

THE NATIONS AS OUR NEIGHBORS

LESSONS FOR MISSION MINDED KIDS

LESSON 7

TOMOYUKI ABE IN JAPAN



The Nations As Our Neighbors

Lesson 7: Tomoyuki Abe in Japan

Goals for Lesson 7:

- Students will be introduced to Tomoyuki and Jessica Abe and learn about their lives and vision for the people of Japan.
- Students will learn that everyone can share the job of world missionary, no matter where we grew up or were educated, or where we live now.
- Students will be able to recite Psalm 86: 9-10 and understand that all nations (even if they are our neighbors) need to hear of Jesus' love and bow before Him in worship.

Verse for "The Nations As Our Neighbors":

"All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God." Psalm 86: 9-10

Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- "Write" the verse on the board, or a large piece of paper or transparency, using only blanks with the first letter of each word written. (A__ t__ n_____ y__ h__ m____,.....etc.)
- Cut the colored pictures apart and mount on construction paper.
- Obtain a globe or world map that shows individual states in the U.S.
- Collect star stickers, markers and crayons.
- Make one copy for each child of the Japan map, the Japanese flag, and the coloring page.
- See if a local Japanese or Chinese restaurant will donate chopsticks for your class to experiment with. Collect one pair of chopsticks for each child and napkins or plates. Prepare Japanese food samples as desired. A common Japanese custom requires that shoes be removed upon entering a home. You can have the children remove their shoes and line them up in the hallway before entering the classroom, or you can just talk about this custom while tasting the food.

Lesson Plan

- Begin with prayer.
- Direct students to look at the verse with only the first letters written. See how many of your students can say the verse, using only the first letters as prompts (or even without any prompts). You might consider a small prize or reward for this accomplishment. (This will be the last lesson using this verse.)
- Read or tell the story part of the lesson, explaining, discussing or adapting as necessary for your group of children. Show the prepared pictures and point out the map locations as directed.
- Give each student a copy of the Japan map. Point out Tokyo on the world map or globe, and have students place a star sticker on their map in the approximate location. Point out that Japan is a series of small islands (6852 islands altogether) that together equal the land size of our state of Montana. Since there are 128 million people living on these islands (there are 967,440 people in Montana), the living conditions are very crowded. Houses are very small, with many people living in each, and buildings have many stories, because there isn't enough ground space. Our map only shows the largest islands. Have students color the map.
- Give each student a copy of the Japanese flag, and have them color it while you talk about the information given at the bottom of the page. The coloring page may be used in class or sent home.
- If you are going to taste the Japanese food, pass out the chopsticks and show how to use them. Pass out plates or napkins, and samples of the foods you have prepared, discussing as necessary.
- While the children finish their food samples, pass out the Japanese verse page. Have students copy the Japanese letters, pointing out that the Japanese language is written in vertical columns, from the right to the left of the page. Say the verse phrase together. (It is the same phrase they practiced in Spanish in lesson 5.) Discuss the idea that they have now learned that phrase in three different languages. (English, Spanish and Japanese) It is still God's Word, and although only a certain group of people can understand each version, its meaning is the same to each person. God, Himself, never changes, and His Word still tells people about Him, though it be written in thousands of different languages. Talk about the importance of having God's Word translated into one's native language, and the importance of being able to worship God according to one's own culture.

Lesson 7 Story: Tomoyuki Abe in Japan

Tomoyuki Abe (**pronounce: Toe-moe-you-key Ah-bay**) grew up in the city of Tokyo, Japan. He was raised in a Christian home and is the son of a pastor. Christians make up less than 1% of the population of Japan, so that makes Tomoyuki's (Tomo's) childhood very unusual. He was the only Christian at his school, so he didn't have any other Christian friends there, which made things difficult for Tomo.

Tomoyuki's parents, Rev. Nobuo and Keiko Abe, minister at the Sagamiara Grace Chapel. The building used to be the home of a U.S. armed forces officer, so it is larger than most Japanese homes. The first floor is used for the church and a daycare, and the second floor is where Tomo's family lives. There are two younger sisters, Mamiko and Kaori. Mamiko is married to an American man, Tom Lewis. They live in Japan with their two sons. Kaori is a day care teacher and lives with her parents.

