

Inuyama, North Aichi, Japan Family Church holds bus tours to witness

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Simply spending a pleasant day together as Unificationists with non-members can be the starting point of deepening relationships with people. This is a group photograph of a bus tour to go strawberry picking that the Family Church in Inuyama Japan organized

The Inuyama Family Church holds a bus tour as a part of our projects to promote interaction. Last year, we went on a bus tour to the Kantenpapa Garden in Nasu City in Nagano Prefecture as one of our activities to mobilize members and guests to the Hyojeong Culture Festival Aichi Rally on November 16. At the Kantenpapa Garden, people were able to gain energy through the rich and plentiful natural surroundings and gain knowledge on art and health. The first bus tour we had was for the church members in April. This revived the members and they wanted to go on another bus tour as a means of mobilizing guests for the rally. The next bus tour we did in April. Many of the members invited their family members or close friends and twelve among fifty participants were new guests. Most of the guests who took part in this bus tour participated in the Aichi Rally.

The good part about the bus tour is that the participants could become close at heart by spending the whole day together. At the beginning of the day, there are people who have a questioning look on their face, or those who have had negative images toward the Family Federation from the first place. When we ask all participants to introduce themselves in the bus in the morning, such guests refuses. But when we

ask them to give their impressions in the bus back home, they answer rather willingly. The greeting message given by the church minister reaches the guests in a natural way and some guests say it was very helpful. Also, unlike other bus tours, the participants listen carefully to comments given by each other and clap their hands and speak to each other. One aspect or another touches most guests and they say that unlike the general image held by the society, the members of the Family Federation are good people."

This year, we held the bus tour on March 13th under the title "Bus Tour for Strawberry Picking and Handa City Sightseeing." Since the church members had been looking forward to it, the bus tour reached its capacity as soon as we made the announcement. This time, there were ten guests including repeat guests. Moreover, there were six couples and five families among the participants, making it a "Family Federation" like bus tour in a literal sense. Although it was held on a weekday, some members participated by taking a day off.

One of the guests started to come to the church after participating in the bus tour saying, "I have been interested in the Family Federation for some time." The guests who participated as a couple said, "We want to become like the harmonious couple we saw at the bus tour," pointing at one of the blessed couples, and recently, their son has been connected to the son of that blessed couple. We have realized that the bus tour can lead our guests to the next step in witnessing.

There are still many improvements to make, but the fact that we can deepen our relationships with our people we have contact with simply by spending time together and having fun without being so eager to overtly "witness" to them is in itself very new to us. We are grateful to True Parents for letting us march forward with joy and hope corresponding to the era of the Family Federation.