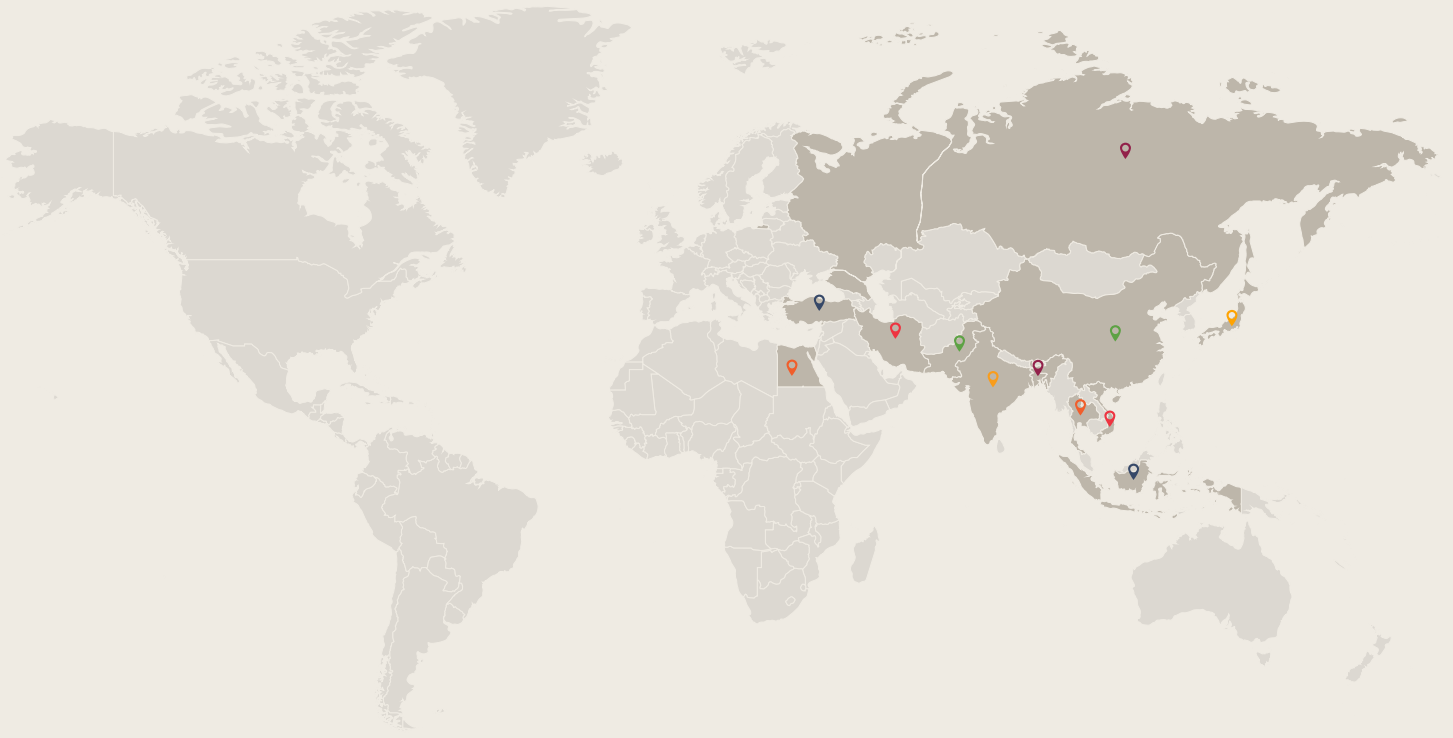


Family Guide

May 2023
Japan



“Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.”
— Psalm 2:8, New American Standard Bible 1995



A One-Year Prayer Adventure!

Using this handy family guide, we will travel to a faraway country every month, learn about its people and culture and pray for them. We will focus on a different least-reached country in every guide. There are 12 family guides covering 12 countries in 2023—one for every month.

Why do we call these countries “least reached”? Many of the people in these countries have never heard about Jesus, or it’s difficult for them to hear about Him. Even though you won’t get on a plane to each country, when you pray you join our mission to make a difference in the lives of the people in each country.

