

# JAPAN

## Lessons for Mission Minded Kids

### Lesson 6

#### *An Artistic Culture*



# Japan

## Lesson 6: An Artistic Culture

### Goals for Lesson 6:

- Students will be introduced to the beauty that is so important to the Japanese people.
- Children will understand that the Living God is the One who created all beauty and is the source of all peace.
- Children will apply the verse for Japan to the Japanese way of life and understand that as they strive for artistic serenity, their hearts are really searching for a relationship with the Creator of all.

### 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.
- Prepare Japanese Garden, Japanese Flower arrangement, and origami pictures as power point slides, or print them and back them with card stock for stability.
- Make copies of the Japan’s Verse page for each student and make plans to pair readers with non-readers if necessary. Gather pencils for use in class.
- Make copies of the Language Activities page for each student (or print it on the back of the Verse page). Practice saying the Japanese phrases and singing the song beforehand so that you can help your students to say them accurately.
- Read through the directions for the Musical Prayers activity, and make preparations according your space and class size.
- Make copies of the Japanese Art Coloring Page. Gather markers or colored pencils to use in class.

## **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, showing the pictures as directed, and discussing as necessary. (15-20 min.)
- With students sitting at a table, read Acts 17:24-25 together from the Japan Verse Poster. It should be easy by now for the students to recognize the covered words and fill them in automatically. Give each student a copy of the Japan's Verse page and a pencil. Show them the Japanese characters at the bottom of the page and help them to copy the characters into the correct spaces to complete the verse. Pair older students with those who might have difficulty copying the Japanese writing. Talk about how different their words are from ours, and how they even strive for artistic beauty in their written language. When everyone is finished, read through the verse again, using the completed pages in front of them. (8-10 min.)
- Give each student a Language Activities page and spend a few minutes saying some of the phrases and trying to sing the song. (8-10 min.)
- Follow the directions for the Musical Prayer activity, continuing as long as your students are interested, or as time allows. (15-20 min.)
- Use the Japanese Art coloring picture to fill the remaining class time, or send it home to finish later. (5-10 min.)

## Lesson 6 Story: An Artistic Culture

We've already learned that the Japanese people love beautiful things. We also know that nature is the main topic of the Japanese arts. Our verse for Japan tells us that God is the One who created everything in the world, and so we know that He is the source of all beauty. We see from the natural world that God is a God of order and peace, and that we can learn about our Creator from learning about and enjoying His creation.

**(Show picture of Japanese Garden)** The Japanese people have learned very well how to take God's creation and design it into some of the most peaceful and beautiful gardens on earth. Since their island nation does not have a lot of extra room, individual families rarely have any yard space for themselves. Almost anywhere you go, however, people have transformed spaces, whether large or small, into beautiful gardens. They create an atmosphere of tranquility surrounding their temples, and they offer moments of quiet reflection for those feeling stressed or hurried. Rarely, however, do they point to the God who made the water and flowers and trees. The people don't even know that the God of Peace wants to offer them His Peace.

Since the Japanese people don't have much outside space, they like to practice different art forms in their own houses. One favorite form of art is flower arranging. Even young children can learn this art in their after-school clubs, and many mothers use this art to make their homes beautiful. **(Show picture of Japanese flower arrangement)** This might look different from the bouquets of flowers we often use in our homes. The Japanese people have very specific ideas about how an arrangement should flow gracefully and showcase just a very few elements.

