

Land of the Risen Son

イエス・キリストは日本を愛する

(Jesus loves Japan)



In January, we helped host a Korean CCC team of university students. This was taken at the last outreach event.

A Christmas Surprise

Over the past four years, we've been enjoying getting to know the Fletchers*. We first met them after they received a flyer for our Bible ESL class. Over the next two years, five of the six family members would come to class and learn about the story of salvation and forgiveness that God wove into the lives of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus.

Faith (the mother) is shy about her English and didn't participate in Bible ESL classes, but she came out with her kids to every cooking club (except one) and every home outreach party.

Fleming (the father) and Felicity (the only daughter) were particularly faithful in coming to Bible ESL every week. We saw Fleming demonstrate wonderful spiritual instincts; when we started talking about Jesus, Felicity seemed to fall in love with Him. She always wanted to play Jesus whenever it came time to act out the stories in skits. When given the choice, she chose memorizing Bible verses over playing games! The Fletcher family started to read the stories together as a family at home.

However, the Fletchers seemed strangely reticent to attending anything they considered "church". This seemed odd to me, because they were learning the Bible stories on a weekly basis. Yet they seemed to be hesitant to hear them from other people. My best guess is that though they had come to trust me personally—that I wouldn't pressure them into doing something they didn't want to do—they had no such trust of the church in general.

Whenever I invited them out to special events at the church, they always accepted my invitations with a smile. But, based on their body language, I knew that they wouldn't come.

Since we've come back to Japan, the Bible classes have stopped. Fleming is currently on a 2-year work assignment to Tokyo, Felicity is swamped with homework required for acceptance to the high school of her choice, and her older brothers are now at boarding schools some distance away. However, Felicity, her mum, and younger brother continue to take part in our home outreach parties and cooking clubs.

** All names have been changed to protect privacy.*

**"WE HAD SO MUCH FUN! MY FAVOURITE PART WAS THE SINGING.
WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO COMING TO CHURCH AGAIN NEXT YEAR!"**

- Faith Fletcher (mother)

Interesting Facts



A Key Component

In Japan, body language is a key component to communication. Since most of the time it's culturally impolite to say "no", people communicate their negative responses through body language instead.



Understanding "No"

It's up to the listener to determine what the body language of the speaker means. Many times, a Japanese "no" is only observable through subtle muscle changes in the face or posture. These changes are often only perceptible after years of practice.



An Overt Method

The Japanese sometimes employ a more overt method of refusal: sucking air through their teeth, and saying, "That would be difficult." This means "no".

This year, as usual, they came to our home Christmas party—and something wonderful happened. I noticed that Faith was much warmer in relating to the Seaside Chapel church members who also attended. I gave her an invitation to the next day’s church Christmas party later that evening. To my surprise, her body language wasn’t closed off! *She just might come this time*, I thought.

Christmas Service

This past year’s church Christmas service wasn’t exactly conventional! Peter came up with the concept; I was the general organizer, and also in charge of the games section. The service was broken into four parts. Each of the first three had: (a) either a scripture-based movie or scripture reading telling the Christmas story; (b) a song connected to the story’s theme; and (c) a related game with prizes. The idea was to help people remember each part of the story using songs and games.

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|--|---|--|------|-----------|----------------|------|----------|-----------------|-------|--------|-----------|
| <p>1</p> <p>JESUS IS BORN</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Movie: Jesus is born ▶ Song: Silent Night ▶ Game: The Diaper Game (Guests guessed which melted chocolate bars were in a series of diapers.) |   | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>2</p> <p>ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Movie: Angels tell the shepherds about Jesus ▶ Song: Angels We Have Heard on High ▶ Game: Sheep Game (Guests made their own sheep out of a random set of objects.) |   | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>3</p> <p>WISEMEN SEEKING</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reading: Wisemen search and find Jesus ▶ Song: We Three Kings ▶ Game: Finding Jesus (Guests were “wisemen” searching for Jesus. Printed cards were hidden around the room.) | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Star</td> <td>250 cards</td> <td>1 point / card</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Baby</td> <td>50 cards</td> <td>3 points / card</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jesus</td> <td>1 card</td> <td>20 points</td> </tr> </table>  | Star | 250 cards | 1 point / card | Baby | 50 cards | 3 points / card | Jesus | 1 card | 20 points |
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| <p>4</p> <p>FINAL SECTION</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 15-minute sermon ▶ Short piano concert, with professional pianist ▶ Final game ▶ Potluck |    | | | | | | | | | |

I’m still getting people coming up to me—sometimes strangers!—and thanking me for the fun they had at Christmas.

When the church Christmas party began the following day, Faith, Felicity, and Flynn were seated right in the thick of things. They had a ball. When it came time to examine the diaper game entries, only one person out of more than 100 attendees got them all right. I turned the card over to see the name, and electricity shot through my veins. It was Faith! I knew that God was at work. What a wonderful first experience for the Fletcher family! They tell me that they are looking forward to coming again—and their body language seems to match their words!

Contact Information

Thank You!

Thank you for your interest in our work. We send out newsletters every two months. If at any point you decide that you don’t want to receive them anymore, just write or email us.

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