The best part is you’ll always know what to pray for. This family guide gives you a prayer request for every day of the week. Moms, dads and kids everywhere will be praying for the same thing together with you. Let’s get started by learning about this month’s country.

WELCOME TO Japan!



Christianity—the name of the religion for Jesus followers—was introduced to Japan over 500 years ago. But only a very small number of Japanese people consider themselves Jesus followers. The majority of pastors in Japan are over 60 years old, so when they stop being pastors and retire from working it looks like there may not be younger pastors that can replace them in their work.



Japan is an archipelago (the name for a group of islands) made up of over 6,800 islands, but people don't live on most of them. Mountains—including Mount Fuji in the Japanese Alps—cover close to 75% of Japan's landmass. Dense forests also cover 67% of Japan, leaving many of the country's 125 million residents to crowd large cities.

Fun Facts About Japan



Visitors flock to Japan in Spring to see the cherry blossoms in bloom. Their beauty is fleeting but they signal the ever-changing seasons. Is there something in nature that reminds you of God's amazing beauty?



The martial art called Judo was created in Japan in 1882. A sport and a form of combat, Judo athletes practice repeatedly, work smart and efficiently, using these skills to defeat attacks based on pure physical strength.



Japan is home to a record 80,000 centenarians—people who live to be 100 years old or older. About 1 of every 4 Japanese are 65 or older. Do you have any family members over 100 years old? Or over 65 years old?



Origami, the art of folding paper, originated in Japan. Have you ever tried this art? See the week 2 activity to make an origami bird.



Japan's most famous mountain, Mount Fuji, is also an active volcano, and it reaches 12,388 feet high—that is really, really tall. It is over two miles tall. Find out how far it is to your local school or park. Is that more or less than two miles? Imagine going that distance straight up into the air!

Ready to pray for the people of Japan?

As I mentioned in April, prayer is both talking to God and listening to Him. How can we hear God? The most common way is by reading His word, the Bible. Meditating on a verse is a special way to learn more about what He is saying through that verse. When we meditate on a verse, we think deeply and carefully about it.

There is nothing mystical or magical about this type of meditation. It does involve taking time—in a quiet place—to read, pray, think and listen.

This month, I would like to invite you and your family to focus on the verse listed at the top of each week.

- Read it aloud slowly several times. If any of the words are unfamiliar, look them up or ask what they mean.
- Stop and pray something like this, “Lord, I want to learn how to better listen to You. Please quiet my mind so I can hear Your voice through this verse. Thank You that You care enough about me to teach me.”
- Be quiet and silently read the verse again.
 - Is there something to praise God for?
 - Is there something to thank God for?
 - Is there something to ask God for?
 - Does He want You to change anything in the way you act or think?
 - Is there something you can use to pray for others, like for the people of Japan?
- Take time each day to meditate on the weekly verse.
- Discuss with your family: did you learn anything as you focused on the verse?
- Together, thank God for how He spoke to you as you read, prayed, thought, and listened.

Your 2023 Prayer Partner,

Lucinda

Please email me, or have a parent email me, if you have any questions or want to share what you are learning about prayer. I'd love to hear from you! prayer@jesusfilm.org



01

Week 1: May 1–7, 2023

*“People everywhere will remember
and will turn to the Lord.
All the families of the nations
will worship Him.
This is because the Lord is King.
He rules the nations.”*

— Psalm 22:27–28, International Children’s Bible



Week 1 Prayers



■ Day 1

God made human beings to worship Him, but gave them a choice to follow Him or not. Many know God through His son Jesus, but some have chosen to not follow Him. Instead, they worship idols made with their hands, which are lifeless and without power. Others choose to follow other leaders, and some choose only to do what they want to do. But every human being has a place in their heart that only the God of the Bible can fill, though they might not know it yet. Pray for Japanese to hear the message of Jesus and choose to follow Him, so that they can worship Him now and forever.

■ Day 2

Pray for Japanese people to make friends with followers of Jesus, so through friendship they can learn who Jesus really is and what it means to follow Him.

