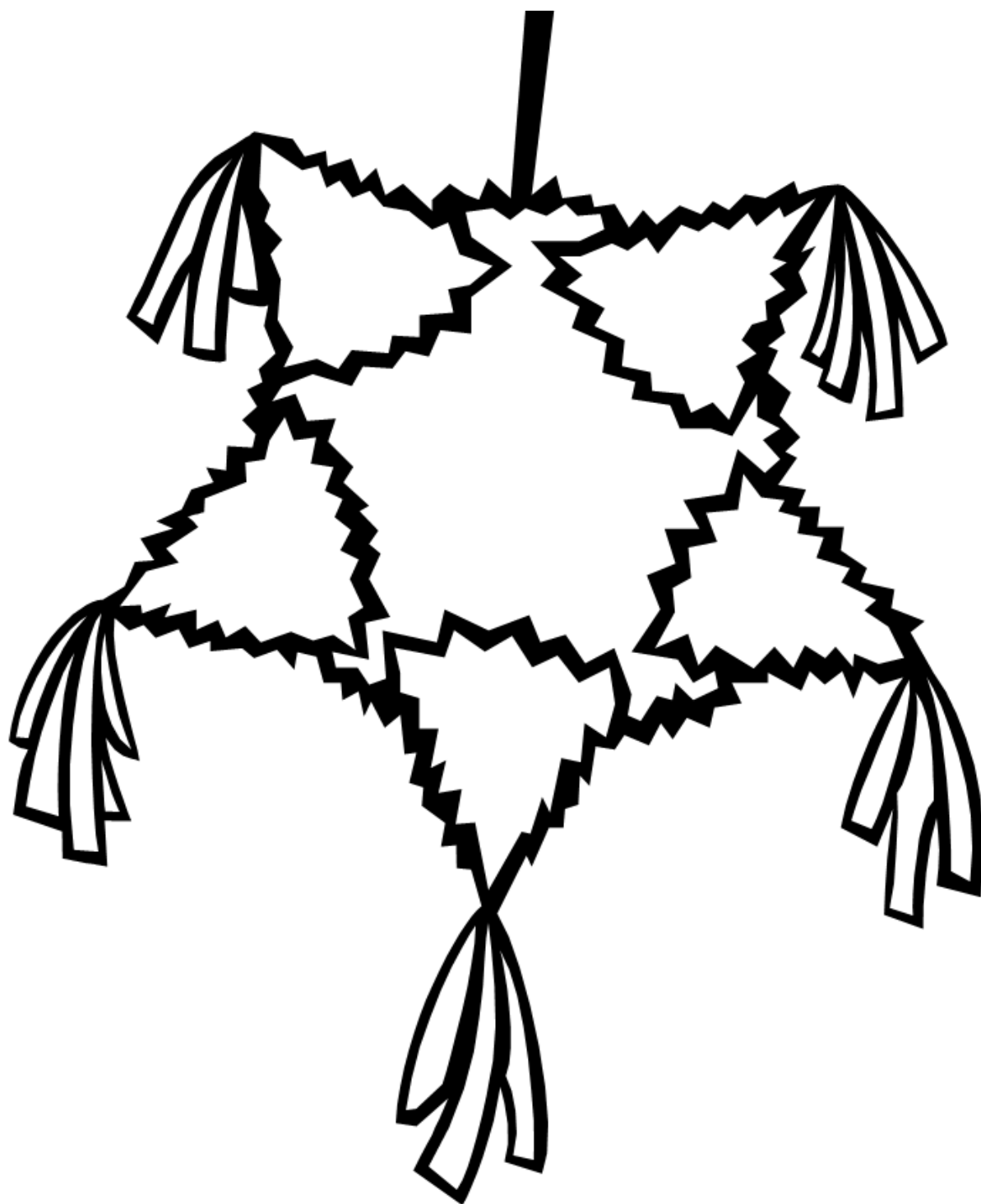
1. True; 2. False; 3. False; 4. True; 5. False—

