



## Japan: Children's Day

### Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading

Japan is an island country on the continent of Asia. Japan is made up of more than 3,000 islands. Japan is about the size of the state of California. When you look on a map you will see that Japan is shaped like a seahorse.

Japan is located in the part of the world called the "Ring of Fire" where there are many hot springs, earthquakes, and volcanoes. 80% of the island is covered by mountains. Mt. Fuji is Japan's tallest mountain. The geography of a place affects the way people live. The way of life, or culture of Japan has been affected by the geography. The way people celebrate is one part of culture.

For centuries Japan celebrated Boy's Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month. After World War II, May 5<sup>th</sup> became a national holiday, and the name was changed to Children's Day. On this day families celebrate the healthy growth of all children—both boys and girls. Families tie streamers that look like fish to the front of their homes, one for each child. The fish are known as koi, or carp. Koi fish symbolize courage and strength. Sometimes, families place larger kites for the mother and father. When the wind blows through these streamers, it looks like the fish are swimming.

Inside the home, decorations might include an arrangement of irises, the seasonal flower. A miniature set of samurai armor, with helmet, sword, and bow/arrow may also be displayed. Special foods are eaten on this day. Chimaki is a sweetened sticky rice treat on a stick that's wrapped in bamboo leaves and steamed. Kashiwamochi are rice cakes with sweet bean paste inside and wrapped in oak leaves. A special hot bath with shobu leaves end a busy day.

Source: <http://www.globalroadwarrior.com/#mode=country&regionId=75&uri=country-content&nid=20.38&key=facts-holidays>



## Japan: Children's Day

### Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading Questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Japan is a group of \_\_\_\_\_ shaped like a seahorse.
2. Japan is located in a part of the world called the \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Culture is the way of \_\_\_\_\_ for a group of people.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is an important holiday in Japan because families celebrate the healthy \_\_\_\_\_ of boys and girls.
5. Families tie \_\_\_\_\_ in front of their house, one for each child and sometimes one each for the mother and father.

Draw a picture of something families do to celebrate Children's Day





## Japan: Children's Day

### Pre-visit Activity: Background Reading Questions

1. Japan is a group of **islands** shaped like a seahorse.
2. Japan is located in a part of the world called the **Ring of Fire**.
3. Culture is the way of **life** for a group of people.
4. **Children's Day** is an important holiday in Japan because families celebrate the healthy **growth** of boys and girls.
5. Families tie **carp/koi/fish streamers** in front of their house, one for each child and sometimes one each for the mother and father.

Draw a picture of something families do to celebrate Children's Day

