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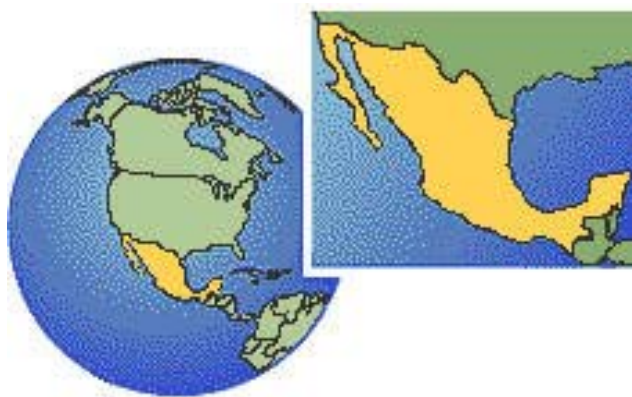
# CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA

MARYKNOLL WORLD PRODUCTIONS

2000

Grade Levels: 4-8

14 minutes



## DESCRIPTION

Jesús lives in Juarez, a town in Mexico, across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. The eighth-grader tells about his life in the barrio, his schooling, family, and chores. With his parents working nights, the family is together only on weekends.

## 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 Mexico.
2. To dramatize the life of a 15-year-old boy, who lives in Ciudad Juárez in the state of Chihuahua.
3. To review the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
4. To review the causes for tensions between the U.S. border efforts and Ciudad Juárez.

## BEFORE SHOWING

1. Write down the name of "Jesús Manuel Aldaba Soto" and his city, "Ciudad Juárez," on the blackboard.
2. Find Mexico and its capital, Mexico City, on a map. Close to the United States border, find Ciudad Juárez, El Paso, Texas and Rio Grande River.
3. Do you know any Mexican people or people of Mexican descent in your school or neighborhood? What do you notice about them?
4. Do you know any Mexican entertainers or sports figures? What is the name of the Mexican president?
5. What do you know about Mexico from television or the news?
6. Would you want to visit Mexico as a tourist? Any particular place?

## AFTER SHOWING

1. Did Jesús Manuel say something that surprised you?
2. Both parents work and are absent from the house when the children return from school. What do you think of this situation?
3. The Aldaba family—as well as thousands of other families—are newcomers to Ciudad Juárez. How do you think it feels to leave friends and school and move to another new town and school?
4. Many factories in the United States have closed down and moved to Mexico and other countries. Why did the owners do that?
5. What is the minimum hourly wage in the United States? Can people here live on that?
6. The Albada family earns \$7.00 a day (each parent earns \$3.50 a day) working in the assembly factories. For them it is a wonderful wage, one that they never earned before. What do they gain and lose in moving to Ciudad Juárez?
7. What do you think about the scholarship program of the church? What are Jesús Manuel's chances of going to the university?

## SUMMARY

Jesús Manuel Aldaba Soto, 15, lives with his parents and two younger sisters in a *barrio* (neighborhood) of Ciudad Juárez, in the state of Chihuahua. The city is relatively new to them, for the family migrated here 6 years ago from the state of Durango, south of Chihuahua.

Ciudad Juárez, named after the President Benito Juárez (1867-72), is located in northern Mexico on the border with the United States. In recent decades, factories in the United States closed and moved to Mexico and other countries, where there was an abundant work force and low wages. In Mexico, environmental laws are not as strict and independent labor unions are nonexistent. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed by Canada, the United States and Mexico in 1992, was a boon to all assembly factories, or *maquilas*, in Mexico.

Jesús goes to a nearby high school and his sisters, Lucia and Guadalupe, attend grammar school. In the afternoons, as the children finish classes, Ascensió and Candelaria are on their way to the second shift at the *maquila*. Parents and children may see each other for a few minutes to exchange messages, and then it is off to catch the bus. The family is together only during the weekends.



There are also serious tensions along the border here. The constant presence of United States border guards and miles of 10-foot high razor wire fences are reminders of the United States government's efforts to deal with the flow of illegal immigration. In addition, the area has become a major drug center, with Ciudad Juárez now the principal port of exit for Latin America drugs. Furthermore, delinquency and gangs contribute to an explosion of crime, creating an atmosphere of insecurity among the *maquila* workers.

It has been a long journey for the Aldaba family from the rural farm to city life. The larger question for them—and many others—is whether the job security and fixed salary in the assembly plant is a worthwhile exchange for all they left behind.

## RELATED RESOURCES



### Captioned Media Program

- Andres Orosco of Mexico #3434
- Mexico #3637
- Mexico: The People and Their Customs #3156
- Acteal, Chiapas #9070



### 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.

#### • MEXICO

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

From the CIA World Factbook, presents information on Mexico, 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.

#### • DISCOVERING MEXICO

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/mexico/>

Click on "Journeys" to follow where a developing nation is situated on the border of a great industrial power. Read about the maquiladoras and view pictures of common goings-on.

#### • WELCOME TO "NAFTA FACTS"

<http://www.mac.doc.gov/nafta/menu1.htm>

Click on number 3008 to find out what "Effect of NAFTA on Maquiladoras" has, number 8312 on "Maquiladoras—Recent Trends and Growth," number 8313 for "FAQs and Answers about Maquiladoras," and other topics related to "Doing Business in Mexico."

