

CZECH REPUBLIC

Written by:
Malcolm Haslett, Heather Pugsley
and Simon Rudiger
Edited By: Simon Peters
and Soo Webster
With thanks to: Karen Morrison



**Pilots
Overseas
Voyage
2015**



Welcome to the Czech Republic



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Pilots Overseas Voyage Materials are produced annually to support Pilots, along with the whole Church, in:

- discovering something about the history & geography of another country
- learning what it is like to be a child or young person in another country
- exploring the culture, food, games and pastimes enjoyed in another country
- looking at the Church traditions of another country
- sharing their newfound knowledge of another country with those around them

This year, the materials invite Pilots and others to focus on the Czech Republic.



HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

These materials may be used and adapted, as necessary, to suit the needs of differing groups, communities and contexts. They could, for example, be used:



- to organise a series of weekly sessions for a Pilots company through part, or all, of their term
- throughout the year, woven into other parts of a Pilots company's programme
- as a theme for a Worship Service to be organised and led by children and young people
- as a main theme for an Away Day or camp weekend

Each Section covers a different aspect of life in the Czech Republic, offering Bible verses, prayer links, activities, games, discussion ideas, 'Did You Know..' facts and other programme ideas to further encourage companies and groups to engage with these materials in ways most relevant for their own contexts.



Section 1

Getting to know the Czech Republic



Introduction

The Czech Republic is a landlocked nation in Central Europe sharing borders with Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Austria. The country has two regions; Bohemia and Moravia.

Bohemia, in the west, consists of rolling fields surrounded by low mountains. Moravia, in the east, on the other hand, is a very hilly part of the country.

Although the Czech-speaking lands of Bohemia and Moravia had both, at different times, been important states in Central Europe, through the 17th to 19th centuries they fell under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose rulers spoke German. After the First World War, when Germany and Austria-Hungary were defeated, the new country of Czechoslovakia was formed.

Tourism is a major source of income for the country. The capital, Prague, was the sixth most visited city in Europe (2011) and there are more than 2,000 castles, keeps and ruins to visit across the country.





Section 1 Getting to know the Czech Republic

Historical Timeline

9th
Century

The Duchy of Bohemia (formerly part of Great Moravia) is formed



The country becomes the
Kingdom of Bohemia

11th
Century



1414

Jan Hus speaks against the
corruption of the Roman
Catholic Church



World War I starts

1914

1918

An independent nation, Czechoslovakia, is
established, covering the area

World War II starts and
Czechoslovakia is invaded by
Hitler's army

1939



1948
1989

The Communist era reigns

The Velvet (or Gentle) Revolution
brings Communism to an end

1989

1993

January 1, Czechoslovakia peacefully
splits into two independent countries;
the Czech Republic and Slovakia



Section 1

Getting to know the Czech Republic



The Flag

The Czech flag was adopted in 1920 and remains the same as it was in the days of Czechoslovakia. The Czech Republic kept the flag at separation, in December 1992, whilst Slovakia adopted a new one.

The flag consists of two horizontal halves. The top half is white and the bottom is red. On the left hand side there is a horizontal blue triangle pointing towards the middle of the flag. The triangle was added to the original flag to differentiate between the flag of Poland and Czechoslovakia.



The red represents the blood shed for freedom

The blue represents imperialism and sovereignty

The white is a traditional Bohemian colour and also represents the sky



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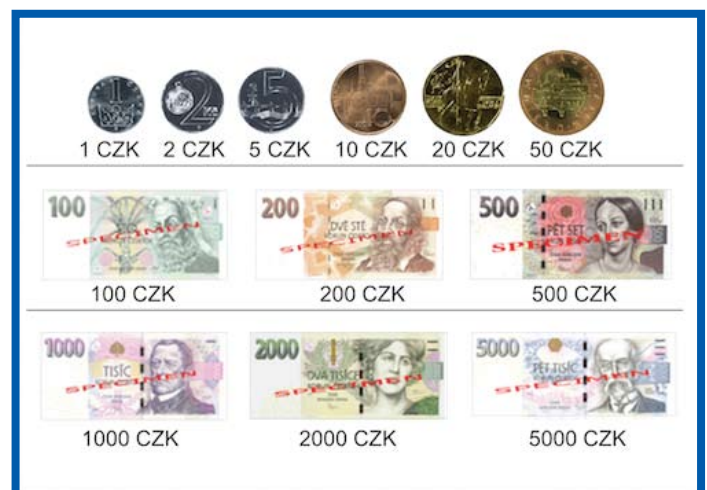
Currency

The money used in the Czech Republic is the 'crown' (koruna ceska, abbreviated to 'Kc').

There are 100 hellers to a crown, but hellers are not in use. Sometimes prices are shown in fractions of crowns, but the price you pay is always rounded to the nearest crown.

Bank notes come in values of 100kc, 200kc, 500kc, 1000kc, 2000kc and 5000kc and coins in values of 1kc, 2kc, 5kc, 10kc, 20kc and 50kc.

When dealing with money, of any sort, it is important to be able to count, so be sure to look out for Section 2 - Education, Language and Numbers, which contains guidance on counting in Czech.





Section 1

Getting to know the Czech Republic



Biblical Link (Galatians 3:26-29)

Exploring the beliefs and ways of peoples and cultures which are different to our own can be a bit of a strange adventure. Differing ways of looking at the world, differing ways of doing things, differing values and priorities can all easily confuse us and, sometimes, seem a little scary to deal with!