**HERE ARE 289 BOXES**, one for each language spoken in Mexico.

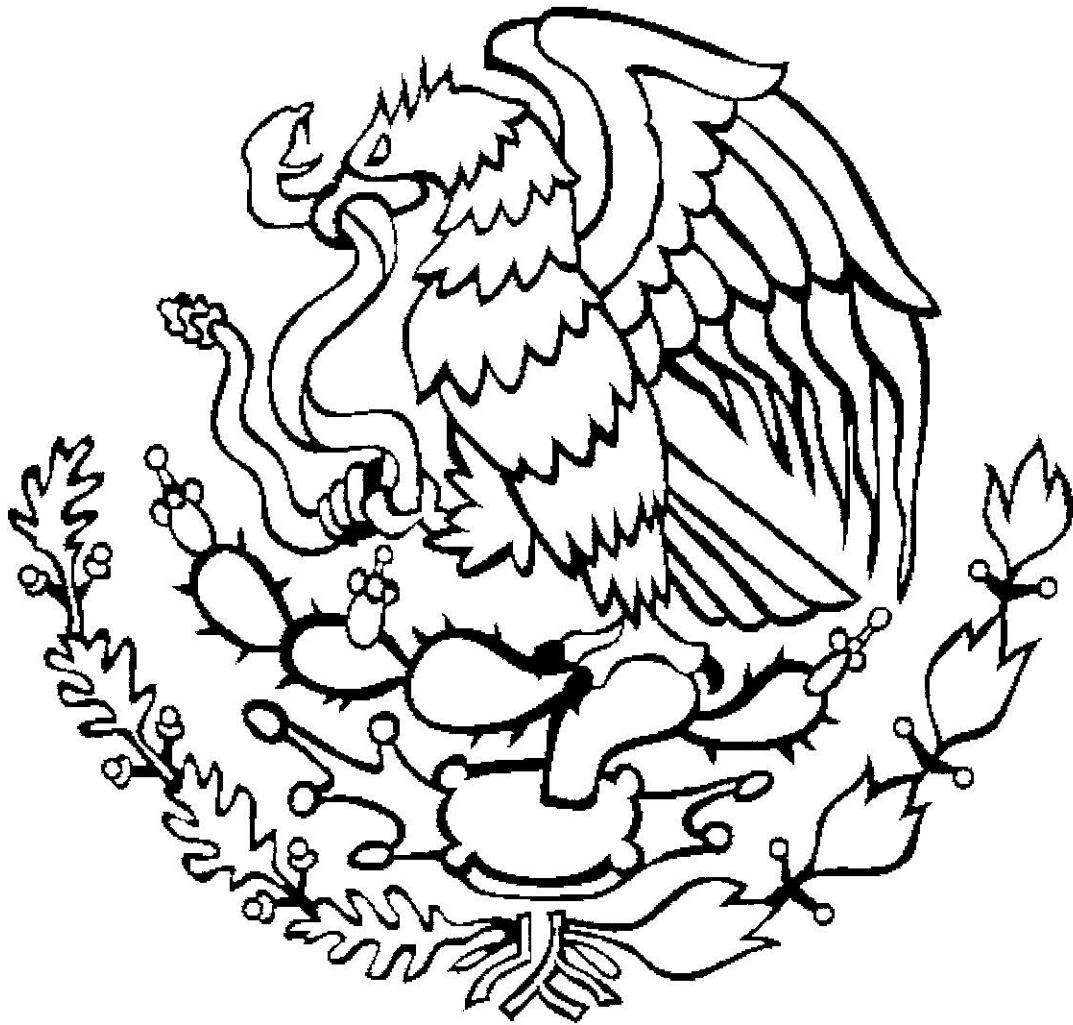
**PUT AN "X"** in one box for each language that has a New Testament or a whole Bible printed. The empty boxes show how many people groups in Mexico still need God's Word in their language.



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Piñata: In Mexico, a piñata is a clay container or cardboard and papier-mâché figure filled with small toys, treats and candies. The piñata is broken with a pole or stick and the treats shared. Piñatas are believed to have originated with the Mayans and Aztecs.



The Mexican Coat of Arms that appears on the Mexican flag came from the ancient Aztec symbol of their migration into Mexico. When the ancient Aztecs saw an eagle sitting on a cactus eating a snake, they stopped their wanderings and settled down to build the city of Tenochtitlan, which later became Mexico City. Many Aztec Indians living in Mexico today still need to hear about the Light of Jesus.