

# Japan Mission Trip

*Osaka, Japan*

*California Missions Initiative*

*Partnership*

*November 10–19, 2025*

## Why Japan?

- 125 million people
- Less than 1% evangelical believers
- Tokyo: largest concentration of lostness in history
- Japan is open to missionaries
- Teams bring energy, partnership, and multiplication

## 1. Vision and Strategy

### IMB Japan Team Vision

*All believers in Japan abiding in Christ, living in community, proclaiming the gospel, multiplying disciples, and planting healthy churches.*

## **IMB Japan Team Mission**

*Every believer a maturing disciple.*

*Every disciple a disciple-maker.*

*Healthy, multiplying, sending churches.*

## **What Teams Do**

- Prayer walking
- Mapping unreached areas
- English cafés & Bible studies
- Evangelism & relationship building
- Supporting church plants
- Building long-term partnerships

## **Long-Term Goal**

Direct partnerships between U.S. churches and Japanese churches

- Ask: “How can we bless you this year?”
- VBS, gospel choirs, English outreach, evangelism teams

## **2. Japanese Worldview**

## **Japan at a Glance**

- 98% ethnically Japanese
- Highly urban (90% in cities)
- Aging population
- Declining birthrate
- Strong group identity

## **Religious Landscape**

- 79% Shinto
- 69% Buddhist
- Ancestor worship
- Confucian & Taoist influences
- Atheism taught in schools
- Shrines & temples everywhere

## **Honor–Shame Culture**

Western worldview:

guilt–innocence

Japanese worldview:

honor–shame

## **Honor–Shame Culture**

Key question:

“What keeps harmony?”

- Group identity
- Avoiding conflict
- Indirect communication
- Hone (true feelings) vs. tatemae (public face)

## **The Weight of Batsu**

Batsu: a permanent “mark” for mistakes

- Hard to move on from failure
- Creates pressure to conform
- Deep fear of causing shame

## **Wa: The Value of Harmony**

Wa = harmony, peace

Beautiful when motivated by love

Challenging when motivated by fear

## **Impacts:**

- Evangelism
- Discipleship
- Church life
- Family relationships

## **Barriers to the Gospel**

- Truth must feel “Japanese”
- Group experience > individual experience
- Cultural “peace” hides internal distress
- Media skepticism
- Christianity seen as Western

## **3. Contextualization**

### **Why Contextualize?**

- Jesus came down the mountain to us
- We must enter the worldview of the people
- Speak to their questions, fears, hopes
- Share the gospel in a way they can hear

### **Three Functions of Contextualization**

1. Aligns us with Jesus’ ministry on Earth

2. Connects the gospel to their lived narrative
3. Removes cultural barriers to understanding

## **Luke 15 as a Bridge**

Three parables → three Japanese heart needs

1. Lost Sheep — Life vs. Death
2. Lost Coin — Value & Purpose
3. Lost Sons — Relationship & Belonging

## **Lost Sheep: Life**

- Japanese try to fix the inside using outside things
- Genesis 2:7 — God breathes life from the inside out
- True life comes from the Shepherd

*the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man*

*became a living being.*

## **Genesis 2:7**

### **Lost Coin: Value**

- Japanese struggle with identity & worth
- A coin never loses value
- Value is restored when God “picks us up”

### **Lost Sons: Relationship**

- Japan's loneliness crisis
- Hikikomori (shut-ins)
- Gospel restores relationship with God and others

## **4. Six Core Missionary Tasks**

### **Six Core Missionary Tasks**

1. Entry
2. Evangelism
3. Discipleship
4. Healthy Church Formation
5. Leadership Development
6. Exit (local ownership)

## **Why These Six?**

- Rooted in the Book of Acts
- Provides a common language for missionaries
- Ensures healthy, reproducible ministry
- Focuses on long-term sustainability

## **What This Means for Us**

- We join a long-term strategy
- Our short-term work multiplies missionary efforts
- We support Japanese believers
- We help build healthy, sending churches

## **How Our Church Can Continue**

- Pray for missionaries
- Pray for Japanese churches
- Consider future teams
- Build long-term partnerships
- Support ongoing work