This passage of scripture reminds us, however, that, when everything is stripped away, ‘...there is neither Jew nor Gentile’. We are all the same. Even when others seem to be very different to us, even to the point that we cannot see any points of similarity, we are all human beings, created and loved by God. It is not only natural, then, but also the will of the Lord, that we should all be one, united in His love and grace.

Ask Pilots to think about how they feel when they meet people from countries and contexts different to their own. How do they get over the differences? How do they deal with any nervousness or fear? What role can Pilots play in making unity easier in the place where they are?

Prayer

Encourage Pilots to pray for God’s guidance and strength as they seek to learn from those around them, no matter how strange things may seem.



Activities and Games

Work together to make a flag of the Czech Republic.

Look at a map of the Czech Republic, using the names of cities, towns and rivers to make a word search.

Ask Pilots to design a short tourist guide pamphlet for the place where they live. What are the Top 5 sites or attractions people must see in the area and why?

Play ‘Pesek’ – Being a variation of the game ‘Duck, Duck, Goose’, players stand in a circle, facing inwards, while another player (the “picker”) walks around tapping each player in turn, until finally picking one to be “pesek” (a pawn) by saying “pesek” as they tap that person. The picker then runs around the circle, chased by “pesek” who tries to tag the picker, while the picker tries to get back to the space where “pesek” had been standing. If the picker gets back without being tagged, “pesek” is now the new picker. If “pesek” succeeds in tagging the picker, the picker has another go.

DID YOU KNOW...?

...that the Czech Republic has...

a population of around 10.5 million

an area 30,000 square miles

Prague as the capital city

the most hospital beds per person in the EU

‘mushroom picking’ as a national passion

one of the fastest average internet speeds in the world



Section 2

Education, Language and Numbers



Education

At the start of their journey into education, children aged 3 to 6 years can attend state-run kindergartens. Compulsory study lasts 10 years, from age 6 to 16 years. Most students decide to continue their education beyond this point, at a general secondary school, to prepare for college or university studies, a vocational school, or a technical school. Since 1990, many private and religious schools have also been established.

Enrollment in colleges and universities in the Czech Republic is low, however, in comparison with other European countries such as Poland, Austria and Germany, where twice as many students sign-up for classes.



The leading institutions of higher education in the country, providing four to five years of intensive study, have long-standing traditions. In Prague, Charles University (founded in 1348) and the Czech Technical University (founded in 1707) are among the oldest universities in central Europe.

Language

Czech can seem quite a complicated language to learn because it has all sorts of interesting signs over many of the letters (e.g. á, é, ě, í, č, š, etc...). However, in reality, the language is entirely phonetic (i.e. it's always pronounced exactly the way it's written) unlike English...

Czech is only one of a very large family of Slavonic languages, quite similar to Polish or Russian.

So, if you learn any of these languages, they can help you with Czech, or, if you learn Czech, it can help you, not just with Polish or Russian, but also Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovene and, of course, Slovak, which is very close to Czech!

All Czechs understand Slovak and all Slovaks understand Czech, though they may think they talk with a funny accent, a bit like a Londoner talking with a Glaswegian or vice-versa!

When Czech people (especially young people) meet friends, they say 'Ahoj!' (pronounced Ahoj!), which seems strange to British ears, as this greeting is, in English, associated with being at sea, yet the Czech Republic has no seaside coast and very few sailors! Even more confusingly, when people say goodbye or 'see you soon', they also often say 'Ahoj!'



continued >>





Section 2

Education, Language and Numbers



Language continued

Here's a possible conversation, with some common phrases:

Ahoj! Jak se máš?	(A-hoy! Yak se mash?)	Hello, how are you?
Dobře, děkuji	(Dob-she, dye-koo-ye)	Fine, thanks.
Já jsem Irena.	(Ya sem Irena)	I'm Irena
Těší mě.	(T-ye-shee mn-ye)	Nice to meet you.
Jak se jmenuješ ty?	(Yak se men-oo-yesh tee?)	What's your name?
Já se jmenuji Kevin...	(Ya se men-oo-ye...)	My name's Kevin.
A kde ty bydlíš?	(A ge-de tee bid-leesh?)	And where do you live?
Já bydlím v Londyně, a ty?	(Ya bid-leem v Lon-deen-ye...)	I live in London, and you?
Já bydlím v Praze!	(ya bid-leem v Pra-ze)	I live in Prague.
Ty bydlíš v domě anebo v bytě?	(tee bid-leesh v dom-ye a-neb-o v bit-ye?)	Do you live in a house or a flat?
Já bydlím v domě.	(ya bid-leem v dom ye)	I live in a house.
Máš bratry a sestry?	(maash brat-ry a sest-try?)	Do you have brothers and sisters?
Mám jednoho bratra a jednu sestru.	(Maam yed-no-ho brat-ra a yed-nu sest-tru)	I've one brother and one sister.
Tak, ahoj!	(Tak, ahoy!)	Well then, see you!
Ahoj!	(Ahoy!)	See you!

As well as reading, writing and speaking, it is also crucial, of course, to count. Here are the numbers 1-10 in Czech:

í
ě
á
š

Zero	nula	'noola'
One	jeden	'yeden'
Two	Dva	't-va'
Three	tři	't-shee'
four	čtyři	'che-tir-shee' (very difficult)
five	pět	'pyet'
six	šest	'shest'
seven	sedm	'sedum'
eight	osm	'osum'
nine	devět	'dev-yet'
ten	deset	'deh-set'

1
2
3
4
5



Section 2

Education, Language and Numbers



Bible Links (Acts 2:1-12)

There is estimated to be about 6,500 languages spoken across the globe today. Just imagine what it would be like trying to learn them all. It would be an absolutely impossible task!

