

Conversation Leaders: MaryAnn, Joan, Jon

Students: Hyun ju, Yoko, Jung mi, & Satoko

Review: We reviewed compound words and went through a few from the list, which was distributed to all. After looking at the words, the students told us which they didn't understand and we explained the meanings. The students then worked on the Word Search of compound words until it was time to start the discussion. (Students provided lunch and we decided to wait and serve coffee at that time.)

The discussion topic today was "Hobbies and Crafts."

Yoko told us her hobby used to be skiing, which she began in college. There are very steep slopes in Japan. She said as she is getting older, she needs to find another hobby. She has been to Seven Springs. During university, she used to go to ski areas for up to two months. Yoko's father's hobby was practicing Judo, while her parents both loved gardening. They once paid over \$200 for a kiwi tree, which they loved.

Hyun ju said the first time she skied she was in Japan with a friend. There was no beginner slope and they tried the intermediate one, a 40-degree slope. She & her friend took one step and fell and began rolling down the hill. For three hours, they rolled, stopped themselves to rest and eat food they had with them and rolled some more, til they got to the bottom. They spoke no Japanese so Hyun ju called out "SOS" until someone helped them.

Satoko does all forms of needle work. She loves a website called Mystery Sampler Stitch-a-long. (SAL). A pattern creator posts indicated the size of the finished product and the number of colors of thread they will need for the project. Then, every month, the pattern-maker posts part of the pattern. The workers don't know what it will look like until the end. Satoko began this hobby in Home Economics class in elementary school. Her mother does needlework and her father plays the recorder and sings in a chorus.

Hyun ju practices Yoga as her hobby. She tries to go twice a week to the Oxford Athletic Club for the free Yoga classes. She has edema of the legs and coldness in her extremities from poor circulation and the Yoga helps this. Her husband golfs and she has gone with him but hates it. She says a hobby should bring you joy and not the pain of being a poor golfer.

Jung mi told us she likes to wrap and decorate packages. She likes to tie the ribbons on and make it look nice. She took a class in gift-wrapping in Korea. Her father likes to fish and releases the fish after catching them. Her mother's hobby is cooking.

Joan asked about the hometowns of Satoko and Jung mi. Satoko's hometown is in a suburb of Osaka, Japan. It is close enough to the city that farming and fishing are not jobs there. Most people work in an office or business. Satoko went to a private school, which was two hours by bus and train from her parents' house. She attended University in Keoto, which was also a two-hour ride away from her parents' home, where she resided. Satoko plays violin in the Pittsburgh Philharmonic Orchestra.

Jung mi is from the large city of Seoul, Korea. Her parents, brother and sister still live there.

After the discussion, the students uncovered the hot foods for us to sample. Joyce and Marilyn arrived just in time for lunch, as we had hoped. Joyce took several photos of the students and volunteers, which will probably appear on the church website. (She asked their permission for this and all agreed.)

Hyun ju had cooked sweet-potato noodles with mushrooms and soy sauce. Jung mi made beef with soy sauce and sugar and Satoko made us sushi with cooked salmon. Yoko provided dessert, which was a chilled sponge cake flavored with green tea and topped with a whipped topping. They brought chopsticks, which some of us tried. All the food was delicious.

When Joyce, Jon and the four students remained, Joyce showed us some games she had borrowed from a friend whose church hosts similar conversation groups. The students liked the idea of games. Jon asked them what they like and what else we could do. Satoko explained that we (volunteers) make an attempt to understand what they are saying and what they mean but that most native speakers do not. She wanted to know if their pronunciation was the hardest thing about understanding them and we agreed it probably is the single most important factor for them. We wanted to know if they want help with pronunciation or if that would be offensive to them. They want the help and suggested that we write down problematic words as we hear them and then talk to them about it later. We suggested coffee break might be a good time and they agreed. Besides having trouble with some of the English sounds in words, they also need a bit of help knowing which syllable to stress in some words.

I think if a designated person at each session makes note of speech issues for the day, it would be helpful. That person or someone else can then speak with them about it at coffee time.

We also discussed Vacation Bible School and Jon will send each of them a copy of the flyer. They will consider sending their children and can post the flyer near where they live.

For Tuesday, we asked them again to be on the lookout for compound words. The discussion topic will be derived from articles they bring in from newspapers, magazines, etc.

On Thursday, they would like to talk about weddings and how they met their husbands.