

ADAIR UPDATE



Last day of one of Robert's English classes

ENGLISH HOME-STAY IN TEXAS

Taking elementary students to Tyler

During the last week of March, I (Robert) will be hopping on a plane with our associate pastor and 4 elementary students from our church's English program. We will be heading to Tyler, TX for a week of sight-seeing and exploring Texas and American culture. While in Tyler we will go to a park, a zoo, a school, and take part in other activities that will be potentially life-changing for the students as well as a chance for our ministry in Japan to intersect with some of our life in America.

Please pray for our students. S is going into 7th grade. He and his family are Christians, and he is excited about the chance to come to America with his friend R. R is a year younger than S and is not a Christian. He likes video games but also regularly attends events at church. A is going into 5th grade. Her mother and grandparents recently became Christians, but she has not yet decided whether or not to follow Jesus herself. Y is going into 6th grade. Her mother has a long relationship with the church, but no one in

her family is a Christian. Her father has been struggling with significant health problems for the last few years. Please pray for these students.

For those of you in Tyler, please send me an e-mail if you would like to meet up with the group at some point. If you are out of the region, please pray. It is our hope that by encountering a new version of the church and having longer conversations with our pastor and myself, these kids will come to realize that they are loved by God.

I want to apologize for not letting you know I would be in the States sooner. For awhile we didn't know if the trip was going to happen or not. Roberta and I are hoping to come at some point within 6 months of the baby being born to visit family, and we look forward to potentially seeing you then. Thank you for your partnership and caring for the Japanese people. Please pray that these children would come closer to knowing Jesus through this short trip.



How tall is this Buddhist statue overlooking the city of Sendai?

- A) 130 ft
- B) 230 ft
- C) 330 ft
- D) 430 ft

Answer on page 2

GARUZU-BAI-STA

(That's "Girls' Bible study" in Japanese-English)

A little over a year ago, I started going to a young women's Bible study at a church friend's apartment. When she moved away in the summer, I reluctantly inherited hosting the group. Then, before I realized what was happening, I was basically leading it.

To say I felt a little in over my head is an understatement as my language level isn't up to par to lead a Bible study (trying to keep up with group conversation is hard). Yet I also didn't feel like it was good timing to simply disband the group. So, as awkward and bumbling as I am in Japanese, we pressed on together.

Reading Scripture together

I don't have anything against group Bible study (emphasis on the study part) or using a text. Yet simply reading Scripture in community can be beautiful, powerful, and unifying. I am confident that God speaks through His Word, and it's great when there are others around to confirm and clarify what we are understanding... and to hold us accountable to it.

My first try at this with this group was over several weeks slowly reading Jesus' prayer for his disciples and for the world (John 17). Some weeks went decently - short and simple, but fine. Yet one week a girl (who is a big fan of using a commentary) seemed to get pretty frustrated and said, "Ugh! I don't know what I'm even reading!" (side note: this reaction doesn't seem to be an uncommon one).

This made me sad. If the Bible - in particular a prayer - seems to be too hard to understand for someone raised in the church for 30 years, how can we share the stories from the Bible with our community?

Stories of Jesus

I desperately want my Japanese friends to feel empowered to read Scripture on their own or in a group and seek to understand it. I want them to love Jesus...and to like him, too. I want them to grow in confidence in their ability (and responsibility!) to share their faith with those around them.

A few weeks ago, we started reading stories from John about miracles that Jesus performed. It's been imperfect and occasionally uncomfortable, but I think it's been meaningful to read the passages and talk through 4 questions: What does this passage say about people, about Jesus, and about me? And to whom should I tell this story?

It's simple enough that I can "lead" by reading the questions off a piece of paper. Yet it's focused enough that we don't seem to go on too many rabbit trails and stay mainly focused on Jesus.

Trying it out

To practice what I'm hoping the other women will do, too, I've asked my non-Christian beach friend, M, if we can read these stories together ("Er...last night I was asked who I would share this story with, and I was hoping I could share it with you...?") We start by looking at the *manga* (Japanese comic) version and then read the story in the Bible.

This friend has been patient and open with me, and I am enjoying the process - however awkwardly - of looking at Scripture with her. I am very aware of how limited I am in language,



Eating strawberries with M

yet I am hopeful that even these small seeds will someday bear fruit. I sometimes feel pretty ridiculous, but, as Max Lucado states: *Deliriously joyful are the ones who believe that if God has used sticks, rocks, and spit to do his will, then he can use us.*

When I see my friends from Bible study and tell them that I read the same story we talked about with my friend, I hope that they realize that they are much better equipped to do this than I am. I hope it encourages them to try - and that they can (and need to) rely on the Holy Spirit, too!

Language is still pretty tough for me, but if I can communicate with both my friends inside and outside of the church that 1) Jesus is amazing and 2) Jesus loves us, that's okay with me for now.

Please pray

I want to know how to communicate to these women that they are fully capable of reading and understanding Scripture with each other and their non-Christian friends.

We appreciate your prayers for us and Japan. Thanks for your partnership, R&R.

Partner

To partner financially:

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Memo: R&R Adair Support #038207

Specific Prayer Points

- Japanese language acquisition
- Restart of beach ministry in the beginning of April
- Future ministry focus
- Robert's trip to TX (yay!)
- Friends from the women's Bible study
- Robanokai (young adult small group)
- Beach friend, M, and her family
- Young men Robert is meeting with
- Health for Roberta and the baby

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