Yet, in the scriptural account of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit comes to the disciples, signifying God's presence with us in the world as we journey with Him and serve Him, people who witness the event, even though they speak so many languages individually, can all understand what the disciples are saying. Everyone is amazed at the spectacle and wonders what it might mean.

Love is a universal language. It doesn't need big books or speeches to explain it. In fact, it doesn't even need words at all. What it needs is warm hearts, open minds and welcoming arms. Whatever language you speak, however many fancy words you know and whatever slang or jargon you might like to use, everyone can understand love and the messages God shares with us are the greatest communications of love in existence.

Ask Pilots to think about the people around them, the people they like and the people they find difficult to like, the people they find easy to understand and the people they find difficult to understand, the people who are similar to them and the people who are not. Ask Pilots to think about how God created every person on the earth and loves them as His own children. What can Pilots do to share the love of God with others? How can they let others know that they care? Why is it so important to break down barriers between people?

Activities

Ask Pilots to introduce themselves to each other using the Czech language.

Play the Running Card Game – Each group will need a set of 10 cards (numbered 1-10 in Czech) laid out on a table (a chair or floor area will do). Lay the cards out face down and mixed up on the table some distance from the group. Pilots take it in turn to run to the table and turn over a card. They call out the number in Czech. The aim is to turn over the cards in sequence (1-10). If the first card turned is '1' the card is placed at the top of the table. If it is another number, it is replaced and Pilots must remember where it is. Continue playing until all cards are ordered at the top of the table. This can be played in a quieter way, if required, simply by sitting in a circle around the cards.

Play 'Freeze!' – A large space is needed to play. Give each Pilot a Czech number or word. Alternatively, town names, colours, famous Czechs, etc... could be used. All Pilots gather in the middle of the playing area. One Pilot has a beanbag, which they throw into the air, calling a word or number. The Pilots scatter, running as far away as they can get, except the Pilot whose word or number is called, as they have to catch the beanbag. When they have done so, they shout 'Freeze!'. All the Pilots must stop and stay still. The Pilot with the beanbag takes 2 large strides (you can adjust the number of strides if needed) towards the nearest Pilot and tries to hit them below the knee with the beanbag. The target is not allowed to dodge the beanbag and, if they are hit, they become the thrower.

Prayer

Encourage Pilots to pray for God's love and guidance as they seek to share His love with others.

DID YOU KNOW...?

...that the word...

'Škoda' (pronounced Sh-kaw-da), is the name of the famous car manufacturer in Mlada Boleslav, near Prague, can either mean 'shame' or 'damage' in Czech? Quite ironic, given that is the pride of the country and sold over a million cars in 2014!

'Robot' was first coined by the Czech writer Karel Čapek in his science fiction play RUR (Rossum's Universal Robots) to describe artificial people made in a factory. In the play, the robots start to take over the world!





Section 3

People and Places



People

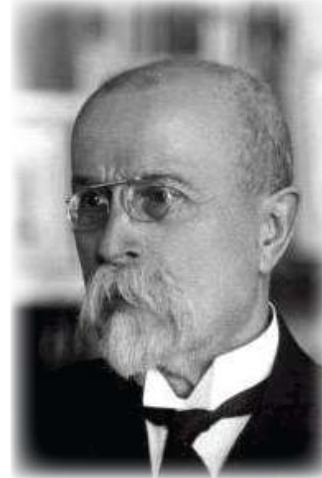
Thomas Masaryk lived from 1850-1937. He was a Czech politician who founded the modern state of Czechoslovakia (now split into the Czech and Slovak republics). This country lasted from 1918 until 1992. Masaryk was the first president of Czechoslovakia, serving his country from 1918 for a further 17 years until the end of 1935.

Petr Čech has served as a prominent goal-keeper for a number of top football teams including Chelsea and Sparta Prague. He has over 100 international caps for the Czech Republic and has made over 300 appearances for Chelsea. Čech was born in 1982, in Plzeň, which is about 60 miles south west of Prague.

Václav Havel was a playwright who lived from 1936-2011, becoming the country's first president in 1993. Against many of the injustices and inequalities both he and his nation faced both during and after Communism, Havel kept peaceful and constructive action at the core of his response. So much so, in fact, that an award now exists, in his honour, celebrating 'Creative Dissent'.

Martina Navratilova is one of the most successful female tennis players of all time. She has won 18 Grand Slam titles and has been runner-up in a further fourteen competitions. Born in Prague in 1958, becoming a US citizen in 1981, Navratilova started playing tennis regularly at the age of 7 and was the national Czechoslovakian champion when she was 15.

Thomas Masaryk



Petr Čech



Václav Havel



Martina Navratilova



Jan (Yan) Hus, who died 600 years ago (1415), is a celebrated figure amongst Protestants. Like British man, John Wycliffe, Hus wanted every Christian to be able to read the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church thought this undermined the authority of the Pope, however, and so, in 1415, some of the Church's more zealous followers condemned Hus and burned him at the stake.

Jan (Yan) Zelezny won 3 Olympic and 3 World Championship gold medals in the javelin throw. He first started competing internationally in 1983, representing Czechoslovakia. He has held the world record for the longest javelin throw since 1996, when he managed a distance of over 98 metres!