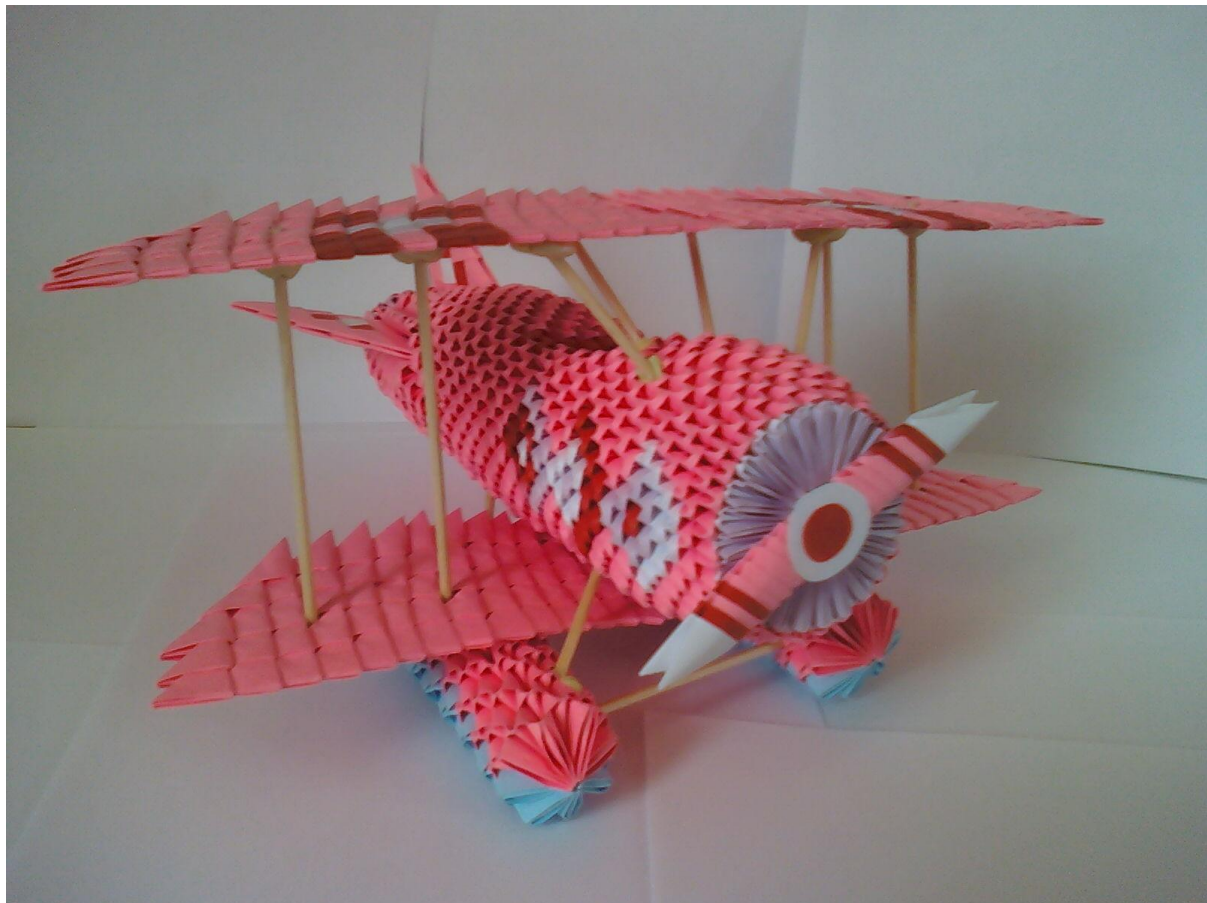
Another form of art that is very popular with children and adults is origami. This is the art of paper folding, and can be as simple as turning a square of paper into a flat animal shape, to something very elaborate and time-consuming. **(Show the origami basket and airplane pictures)**

What do you think happens when millions and millions of people try to live in a very small space? People create dirt, don't they? We have garbage we want to throw away. We build factories to make the things we want, but then our factories create a lot of air and water pollution. We want to travel to work or school or on vacation, but our vehicles use a lot of gas and put a lot of pollution into the air.

Since Japan has very crowded areas along the edges of their islands, they have had to come up with some very good ways to manage all the dirt all those people make. It starts with each person cleaning up their own small spaces. Do you remember that the children all learn to help clean up their schools? They also have outdoor shoes that they take off and leave at the door when they come inside and put on their indoor shoes. There are also very few personal cars in Japan. When people want to go somewhere, they walk or ride their bikes, or they take the public trains and subways. The Japanese have also found great ways to recycle their trash to make it useful to everyone. They have actually created a small island of trash in Tokyo Bay and have built an island Disneyland Park on top of it.

The Japanese have figured out how to keep their islands and their homes beautiful, even though they are crowded with many, many people. Their hearts are looking for order and serenity as they pursue many forms of art. They create beautiful garden spaces where they hope to find a few moments of quiet peace. They don't understand that the thing they are really longing for is the Presence of the Living God inside of them. The God of Order, Beauty and Peace desires to have a relationship with them, and to bring true serenity and joy to their hearts.

