

# 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 For the Least Reached Japan 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).



- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Bangladesh</i> | <i>Japan</i>    |
| <i>China</i>      | <i>Pakistan</i> |
| <i>Egypt</i>      | <i>Russia</i>   |
| <i>India</i>      | <i>Thailand</i> |
| <i>Iran</i>       | <i>Turkey</i>   |
| <i>Indonesia</i>  | <i>Vietnam</i>  |

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!



This month we are focusing on Japan, where missionaries first landed in 1568. Unfortunately, the percentage of Japanese believers today is still very small. Let's pray that the work begun by these first missionaries in the 16th century flourishes again across all of Japan.



Japan is made up of over 6,500 islands. All fall within the Ring of Fire in the Pacific Ocean, which makes the country experience frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. This location also explains its diverse terrain—its majestic mountains and extensive forest areas. Japan is a land of stunning landscapes set against densely populated cities.

## Did you know?

- ▶ Picture yourself walking into a Japanese inn that was started in 705 AD. It's been owned by 52 generations of the same family. Nishiyama Onsen Keiunkan is the oldest hotel in the world according to Guinness World Records.
- ▶ Japan's life expectancy ranks third in the world behind Hong Kong and Macao. The life expectancy of the average Japanese person is 85 years old.
- ▶ Baseball is the number one sport in eight countries including Japan.
- ▶ Japan has more vending machines than any other country, roughly 1 for every 23 people. Unique technology allows one vending machine to serve cans of both hot and cold coffee. You can even buy perishable items like lettuce, fruit or free-range eggs from a vending machine.
- ▶ Can you imagine living on a small island where there are more cats than there are people? Tashirojima, a small island off the coast of Japan, has four times more cats than people.



# Praying for Japan

As of May 2024, Japan's Steel Dragon is the longest roller coaster in the world at 8,133 feet. Would you ride it? I wouldn't. Maybe getting stuck on one for hours as a teenager left a lasting impression. The rest of my family loves roller coasters: the anticipation, the thrill, the speed—sometimes the unknown—creates a fun experience for them.

Real life ups and downs, twists and turns or the unknown can create stress, fear or anxiety in our lives. Is what's happening in your life causing you to feel out of control?

I find that focusing on the Lord, especially by thinking about how awesome He is (praise), or taking time to list the many things I'm thankful for, can help me break through my swirling emotions. Consider being old fashioned and write these verses on notecards, or simply on the note app in your phone so you can pull them out when your life starts to twist and turn. As you stop to praise Him and thank Him, let the presence of God bring you peace.

*"Lord, the God of our ancestors, are You not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in Your Hand, and no one can withstand You."*  
— 2 Chronicles 20:6, New International Version

*"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

Japan has a small number of Christ followers. May our daily prayers cause God to open up Japanese hearts and minds to surrender to Jesus and receive His love.

Thank you for praying with us.

*Lucinda Mason*

**Jesus Film Project  
Prayer Mobilization, Team Leader**





*"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, NIV

# Week 1 Requests



## Day 1

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 2

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 over 80 years old than there are 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 3

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 4

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.

## Day 5

The two main religions in Japan are Buddhism and Shinto. Buddhists follow the teachings of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, or enlightened ones. Shintoists worship supernatural entities believed to be in all things. Pray that many Japanese people will realize that God is the one true God who provides what we need: His love and redemption. Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal the only One worth following—Jesus Christ, His son, who has power and authority over all heaven and earth.

## Day 6

Pray for Japanese people to be drawn 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 7

Pray for Japanese people to find authentic friendships with Christians that lead to changed lives.



Week 2

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

— Amos 4:13, NIV



# Week 2 Requests



## Day 8

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

## Day 9

Pray for harmony within Japanese families—for strong relationships between spouses, parents and children. May God remove any unhealthy conflict and fill their homes with peace that only comes from surrendering to the Lord.

## Day 10

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 the seed of the message of the gospel in their hearts.

## Day 11

Pray for the creation of Jesus-centered content for social media. Pray that it will capture the interest of those seeking the truth about God and will draw them to the One true God.

## Day 12

Record inflation rates in Japan continue 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.

## Day 13

Pray the following verse 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

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



Week 3

*"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 Requests



## Day 15

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

## Day 16

Pray for men in Japan who work away from home and are apart from their families for long periods of time. 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 17

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 18

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.

## Day 19

Pray for Japanese students who are often under great pressure to be successful in their future careers. 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

Taking time to thank God is an important part of prayer for all of us. We show God how grateful we are when we spend time telling Him what we are thankful for. Let's pray for Christians in Japan to be thankful to God as the following 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 21

Ask the Lord to unify ministries and churches to better further His Kingdom. Pray that they grow to trust and pursue peace with one another.



Week 4

*"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 Requests



- Day 22** Pray for Japanese Christians to build a stronger connection with God and fellowship with 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 God’s Spirit to bring unity to the 120 different Christian denominations in Japan, and to demolish barriers that can divide believers.
- Day 24** Japanese people love playing and watching sports, so many churches have found sports to be a useful way to reach out to their communities. Pray for people to join sporting events hosted by churches, and pray for the gospel to be shared at these events.
- Day 25** Many Japanese do not approve of people who become followers of Jesus (follow Christianity) because it is different from what everyone else believes. Social harmony and group cohesion are very important in Japanese society. Pray that God’s Spirit provides comfort and peace to those who face rejection or disapproval from their families and communities.
- Day 26** Pray for young people in Japan who identify as *hikikomori*. This Japanese word describes a condition that mainly affects young adults who live isolated from the world, cloistered within their parents' homes, and locked in their bedrooms for days, months, or even years on end. Hikikomori refuse to communicate even with their family. Pray that they find and embrace Christian community and the purpose that a life in Christ can bring.
- Day 27** 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 28** Pray for the middle-aged population in Japan. Many are facing struggles as they try to care for their aging parents and their children.



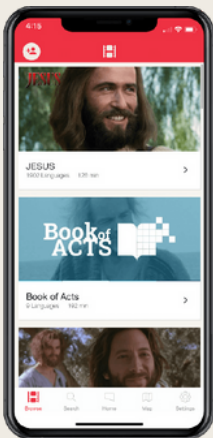
# Week 5 Requests

- Day 29** Many Japanese young people feel like they are drifting in life, with no real purpose. Pray they turn to Jesus, see how much He values them and find themselves in His purposes.
- Day 30** Pray for Christian leaders to have wisdom about bringing new ministry workers into Japan. May God help them determine what is possible and what is needed to reach Japanese 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 information about Japan: [joshuaproject.net/countries/JA](http://joshuaproject.net/countries/JA)
- ▶ Prayercast has great prayer videos: [prayercast.com/prayer-topic/japan](http://prayercast.com/prayer-topic/japan)
- ▶ 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. [jesusfilm.org/watch/jesus.html/english](http://jesusfilm.org/watch/jesus.html/english)
- ▶ We also have multiple other films and short videos available. [jesusfilm.org/watch](http://jesusfilm.org/watch)
- ▶ 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](http://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.

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



First published: August 2024