

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.



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| <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!



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 124 million residents to crowd large cities.



Did you know?

- ▶ In the Greater Tokyo Area, the train system handles around 40 million trips a day, a mind-boggling human shuffle. At peak times, some trains run at 200% capacity and need ‘pushers’ to fit all the people inside.
- ▶ In Japan’s Aomori Prefecture, a major apple-growing region, some premium apples—like the Sekai Ichi variety—can fetch \$20 or more. Farmers there hand-polish each fruit with a soft cloth to remove blemishes and enhance shine, treating them like little works of art. These apples, often weighing up to a pound, are prized for their crisp texture and balanced flavor, making them luxury gifts rather than everyday snacks—think of them as the Rolex of fruit.
- ▶ Japan’s koi fish are bred to look like living art, with some costing over \$100,000 at auction. In Niigata Prefecture, koi breeding is a centuries-old tradition, where farmers selectively breed these carp for their vibrant colors and patterns. The most prized koi, often judged in competitions for their symmetry and shine, can live up to 70 years, making them a symbol of longevity and good fortune in Japanese culture.
- ▶ The country has vending machines that sell everything from hot ramen to live fishing bait, a strange blend of convenience and oddity.
- ▶ Certain forests in Japan light up at night with an eerie glow from bioluminescent mushrooms known as “foxfire” or kitsunebi. These fungi emit a faint greenish light through a chemical reaction called bioluminescence, where enzymes break down organic compounds and release energy as light. You’ll spot them on decaying logs or mossy ground, especially in humid seasons like late summer or fall.



Praying for Japan

What comes to mind when you think of prayer? Is it a daily habit for you? Do you think of it as a task to accomplish or as a privilege? Prayer is, at its most basic level, communication with God. Take a moment to think about what prayer means to you.

There are many ways to communicate with God. Here are some methods of prayer that we see in Scripture:

Asking God for something (for yourself or for others)—this kind of prayer makes up the majority of requests in this guide.

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

— 1 John 5:14, New International Version

Thanking God for something specific

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.”

— 1 Chronicles 16:34, NIV

Praising God for who He is

“I will praise You, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify Your name forever.”

— Psalm 86:12, NIV

Confessing what we have done wrong

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

— 1 John 1:9, NIV

Listening to what He wants to say to you (often in response to our seeking His guidance)

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

— James 1:5, NIV

Praying Scripture—We included one Scripture-based prayer per week in this guide.

When you pray, do you focus on just one or two of these methods? It’s very easy to fall into that habit. Each prayer method has a particular purpose and is important. As you grow in your walk with God, try to incorporate each kind of prayer into the course of your day.

Throughout this guide, you’ll find a prayer request for each day of the month. This lets you pray for the needs that our ministry partners around the world have shared with us. What a privilege to join together, united in our desire to see God move in Japan for His glory and for the furtherance of the gospel.





Week 1

*"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 67. 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.

A man and a woman are smiling and looking towards the camera. The man is on the left, wearing a dark grey sweater, and the woman is on the right, wearing a light grey sweater. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with a blueish-grey hue. In the top left corner, there is a red rounded rectangle containing the text "Week 2".

Week 2

*"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 Requests



Day 8

Thank God for the successful updating of a film about the life of Jesus into modern Japanese. Please pray for great collaboration between churches and ministries to use this updated tool to present the good news of Jesus in Japan.

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 more Jesus-centered content on social media. Pray that stories and illustrations that connect well with Japanese culture will attract those interested in learning the truth about God. Pray what they see and hear will draw them to the One true God.

Day 12

The current high cost of living 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.

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 church body.
- Day 23** After the horrible Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011, churches gained a great reputation for the way they responded with compassion and care. Pray for believers to continue to be ready for disasters such as earthquakes or typhoons, and to show selfless love to those who are hurting. Pray that their actions make the love of Jesus famous in Japan.
- 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, for youth and their family members to meet Christian neighbors there and for the gospel to be shared through these relationships.
- 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 families. 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.

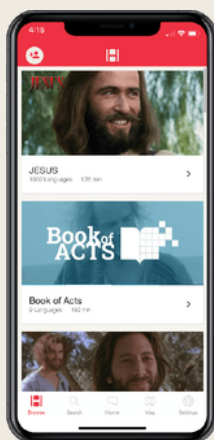
- **Day 30** Pray for Christian leaders to have wisdom about bringing new ministry workers into Japan. May God help them determine what is possible and what is needed to reach Japanese people with the gospel.

- **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

- ▶ Joshua Project has a tremendous amount of information about every country. This link will take you to information about Japan: joshuaproject.net/countries/JA
- ▶ Prayercast has great prayer videos: 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.html
- ▶ We also have multiple other films and short videos available. 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



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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