Tomoyuki studied social welfare in college and worked for three years in the government social services office. He was often frustrated to see people struggling in many ways. Although his government could help them in some ways, he wasn't allowed to share the gospel with them. He felt the financial help the government offered was not enough to restore their lives; they needed Jesus. In 2003, Tomoyuki met the director of the Torchbearers school, who invited him to consider coming to Colorado to study in the United States. Tomoyuki quit his job and went to Torchbearers, where he responded to God's call to become a pastor. After discussing his call with the leadership of the EC church of Japan, he decided to enroll at Evangelical Theological Seminary in the fall of 2005. **(Stop and show Japan on the globe or world map. Then show Colorado, where Torchbearers is, and then Pennsylvania, where ETS is.)**

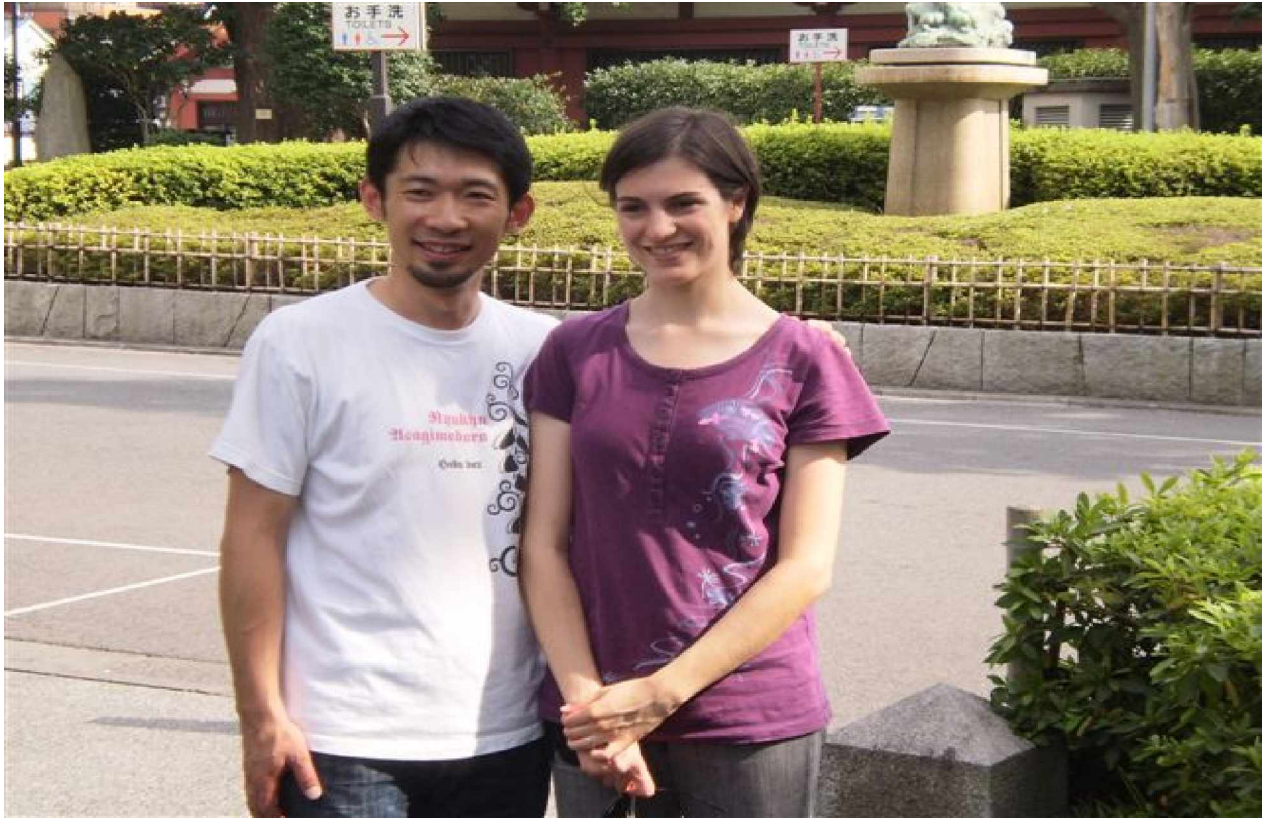
Jessica Poirier Abe grew up in Lyons, France. She is the oldest of three children and has two younger brothers, Jonathan and Stephane. Her parents, Alain and Danielle, work in the medical field. Jessica also grew up in a Christian family and accepted the Lord at age 11. When she was in high school, her pastor, who was a missionary from Colorado, recommended that she study for a year at the Torchbearers Bible School located there. She went to college in France for two years, and then went to Colorado. **(Stop again and show where France is on the globe or world map, and then point out Colorado again.)**

