

How many countries are named in this month's issue?



For many children around the world, September is the beginning of the new school year and so they are busy and excited about new school clothes and books, having new classes and teachers, and making new friends. Some children have to leave home and travel far away to attend a boarding school, where they have to live as well as study, and also often have to help with the chores!

In **Cuba**, when children finish primary school, they ALL have to leave home as the middle and high schools are in the countryside - like small villages, made up of the students, teachers and other school workers. The students also have to work in the fields as well as study there! 11 year old Julia Imana lives in **Sudan**, Africa, and



like many children in developing countries, her parents have to send her away to boarding school if she is to get a good education. Julia shares a dormitory with 41 other girls in a Christian school with 600 students. She has classes from 7.30am to 4pm with breaks for breakfast and lunch, but also has to help with chores like cleaning the school and feeding the ducks in the school compound. She loves science and playing football (soccer), but really enjoys being able to go home and visit her family, although she can only do so maybe once each year! Students in many countries would be shocked if they had to clean their school as well as learn there, but in some countries it is an accepted part of school life! Here is a photo of children in **Japan** cleaning their classroom after lunch.

In the **USA**, many school children are taken to and from school in a school bus - usually bright yellow! In fact, my husband and I both used to drive school buses before we became missionaries. The buses often hold about 60 students, and if it is a country route that picks up children from farms and houses miles from the school, the children often have to spend up to 2-3 hrs each day on the bus! When the weather is bad (too cold OR too hot!) it's not much fun! But most children around the world have to walk to and from school - sometimes up to 5 miles or more each way! In **Japan**, children walk to school in big groups and they all wear helmets! When they go out on school trips, all the children of the same grade have hats of the same color! Of course, some children are home-schooled and so they only have to go from their bed to the table to start school! I had to home-school two of our children when we lived in **Mexico**.



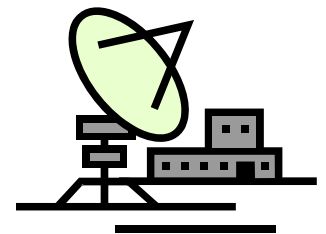
In countries like the **USA** and **Japan** most students attend school for 14 or 15 years, but in many places around the world life is so hard that most children can only go to school for a few years - or maybe not at all! In **Nepal**, half the children have to leave school before 5th grade to go to work, and in many parts of **Africa** and **Asia** families cannot afford to buy the uniform and books required, and so children are unable to attend school. In **sub-Saharan Africa**, about 40% of girls are denied access to an education, often because only boys can attend school, and for 6 years in **Afghanistan** (until 2002) girls were forbidden from attending school and now fewer than one in five women (and one in two men) can read there. So if you feel that you hate school and wish you didn't have to go, remember that you are really very blessed, because education gives you many more opportunities in life!



Even if you do go to school, you would be very surprised to see how different it can be in many countries! In **England** and the **USA**, school is from about 8am until about 3pm or 4pm five days a week. In many places, such as **India** and **Mexico**, it is often from about 7am until 1pm. In **Bosnia** and **Rumania**, it only lasts for 3-4 hrs in the morning, but in **China** some students are in school until 9pm at night, and some weeks they have classes four days a week, but other weeks they have classes seven days a week! (They also spend one week each term in army training!) In **Japan** children attend school 240 days each year, instead of 180 in the USA! These girls

are going to school in **Indonesia** and seem to be very happy about it!

In some schools around the world students study many subjects (often learn 2 or 3 languages!), play musical instruments and sports, and write with computers. But in many schools there aren't even any desks or blackboards, and children have to sit on the floor or under a tree! In some parts of **Mexico**, the local teachers have not had much training and so the students learn from teachers via satellite TV programs. In **Australia**, some kids in the outback attend "The School of the Air". They talk to their teachers on a two-way radio and get assignments through the mail or internet.



Children that only attend school for half a day go home to have their lunch, but in many schools children have to bring their lunch from home or buy it at school. Sometimes, such as in **India**, there are little stands outside the school gates where students can buy their lunch - in this case maybe *chana batura* (spicy chick peas and fried bread) or as in **Mexico** *taquitos* (tortillas rolled up with meat inside). Often school cafeterias provide an inexpensive lunch, and maybe even offer some choices. In **Japan**, the children get their food from the cafeteria but then eat it in their classroom - and they all have to wear face masks to prevent the spread of germs!

Education is important and every child needs to learn skills such as reading, writing, math and science; but schools also teach kids about discipline, their rights and responsibilities - and how to work and play together. The Bible tells us that if we really seek wisdom and understanding then we will come to understand and fear God and find the knowledge of God (**Proverbs 2:2-6**)



Do you know who the wisest man in the bible was before Jesus?
He learned all about plants and animals, wrote over 1,000 songs, and also many wise proverbs.

The Bible also tells us a lot about the importance of knowledge.
See if you can unscramble these bible verses to learn more about it:

- 1) MEN UP KNOWLEDGE LAY WISE (Proverbs 10:14)
- 2) FOR KNOWLEDGE OF PEOPLE ARE LACK MY DESTROYED (Hosea 4:6)
- 3) MAN A STRONG WISE IS STRENGTH OF YES MAN INCREASES A KNOWLEDGE (Prov. 24:5)
- 4) FINDS THAT MAN IS HAPPY THE WISDOM GETS AND UNDERSTANDING THAT MAN THE (Prov. 3:13)

If you would like to read more about school children in other countries, check out these interesting websites - www.katw.org and www.worldalmanacforkids.com/WAKI-Home.aspx (Go to the Nations link). Let's pray for all those children who cannot go to a good school - that God will move on their government leaders to realize the importance of education and soon arrange for better schooling.

Work hard at school and homework and then you can enjoy your time to play! 'Til next time,

your friend, Shirley