



the VRUGGINKS

TRAINING LEADERS IN ASIA

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Christmas Stars



This month we were blessed to use Christmas cookies to reach out in three ways! First, our family baked and delivered star cookies to our Thai neighbors. Although we have a language barrier we were able to say, "Sukhsant Wan Christmas!" and the star cards say in Thai, "Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' John 8:12." We also learned that one of our neighbors speaks English, so we have invited their family over to join us for dinner next week. Please pray for us as we get to know our neighbors, Moo and Shing, and that we will eventually be able to share the gospel with them.



Second, Rachel and the kids made Christmas cookies for a local Thai orphanage's Christmas party and our family delivered them. It was a great experience for our children and a blessing to be a small part of making the orphan's Christmas celebration special.



Finally, our family hosted a Cookies & Cocoa Party for some local missionary kids. The children had a wonderful time decorating cookies together and the parents enjoyed sipping coffee and chatting. We are so grateful for our home that made it possible of us to host this special party! We pray that through Christmas cookies we shined the light of Christ in a special way this month, and that the orphans and our neighbors will come to know the One whose coming was announce with a star, the light of the world, our Savior!

Sukhsant Wan Christmas!



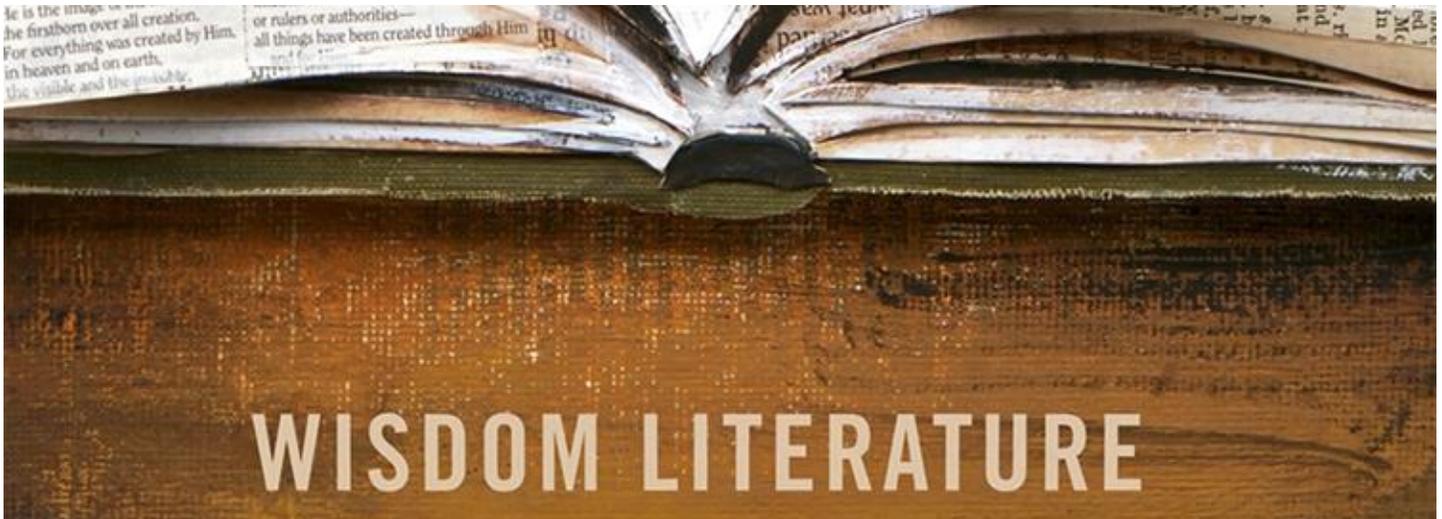
Sukhsant Wan Christmas! (Merry Christmas!) This month we had a wonderful time celebrating our Savior's birth! As is our family's advent tradition Rachel prepared a special activity for every day in December leading up to Christmas. The kids had many wonderful experiences from preparing gifts for others to being reminded of the meaning of the candy cane which really helped keep away homesickness as we were busy having fun.

The highlight for our kids was visiting the Chiang Mai Zoo Snow Dome. We paid money to be in 19 F (-7 C) for 15 minutes (never thought that day would come!), but it was fun to escape the tropics for a few minutes and the kids loved the ice slide. Our Michigan kids are really missing winter - especially snowball fights and sledding. Please pray for their adjustment to our new tropical seasons.

Abbie was very sick Christmas Eve, but thankfully she recovered overnight and we had a wonderful Christmas morning as a family. The highlight for our kids were the bikes which were paid for by generous donations from our sending church, Grace Community Church (GCC), in Hudsonville, Michigan! For our kids giving up their bikes was one of the hardest parts of moving to Thailand. Our church knew that so they came right beside us and met a longing of our kids' hearts. We are so thankful for GCC and how well they love us from around the world! Thank you GCC family for being our kids' superstars this Christmas! You can see a quick video of bike highlights by clicking the picture above.



Teaching Preparations



Greg is continuing to prepare for his conference and class which will be in the Philippines January 29-February 17. Greg will be the keynote speaker at a conference on Wisdom Literature (teaching on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job) from January 30-February 1, and then he'll teach a class on Wisdom Literature from February 5-16. Please pray for Greg as he prepares. Also, please especially be praying for Rachel and the kids as being without hubby/daddy for three weeks will be a long time to be separated - especially when living in a new country.

This semester Rachel will be teaching an Animal Sketching class to 19 3rd-5th graders at the kids' home school co-op. Over Christmas break she's been purchasing the kids sketchbooks, pencils, erasers, etc. and practicing the sketches she will teach. She's excited to have the opportunity to pour into a class of elementary students this semester!



Additionally, our new church in Chiang Mai, The Gathering, has asked us to become the youth leaders at our church. The current husband/wife youth leaders had to relocate to Bangkok, so we will be taking over their roles. The youth group typically has around 40 teens in attendance and they meet the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each

month. It's a very international group with a mixture of believers and unbelievers.

On January 7 we'll have a send-off for the current youth leaders, January 21 Greg will be sharing his testimony and teaching on Philippines 1:1-2, and February 4 Rachel will be sharing her testimony and teaching on Philippines 1:3-10. We have been praying for wisdom to know how to get involved in our church and are so excited our church leadership team has given us this exciting opportunity! We can see how God has prepared us for this ministry throughout the years we worked with teens, and timed our arrival to Chiang Mai perfectly to assume this special role.

Praises and Prayer Requests

Thank you so much for praising God with us and praying for our needs. Please email us with any prayer requests you have so that we can be praying for you as well!

- 1) Praise God we were able to use the simple act of baking and decorating cookies to show God's love to others! Please pray for us as we get to know our neighbors, Moo and Shing, and that we will eventually be able to share the gospel with them.
- 2) Praise God for a wonderful advent season celebrating our Savior's birth! Please pray for our children as they are missing winter and adjusting to living in a year-round tropical climate.
- 3) Praise God for the multiple opportunities we have to begin teaching this month! Please pray for Greg as he prepare for his Wisdom Literature conference and class, as well as the initial youth group lesson on January 21. Please pray for Rachel as she prepares for her Animal Sketching class this semester and initial youth group lesson on February 4.

Thank you so much for all of your love and support!

Greg + Rachel

