

Iraq

- ◆ The capital city of Iraq is Baghdad.
- ◆ Most of the people are Muslims. Less than 2% are Christians.
- ◆ Iraqis have two official languages: Arabic and Kurdish.
- ◆ Iraq is in the Middle East with Turkey to the north, Syria and Jordan to the west, Iran to the east, and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to the south.
- ◆ Iraqi Christians do not have the same rights as Muslims. They are often victims of kidnapping, have their property destroyed, and are raped and/or murdered. The government offers little help or protection.
- ◆ The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, were built in Iraq by King Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) for his wife, Amytis.
- ◆ Iraqis observe the death of a family member with a 40-day mourning period.
- ◆ Iraqi women serve the men their meals and eat in a separate area. The right hand only is used to eat, and food is eaten with the hands.
- ◆ Soccer is the Iraqis' favorite sport.
- ◆ In Iraq, men greet other men with a kiss, and commonly hold hands. This is not the case for men and women. Women do not shake hands with men. They may say Salaam Alaykom (peace be with you) or something similar.



الله أكبر



Story: Mathias and Sayed

Mathias was in prison. The Iraqi government had sent a spy to his house church, who pretended to be a trusted friend to the Christians in the church, but was really getting information for the police.

Mathias and seven other Christians were arrested because it is against the law to worship God outside of churches that have been approved by the government.

The prison looked like a big, white boat on the outside. But on the inside, workers had painted the walls blood red to obey an order of the government. This was one of the many ways the government used to make the prisoners miserable.

Mathias was placed in a six-by-eight-foot cell with five other prisoners who were Muslims. He prayed that he would have the chance to talk to the men about Jesus. He carved "Jesus" on the cell wall with a piece of concrete and drew a cross by it.

"Why do you pray to Jesus?" asked Sayed, one of the Muslim prisoners. "You must pray to Allah!" Allah is the Muslim god.



Story cont...

Mathias explained that he had a personal relationship with Jesus. He told his cellmates that Jesus had done many miracles, and said he believed Jesus would do another miracle and free him from prison.

Sayed hated Mathias and insulted him. But Mathias continued to pray for him and the other Muslims.

Early one morning, Sayed woke Mathias up and told him about a dream he had. In the dream Jesus came to him and told him that Mathias was going to be freed from prison. "He was dressed in white," Sayed said of Jesus, "and I could not see His face because it shone brighter than the sun and blinded me. I asked who He was, and He answered, 'Jesus Christ.' Then Jesus said, 'I am responsible for Mathias, and I will release him from this place.'"

After Sayed told his cellmates about his dream, the Muslim prisoners fell to their knees and began asking Jesus to free them also! A week later, Mathias and the Christians who were arrested with him were released.

Adapted from LINK International, a division of Voice of the Martyrs.



Recipe: Shorbeh

- 2 cups orange lentils
- 4 cups water
- 1/2 tablespoon salt or 1 chicken bouillon cube
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon dry onion

Wash lentils. Fill pot with lentils and water, pepper and salt, and dry onion. Bring to a rapid boil. Cover and reduce heat to simmer. Cook 20-25 minutes until thick and yellow.

Activity: Mathias in Prison

Measure off a six-by-eight-foot space, the size of Mathias's cell. Sit in your "cell" with five other people. Discuss how you would sleep and live there if you had to stay in that space all the time. Pray for Christians around the world who are in prison (see Hebrews 13:3).



Go to www.frontlinekids.com/resources to find lesson supplemental materials such as: prayer points, recipes, maps, videos, printable coloring sheets and more.