About 1% of the Japanese people have chosen to follow Christ, but there are many obstacles that make it difficult for the Japanese to become Christians. In the next two lessons, we will be learning about the Japanese Christians, and why there are so few of them. We need to pray that God will open their eyes to see the God of Creation in the natural beauty they are pursuing. We can pray that the few Christians in Japan can find effective ways to teach their friends and neighbors about Who God is, and why He wants to have a relationship with them.







# Musical Prayers

**Preparation:** Put a dot of sticky tack on the blank side of each of the 24 prayer cards. Find a space where you can make a circle of chairs, facing outward with backs together. This may be simply around the table where you will sit, or it may be in the middle of an open space or a hallway. Include at least as many chairs as you will have children. A few more is okay. Attach a Japan prayer card on the underside of each chair, or the underside of the table at each chair spot, or on the back of each chair back. Multiple locations will allow you to play longer.

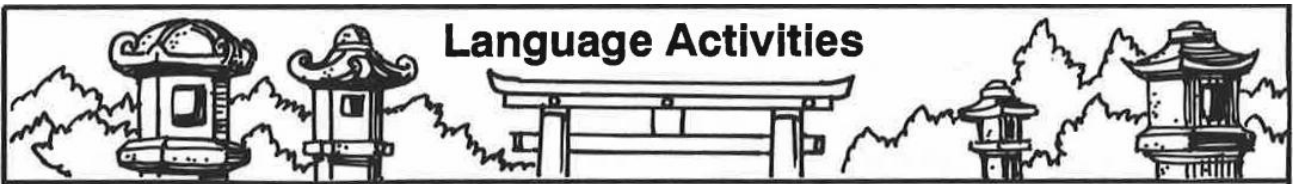
**Activity:** Play some Japanese or Worshipful music. Explain that the students will walk around the circle of chairs and when the music stops, each student will kneel at the chair they are closest to and locate the prayer card hidden where the leader tells them to look. They will each simultaneously and quietly (whispering or talking quietly) pray for the item on their card and then replace it in the spot where it was. The music will resume and the students will walk around the circle again, stopping at a new chair, or looking in a different location for a new card.

Continue this activity as long as the children are interested and depending on your available time. Use any number of variations, depending on your space and the number and ages of your students.

**If you have non-readers:** Plan to pair a reader and non-reader together for the activity. The reader will read the prayer card out loud and the two will pray together, with the older child helping to lead and teach the younger child as necessary.

**If you have a large group or limited space:** You can pair your students into prayer teams of two or more and space your chairs farther apart to allow for more than one student to kneel at each, **or**, you can make your circle using only about half of the chairs for your number of students. Put one prayer card on the back side of each chair back and one prayer card on the underside of each chair. Form two circles of students, one inside the circle of chairs and one outside the circle. When the music starts, each circle will move in opposite directions. When the music stops, each chair will have one student praying at the back and one student praying at the front of the chair.





## Language Activities

### Everyday Japanese Words

ohayo gozaimasu (oh-hi-yo go-zai-mus) - good morning  
 konnichi wa (co-hnee-chee wah) - good afternoon  
 komban wa (com-ban wah) - good evening  
 sayonara (sigh-oh-nah-rah) - good-bye  
 doozo (dough-zo) - please  
 arigato (ah-ree-gah-toe) - thank you  
 haha (ha-ha) - mother  
 chichi (chee-chee) - father  
 onna noko (on-nah-no-koh) - girl  
 otokonoko (o-to-co-no-co) - boy



