

ADAIR UPDATE



New Year's view
from Shioyama
Shrine

ENGLISH CLASS UPDATE

Introducing the Bible to our students

Twice a month on Tuesday nights, we have adult English classes at the church plant building. When we started the class in November, I (Robert) hoped that I could gather 5-10 students and that some of them would be from our target community. Since the first week, the 3 classes have quickly grown to include over 20 students and all but 3 of them live in our immediate neighborhood. At this point I do not think we have had a week without a prospective new student.

We end each class by reading a scripture in English, translating it into Japanese, then checking our class translation with the Japanese Bible. I like this method because it allows people who are interested in spiritual things to explore the Bible while providing an English exercise for those who are not. Also, to translate the words from one language to another, the students must understand what they mean.

For our last class in February, we looked at 1 Corinthians 13:4. Up to this point I had mainly

used Proverbs, which are great, but the conversation often ended with some version of “we have a similar proverb in Japanese.” Discussing this passage from Corinthians, two people were particularly engaged.

After my first class, one of the women grabbed my Bible and took it to two students who were visiting. She sat them down and told them to read it again because they needed to learn what love really is. After our Bible time in my third class, a student commented specifically on the line that “love does not envy.” In a casual but honest way, she reflected on how she hadn’t realized that love isn’t jealous. While I wouldn’t call most of my students seekers, they are giving scripture a certain authority in their lives. God’s Word is having an impact on them.

Thank you for your prayers for the work in Higashi-Shiogama. Please continue to pray that our English students would encounter Christ through their relationship with us and our Japanese Christian friends.



We live in a port city, and we recently toured a new fishing boat with others in our neighborhood. What is the man in the picture throwing?

- A) Fish food
- B) Garbage
- C) Rocks
- D) Mochi (pounded rice)

(Answer on page 2)

NEW LIFE AND SADNESS

March babies and March tragedy

March is Benji's birthday month, and Boy Number 3's due date is in (eeks!) a little over a week. Although still more winter than spring here in northeast Japan, we know a new season is coming and will be marked by flowers, cherry blossoms, and that wonderful pale green of new leaves...life.

Heavy stories

Yet March is also a month marked by incredible tragedy in this part of Japan. What in many ways defined or at least strongly influenced our life and ministry last term is now 7 years behind us. I (Roberta) sometimes feel like life has moved on for most people. While we live in a neighborhood impacted by the tsunami, there wasn't as much loss of life here as in other communities and we aren't as directly involved in post-disaster ministry as last term.

Yet for some reason, I am hearing a lot of stories in the past month about the disaster (and have shared more specifically on our blog). I've heard people share about the passing of family members, sleeping alone on a roof in the snow in a flooded area, and being asked to help identify bodies as an elementary school teacher.

I've heard people share of recurring nightmares, children who won't talk about their birth mother's tragic passing with their new mom, and not feeling accepted by new neighbors as "relocated disaster victims." Recently a friend shared with me that her husband called her after the first wave from a severely impacted city and said, "Please wait for me at home." She waited, terrified, for 4 days before she heard from or saw him again.

Then there are other stories from last term that are still heavy: a friend's traumatized son taking his life after working in an area with a lot of death, a woman watching the wave sweep into her house from a distance and knowing her ill husband was inside, another friend's family member who is one of the "missing" and whose daughter and family had to relocate because of radiation.

Limitations

I know God didn't call me here to fix peoples' pain or to carry the burden of everyone I meet. I know he didn't build me for that and, as a friend told me in college, my "shoulders aren't broad enough; Jesus' are." I know this - yet at times I feel overwhelmed by my limited capacity: 3 (energetic, silly, stubborn, wonderful) boys 3 and under, language and culture gaps, less time and energy than I often wish I had. Recognizing this, rather than feeling burdened by not being able to "do" more, I have recently felt challenged to take this next season and focus on intercession.

Trying to trust

It would be dishonest to say I don't struggle: I still wrestle with the age-old question of why a good, all-powerful God allows tragedy. I sometimes let my imagination fixate on stories that I hear and then struggle to sleep. I occasionally doubt God, escape emotionally, and fixate on stuff that doesn't matter. Yet what I do know: our Father God weeps over the deaths and sadness of his creation. And he calls his



Excited to meet their little brother

church to rejoice with those who rejoice and to mourn with those who mourn (Rom. 12:15). This has been a verse we have heard and talked about dozens of times over the last 7 years - and one that is still relevant to us now.

Infant bonding + prayer time

While we eagerly anticipate meeting another March baby, we also feel the heaviness of this time of year. Please pray that we will be good listeners and, as appropriate, point people to Jesus. Pray that we will be effective intercessors - not just giving lip service to "prayer is our primary work" but actually doing it. Please pray that we will adjust to and steward this next season with a newborn well. We are grateful for your prayers for us (and our kiddos), and we are thankful we get to do this in partnership with you.

-Robert, Roberta, Joseph, and Benji

Partner

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Specific Prayer Points

- For a healthy delivery of baby #3 (due March 9)
- For a good time with Grandma (visiting March 5-April 2)
- For the 3.11 memorial service at our partner church
- For deepening trust with English students, neighbors, and people from the kids play area near our house - for more low-hanging fruit.
- For our friend E to grow in her faith

Contact Info

Robert radair@asianaccess.org
Roberta roberta@asianaccess.org

Address: Robert & Roberta Adair
985-0004
Miyagi-ken Shiogama-shi
Fujikura 2-6-5

Web: www.adairupdate.com