Jan Amos Komenský (known outside the country as Comenius) was instrumental in forming 'teaching' as we know it today. Living from 1592-1670, he called for an ecumenical council of churches and an international academy of scientists to be set up, both of which eventually were. Among his writings is 'Orbis Pictus' from 1658, said to be the first textbook-type publication.

Jan (Yan) Hus



Jan (Yan) Zelezny



Jan Amos Komenský





DID YOU KNOW...?

...that other famous Czechs include:

Franz Kafka (1883 -1924) – a novelist

Ivan Trump (1949 - present) – a model, TV personality and writer

Joy Adamson (1910-1980) – an animal rights activist

Tom Stoppard (1937 - present) – a playwright and author

Madeline Albright (1937- present) – a diplomat for the US Government

Antonín Dvořák (1848 - 1904) – a composer of music

Bedřich Smetana (1824 - 1904) – another composer of music

Gustav Mahler (1860 - 1911) – yet another composer of music

Jakub *Kryštof Rad (1799 - 1871) – inventor of the sugar cube

Stanislav Brebera (1925 - 2012) – inventor of 'Semtex' explosives

Otto Wichterle (1913 - 1998) – inventor of soft contact lenses

J E Purkyně (1787 - 1869) – discovered the uniqueness of fingerprints

Can you find any others?





Section 3

People and Places



Places

Prague

The capital city of the Czech Republic is Prague. Covering approximately 300 square miles, it's about 800 miles away from Central London, meaning it only takes a few hours to fly there from the UK. It has a population of around 1.25 million people and over 8 million people visited the city in 2014, making it one of Europe's most popular tourist destinations. Prague is nicknamed 'the city of a hundred spires' owing to its great historicity and architecture. Anyone visiting the city is strongly advised to go to the Old Town Square with the town hall's famous Astronomical Clock, Charles Bridge, the city's most famous monument, and Wenceslas Square, in particular.

Prague castle

Prague Castle (Pražský hrad) is one of the most popular attractions in the city. It is one of many similarly historic and popular buildings throughout the Czech Republic. The castle sits on a hilltop, dominating the skyline, looking out over the city centre. It serves as the headquarters of the Czech president and traditional home to the royal household for over a thousand years. The castle site is also where you'll find the Gothic Cathedral and the medieval Old Royal Palace, as well as a number of museums and art galleries. The castle holds the official world record as the largest ancient castle complex covering, altogether, an area of almost 70,000m².

Brno

Brno, in southern Moravia, is the second largest city in the Czech Republic. The Ignis Brunensis, a competitive fireworks festival is held, annually, in the city around May or June. It is a beautiful, historic city, home to the Villa Tugendhat, an early prototype for modern European design. Brno is also a central point for justice in the Czech Republic, with the Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, Supreme Administrative Court, the Ombudsman and the Office for the Protection of Competition providing judicial services and standards for the whole nation. With 13 institutions of higher education and around 89,000 students, learning is also an important priority in the city!

Český Krumlov

Český Krumlov has all the usual features of a Czech town. It has plenty of restaurants and cafes, several art galleries and museums and, like Prague, has an impressive castle as well as a traditional, preserved Baroque theatre which opened in 1682. This charming town has been described by National Geographic (a renowned international magazine) as one of the 'world's greatest places'. So much so, it seems, that Český Krumlov's Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's a beautiful, picturesque place. Photos of Český Krumlov are often used in tourist brochures to depict the perfect fairytale Czech town and it isn't difficult to see why.





Biblical Link (Jeremiah 29:4-14)

Lots of people recognise the part of this passage which says, 'I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord... Plans...to give you hope and a future.' What many people don't know is the part of the story before that.

When God releases His people from slavery in Egypt, they begin their journey towards paradise in the promised land. However, God takes them to a barren place, a place where it is difficult to settle, and tells them to build homes there. For as long as God states, this strange and difficult place, where growing crops and tending animals is a huge challenge, will be their new base. They must have been confused, tired and furious to have been led by their mighty God into such an awful situation! It is right in the midst of this turmoil, though, that God tells His people to trust Him. He knows what He's doing, even if they don't! Their choice, then, is between trusting in God, suffering through the hard times, knowing that He has everything under control, or ignore God and give up.

During the days of Communist rule, many of the people and places mentioned here had to face great challenges to achieve what they did. In the face of adversity and hardship, they held tight to what they believed in. They continued on their journey, despite the consequences this would bring, such as their commitment and loyalty to their causes and, in so doing, made a huge impact, not only on life in their own country, but around the globe too!

Whatever problems Pilots may have, whatever trouble Pilots face, remind them that God 'knows the plans' He has for their lives and these plans will 'not harm or destroy' them, but rather 'give [them] hope and a future'. So, trust in Him, keep going and keep working hard. All WILL be well!!!

Prayer

Pray for God's wisdom and resilience as you face all that life throws at you, seeking his comfort and blessing for those who find the struggle too much to bear.

Activities

Use 'junk' materials to construct robots.

Puppet theatres are traditional in the Czech Republic. Why not make puppets and produce a Puppet Show? Wooden spoons, paper bags, socks or ready-made kits can all be very useful...

Build a fairy tale castle out of sugar cubes.

Have some fun with sport related activities. Why not organise a running race while balancing tennis balls on racquets or play skittles using tennis balls and plastic bottles or have a go at throwing indoor foam javelins? The possibilities are endless!

Discuss how Pilots feel about the increasing use of robots /drones.

