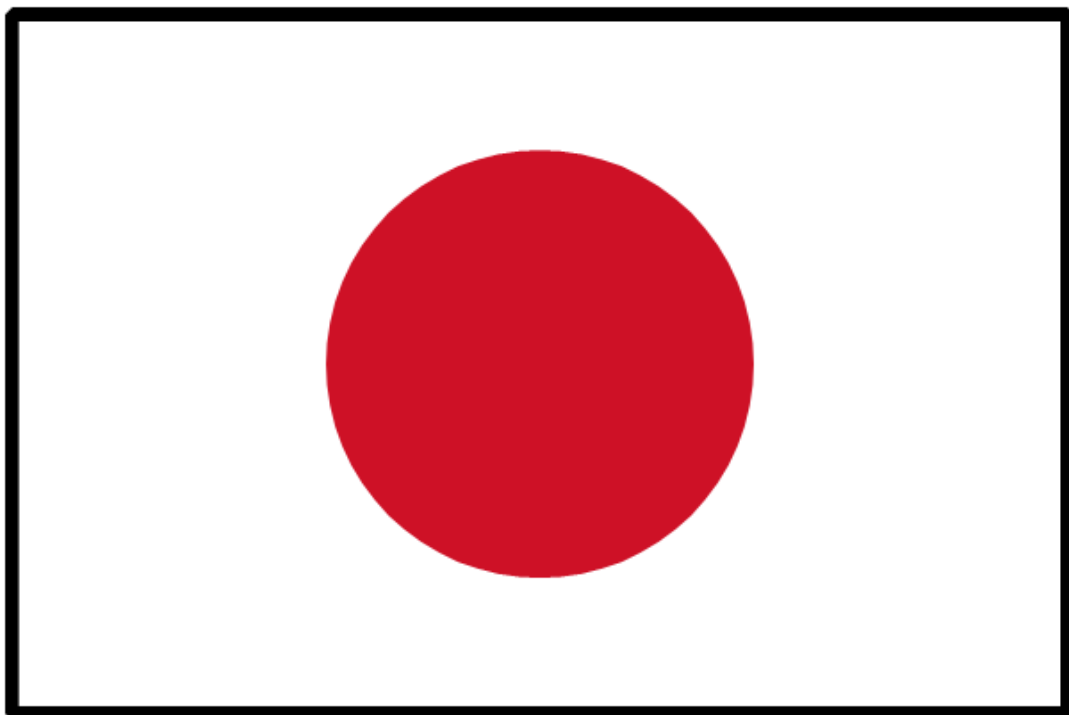


JAPAN

Lessons for Mission Minded Kids

Lesson 1

The Land of the Rising Sun



Japan

Lesson 1: The Land of the Rising Sun

Goals for Lesson 1:

- Students will be introduced to the country of Japan, forming a base of knowledge about its culture, its land and its people.
- Students will be introduced to the verse for the Japan lessons and learn to associate this verse with the cultural values of the Japanese people.
- Students will think about being thankful for God's diverse and marvelous creation.

Verse for Japan:

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else." Acts 17:24-25 (NIV)

Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- Read through the Japan Prayer Card instructions. Print cards on appropriate paper colors and cut apart and laminate before class. **You will use these cards throughout all of the Japan Lessons.**
- Prepare all pictures, including the flag on the lesson cover as slides to show on a screen, or print them and back them with cardstock for stability.
- Print the Japan Verse on brightly colored paper so it will stand out. Decide on a location in your classroom where it will be able to hang for the duration of the lessons.
- Make copies of the Japan map and flag page and the cherry blossom page. If you will use them during class time, gather crayons or markers.

Lesson Plan:

- Open your time together with a welcome, announcements and a brief prayer. (5 min.)
- Read or tell the story part of the lesson, stopping to show the pictures and discuss each part as necessary. (15-20 min.)
- Pass out the six green “Prayers of Thanksgiving” cards to six volunteers and have each student pray a short prayer of Thanksgiving for the items listed on the cards. (5-8 min.)
- Use the map and flag picture and the cherry blossom picture to fill in the rest of your time, or use as take-home extras. (5-10 min.)