Tomoyuki and Jessica met when they were both attending Torchbearer's Institute, a Bible college in Colorado, attended by many international students. Jessica

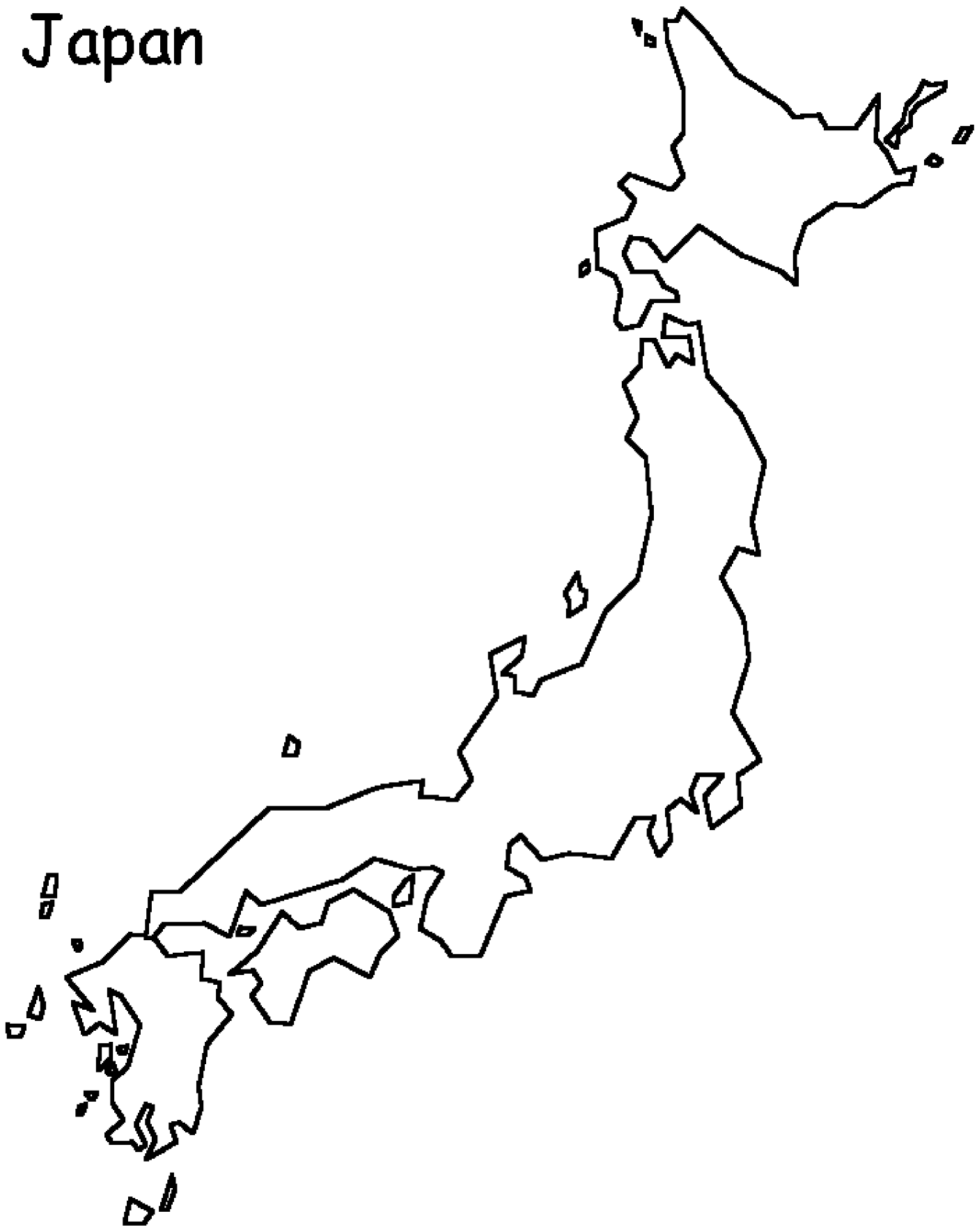
returned to France to go to business school for three years, and Tomo came to Pennsylvania to attend seminary. He and Jessica continued to be in contact with each other by email, and even visited each other on holidays. Soon, Tomoyuki proposed to Jessica, and she accepted. They were married on June 30, 2007 in France. **(Show picture of Tomo and Jessica)**

