

Japan: My House in Japan **My Beautiful House Series**

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World Geography and Cultures, Multicultural Studies

Synopsis: Takashi is ten years old. His traditional Japanese house has tatamis (straw mats) on the ground and a Japanese garden in the center. Learn how people in Japan sleep on futons, eat with chopsticks, wash in a communal bath and treat the tea ceremony almost religiously.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to compare and contrast their culture, family and activities with Takashi's culture, family and activities.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity of cultures on our planet.
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to locate Japan on a map or globe.
- Objective 4)** Students will be able to identify the cultural traditions of Japan.
- Objective 5)** Students will be able to compare how Takashi's basic needs are met with the way their own needs for food, clothing and shelter are met.

Vocabulary:

Japan, tatamis (straw mats), interior garden, brag, "works of art," symbolize, elements, sacred, tradition, modern, national, chopsticks, complicated, futon, occasion, kimono, costume, tea ceremony, ritual, beverage, bitter, gestures, ancient, precisely, clockwise, maintain

Pre-Viewing Activities:

- 1) Locate Japan on a map or globe. Ask students on which continent Japan is located. Point out Tokyo, the Pacific Ocean, China and Asia on the map. Make sure viewers know where Japan is in relation to the rest of the world, including the United States and North America.
- 2) Discuss general characteristics of Japan such as climate, geographical features, the people, customs, etc.
- 3) Ask students to draw a map of their homes. Have them include the number of rooms, number of bedrooms, who lives with them, etc. Compare and contrast the different maps.

Post-Viewing Questions and Discussion:

- 1) Describe Takashi's family. How are they similar or different from your family? How many brothers and sisters does Takashi have? How many brothers and sisters do you have? What kinds of food does Takashi's family eat? What do they drink with their meals? What kind of food do you like to eat? Do you like to drink tea? If not, what do you like to drink? Who helps Takashi put on his kimono? Why does he need help? In what ways does your parent or guardian help you?

- 2) Describe Takashi's house. Compare it to your home. How is it similar or different? What do Japanese people put on the floor? What do you put on your floor? Do you have a garden at your house? If so, how is it similar or different from Takashi's garden? Where is his garden? On what does Takashi sleep? On what do you sleep? Where does Takashi eat his meals? Where do you eat your meals? With what does he use to eat his food? Do you use chopsticks too? If not, what do you use?
- 3) Compare and contrast Takashi's activities to your own. How are they similar or different? What kind of games does Takashi like? Do you play video games? If not, what kind of games do you play? Describe the way Takashi bathes. Why does he need to keep the water clean? What is your bath time like? What does Takashi wear for the tea ceremony? Describe the ceremony.

Additional Activities:

- 1) Have students draw a picture of their neighborhood or write a story about their family and home. Then, have the students read their stories or display and describe their drawings for the class.
- 2) Have students prepare a geographic profile of Japan noting its size, location, climate, natural resources and outstanding cultural traits. Have the students describe Japan's history, people, language, principal industries and major tourist attractions.

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