

# For the Least Reached

## Prayer Guide



“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

# *Thank you for praying with us!*

Welcome to the May Prayer Guide. This monthly prayer guide forms part of **For the Least Reached: A Year of Prayer**, our one-year prayer initiative.

Each month we unite with the body of Christ in prayer for one least-reached country around the world. Many of the people in these countries have never heard the message of the gospel, or it's difficult for them to learn about Jesus or worship Him.

Learn more at [jesusfilm.org/pray](https://jesusfilm.org/pray).



Nearly

75%

of all the world's unreached people—a whopping 3.6 billion people—live in the 12 countries that we will pray for this year.



# WELCOME TO Japan!



Christianity was introduced to Japan over 500 years ago. Yet, only a very small percentage of Japanese consider themselves evangelical Christians. Sadly, the majority of pastors are over 60 years of age with no younger pastors to replace them once they retire.



Japan is an archipelago made up of over 6,800 islands but most are not inhabited. 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.

## Did you know?

- ▶ Japan has a higher density of vending machines than any other country. Some reports say there is one vending machine for every 23 people.
- ▶ The martial art called Judo was created in Japan in 1882. A sport and a form of combat, Judo has its practitioners anchor themselves in practice, intelligence and efficiency, using these skills to defeat attacks based on pure physical strength.
- ▶ Manga and anime—comics and animated drawings—are very popular in Japan. Jesus Film Project has a short anime film called *My Last Day*. Check it out [here](#).
- ▶ Visitors flock to Japan in Spring to see cherry blossoms in bloom, which signal the changing of the season.
- ▶ Japanese are a very homogenous people group, racially, ethnically and culturally, and are the world's second-largest unreached people group. Thank you for joining us in praying for Japan this month.





# Praying for Japan

Prayer is both talking to God and listening to Him. This may seem obvious but many Christians struggle with the listening to God part. For that reason, I'd like to go back to some basic principles.

How can we hear God? The most common way is by reading His word. 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 to read, pray, think, ponder and listen.**

This month, I'd like to invite you to focus on the verse listed at the top of each week.

- Read it aloud slowly several times.
- 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.
- At the end of the week, thank God for how He spoke to you as you read, prayed, thought, pondered and listened.

Thank you for praying with us.

*Lucinda Mason*

Jesus Film Project  
Prayer Mobilization, Team Leader



Week 1: May 1-7, 2023

*"All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations will bow down before Him,  
for dominion belongs to the Lord and He rules over the nations."*

— Psalm 22:27-28, New International Version



# Week 1 Prayers



## Day 1

The two main religions in Japan are Buddhism and Shinto. Pray against the grasp these religions have on the country of Japan, and that they would realize that God is the one true God. Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal the power and authority Jesus has over all heaven and earth.

## Day 2

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 you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light”* (NIV).

## Day 3

Pray for Japanese people to find authentic friendships amongst Christians that leads to changed lives.

## Day 4

Many Japanese people would prefer to accept Jesus as another great teacher among many that they admire. For many Japanese, the claim that Jesus is the one true living God is offensive. Pray that Japanese people who hold a universalistic perspective would be open to seeing Jesus as the way, the truth and the life.

## Day 5

Most of the pastors in Japan are over the age of 60. And there are more pastors active in the church in Japan who are past 80 years old than there are those under 30. As leadership in the Japanese church is growing older, pray for the next generation of leaders to take the baton and lead well.

## Day 6


Pray for people in Japan who are struggling with suicidal thoughts and thoughts about death. Pray that they're able to tell someone in their life about how they're feeling. Pray that they will find hope in Jesus.

## Day 7

Many Japanese young people suffer from crushing depression. Shame over poor school performance or feeling isolated can leave them feeling hopeless about the future. Pray that they will find their security and hope in God.



Week 2: May 8-14, 2023

A photograph of two young men with dark, wavy hair, laughing joyfully. The man on the left is wearing a brown and tan plaid button-down shirt and has his right arm around the shoulder of the man on the right. The man on the right is wearing a bright red hoodie and has his hands clasped in front of him. They are standing outdoors against a bright, hazy background, possibly a rooftop or a high-rise view. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

*“He who forms the mountains,  
who creates the wind,  
and who reveals His thoughts to mankind,  
who turns dawn to darkness,  
and treads on the heights of the earth—  
the Lord God Almighty is His name.”*

— Amos 4:13, NIV

# Week 2 Prayers



## □ Day 8

Manga is a very popular form of literature and art in Japan. Pray for the development of manga gospel resources and the Christians who are creating it. Pray for Japanese people who are reading Christian Manga, that it would plant a gospel seed in their heart.

## □ Day 9

Pray for families in Japan who are struggling. Pray for healthy relationships between parents and their kids, and pray for entire families to know Jesus.