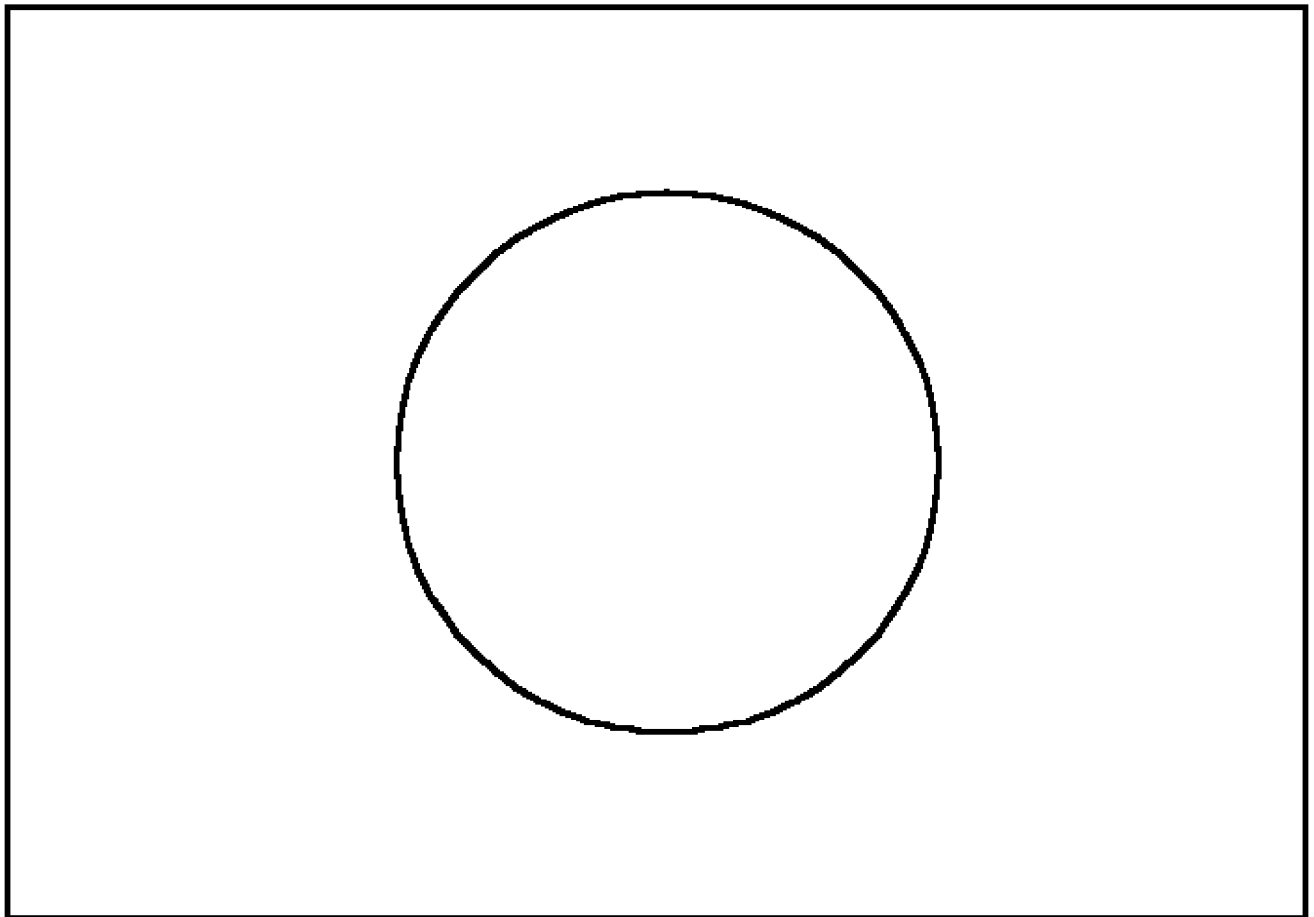
Tomoyuki and Jessica returned to PA and Jessica also enrolled at Evangelical Theological Seminary. Both of them graduated in May of 2009, and they returned to Japan a month later. They are now living near a train station. (which is in the district of Sagami-hara, a city of 700,000 residents in a western suburb of Tokyo) The station, which is part of the Yokohama line, is gaining popularity because a famous university has just relocated to the area. Tomoyuki and Jessica's prayer and goal are to start a church plant in this area. The doctor of a local children's clinic is already referring mothers with non-medical issues (such as problems with child raising, relationships, etc.) to a Bible study held monthly at the clinic and led by Tomo's father, Rev. Nobuo Abe. Although this doctor is not a Christian, his receptionist is a member of our Sagami-hara Grace Chapel. The mothers who attend this monthly Bible study are then invited to the church.