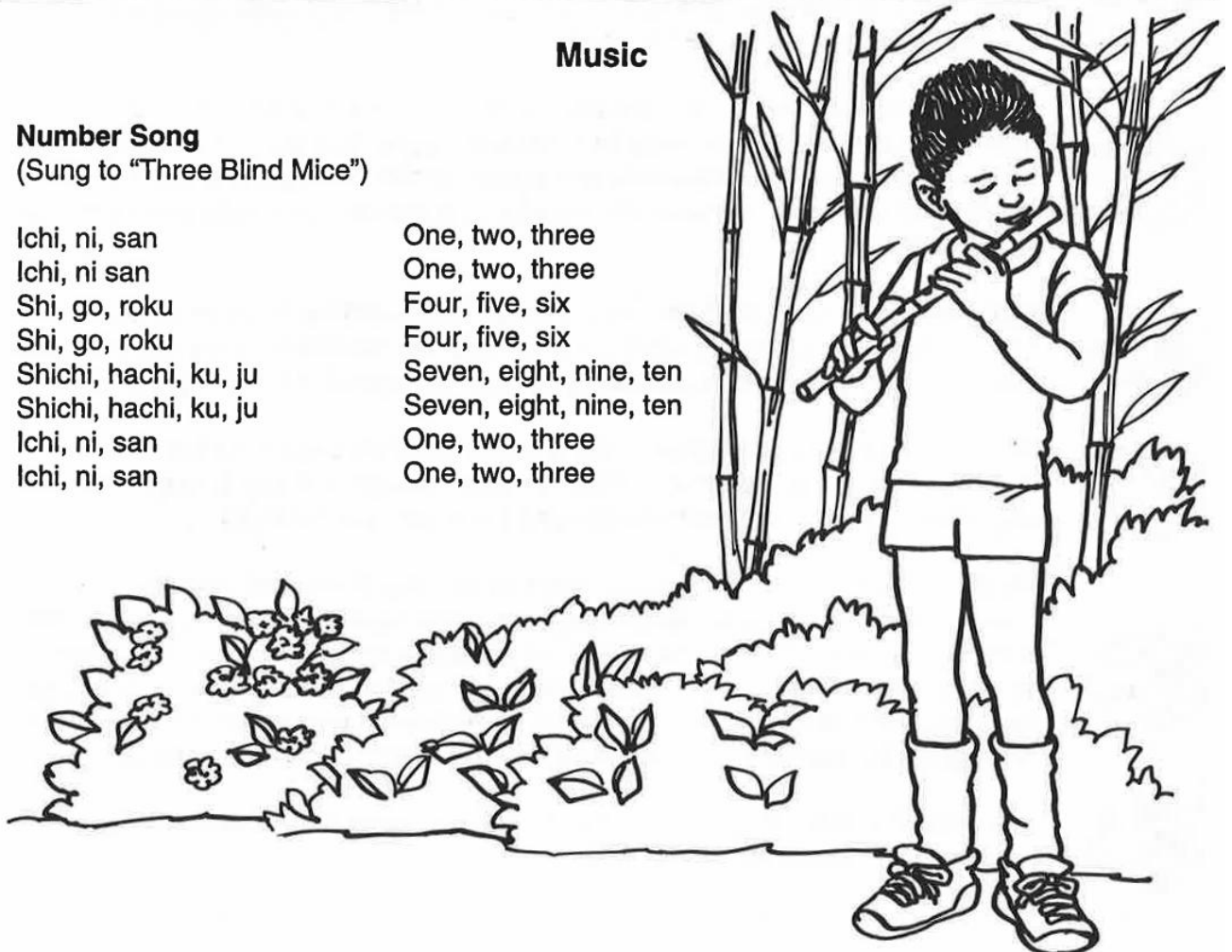
### Music

#### Number Song

(Sung to "Three Blind Mice")

Ichi, ni, san  
 Ichi, ni san  
 Shi, go, roku  
 Shi, go, roku  
 Shichi, hachi, ku, ju  
 Shichi, hachi, ku, ju  
 Ichi, ni, san  
 Ichi, ni, san

One, two, three  
 One, two, three  
 Four, five, six  
 Four, five, six  
 Seven, eight, nine, ten  
 Seven, eight, nine, ten  
 One, two, three  
 One, two, three



## JAPAN'S VERSE

"The \_\_\_\_\_ who made the  
\_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_  
of \_\_\_\_\_ and does not live  
in \_\_\_\_\_ built by  
\_\_\_\_\_. And he is not  
served by \_\_\_\_\_, as if he  
needed anything. Rather, he  
himself gives everyone

\_\_\_\_\_ and everything  
else.” Acts 17:24-25 (NIV)

Use the following Japanese symbols to fill in the blanks and complete Japan’ s verse.

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| 寺 (temple)  | 生命 (life and breath) |
| 人間の手 (human hands)                                | 主なる神 (Lord/ God)     |
| 天地 (world and everything in it/ heaven and earth) |                      |

