

NEW YEAR EDITION

FAMILIES ON THE EDGE

Can you name all the countries that border Ukraine? Check on a map at home.



WELCOME TO UKRAINE!

From your church family in Ukraine and Moldova, welcome to the Families on the Edge devotional series! We are constantly amazed and encouraged by your love and support through your special missions contribution. We hope your hearts are also encouraged in the following months, as you explore Ukraine – learning about the traditions, culture, and of course, disciples!

Where is Ukraine?

Ukraine is a country located in the geographical center of Europe. Can you find Ukraine on a map?

Moldova is a small country southwest of Ukraine. Can you find Moldova on a map?

What language do Ukrainians speak?

In Ukraine, the official language is Ukrainian, but most people speak both Russian and Ukrainian. In different parts of Ukraine, you will hear more Ukrainian, and in other parts people more often speak Russian.

In Russian, Privyet means “hello.” Can you say it? In Russian, it looks like this: ПРИВЕТ. Try to write “privyet” in Russian.

Where is my church family in Ukraine?

We have nine official churches in Ukraine and Moldova, and in many other cities there are small groups or “house churches.” Our biggest church is in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, where you have around 2,000 brothers and sisters!

Every few weeks, you will be learning more about a different church in Ukraine or Moldova. We encourage you to buy or print a map of Ukraine, and when you visit a new church, to mark it on your map!

UKRAINIAN CULTURE:

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS

Did you know that Ukrainians celebrate Christmas in January, and have 2 New Years?

It's true!

On December 31, like all around the world, Ukrainians celebrate the New Year. New Years is by far the favorite holiday in Ukraine, and is similar to Christmas for Americans. Ukrainians have a saying, that you will spend a year the way you have welcomed it. So they try and make New Years Eve the best day of the year.

Like we have Christmas tree, Ukrainians have a New Year tree (Yolka or Sosna). Like us, they decorate their New Year tree with many lights and ornaments. At the New Year Ukrainians exchange gifts and make delicious dinners to eat together with their families. Children wait for Uncle Frost (Santa Claus in Slavic culture) to put presents under the New Year tree.

During the Soviet Union, people were not allowed to believe in God or celebrate Christmas. New Years replaced Christmas, and that is why the holidays are so much alike. Their New Years is basically Christmas without Jesus. Praise God, that under the current government, Ukrainians now have freedom of religion and we can worship Him openly!

On January 7, is the Ukrainian (Orthodox) Christmas. Then, on January 13, Ukrainians celebrate "Old New Year." The story is, that the USSR did not adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1918. Before that time, they were thirteen days behind the rest of the

world. Now, they celebrate both the "old" and "new" New Year.

Snovom Godom! (Happy New Year!)

SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK:

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

ACTS 20: 35



**New Year
Tree in Kiev
2007**

FUN FACT: Last year the New Year tree in Kiev's Independence Square was made from over 300 smaller fir trees.

DISCUSSION:

1. What was your favorite Christmas present that you recieved this year? Gave?
2. Which do you enjoy more, giving or recaiving? Which did Jesus say is better? Why?

ACTIVITY:

For Younger Children: Make up a game where you practice giving and receiving gifts from one another, Which is more fun?

For Older Children: Make a list of your dreams and goals for the new year.

CHALLENGE:

Decide on a time every week to sit down together for family devotionals.