■ Day 3

There are hardly any Japanese people who think of Jesus as the one living and true God. Pray for the eyes of Japanese people to be opened to see that Jesus is both living and the only true way to God.

■ Day 4

Pray for those in Japan who are sad and feel hopeless. Ask God to encourage them and bring them a good friend to talk to.

■ Day 5

Pray for Japanese people to be drawn powerfully to the Lord in the midst of the challenges they face. May they discover the beautiful promise of Jesus in Matthew 11:28–30, *“Come to Me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads. I will give you rest. Accept My work and learn from Me. I am gentle and humble in spirit. And you will find rest for your souls. The work that I ask you to accept is easy. The load I give you to carry is not heavy”* (ICB).

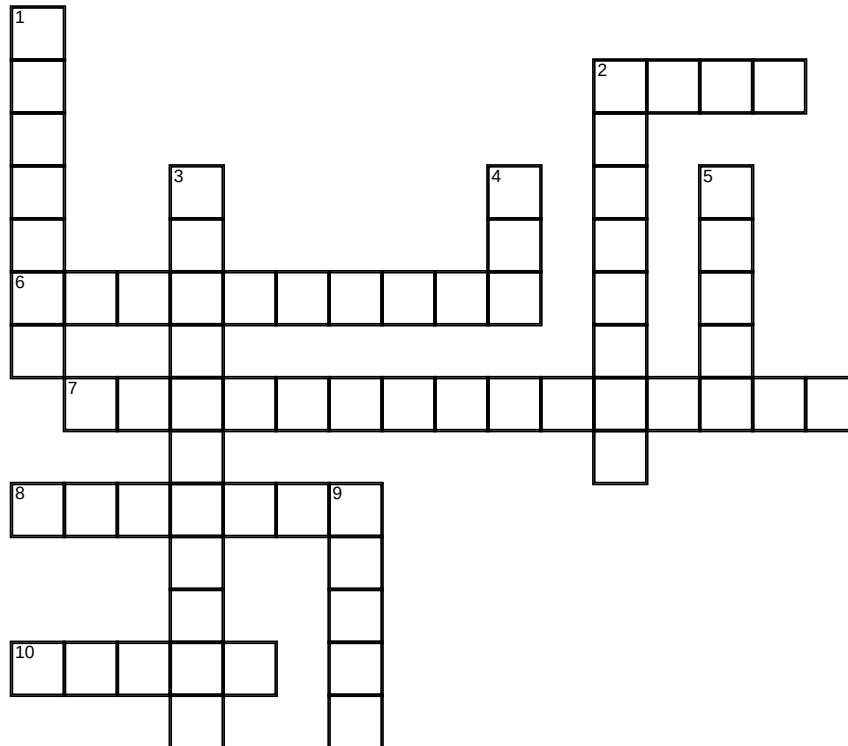
■ Day 6

In all of Japan there are very few pastors of Christian churches, and many of them are over age 60. Pray that God would soon provide a new generation of younger church leaders to lead Japanese Christians wisely.

■ Day 7

Pray for the young people of Japan to see Jesus as trustworthy—someone they can place their hopes for the future in. Pray God would use them in big ways to help change the world.

Week 1 Activity: Crossword



Across

- 2 A martial art that was born in Japan
- 6 Active volcano and the tallest mountain in Japan
- 7 Beautiful and fragrant flowers of a particular tree common in Japan
- 8 Pieces of land surrounded by water. Japan is made up of thousands of them!
- 10 The country we are praying for this month.

Down

- 1 The art of folding paper. See activity in week 2.
- 2 The language spoken by 98% of the people in Japan
- 3 A person who has reached the age of 100 years old.
- 4 The national fish
- 5 The capital city
- 9 Pieces of seafood or vegetables on bite-sized portions of rice

WORD LIST:

CENTENARIAN	JAPAN	KOI	SUSHI
CHERRY_BLOSSOMS	JAPANESE	MOUNT_FUJI	TOKYO
ISLANDS	JUDO	ORIGAMI	

02

Week 2: May 8-14, 2023

*“He is the one who makes the mountains.
He creates the wind.
He makes His thoughts known to man.
He changes the dawn into darkness.
He walks over the mountains of the earth.
His name is the Lord God of heaven’s armies.”*

— Amos 4:13, ICB



Week 2 Prayers



■ Day 8

There is a type of art that is very popular in Japan called manga. It’s often used in Japanese comic books. Pray for Christians to create manga art and books that are centered around the message of Jesus, so many readers can learn about Jesus through manga.

