

PRAY

FOR JAPAN

**Eliminate child trafficking in Japan:
A prayer warrior's guide**

ZOE[®]
JAPAN



INTRODUCTION

Dear Prayer Warrior

We are so excited that you feel the Holy Spirit tugging at your heart to pray for Japan!

We strongly believe that God has a special place for Japan in His heart, and your prayers can help us break down the barriers that are still holding back the harvest. Decades of missionaries have sown the Word in this beautiful country, and we stand on His promise:

“ So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it ”

- Isaiah 55:11 (KJV)

Most reports indicate that overall Japan has 1% Christians (1.9 million believers), but we are excited to see that the estimated number for Tokyo is standing at 6%. We are hearing wonderful testimonies from missionaries and churches, and stand in awe at the creative ideas that our brothers and sisters in Christ are coming up with to share the Gospel in new and exciting ways.

It is therefore with hope in our hearts that we share these prayer topics that relate directly or indirectly to the exploitation of vulnerable children and youth. And although we cannot meet you in person, we feel truly humbled at this opportunity to meet you in spirit at the feet of Jesus.

We would love to hear from you, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us at info@goZOE.jp

With gratitude,
ZOE Japan
www.goZOE.jp
www.thegoodnews.jp



Prayer topic #1:

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGERY (CHILD PORNOGRAPHY)

DESCRIPTION

Pictures (photos or drawn), videos or sound recordings of children who are wearing less clothing than usual, wearing no clothing, or having sex.

CURRENT SITUATION

Possession of child sexual abuse imagery was declared illegal in Japan in 2014, but continues to be widely available. The law excludes virtual child sexual abuse images/pornography in manga or anime. These materials often depict violent sexual acts against very young children, and perpetrators use them as examples to desensitize children by creating the impression that it is normal for adults and children to have sex. There is a strong resistance from the manga/anime community against regulation, citing freedom of expression through the arts.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- Protection of children against sexual exploitation through pornography.
- For Japan to align with other developed nations and declare virtual child sexual abuse images illegal.
- For the Holy Spirit to convict perpetrators of their sin and opportunities for them to be saved and delivered!

*Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.*
Isaiah 1:17 NIV



Prayer topic #2:

COMPENSATED DATING

DESCRIPTION

Japan is infamous for its sexual obsession with school girls. Compensated dating, known locally as enjo kosai or papakatsu (loosely translated as sugar daddy) is where an adult (normally male) pays for a date with a school girl. Some girls advertise themselves through social media, and many others are controlled by traffickers and are forced to provide sexual services to perpetrators. Some of these children are employed by theme cafes (often referred to as JK businesses, JK standing for Joshi kōsei or high school girl) as waitresses or staff, but then required to provide off-menu sexual services.

CURRENT SITUATION

It is illegal for JK businesses to employ children under 18, but many establishments still advertise their sexual services by using younger looking adult models dressed in school uniform, thereby encouraging the sexual objectification and exploitation of children.

Children that advertise themselves often have a history of sexual abuse and lack a stable home environment.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- The National Police Agency, who have a daunting task to crack down on underground operations.
- For schools to open their doors to organizations such as ZOE to provide much needed awareness and education to children and teachers.
- Wisdom for authorities and NPOs with rescue efforts.



Prayer topic #3:

CHILD POP IDOLS

DESCRIPTION

A Japanese pop idol is a young entertainer marketed for image, attractiveness, and personality in Japanese pop culture. Idols are primarily singers, but they are also trained in a wide range of roles, such as acting, modeling, and appearing in variety shows.

Many female teenage pop idol groups have a fan base of mostly men in their 30's and 40's. Some of these fans display an unhealthy obsession with their favorite child idol, spending thousands of yen per month to speak to their favorite performer for a few seconds or take a photo after a performance.

Poor regulation makes it easy for agents with nefarious intentions to strictly control every aspect of the idol's life, isolating them from family and friends. Many idols are believed to be in debt bondage, forced to pay off their debts through excessive working hours or sexual favors, and even stalked and harassed by fans.