Please pray for Tomoyuki and Jessica as they try to build relationships with their neighbors and their community. Each of them grew up in a separate country, with a different language and culture and have been educated both in their own language and country, and in the English language in the United States. Their new neighbors are Japanese people who don't know Jesus. Sometimes God brings us far away to tell our new neighbors about Jesus in another language (like Jessica). **(Show the distance between France and Japan on the map.)** Sometimes He brings us right back to our own neighborhood to continue serving the people we grew up near (like Tomo). And sometimes, God takes us far away to learn about other cultures and languages, so that we are prepared to tell our neighbors about Jesus, no matter where we live (like both Jessica and Tomo). **(Point to Japan and France, then to Colorado and Pennsylvania, and then back to Japan.)** No matter where God takes us in this world, or who He brings next to us, He wants all of His children to love each other as brothers and sisters, and to teach our neighbors about Jesus, so that all of the nations He made can worship before Him and bring glory to His name. **(Show picture of busy street and discuss how crowded Japan is and the differences and similarities in culture that are obvious in the picture.)**



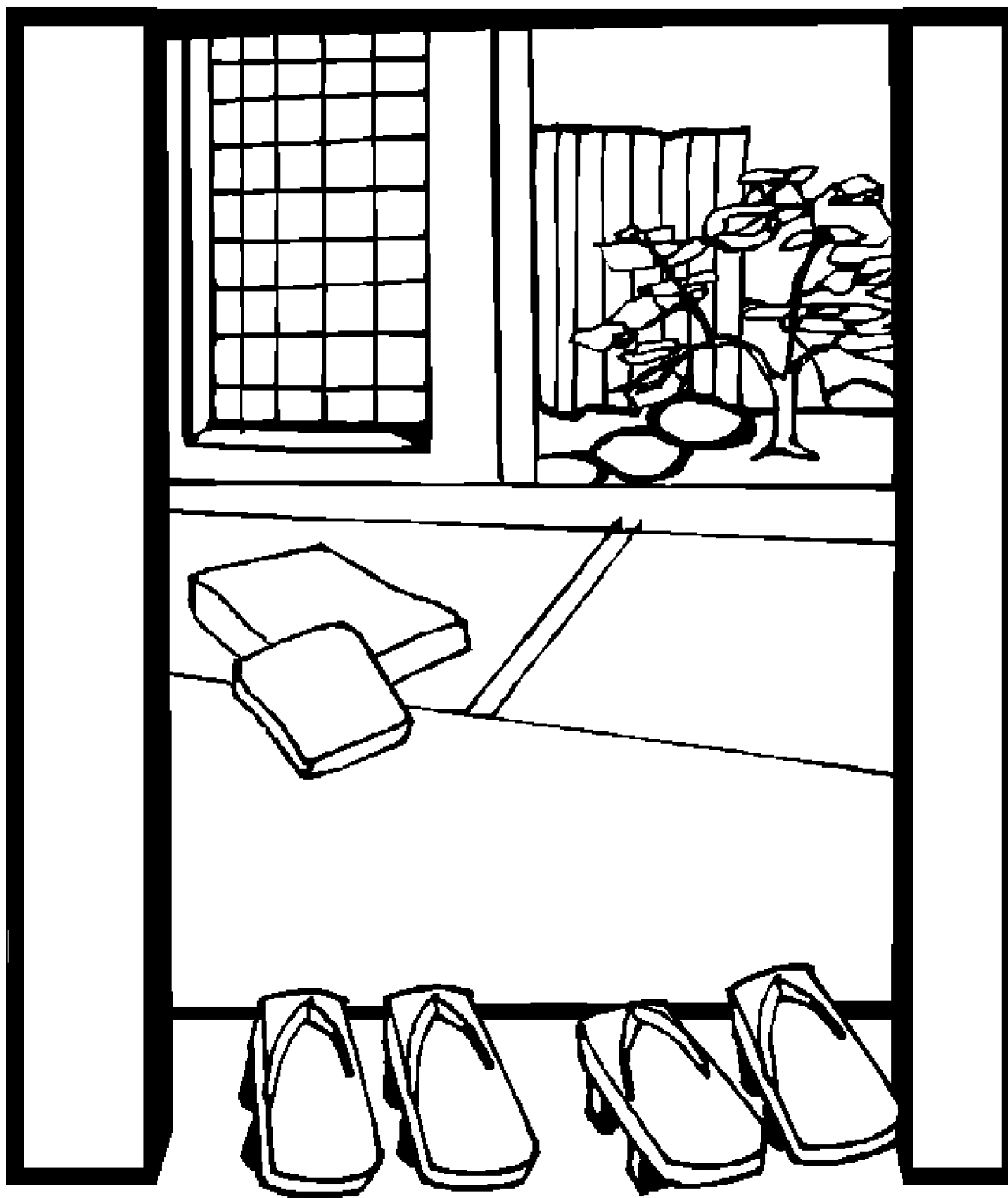
Japan





The Japanese flag

- white background with a red circle in the center that represents the sun.
- In Japanese, it is called Hinomaru ("circle of the sun")