■ Day 9

Pray for entire families to come to know Jesus as their Savior. Pray for parents and kids to have loving, healthy relationships, even when disagreements come up. Pray that their love for each other and for God will help them work through their problems.

■ Day 10

Students from Japan sometimes go to another country for their college studies. Pray for Japanese students who study in other countries to hear the message of Jesus and invite Him into their hearts.

■ Day 11

For some people in Japan, life is really hard. Some find it difficult to buy even the necessary things. Some have little hope for a better life. Pray for churches, neighbors and Japan’s leaders to look for these hurting families to provide the help they need.

■ Day 12

Christian workers are working on a movie about the life of Jesus. They want it to have just the right words and meaning to show Jesus just as He is. Pray that Jesus would open the eyes of the Japanese people to discover that His gospel truth is more wonderful than anything they have known. May they put their faith in Him and learn to walk in His ways.

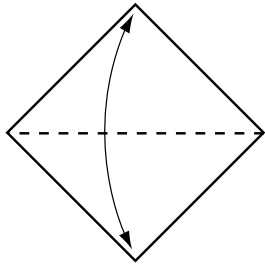
■ Day 13

Pray Japanese people come across truthful Jesus-focused messages that catch their interest while they use their phones to search for information.

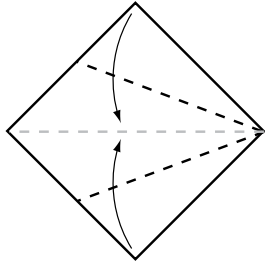
■ Day 14

Pray this for every Christian in Japan:
“Do not worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks. And God’s peace will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The peace that God gives is so great that we cannot understand it.” —Philippians 4:6-7, ICB

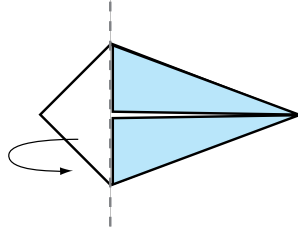
Week 2 Activity: Origami Bird



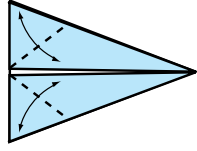
1. Start with your paper white side up. Fold in half, as shown.



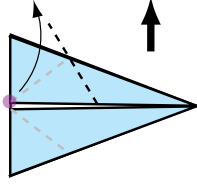
2. Fold the outside corners into the center line, and crease well.



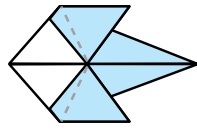
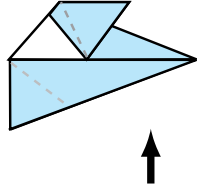
3. Fold the top triangle backwards.



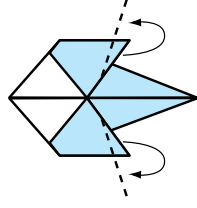
4. Fold the corners of the model in toward the center, crease well, then open again.



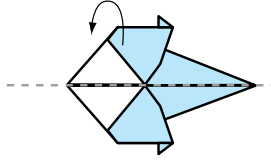
5. Bring the highlighted corner up and outward using the crease shown. Then bring the highlighted corner back down toward the center line and flatten.



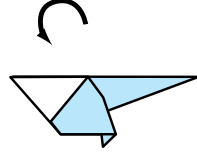
6. Repeat this step on the opposite corner. The model should now look like this.



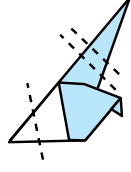
7. Fold the outermost corners backwards on the angle shown and crease well.