CURRENT SITUATION

There are believed to be more than 10,000 teenage girls who are actively performing idols in Japan. Most activities are centred around Akihabara district in Tokyo.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for those fans that have an unhealthy attraction to the girls. May the Holy Spirit touch these men (and women), set them free and enable them to engage in healthy, age-appropriate relationships in line with His will.
- Stricter regulation in the industry to combat exploitation of children.
- Doors to open for ZOE Japan and other NPOs so that we can directly reach the boys and girls that are being exploited.
- Opportunities and wisdom to educate children that aspire to become idols about the dangers.

Prayer topic #4: LABOR TRAFFICKING

DESCRIPTION

Japan's low unemployment rate and rapidly declining population is providing job opportunities for migrant workers to live and work in Japan.

The TITP (Technical Intern Trainee Program) is a government initiative that provides the opportunity for companies to bring in foreign workers as part of a structured internship. The main intention of the initiative is to contribute to developing countries by upskilling the trainees through on-the-job training, but in reality, many companies are abusing the program to acquire a cheap source of labor.

Trainees that enter Japan through the program often experience slave-like conditions, with lack of access to legal/support resources. There has been an increase in reports by female trainees of forced abortions by employers, as pregnancy is considered a breach of contract.

CURRENT SITUATION

The COVID-19 pandemic means that many of the trainees' jobs are made redundant, with huge debts to pay off to intermediary agencies, and no way to find alternative employment or even to return to their home countries.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- Wisdom and resources for the various NPOs that are providing support to these vulnerable trainees.
- Strengthening of the protocols by authorities to identify and take swift action against employers and agencies that exploit workers.



Prayer topic #5: BULLYING

DESCRIPTION

Japan has a strong group culture, which in times of natural disasters has proven to be a wonderful strength as people stand together to support each other.

Unfortunately, this also leads to the famous proverb: “the nail that stands out, must be hammered”.

Children that do not blend in (foreign, mixed race, broken families or simply different physical features or academic abilities than the norm), are often exposed to extreme forms of bullying – which contributes to the high suicide rate among children. This has intensified with cyber bullying, often in the form of revenge pornography.

CURRENT SITUATION

There are many efforts by the government to combat bullying in schools, and society is gradually starting to open up and discuss it more freely.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- Open doors for the Body of Christ to reach out to children. A child that hurts, will hurt other children – we need to reach perpetrators and victims with the Good News to see a true change.
- An increase and strengthening of Christian teachers in schools.
- Wisdom for parents and teachers on how to identify and treat bullying cases.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:29 NIV



Prayer topic #6: CHILD SUICIDES

DESCRIPTION

Suicide is the leading cause of death among children in Japan aged 10-19yrs.

Reasons for suicide are often linked to bullying in schools by other children, teachers or sports coaches, or children's inability to live up to academic expectations of their families.

Research by the Japan Support Center for Suicide Countermeasures show a significant increase in suicides from Aug 31st – Sept 2nd every year, just before children are supposed to return to school after the summer vacation.

CURRENT SITUATION

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen an even higher rate of suicides among youth.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- The Body of Christ to reach out and provide support to vulnerable children.
- That children will learn who they are in Christ!
- God's wisdom and favor on various efforts by the government and NPOs to combat child suicides.

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.
Isaiah 41:10 NIV



Prayer topic #7:

HIKIKOMORI & FUTOKO

(Recluses & school non-attendance)

DESCRIPTION

Hikikomori (can be translate as a recluse) is the term for individuals that completely withdraw from society by quitting their jobs or school and locking themselves into their rooms for months or years at a time. The term hikikomori refers to both the condition and the individuals themselves. Causes include family relationships, workplace bullying and harassment, depression and anxiety.

Futoko describes the phenomenon of children that refuse to go to school for at least 30 continuous days or longer (could continue for several years). Family circumstances, personal issues with friends, and bullying are among the main causes, according to a survey by the Ministry of Education.

CURRENT SITUATION

A 2015 Cabinet Office survey estimated that 541,000 hikikomori aged 15 to 39 exist. In 2019, another survey showed that there are roughly 613,000 people aged 40 to 64 that fall into the category of adult hikikomori.