Lesson 1 Story: The Land of the Rising Sun

Japan is a nation made up of thousands of islands. The islands sit close together in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of China, close to North and South Korea. The Sea of Japan lies between the island nation and the mainland of Asia. **(Show map of Asia and point out each place as you talk about it.)**

Even though there are thousands of islands making up the country of Japan, if they were all stuck together, they would still be less than the size of our state of California. Of all those islands, there are four major islands where most of the Japanese people live, and where the major cities and towns are located. Going from north to south, the four major islands are called: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. **(Show map of Japan and point out major islands and smaller islands.)** Many of the smaller islands are volcanic mountains and are so small they are not drawn on most maps.

Because the islands of Japan are built from volcanoes, each of the islands is very mountainous and rocky. Many of the volcanoes are still active and so the landscape continues to change as new eruptions and earthquakes form new coastlines and new layers of rock. Mt. Fuji is the most famous volcano, and is known for its beautiful cone. **(Show picture of Mt. Fuji.)**

California has about 38 million people living in it, but Japan has over 127 million people in the same amount of space. Since Japan is covered with mountains, much of the land is difficult to live on. This means that almost all of the Japanese people live in the cities, built along the flatter coastal areas of the islands. The cities are very crowded with all the people, making property and space very valuable. Most people don't own cars, because parking is such a problem. Public transportation is the most common way to travel any distance, with many people using bicycles and walking for shorter distances.

Because there is little land suitable for farming, Japan grows very little of its own food. Rice and fish from the sea are the most important crops, with almost all other foods being imported.

Japan's cities are very modern and clean. The capital city, Tokyo, is the largest city in the world. They have excellent transportation systems and large corporate businesses. The Japanese people have a strong focus on education, with a literacy rate of 97%, (one of the best in the world). The Japanese have a deep appreciation for beauty and art, and use even small spaces in their homes and cities to create well sculpted gardens, murals, floral displays and artistic arrangements.

Japan is a very expensive place to live. Japanese money is called the "yen". Although it is very modern and produces many things like cars and electronics, they must import almost all of their raw materials and foods. The Japanese people spend long hours at work and are very careful with their money.