8. Mountain fold the model in half. (Fold backwards)



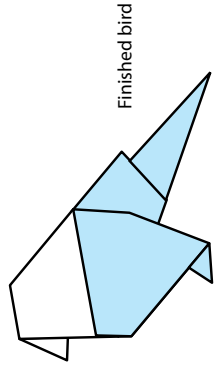
9. Rotate the model slightly so you can see the bird forming.



10. Make these creases and unfold.



11. Using these creases, inside reverse fold the head, and reverse fold the tail by pushing it in. If you have folded the feet at the correct angle (in step 7), the model should stand up. You can refold the feet if you need to.



03

Week 3: May 15–21, 2023

“Then I looked, and there was a great number of people. There were so many people that no one could count them. They were from every nation, tribe, people, and language of the earth ...”

— Revelation 7:9, ICB



Week 3 Prayers



■ Day 15

Many men in Japan have jobs that make it necessary for them to live in the cities where they work, far from their families. It can be hard for families to live apart, but leaning on Jesus can bring comfort and strength while they are away. Pray for whole families—moms, dads and kids—to follow Jesus and walk in His ways.

■ Day 16

Only one person on Earth has ever been perfect, never making mistakes or bad choices: Jesus. We humans can't be perfect, no matter how hard we try. We need a perfect Savior who forgives us when we mess up and sin. Jesus loved us and willingly came to die for our mess-ups (sins). If we accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness for all of our mess-ups—past, present and future—we can become God's friend forever! Pray that all Japanese people realize they can't be perfect but can choose to be forgiven.

■ Day 17

Many people in Japan are hardly open to hearing or reading about the gospel. They think it's not for them. But it is! Pray that their hearts will become open to the message of Jesus.

■ Day 18

Working hard at school is really important, but in Japan some kids feel a lot of pressure to do well in school. Pray that Japanese families will help their children not feel pressured as they complete their schoolwork and work toward a future career.

■ Day 19

Taking time to thank God is an important part of prayer. We show God how grateful we are when we spend time telling Him what we are thankful for. Let's pray that the Christians in Japan would be thankful to God as this verse describes:

“Thank the Lord because He is good. His love continues forever. ...You are my God, and I will thank You. You are my God, and I will praise Your greatness. Thank the Lord because He is good. His love continues forever.” — Psalm 118:1, 28–29, ICB

■ Day 20

God made all people, starting with Adam and Eve. He made it so groups of people in different countries could each have unique ways of life, like the language they speak, the music they create, their customs and traditions, and unique physical features like skin color or hair color. He made the groups different from each other on purpose, and they are beautiful to God. Pray that people everywhere, including Japan, appreciate these differences, see all people as beautiful, and treat everyone with respect.

■ Day 21

Anyone who genuinely asks Jesus to be their Savior is part of God's big family. Pray for Japanese Christians to reach out in friendship and love to other members of God's family in their city and country, so they can work together to bring the message of Jesus to those who haven't heard it.

Week 3 Activity: Word Search

E A I O V T F Y S U S H I P C
F U A K U I A G S M Z R L W Z
T F T K X C X P Q O X V R G G
C H E R R Y B L O S S O M S G
W R N Z K T X U H L O Y C N J
X L I B G M O U N T F U J I U
B A E J B P C U P G K W P N D
I S L A N D S P O R R O W K O
B R M P L Q T X R G L O I J U
A K E A N V O X I G J A P A N
O V O N P F K E G M B U N F H
K N X E H N Y S A D K D G R I
Y R W S M W O D M B L Y W M B
X S P E H A U R I S F I M P N
P P C E N T E N A R I A N W L

WORD LIST:

CENTENARIAN
CHERRYBLOSSOMS
ISLANDS

JAPAN
JAPANESE
JUDO

KOI
MOUNTFUJI
ORIGAMI

SUSHI
TOKYO

04

Week 4: May 22–28, 2023

“The Father has loved us so much! He loved us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are His children...”

– 1 John 3:1, ICB



Week 4 Prayers



■ Day 22

In any challenging situation, people who walk with God have His Spirit’s power to be godly examples of kindness, peace, patience and love. Pray Jesus’ followers in Japan will grow to love one another no matter what and show people around them that the God of the Bible is full of goodness and loves them too.

