

1.

For most of their history, people in the Czech lands had only one choice when it came to religion—Roman Catholic.

1.

Bohemia, in the western part of the Czech Republic, is a land of rolling hills and valleys, surrounded by mountains. Moravia, in the east, is very hilly.

2.

In the 1400s Jan Hus led a rebellion against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

2.

Some of the oldest and most important land routes in Europe go right through the Czech Republic. This is one reason why it has been occupied by so many different groups over the centuries.

3.

One Catholic practice that Jan Hus protested was the giving of communion wine only to priests. He thought priests and common people should be treated equally when it came to the communion service.

3.

After World War I, the area became known as Czechoslovakia. In 1938 part of Czechoslovakia was given to Hitler, in hopes of preventing World War II. Although this didn't work, it did prevent the bombing of Prague and other historic sites.

4.

The chalice cup in the UU symbol today comes from Hus' protest. He used a chalice to give communion wine to all members of the congregation, not just priests. It became a symbol of freedom and equality for all Czech peoples. Does your church use a chalice in the service?

4.

After World War II, Czechoslovakia became a communist country and joined the Soviet Union in the Warsaw Pact. It remained under communist rule until the late 1980s.



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5.

Hus also protested against the practice of making people pay for “indulgences,” letters of forgiveness from the Pope. He thought this was bribery.

5.

Under communist rule, farms were not successful, so thousands of Czechs moved from the country to the cities. Today,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the population now live in the cities.

6.

Capek studied Czech history and learned that a free Christian faith had been practiced in Czech lands even before the Catholic missionaries arrived. How old is your church?

6.

About 40% of the population is Roman Catholic, though many of them do not actively attend church.

7.

The first services of Capek’s Unitarian church in the 1920s were simple: they did not sing hymns, or say prayers, or have any rituals. Are some things that are done every week in your church service? What are they?

7.

Education has always been important to Czechs. The oldest university in central Europe is Charles University in Prague, which dates to 1348.

8.

People who came to the early Unitarian church did not want anything in the service that would remind them of the churches they left. What do you think would be one of those things?

8.

Education is required from age 6 to 15. After that, youth may enter vocational schools or 4 year schools that prepare them for university studies.



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9.

Capek thought his congregation needed a ritual to bring them together so he designed the Flower Festival. Each person brings a flower and leaves with a different flower. The flower symbolizes each person as unique; taking away a different flower symbolizes free choice to join together in religious community.

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10.

Capek's Flower Festival is perhaps the most widely celebrated ritual in UU churches today. Does your congregation hold a Flower Celebration?

10.

The Czech language has two forms: formal, written Czech that is used in the media and schools, and informal spoken Czech that has many slang expressions, as well as some German and English words.

11.

By 1940, the church in Prague had grown to be the largest in the world with 3,200 members.

11.

Most schools are still controlled by the government but there are a growing number of private and religious schools.

12.

Unitaria is the name used for the place where Unitarians meet. There are 3 Unitaria in the Czech Republic today: one in Prague, one in Brno, and one in Pilsen.

12.

Most Czechs live comfortably: an average Czech family has a car, a TV, a refrigerator and a washing machine.



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13.

Capek believed that religion should help people reach harmony, or peace, within themselves and with God.

13.

Families are generally small. In recent years more Czechs are choosing not to have children, so there are fewer children in the country.

14.

Capek believed you must have inner harmony to have “strong character, good health, joyful mood and a victorious, creative life.” Ask the other players to suggest ways of finding inner harmony.

14.

Czech kids enjoy many of the same things kids in the US do: computer games are popular, as is watching TV and hanging out with friends.

15.

The Prague Unitarian Church mission statement today says: “We are a freethinking society; we encourage each other to act according to our values, expressed in our Unitarian principles. We gather to learn from one another, share our joys and concerns. We strive to be useful to our environment and the world.” Does this sound like something your church would say?

15.

Pork is a favorite food, along with pickled cabbage and sliced dumplings called “knedliky.” Hot dogs are a favorite snack.

16.

Unlike Unitarians in Great Britain, Transylvania and the Khasi Hills, [and some UU’s in the United States,] the Czech Unitarians do not consider themselves Christian.

16.

The traditional Czech Christmas dinner is carp, a kind of fish raised in large ponds. People buy live carp from sellers on the street and keep them alive in their bathtubs until Christmas day when they cook and eat them.



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17.

The church in Prague has a stained glass window with the Czech Unitarian symbol and a quilt wall-hanging that was given to them by their partner church in Rochester, NY. What hangs on the walls in your church?

17.

Tennis is a popular Czech sport. Many international tennis champions are Czech, including Ivan Lendl and Martina Navratilova.

18.

Czech Unitarians begin their services by lighting a chalice, but this is a new ritual brought to them recently by a minister who had spent time in the United States. Do you light a chalice in your church service? Do you ever light a chalice at home?

18.

The Prague Spring Music Festival is one of Europe's biggest annual music events. It lasts for 3 weeks and includes all kinds of music.

19.

Lighting candles of joy and concern are also part of their worship service. Does your church light candles of joy and concern? Do you like it? Why or why not?

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20.

All 3 Czech Unitarian churches have partner churches in North America. The language barrier makes it hard to communicate but they like knowing they are not alone. Can you talk to a friend in another language?

20.

Prague is one of Europe's most popular tourist destinations, especially in the spring and summer.



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