

#9065

GUATEMALA

MARYKNOLL WORLD PRODUCTIONS

1998

Grade Levels: 4-8

14 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Fourteen-year-old Nati shares her life in Guatemala during a typical day. She talks about customs, dress, school, and how her world is changing and the choices she faces.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Geography--Environment and Society

- Standard: Understands how physical systems affect human systems
 - Benchmark: Knows the ways in which human systems develop in response to conditions in the physical environment (e.g., patterns of land use, economic livelihoods, architectural styles of buildings, building materials, flows of traffic, recreation activities)

Subject Area: Geography--Human Systems

- Standard: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
 - Benchmark: Knows the similarities and differences in characteristics of culture in different regions (e.g., in terms of environment and resources, technology, food, shelter, social organization, beliefs and customs, schooling, what girls and boys are allowed to do)

Subject Area: Geography--Places and Regions

- Standard: Understands the physical and human characteristics of place
 - Benchmark: Knows the human characteristics of places (e.g., cultural characteristics such as religion, language, politics, technology, family structure, gender; population characteristics; land uses; levels of development)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To introduce the country, geography, and people of Guatemala.
2. To dramatize the life of a 14-year-old Guatemalan girl who is of South American Indian descent.
3. To examine the history of the Central American Indian group, the Mayas.
4. To illustrate that some rituals are similar across national boundaries, but some are unique to one country or people.

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Write the name "Natividad Martín Hernández" on the board. Why does she have two surnames? What do they mean?
2. Do you know any Guatemalans? Have you talked with them about their country? Point out Central America and Guatemala on a map.
3. What do you know about the Mayas and their great civilization? About the great Mayan ruins of Tikal? What do you know about recent Guatemalan history?

AFTER SHOWING

1. Did anything about the video surprise you? Something that you saw or something that Natividad said?
2. What do you think about all the women wearing identical dress in Chimaltenango? Did you like her dress?
3. The video shows many traditions of Nati and the Maya of Santiago Chimaltenango. Which ones did you notice?
4. Nati says that there is one telephone in town and that she has never used a telephone. Any comments? (A report states that 50% of the world's people have never used a telephone.)
5. What do you think about the Maya creation myth? How does it compare with other creation stories you know?
6. Given the problem of diminishing land in her village, what do you think is the solution for Nati and her family? How do you think she will adapt to new traditions, dress and language?

SUMMARY

Natividad (Nati) Martín Hernández is a 14-year-old Maya Indian girl of Santiago Chimaltenango, located in the northwestern state of Huehuetenango of Guatemala. Her village is located on the side of a mountain, 7,000 feet high, and remote, almost hidden from outside influences. Until recently there were no roads, electricity, TV or telephone in Chimaltenango. But that has all changed---progress and modernization are the in-words.

Traditions here run deep and strong. Women dress as they have for centuries in their time-honored red and white *huipiles* (blouses) and dark blue *cortes* (skirts). Each town wears its own distinct pattern of colors and designs, passed on by women weavers from mother to daughter. The video shows the dress of four neighboring towns.

One problem is quickly hitting home with the population: the land is short supply. Lots in town are scarce and there is no more land for planting corn, beans and squash, the traditional foods. How will Nati prepare herself for the changes that are sure to come in the next century?

The video camera accompanies Nati to school, where she is in the fourth grade. (Why is a 14-year-old girl only in the fourth grade? Because of a lack of room in the school, the entrance age is 9 or 10.)

Nati relates the Maya creation myth of the Great Heart of the Universe while her father works in the *milpa*, the cornfield. Finally, the family visits the cemetery to pray for their deceased members, including their ancestors.



RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Central America #2157
- El Salvador #9066
- Juanita's Dream: A Mayan's Guide to Guatemala #9271



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **GUATEMALA**

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gt.html>

From the CIA World Factbook, presents information on Guatemala, such as a brief background on its history, economy, government; its geography; statistics on its literacy, birth and death, ethnic groups, and other rates; and more.

- **MAYA RUINS.COM**

<http://mayaruins.com/>

A photographic tour of selected sites in Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala allows you to check out the archaeological sites, background, and to visit different cities to view clear pictures of Mayan ruins.

- **LOST KING OF THE MAYA**

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/maya/>

Provides a brief description of Mayan civilization. Click on one of the 15 better-known Mayan cities to read a description and to view a picture of this site.