Play Lifeboat/Quarterdeck - Designate 4 sides or corners of the room as the bordering countries - Germany to the west, Poland to the north, Slovakia to the east, Austria to the south, with the centre of the room as the Czech Republic. The leader calls a country name and Pilots must run to the designated space. The last Pilot to arrive loses a life. A Pilot is 'out' when 3 lives are lost and can become the person who calls. Introducing other instructions with actions such as 'climb Snezna' (mime climbing), 'drive your Skoda' (mime driving around), 'be a robot' (mime robot walking), etc... can make things more interesting.

DID YOU KNOW...?

...that other significant Czech cities include:

Pizeň - famous for Pilsen beer and Peter Chech

Liberec - known as the 'Manchester of Bohemia' due to its textile industry ties

Prostějov - known for its fashion industry and military bases

Karviná - part of the country's most important coalmining region

Paradubice - annual host of a number of sporting events, including the Chess Open





Section 4

Tales and Stories



Good King Wenceslas

Known as 'Vaclav' in Czech, Wenceslas was the 'Good King' we sing about at Christmas in the popular carol. He lived around the late 9th and early 10th centuries. Except, he wasn't actually a king, he was a Duke. He established Christianity as the state religion. His conversion to Christianity really upset his mother and brother, so much, in fact, that they ended up killing him!

The legend of the carol speaks of his selfless act of trudging through cold, wintery conditions to take food and supplies to a man living in poverty in a very secluded spot. He is accompanied on his journey by a loyal servant who wants to support his master, but Wenceslas, in reality, helps the servant when the challenging weather becomes too difficult to handle.

If you're feeling Christmassy, why not sing the carol? Even if it's not Christmas, there are still some very important lessons in the tale about supporting the vulnerable, being loyal to our master, God, but also relying on His grace and strength to help us along the way.

The Friendly Giant of Krakonos

The Krakonos Mountains in the Czech Republic are known as the Giant Mountains where the friendly giant lives. The mountains can be found in the north of the Czech Republic, running along the border with Poland. The country's highest peak, Snezka, can be found here. It's 1,603 metres high.

The giant is the subject of many legends and fairy tales in Czech (and German) folklore. In some legends, he is a giant, a gnome or a goblin. In others, he is a mountain spirit. He can be mischievous, sending thunder and lightning or fog and snow while the sun is still shining! He walks so heavily that the earth trembles around him. He is regarded as the protector of the mountains.

If you ever visit the Krakonos Mountains, you can go skiing and walking, explore nature trails, visit museums, enjoy good food, take bike rides and have a look in underground caves, to name but a few activities. You might even bump into the giant!





The Silver Fish

Legend has it that a wealthy man called Myslík was forced to run away from Prague after the battle of the White Mountain. He gathered all his precious silver and melted it in a fish-shaped clay mould. Before leaving his beloved Prague, Myslík hid the silver fish inside a wall of his house.

Many years later, a new tenant was living in the house. One day, this man was ordered by the city councillors to tear down the old structure and build a new one. The poor man fell into despair at the news as he didn't have the money to do it.

He was about to leave the house when Myslík's silver fish fell out of a broken wall. The precious object allowed the man to restore his old house.

A popular story in Prague, even today, we see, through this tale, that misfortune for one can often turn into good fortune for others and, so, we must never lose our sense of hope as something good could easily be waiting for us, just around the corner...

Biblical Link (Mark 4:10-12)

Stories are crucially important in the ministry of Jesus. In one tale, he speaks of a Samaritan, a person who would normally be seen by his followers as an enemy. However, in the account, Jesus presents this strange man as good and trustworthy, reminding us that it is wrong for us to judge others. What other stories do Pilots recognise from Jesus' ministry?

Stories can be very useful in helping us to digest difficult messages and concepts as they relate the things we don't understand to things we do understand. When asked why he tells so many stories, Jesus says that 'many look, but do not see', 'many listen, but do not hear'. People want to understand His messages, but do not and, so, He has to make them accessible.

Whatever age you may be, stories offer engaging and interesting opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and ability.

Ask Pilots to think about their favorite story. Why does it mean so much to them? Has it helped them to think about or understand something? Is there a message in these stories which others could learn from?

Prayer

Encourage Pilots to pray for God's patience and calmness as they reflect on the stories around them, that they might enjoy these tales, make sense of them and learn from them.

Activities

Ask Pilots to see what they can find out about Good King Wenceslas. Was he, indeed, good? How did his faith affect his relationship with his family?

Explore the carol, 'Good King Wenceslas' with Pilots and discuss their feelings about the story's message.

Play 'Sleeping Giants' – Pilots sit in a circle. One Pilot is the 'sleeping giant' and sits on a chair in the middle. A set of keys is placed under the chair. Whilst they are in the middle of the circle with their eyes closed a 'thief' is selected from the surrounding circle to go in and steal the keys. The thief must stand up and tiptoe round the circle, back to their own space and into the middle to steal the keys. If the giant hears them s/he should point in the direction of the noise. If the giant is correct, the thief sits down and another thief is chosen. When the thief gets the keys in their hand they must run out of the circle through their own gap and run around the outside as fast as they can and finally back into the middle through the same gap they came out of without the giant catching them. The giant may only start chasing when they hear the keys being snatched. If the thief is successful then they become the giant. If not, the giant remains the same.

Play 'Consequences' – Sit in a circle, with each Pilot, in turn, saying only one word (or perhaps a sentence). See what funny or interesting stories Pilots can tell.

DID YOU KNOW...?