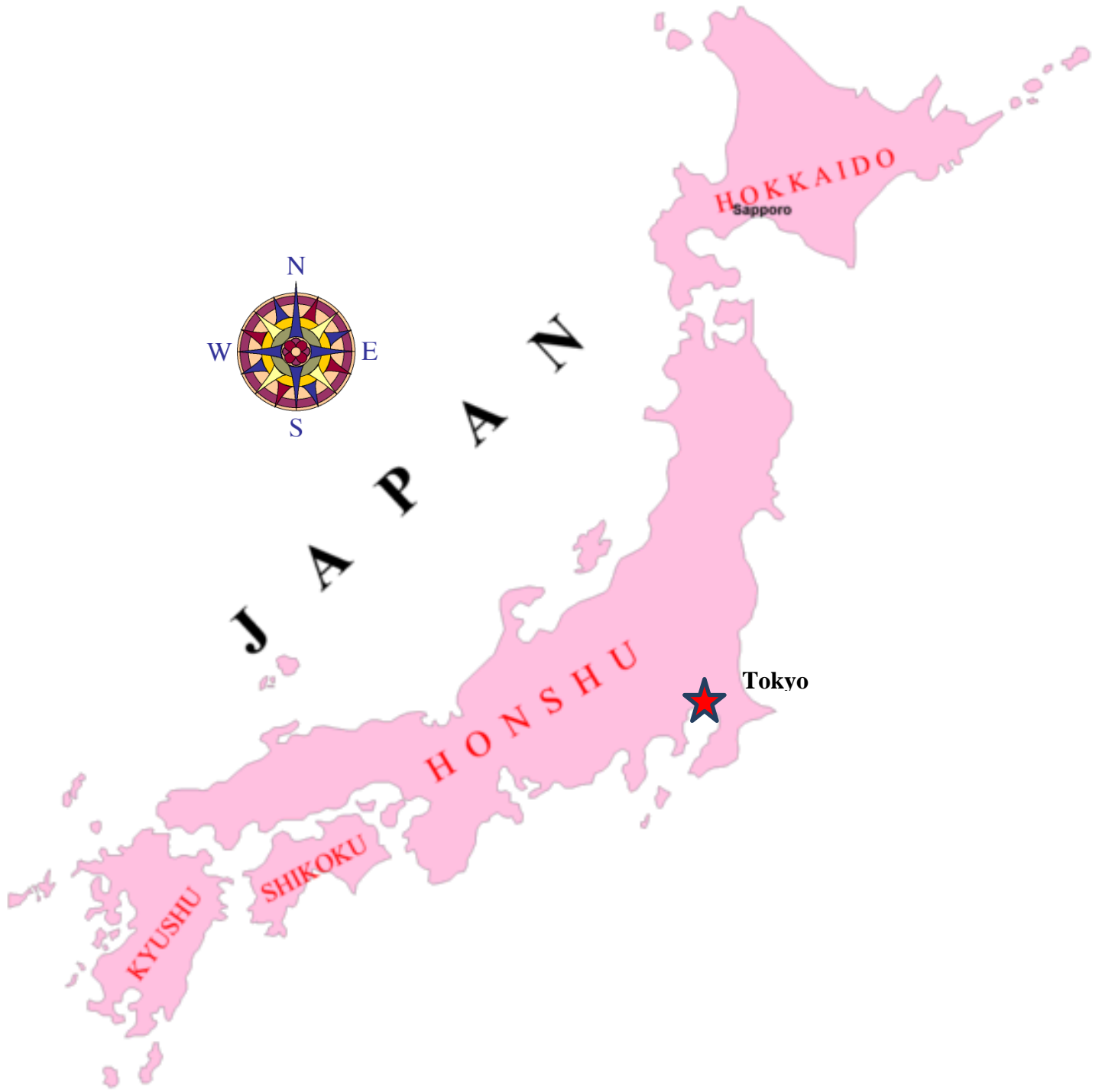
(Show a real Japanese flag or the picture from the lesson cover.) We call Japan, "Japan", because that is the English pronunciation. The Japanese people call their country Nippon, which is the word "Japan" in Japanese. This word in the Japanese language means "Source of the Sun". In English, we say that Japan is the "Land of the Rising Sun". You can see from their flag that they have used the image of the sun to symbolize their country. The sun on their flag reminds them of the sun goddess. The Japanese believe that thousands of years ago, their first emperor was the grandson of the sun goddess, and was himself a god. They believe that he was made emperor of Japan in a special ceremony with the sun goddess. Japanese emperors used to be very powerful and demanded to be worshipped as a god.

The emperor today only has symbolic power over the government and people of Japan. They don't worship him anymore, but he is still a powerful and important person to the Japanese people. They are not aware that there is One Son of the True and Living God, who died to make a way for every person to go to heaven. Pray for the people of Japan, that they would understand that although their emperor is just a person, they need the Son of God to make His home in their land.