- The flag has been in use for over a thousand years.
- It was officially adopted as the Japanese flag on January 27, 1870



Japanese Verse: "You alone are God"

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Japanese Food Samples

Prepare any or all of the following foods as directed. Serve small amounts to the children on small plates or napkins. Direct them to practice using chopsticks to sample the kinds of foods eaten in Japan. Meals are typically eaten at low tables, seated on cushions or mats on the floor.

Rice:

Find “sticky rice” if possible and prepare as directed on the package. Although regular rice will work, sticky rice is what is commonly used with chopsticks because the grains stick together more, making it easier to eat with chopsticks.

Fruit:

Serve canned pineapple tidbits and canned mandarin orange segments. These are fruits that are typical in a Japanese diet, and can easily be eaten with chopsticks.

Vegetables:

The Japanese eat many of the same vegetables we eat. You could try cutting baby carrots into chopstick sized pieces. Kernels of canned corn and pieces of raw cabbage can also be used. You could also serve canned, sliced water chestnuts, or canned bean or bamboo sprouts.

Fish:

Swedish fish candies might be fun to eat with chopsticks, or for the “real thing”, you could prepare fish sticks, and cut them into chopstick sized pieces.

Noodles:

Ramen-type noodles are very popular, and are often combined with many vegetables in different ways. You could prepare ramen noodles (without much juice) and put a few on each plate to eat with the chopsticks.