Futoko among elementary and junior high school students was as high as 164,528 children during 2018, up from 144,031 in 2017.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- Knowledge, wisdom and courage for local churches to step up to the challenge to develop and implement the support structures and programs that can bring healing and restoration.
- For testimonies of mature Japanese Christians that have found the solution and full recovery through a relationship with Jesus. ZOE Japan captures these stories on video and shares it through thegoodnews.jp as a resource for the body of Christ.

Prayer topic #8:

WORKING CULTURE

DESCRIPTION

Japan is notorious for extremely long working hours. Employees typically work at one company their entire lives, and are often required to give up personal or family time to meet workplace expectations. Adding to the excessive working hours are long commutes between their home and office – easily up to 4hrs per day for people working in city centers. Marriage and father-child relationships are heavily affected, with children often only seeing their fathers over weekends.

CURRENT SITUATION

Extreme overwork is so common in Japan that it has its own term, *karoshi*, which means to work yourself to death (literally). In recent years, media attention turned to adult suicides due to excessive work pressure and has forced organizations to review their policies. In 2018, Japan enacted the Workstyle Reform Act, requiring employers to implement specific measures to limit employees' working hours and improve work environments. The COVID-19 pandemic is also contributing positively to workplace reforms.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- Wisdom and new opportunities for companies to continue with workplace reforms.
- For restoration of marriage relationships as couples learn to spend more time together due to COVID-19.
- For restoration of relationships between fathers and children.

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.
Proverbs 23:4-5 NIV



Prayer topic #9:

J.O.Y. Club

Jesus Others and You



DESCRIPTION

ZOE Japan is proud to support J.O.Y. Club, a ministry under Evergreen Chapel. Together, we are able to reach out to the families in our neighborhood and share the love of Christ.

J.O.Y. Club's mission is to use English classes as a hook to reach children and their parents with the Good News of Jesus Christ, as well as provide a tool for the Japanese church to reach others in their community.

Since its launch in 1996 by missionary Joy Tani, the Lord has used J.O.Y. Club to lead numerous children, parents and even grandparents to Christ!

CURRENT SITUATION

For the first time, we are in the unique position where more than 80% of our J.O.Y. Club children have accepted Christ. The next challenge is discipleship and helping them to grow so that they can be salt in light in their families and schools.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- Salvation of parents and siblings.
- Creative ideas for our Bible time teachers to present the Word in an engaging way that speaks to the hearts of the children.
- That new believers will find a good church family with a strong Sunday school program to help them grow in their faith.

*Start children off on the way they should go,
and even when they are old they will not turn from it.
Proverbs 22:6 NIV*



Prayer topic #10:



DESCRIPTION

In Japan, Christianity is often perceived as a foreign religion, not suitable or relevant to Japanese people. It is therefore crucial to share the testimonies of Japanese Christians, especially stories of mature believers that came to Christ without western influence.

ZOE Japan is working on the expansion of **thegoodnews.jp**, a platform hosting testimonies as a free resource for the church and for viewing by the public. All videos can be downloaded and freely used by any individual or other ministry for the purpose of sharing the gospel.

SUGGESTED PRAYER POINTS

- Continued favor on the distribution of the testimonies.
- Protection for the individuals that are sharing their stories.
- Wisdom and guidance for ZOE Japan as we are moving into the preparation phase for a Season 2 of filming testimonies.



*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
Romans 10:17 NKJV*



OTHER PRAYER POINTS

- COVID-19 related:
 - Increase in unemployment rate. There are already an estimated 10,000 homeless people in Japan. Ministries that reach out to homeless people are struggling to secure enough food and funds to keep up with the increased demand.
 - Struggling single mothers that are turning towards the sex industry to provide for their children.
- Japanese believers
 - Effective discipleship programs.
 - Courage to live out their faith in their homes and workplaces.
 - Opportunities to share their testimonies and protection when they step out in faith to do so.
- Churches and missionaries
 - Courage, wisdom and creative ideas on how to reach out in their communities.
 - The development of the next generation of church leaders to succeed the rapidly aging pastors.
 - Financial provision for churches and missionaries.
 - Strengthening of relationships and increased networking opportunities.





Reach every person. Rescue every child.