

Lesson 56

Panda Diplomacy

Diplomacy is a big word that has to do with keeping things peaceful between countries. If the president of one country makes a deal with the president of another country so they can avoid going to war, that's diplomacy. If two countries work out an agreement about how one country can buy fruit that the other country grows, that's diplomacy. If one country's prime minister travels to meet with another country's king for official meetings, that's diplomacy. If world leaders exchange gifts with each other, that's diplomacy. If China sends the United States a present of two baby pandas, that's panda diplomacy!



A panda in the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.

Panda diplomacy might sound silly, but **China** has used it many times. World leaders often exchange presents. They might give a rug, a vase, a painting, a chess set, or a special food or drink. President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush received the gifts at right during his presidency, which lasted from 2001 until 2009. Since China is the only country in the world where pandas live in the wild, China is the only country that can give pandas as presents. A Chinese empress gave two pandas to Japan way back in the year 685.

After World War II, China became a Communist country. The relationship between China and the United States became unfriendly. President Richard Nixon of the United States wanted to change that. He made a diplomatic visit to China in 1972. His wife, First Lady Pat Nixon, traveled with him. While President Nixon met with Chinese leaders, the first lady experienced everyday life in China by visiting markets, hospitals, orphanages, schools, and a zoo. She was especially fond of the pandas she saw in the zoo. When she told a Chinese government leader how much she liked the pandas, he said he would give her some. He did! Two months after the Nixons' visit, the Chinese government put two young pandas, Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing, on a plane and sent them to Washington, D.C.



First Lady Pat Nixon (in a red coat) visits a panda in a Chinese zoo in 1972.

Gifts presented to President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush during his presidency



Bowl from the emir of Qatar



Vase from the president of South Korea



Gourd from the president of Mexico



Gold-plated silver stirrups with inlaid rubies from the king of Morocco



Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing at the National Zoo



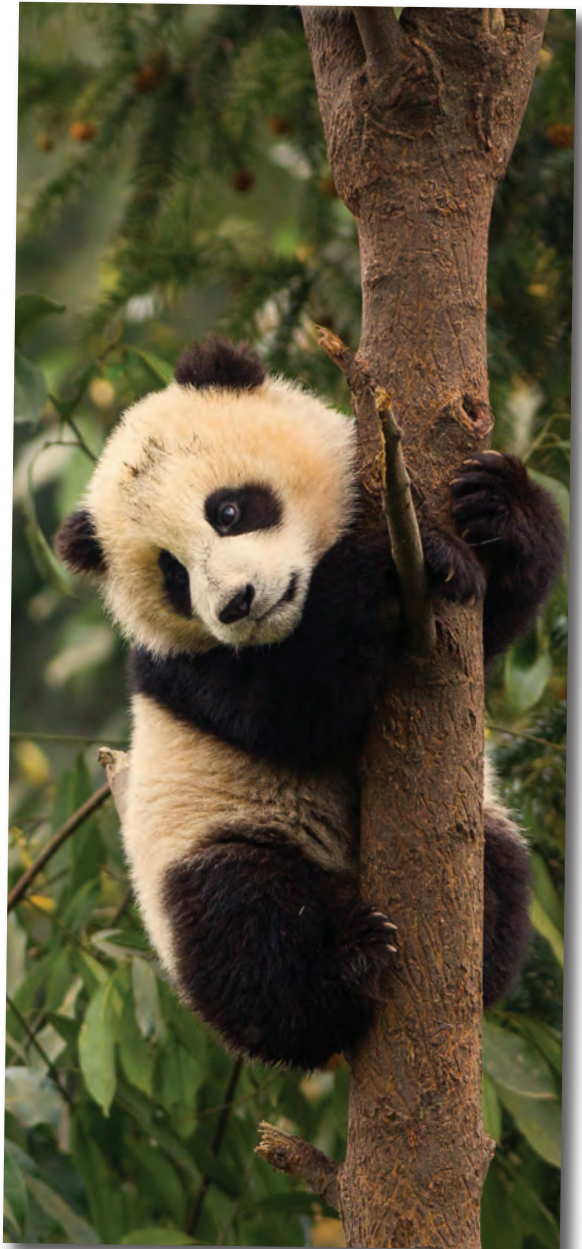
Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing lived in the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., for over 20 years. They were a popular exhibit. On the first Sunday after their arrival, 75,000 people lined up to see them!

The Chinese government continued to give pandas as gifts until 1984, when they decided to loan the pandas instead. The Chinese wanted all the pandas in the world to belong to them. China requires zoos to pay up to one million dollars a year for the privilege of having borrowed pandas on display. If a panda living in a zoo outside of China gives birth to a cub, the zoo must pay a cub tax and then send the cub to China.

Baby pandas are teeny tiny when they are born. They weigh only about five ounces. (How much did you weigh when you were born?) The cubs are wrinkly, blind, and bald. They don't have a black and white coat until they are about three weeks old. A mama panda has an exhausting job caring for a newborn cub. A cub needs so much attention that a mama panda might not even lay it down for a month as she cares for it night and day.

Pandas are adorable creatures. They are fun to watch as they do a somersault through the grass, slide down a snowy hill on their backs, or munch on bamboo. Munching on bamboo keeps pandas busy for about 12 hours every day. They will occasionally find something else to eat, but bamboo is definitely their favorite breakfast, favorite lunch, favorite dinner, and favorite snack! (What is your favorite snack?)

Rugs, vases, and pandas are nice presents and might help keep the peace, but the only place anyone will ever find true peace is in Jesus. As Christians we can fill the world with the fruit of the Spirit.



But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

Activity Ideas

- Find **China** on your globe.
- Complete “Lesson 56: Panda Diplomacy” in the *Atlas Workbook*.
- Answer the questions for Lesson 56 in the *Lesson Review*.
- Color the picture for Lesson 56 in the *Coloring Book*.
- Family Activity: Make Felt Pandas (page 266)
- Read Chapter 11 in *Race for the Record*.

Family Activity: Make Felt Pandas

Supplies:

- white felt
- black felt
- white thread
- needle
- cotton balls
- ribbon, yarn, or string for a hanger
- googly eyes
- black marker
- scissors
- glue
- pins
- round object to trace panda head shape (such as a mug)
- smaller round object to trace panda ears (such as a spice jar lid)

Directions:

1. Trace two circles onto the white felt for the panda head. Cut them out.
2. Trace two circles onto the black felt for the panda ears. Cut them out.
3. Trace two circles onto the black felt for the patches around the panda's eyes. Cut them out and trim them into ovals.
4. Thread your needle with the white thread.
5. Lay one white circle on the table. Place the two eye patches in the correct locations and sew a single stitch in the center of each one to hold them in place. See Image 1.
6. Use the black marker to draw a nose and mouth shape on the panda's face. See Image 1.
7. Lay the other white circle on the table. Arrange the two ears on the top, halfway on the circle and halfway off. See Image 1.

8. Flatten two or three cotton balls and place them in the center of the white circle that has the ears. See Image 1.
9. Cut a 6" piece of ribbon, yarn, or string, and tie the two ends together to make a loop. Lay the loop on the white circle that has the ears (see photo). See Image 1.
10. Place the white circle with the face on top of the cotton balls. Pin the two circles and the ears together to hold them in place. Stitch the two circles together with white thread. Make sure you stitch the yarn loop inside of your panda's head. See Image 2.
11. Glue a googly eye onto each eye patch. See Image 2.

