Gregor Mendel
Genetics Pioneer

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Gregor Mendel:
Genetics Pioneer

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Johann Mendel (YOH-hahn MEN-dl) was born in 1822 into a poor farming family. He was born in the Austrian Empire, in a town that is now in the Czech (CHEK) Republic.

When Mendel grew up, he became a monk. He was also a botanist. A botanist is a scientist who studies plants. Mendel experimented with garden peas. People say he is the father of modern genetics because of his work.

The Czech Republic is in Europe. It is in between Germany, Austria, and Poland. It is a small country. It is smaller than the state of South Carolina. Its capital city is Prague.
Mendel’s life was hard. He worked as a gardener when he was young, but he wanted a better life. It was almost impossible for poor people to get a good education. His parents helped pay for him to go to school. Then his father got hurt. After that, his two sisters helped Mendel. To continue his education, Mendel entered a **monastery**. It was a teaching monastery. It was a place for learning and scientific inquiry. There, Mendel was given the name Gregor (GREG-er).

Monasteries such as this one in Greece have been centers of learning for centuries.

**Monasteries**

There are monasteries all over the world. Monks and nuns live in them. They spend time praying and meditating there. The monks of Mendel’s monastery belonged to the Augustinian (aw-guhs-TIN-ee-in) order.

Many well-known scientists lived in monasteries. People throughout time have often gone to monasteries to learn. Some do research and teach there. Monasteries also often give shelter to travelers and to the poor.