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ACTS 17:24-25 (NIV)**

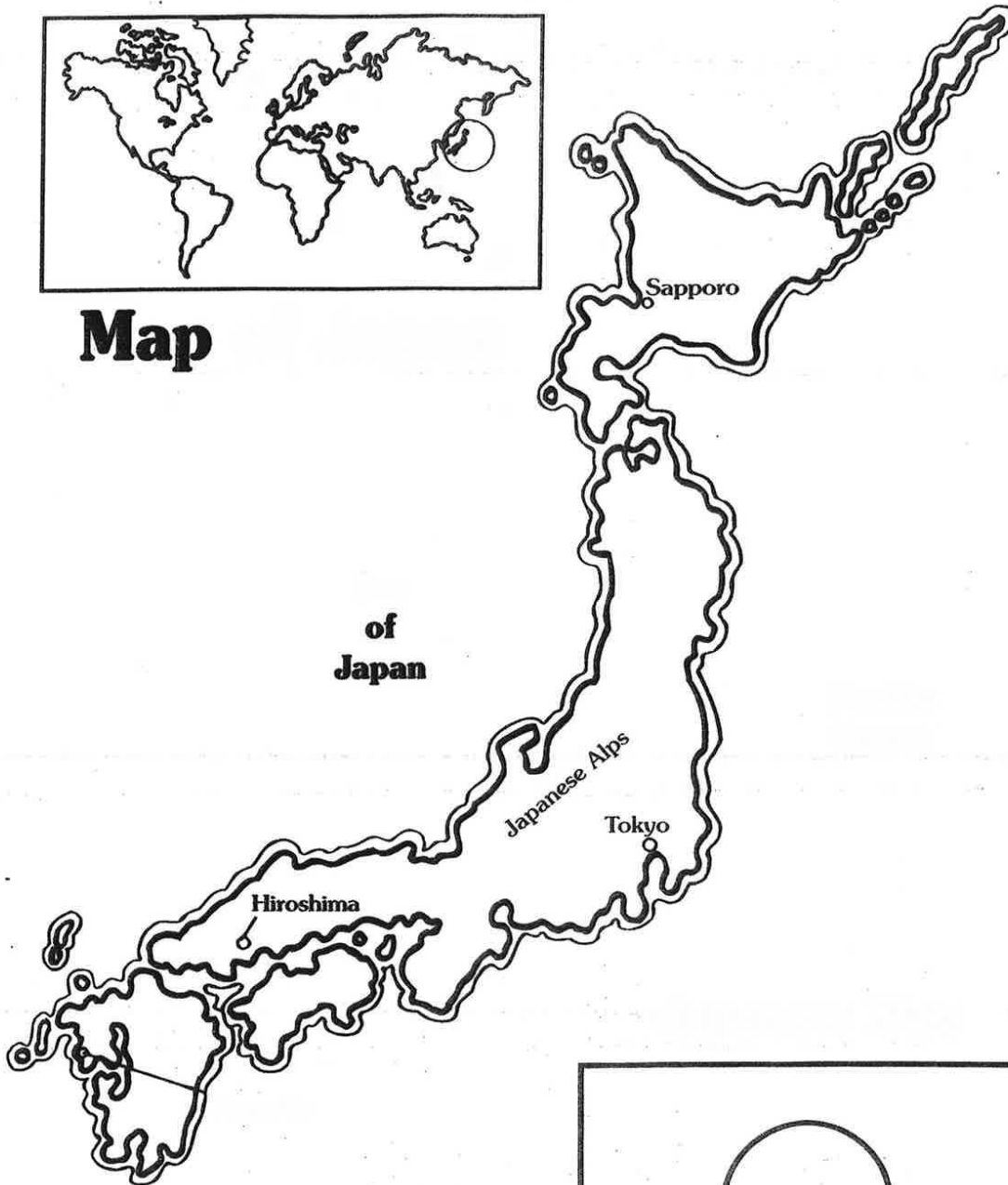
Asia



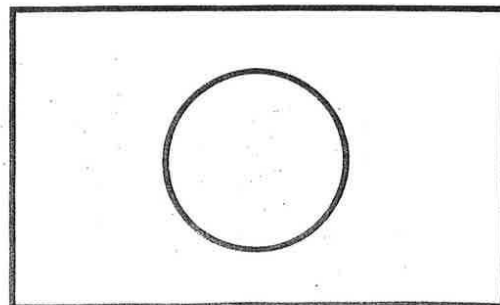