## □ Day 10

Pray that Japanese students who are studying in other countries would have an opportunity to hear the gospel and respond to it.

## □ Day 11

Pray for wisdom and cooperation among Christian workers who are updating a film about the life of Jesus into modern Japanese language so that it is more easily understood by Japanese people who have never learned about Jesus before.

## □ Day 12

Pray for the creation of Jesus-centered content for use on social media that will capture the interest of those seeking or hurting and will draw them to God's truth.

## □ Day 13

Pray this for every Christian in Japan:


*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* – Philippians 4:6-7, NIV

## □ Day 14

The record inflation in Japan continues to affect women, especially single mothers. The suicide rate, which was steadily decreasing in the past, has increased for all ages and especially among women. Pray for churches, government and communities to come up with ways to locate needy families and provide support to them.



Week 3: May 15-21, 2023



*"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb... ."*

— Revelation 7:9, NIV



# Week 3 Prayers



## □ Day 15

Pray for the many husbands in Japan who stay alone in cities where they work, apart from their families. This can be challenging for marriages and families and can lead to disconnection and affairs. Pray for families to be rooted and united in Christ.

## □ Day 16

“Kodawari”—the pursuit of perfection—is ingrained in Japanese people from a very young age. Pray for people in Japan to understand that they will never be perfect and that only Jesus is perfect and is the source for their salvation.

## □ Day 17

Pray for ministries and churches in Japan to be united. Pray that they would grow in trust and pursue peace with one another.

## □ Day 18

For all of us, 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 Christians in Japan would be thankful to God as this verse describes:

*“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever. ...You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.”*

— Psalm 118:1, 28-29, NIV

## □ Day 19

Pray for Japanese students who are often under great pressure to be successful in their future career. For some it can lead to depression and the tendency to overwork to the detriment of their health. Pray that these students and young adults will develop the healthy living lifestyle that God intended for them, so that they can fully live out their passions, gifts and talents.

## □ Day 20

Pray for immigrants living in Japan who sometimes face racism and discrimination. Pray for many in Japan to see all people with dignity and in the image of God.

## □ Day 21

In Japan, Christianity is mostly perceived as a western religion. Pray for the message of the gospel, not religion or an idea of Christianity, to take root in Japanese culture.



Week 4: May 22-28, 2023



*"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ..."*

— 1 John 3:1, NIV



# Week 4 Prayers



## □ Day 22

Pray for Japanese Christians to build stronger fellowship and connection with God and one another, even when they are busy or life is difficult, so that they can serve the Lord as one body.

## □ Day 23

Pray for young people in Japan who are Hikikomori. This Japanese word describes a condition that mainly affects adolescents or young adults who live isolated from the world, cloistered within their parents' homes, locked in their bedrooms for days, months, or even years on end. Hikikomori refuse to communicate even with their family. Pray that they would find and embrace Christian community and the purpose that a life in Christ can bring.

## □ Day 24

Pray that Christian gatherings in Japan would follow Paul's instructions from this Bible verse: "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts" (Colossians 3:16, NIV).

## □ Day 25

Pray for God's Spirit to bring unity to the 120 different Christian denominations in Japan, and to demolish barriers that can divide believers.

## □ Day 26

Pray for the middle-aged population in Japan. Many are facing struggles as they try to care for their aging parents and their children.

## □ Day 27

Japanese people love engaging in sports, and many churches have found it to be a useful way to have outreach. Pray for people to join in these sporting events that churches are hosting in every prefecture (district), and pray for the gospel to be shared at these events.

## □ Day 28

It is common for Japanese people to face a large amount of societal pressure. This can have many implications on Christians. Pray that Japanese Christians would follow Jesus unashamedly.



# Week 5 Prayers

## □ Day 29

Pray for Japan's drifting, overworked, and anxious young people to find freedom in Christ.

## □ Day 30

As Japan reopens after COVID-19 restrictions have eased, Christian groups are testing the waters to figure out how to do large, in-person events to bring communities together. Pray for Christian leaders to have wisdom about bringing new workers into the country to determine what is possible and needed to engage people with the gospel.

## □ Day 31

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 who started to follow Jesus in part due to our prayers this month. We give You all honor and praise.



# Resources

You can see these requests and others in our [Prayer Experience](#), a web based app.

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 over 2,000 languages available on our website. <https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/jesus.html/english.html>

We also have multiple other films and short videos 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](https://jesusfilm.org/pray)



The Jesus Film Project app is completely free and available on iOS and Android devices. Get the app now and start watching and sharing a huge library of Jesus-centered films.



Each month we will focus on a different least-reached country. Many of the people in these countries have never heard the message of the gospel, or it's difficult for them to learn about Jesus or worship Him. Nearly 75% of all the world's unreached people—a whopping 3.6 billion people—live in the 12 countries that we will pray for this year.

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