■ Day 23

Some young people in Japan choose to spend almost all of their time alone instead of with other people, even their families. This can lead to them feeling isolated and extremely sad. They need to experience God’s love. Pray for God to give them a Christian mentor or friend who can help them grow and discover the purpose Jesus gives to all who follow Him.

■ Day 24

Many Japanese people love sports. Christian churches use sports to engage people who might not believe in Jesus yet and invite them into their community, where they can learn more about Him. Pray that people will come with hearts ready to know Jesus when they hear about His love.

■ Day 25

Many Japanese do not approve of people who become followers of Jesus because it is different from what everyone else believes. Pray that God’s Spirit would help Jesus followers be respectful to others while they faithfully walk in His ways.

■ Day 26

Sometimes conflicts happen between Christians. Differences can be shared respectfully, but God wants us to cooperate with one another to get God’s work done. The Holy Spirit, who lives inside God’s people, can help believers work through problems and conflict. Pray that Japanese Christians will ask the Spirit to help them solve conflicts and peacefully work together to honor our heavenly Father.

■ Day 27

Pray that Christian gatherings in Japan would follow Paul’s instructions from this Bible verse:

“Let the teaching of Christ live in you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” – Colossians 3:16, ICB

■ Day 28

Moms and dads love their children, but they would probably say taking care of them is a hard job. Moms and dads also love their own parents, and sometimes they have to take care of them too. In Japan, their parents could even live with them and their children. Pray for Japanese moms and dads who have the doubly-hard job of taking care of their kids and their parents.

Week 4 Activity: Trace John 14:6 in Japanese

イエスはトマスに言われました。いい
ですか。わたしが道です。
そして真理でもあり、いのちでもありま
す。わたしを通らなければ、だれ一
人、父のところへは行けません。

ヨハネの福音書 14:6 Japanese Living Bible

Jesus answered, "I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through Me."

– John 14:6, ICB



Week 5 Prayers



■ Day 29

Without a sail to catch the wind, a sailboat drifts in the water, going nowhere. That's the way many Japanese young people feel—drifting, with no purpose for their life. They don't know that having Jesus and His Spirit as their friend and guide is just what their hearts are looking for. Pray that Japan's young people will soon hear the message of Jesus and invite Him into their lives.

■ Day 30

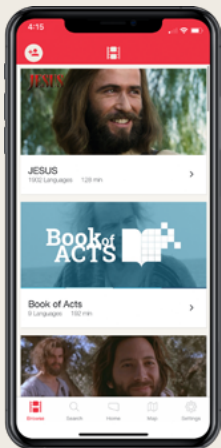
Christian groups from other countries come in and work alongside Japanese Christian churches. Ask God to show them the best way to connect with people who don't yet know Jesus.

■ Day 29

Lord Jesus, we thank You for giving us a chance to pray for Japan each day this month. We believe You will continue Your work there until everyone has heard clearly about Jesus and been invited to follow Him. Someday we'll see how You answered our prayers. May heaven be filled with Japanese people who started to follow Jesus in part due to our prayers this month. We give You all honor and praise.

Resources

- ▶ Joshua Project has a tremendous amount of information about every country. This link will take you to Japan.
<https://joshuaproject.net/countries/JA>
- ▶ Prayercast has great prayer videos.
<https://www.prayercast.com/japan.html>
- ▶ A great way to help someone learn more about Jesus is to share the *JESUS* film in their heart language. We have the film in over 2,000 languages on our website.
<https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/jesus.html/english.html>
- ▶ We also have multiple other films and short films available.
<https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch.html>
- ▶ For more Jesus Film Project® prayer resources—including access to each month’s family prayer guide—visit the prayer page on the Jesus Film Project website.
jesusfilm.org/pray



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This family guide is part of For the Least Reached: A Year of Prayer—a one-year prayer initiative created by Jesus Film Project®. It's a great way for families to pray together for countries and people in the world who still don't know love, hope and forgiveness in Jesus. A new family guide is available every month.

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