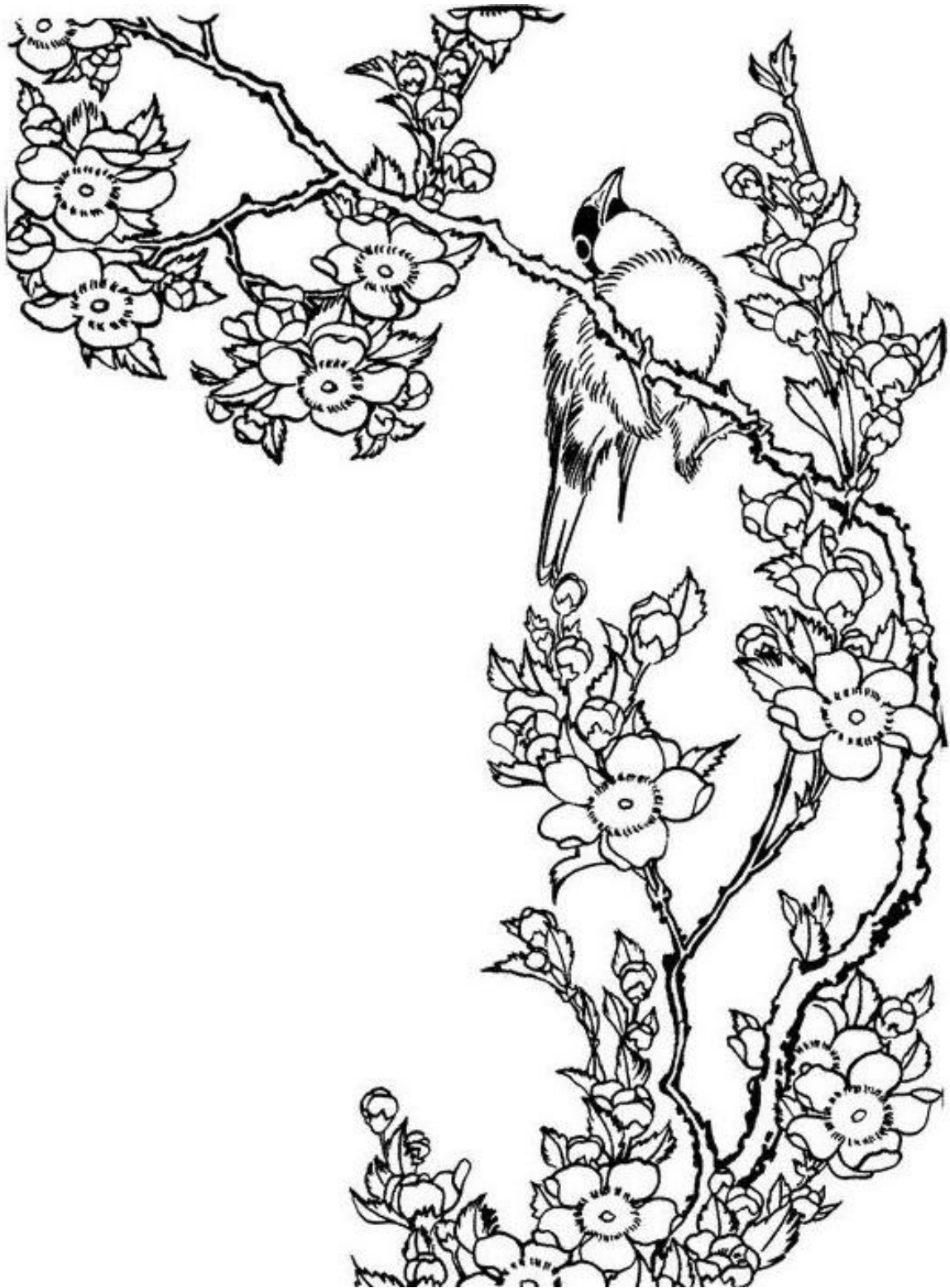


Map



The white background has a red circle in the center signifying the sun.





Cherry blossoms are a Japanese symbol of the beauty of nature.