...that Charles Dickens has influenced Czech literature by:

inspiring controversial satirist Jaroslav Hašek in the 19th century

needing Czech words to be invented for more complex terms in translating his works

returning to popularity with new Czech generations through film versions of his works





Section 5

Food and Festivals



Exploring the culture and traditions of another country can often be as confusing as it is interesting. One good way to begin an adventure into the customs and ways of a nation is through its stomach! What and how people eat can take us nicely into its beliefs, behavior and priorities.

Eating in the Czech Republic can be very meat-focused. Pork is very popular indeed, as are a variety of dumplings which regularly accompany main meals.

General Dining Etiquette

If you join a Czech family for a meal, as in any other context, manners and etiquette are important. You wouldn't be expected to begin a meal without saying 'dobrou chut', the Czech equivalent to bon appetite. The appropriate response is to repeat the phrase. It's also considered bad manners to talk during a meal. Conversation can happen between courses or after eating.



Regular Meals

Breakfast (snídane)

When eating out, 'snídane' is served between 7am and 9am and is often a light meal of bread (chléb) or bread roll (rohlík) with butter, cheese, jam or yoghurt. Czech bakeries (pekárna) sell crossaint-like pastries called 'loupáčky', these are smaller and heavier than the French variety.

Lunch (obed)

This is traditionally the main meal of the day and, because Czechs often start their day early, they're ready for what we might think of as an early lunch, at around 11.30am.

Dinner (večere)

As lunch is normally the main meal, dinner is usually a light meal resembling what we might think of as lunch, with items such as sandwiches, salad, cold meats or cheese.

Specialities

Dumplings are often served instead of potatoes in Czech savoury dishes. There are two main types; bread dumplings (houškové knedlíky) and potato dumplings (bramborové knedlíky). The bread dumplings are made from flour, yeast, egg yolk and milk. They are boiled, sliced and served alongside pork and sauerkraut. The potato dumplings are heavier and stodgier, but served in the same way.

Another type of dumpling is a fruit version (ovocné knedlíky), similar to the bread dumplings but sweetened and served stuffed with berries, plums or apricots and drizzled with melted butter and a sprinkle of sugar.

If roast beef and Yorkshire puddings is a classic British dish, roast pork with dumplings and sauerkraut (vepřová pečeň s knedlíky a kyselým zelím) is the Czech equivalent.

The pork is rubbed with salt and caraway seeds then roasted until it is tender. Roast beef (svíčková) is also on the Czech menu, served with a sour cream, lemon and cranberry sauce.





Christmas

For many, December 24 is the most enjoyable day of Christmas holidays. Its Czech name, Štědrý den, literally means “Generous Day”, probably in honour of the wealth of food that is traditionally shared with everyone and everything, from friends and family to farm animals! Even poor families make sure that their plates are full on this one day of the year.

In many households, Christmas trees are also decorated with traditional Czech ornaments.

December 24 is the feast day of Adam and Eve, the first humans, offering another reason to be generous with one another as we celebrate our existence.

Christmas Dinner is served after sunset (traditionally, it should not be served until after the first star has come out) and consists of carp and potato salad, sometimes preceded by mushroom, sauerkraut or fish soup. Christmas carp are raised, in specially made ponds, to be sold from large tubs placed on the streets and town squares a few days before Christmas. You will not see this sight at any other time of the year. Some families keep their carp in the bathtub for several days. Apple strudel is very often served as a pudding. A traditional Christmas bread called vánočka (similar to Jewish challa) used to be a part of the Christmas dinner in the past, representing the manna which fell from heaven to feed God’s people in exile (see Exodus 16:1-5), but today it has largely lost its Christmas connotation and is now available all year round.

After dinner, everyone around the table may sing Christmas carols together before moving over to the Christmas tree. Presents have been placed under the tree. Czech children believe that Christmas gifts are brought by Baby Jesus (Ježíšek) who comes into the room through the window to leave the presents. Unlike Santa Claus, Baby Jesus is a rather abstract figure with no particular physical image attached to him, and no one knows where he lives. Just like Santa though, he receives wish-list letters from Czech children a few weeks before Christmas.

Some people end Christmas Eve by attending the midnight mass at a local church. It usually starts at midnight but some churches hold it earlier, such as at 10 p.m. There can also be a Christmas Mass for children in the afternoon.



On December 26, St Stephen’s day is celebrated. People used to go round their neighbour’s homes singing carols to mark the occasion. Nowadays, families tend to stay at home or visit friends.

In the week following, Pork is a traditional New Year’s Eve dinner, but not a part of the pig we might expect. Once it has been boiled, pig’s head is usually served with horseradish and apple.





Section 5

Food and Festivals



Easter ('Velikonoce')

In, what is now the Czech Republic, the religious side of Easter was suppressed under the communist regime. Nowadays, Czechs are again aware of the strong Christian background of the festival, but it is not treated as a major religious holiday. It remains, however, one of the Czech Republic's most joyful times of celebration!

Easter in the Czech Republic is a time of fun. Many local traditions are still observed and practiced during this season, especially in villages.

Easter symbols, such as eggs and baby animals, red and other bright colours, representing health, joy, happiness and the new life that comes with spring, are also popular. Eggs are decorated, most commonly with geometric designs, to boys, by girls, on Easter Monday. A nationwide Easter egg decorating contest is held in Prague and other Czech cities around Easter time.

