

Sep. 4, 2017

Greetings from Hamadera Bible Church!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued prayers and support for us as we continue our ministry to the local community through our summer Joy Joy program. We hope that you would continue to pray for us so that we may be effective ministers of the gospel and that would have the wisdom to use our time and our resources effectively to reach the lost in our community.

In terms of numbers, this was another encouraging year. Over a 2 week period we had 233 children join us over for daily lessons and activities. Additionally, 176 families also attended the end of the week presentation where they were also given the opportunity to hear a special gospel presentation given by pastor Shuji Kondo.

This two week period wasn't just an opportunity to minister to the children either. We also had 27 mothers volunteer their assistance in the kitchen during these 2 weeks and it provided a fantastic opportunity for the christian women to share and discuss their testimonies. Additionally, these mothers were also encouraged to come along to the weekly bible studies.

We feel that the Joy Joy summer program is an especially important program for our community because it provides such a wonderful opportunity to introduce information about our God and creator and to prepare the soil for the hearing of the gospel. The majority of people in Japan have little to no knowledge about God and over the past few years we have made a lot of groundwork in terms of introducing core concepts about who He is as both Creator and Redeemer. One of the very exciting things we have seen come out of this is that through the questions we have been receiving, many of the returning older children from ages 8 - 10 have been showing greater understanding about who God is, who we are, and also the problem of sin.

One very important lesson we spent particular time focussing on this year is that God is one. For Japanese kids who are used to thinking about there being many 'gods', the idea of Jesus being the same as the Creator is a very difficult concept to grasp, but we even heard a particular report this year from a mother of her child explaining how they had come to understand this. This mother in particular had said that it was the first time her child had explained something like that before.

At the end of one week another child asking about who they can get forgiveness, and other child asking questions to a teacher about the cross - although there was some difficulty understanding sin and how it relates to us.

Previously we have spent a lot of time focussing on God as our Creator because it shows our responsibility towards him as His creations. This year in particular we spent a lot of time focussing on God being a God who keeps his promises and building from an understanding on the promises made to Abraham and Sarah in the bible. Next year it is our desire to focus more deeply on sin.

One very difficult challenge we face is unfortunately we don't have a lot of children returning after the Joy Joy program is complete, especially for our Sunday classes. Unfortunately for many families in Japan, Sunday may be the only day fathers get time off of work and so Sundays are seen as an opportunity for the families to go and spend time on family activities. The incredibly high pressure of school and other activities during the week also makes it quite difficult to find any time that allows opportunities to have more continuous ministry opportunities. We ask that you might pray that God provides an open door and an opportunity to reach unbelieving children and families more richly in spite of their hectic lives.

Once again, thank you so much for your love and support you continue to show us through your prayers, time and financial support. We are so incredibly blessed to part of a body of believers who understand the value and the weight of the obligation of reaching the lost and it is this encouragement we receive by your love that helps us to keep moving forward. We are continually praying that in some way, God will truly work in this nation to open the hearts and eyes of the lost so that they might acknowledge Him as our savior and King. We hope you will too.

With all the blessings and richness that comes with knowing Christ,  
Hamadera Bible Church  
Osaka, Japan