In rural areas, children finish school on 'Ugly Wednesday', the day before Maundy Thursday. Maundy Thursday is known as 'Green Thursday', when boys with rattles run through the towns and villages making a great noise in order to chase Judas away. This is repeated on Good Friday and again on 'White Saturday', when they stop at every house to collect money which is then shared amongst them all.

On Easter Sunday, the eggs are prepared to be given out the following day.



Children's Day

The citizens of the Czech Republic celebrate Children's Day annually on the 1st of June, as do a number of countries in the former Communist Bloc. On this day, families take their children to local churches and parks to enjoy carnivals and fun events together. This day celebrates peace, harmony, and great health of all children.

Some Recipes to Try

Czech Chocolate Pecan Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 squares of chocolate - melted
- ¼ cup butter
- ½ cup of flour
- 1 cup of pecans

Method

Mix all the ingredients together until smooth

Put a teaspoon of mixture onto a lined or greased baking tray

Bake 300 C for 6- 8 minutes (Gas equivalent??)

Allow to cool slightly - place ½ pecan on top of each cookies.

Knedlíky (Czech Dumplings)

Ingredients (for 4 servings)

- 1 egg, beaten
- ½ cup milk
- 1 cup flour
- ⅛ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 to 5 slices white bread, cut into cubes

Method

In a mixing bowl, combine beaten egg, milk, flour, baking powder, and salt until smooth.

Add bread cubes in batter and mix well.

Make 2 small balls from the dough.

Fill a large pot about half full with water and bring to a boil.

Drop the dough balls into the pot of boiling water and cook 10 minutes, then roll knedlíky over and cook an additional 10 minutes.

Remove immediately from the water and cut in half to release steam.

Serve with roast pork or sauerkraut.

Why not have a look at foodbycountry.com/Algeria-to-France/Czech-Republic.html#ixzz3bLjUmrr2 and bbc.co.uk/food/cuisines/east_european for more recipes from the region? Contact the Pilots Desk if you need any help with this.





Biblical Link (Matthew 26:17-29)

Festivals offer important opportunities for us to break with the norm and do something different. Whether they focus on the commemoration of a particular event, the remembrance of a specific person or the celebration of principles and values, they each, in their own way, make us focus on those things which truly matter. Tradition often plays an important role in such festivals. There are things which should and should not be done during festivals, specific food to eat, particular places to visit. If these traditions were not in place, things just wouldn't be the same.

As the disciples gathered round the table for their Passover meal, they did so knowing exactly what to expect. The rules and procedures, symbolism and imagery for the event are clearly noted in scripture. Yet, in the midst of this familiar festival, Jesus breaks with tradition. At this meal, which scripture clearly set aside to recall the hurried escape of God's people from slavery in Egypt, Jesus proclaims that the bread symbolizes His body and the wine His blood. This is now a meal which should commemorate Him, His work and sacrifice. People should continue to celebrate it until He returns to the world again, at the coming of God's Kingdom. Christ takes a traditional festival and, by changing some of the practices and emphases, adds new meaning.

Ask Pilots to think about their favorite festival, holiday or special meal of the year. Why does it mean so much to them? What are the traditions associated with the celebration which just simply must be in place? Why are they so crucial? How can we make sure that, when we celebrate something, the traditions, in and of themselves, don't take over the thing we're supposed to be commemorating or remembering?



Prayer

Encourage Pilots to pray for God's peace and clarity as they seek to make good use of festivals and special occasions to focus on the things that really matter, even if Pilots need to change the way they celebrate them to keep them relevant.

Activities

Talk about the differences between the public holidays in the Czech Republic and those in this country. What other public holidays would Pilots introduce if they could?

Ask Pilots to try their hand at painting eggs.

Find some traditional Czech recipes to try out.

Invite Pilots to lead a Worship Service in June focussed on Children's Day.

Organise a Czech-themed evening for the congregation to help Pilots share what they have learned about the Czech Republic with the wider community.

DID YOU KNOW...?

...that the Czech Republic has seven Public Holidays:

January 1 - New Year's Day

May 8 - Day of Recovery of the Independent Czech State, Liberation Day

July 5 - Day of Slavonic Apostles Cyril and Methodius

July 6 - Jan Hus Day

September 28 - Day of Czech Statehood

October 28 - Independence Day

November 17 - St. Wenceslas Day and Day of the Students' Fight for Freedom and Democracy

In addition, most Czechs, including atheists, celebrate Christian holidays, including Easter and Christmas, which remain the oldest public holidays and were even recognised during the communist period.





Section 6

The Church



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During the communist era, no official statistics were kept on religion, though the activities of churches were financed by the government following the nationalization of all church property by 1949. Atheism was the official policy of the communist government and the role of the Church was largely restricted to religious rites. This prevented Christians from explicitly working for social justice in the communities around them, as well as from participating in the global ecumenical movement (where denominations from around the world work together). After 1989, when Communism in Czechoslovakia ended, the churches there were allowed, once more, among other things, to cooperate more freely with churches abroad.

A visit to Czechoslovakia by Pope John Paul II in April 1990 celebrated the resurgence of Roman Catholicism, which counts about two-fifths of the population as adherents (meaning that they support the Church from the background, but are not fully members).

There are also Eastern Orthodox congregations and various small Protestant sects, of which the Evangelical

Church of Czech Brethren is one of the most important. A significant number of Czechs are members of the national Czech church, which was founded in 1920 and took the name Czechoslovak Hussite Church in 1972.

Almost one-third of the population claims no religious affiliation.

Between 1990 and 1997, small groups of people from the United Reformed Church (URC), the denomination which runs Pilots, went to work at a beautiful mountain resort called Herlikovice. There, alongside young people from the Czech Protestant churches, they helped rebuild a conference and leisure centre called "The Mountain House" (Horsky Domov), as well as playing volleyball together and going for long walks in the surrounding mountains. In recent years some of the Czech young people who took part in those meetings have started them again in the form of International Work Camps for young people of various nationalities. Some young people from the churches of the Thames North Synod have attended these camps in Herlikovice.



The Church



You can find out more about the annual youth camp which takes place in the 'Horsky Domov' here: <http://icamp.evangnet.cz/> or contact the Pilots Desk for more details.

Many of the overseas voyage packs produced for Pilots are written by groups of people, from local churches or URC Synods, who have links with a particular country. Thames North Synod has a partnership arrangement with a group of churches in the Czech Republic. Some of the churches in the Thames North Synod have had ministers from the Czech Republic spend a year, sometimes more, with them as part of their leadership team, allowing both the Czech minister and the congregation to experience a church style from a culture outside their own, as well as the opportunity to build links between churches in different countries.



Malcolm's Memories

Malcolm Haslett has countless memories of URC group trips to the Czech lands, here are some of his stories:

"The first time some of us from the URC went to a work camp, we soon learned some very special words! Pick-axe, for example, was 'krumpach', shovel was 'lopata' and the almost unpronounceable word 'hnuj' meant manure! As you may guess, the job of the little group I was working with was to move some manure from an old cowshed down to the warden's garden! Oh yes, and break up the cement floor of the old cowshed (that's where the 'krumpach' came in handy!).

In the evenings, we sat round a campfire, singing spirituals. One very old church minister came to visit us one evening. He told us that, once, during the German occupation during World War II, he had been arrested by the Gestapo for not mentioning it was Adolf Hitler's birthday in his sermon. Then, after Germany's defeat and the introduction of a hard-line Communist regime, he was arrested again and forbidden to practice as a minister because he had done some of his church training in America, a democratic nation.

Work in the churches with children and young people was very difficult in the Communist period because the government disapproved of young people going to church and tried to stop them from doing so. When I first went to Czechoslovakia in 1970, there was a particularly strict clampdown following the earlier Russian invasion in 1968, so my friend, Rev. Petr Capek, who was the Protestant Church's Youth Secretary, contacted young people in their teens, through their ministers, to organize a secret gathering. Suddenly, they miraculously appeared, as if spontaneously, in the same place, at the same time, in a forest in Southern Bohemia where the forester 'just happened' to be a church member! In the mornings, we worked for the forester (and the officially 'atheist' state!). In the afternoons and evenings, we went walking, swimming in the river Vltava, near a beautiful, fairy tale castle called Orlik and, come sunset, enjoyed songs round the campfire once again! Truly memorable experiences for all involved."





Section 6

The Church



Biblical Link (Ephesians 4:11-16)

The World Church is a fascinating family. Its diversity is so great that it can sometimes be difficult to see how all parts of the group fit together. Yet, in His love and wisdom, God declares that this broad and wide-ranging plethora of people all belong to Him. They are, in His eyes, united as one, His body in the world.

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, offers this famous reminder that these differences are not threatening or dangerous, but are, rather, great gifts to be enjoyed. Some are called to be Preachers and Teachers, others to be Prophets. This, it seems, extends to the family of the Church, as some are called to be Reformed, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Roman Catholics...the list goes on. Each one unique, each one important.

Paul goes on to say that our acceptance of this diversity is not merely an option we can decide to ignore, but is, rather, crucial for our health, growth and development. For, without recognising and valuing each other as the people of God, we cannot support each other, learn from each other or, when needed, challenge each other.

One fish, swimming alone, can be easily caught by a predator. Hundreds of fish in a shoal are much more difficult to catch, however, as they support and guide each other to safety. So it is with us. Alone, we cannot deal with the challenges and questions which life and faith throw at us, but together, with our siblings in Christ around the globe, we can gain a bigger picture of what God is doing in other parts of both the Church and the world, using our findings to help each other as we move forward, so that we will not falter at the first sight of difficulties, but, rather, tackle them as one, untied force.

As Pilots to find out more about the relationships their congregation or URC Synod (roughly the same shapes and sizes as the Pilot's Regions) shares with other Christians around the world. In what ways do the groups differ? How have they dealt with these differences in their interactions? How do these partnerships enhance the groups who are involved?



Prayer

Encourage Pilots to pray for God's understanding and unity as they learn about how their own communities of faith relate to other communities of faith worldwide and reflect on how they, as Pilots, might influence these partnerships.

Activities

Talk about international exchanges and opportunities which Pilots will be interested in learning about and may wish to support or be a part of.

Invite people who have already enjoyed such opportunities to share their experiences with Pilots.

Create a poster or scrapbook about the links which Pilots companies, URC Synods or congregations share with other Christians around the world.

DID YOU KNOW...?

...that the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren is:

the largest Protestant denomination in the Czech Republic

brings together Calvinists and Lutherans, two groups which often find unity difficult

is among the country's biggest supporters of social justice and help for the vulnerable

has more members than the URC, despite being in a much smaller nation





Czech Republic





Czech Republic - Pilots Overseas Voyage 2015

Produced by the Pilots Desk :: United Reformed Church House
86 Tavistock Place :: London :: WC1H 9RT
t: 020 7916 8637 f: 020 7916 2021
email: pilots@urc.org.uk website: www.pilots.org.uk

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CZECH REPUBLIC

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