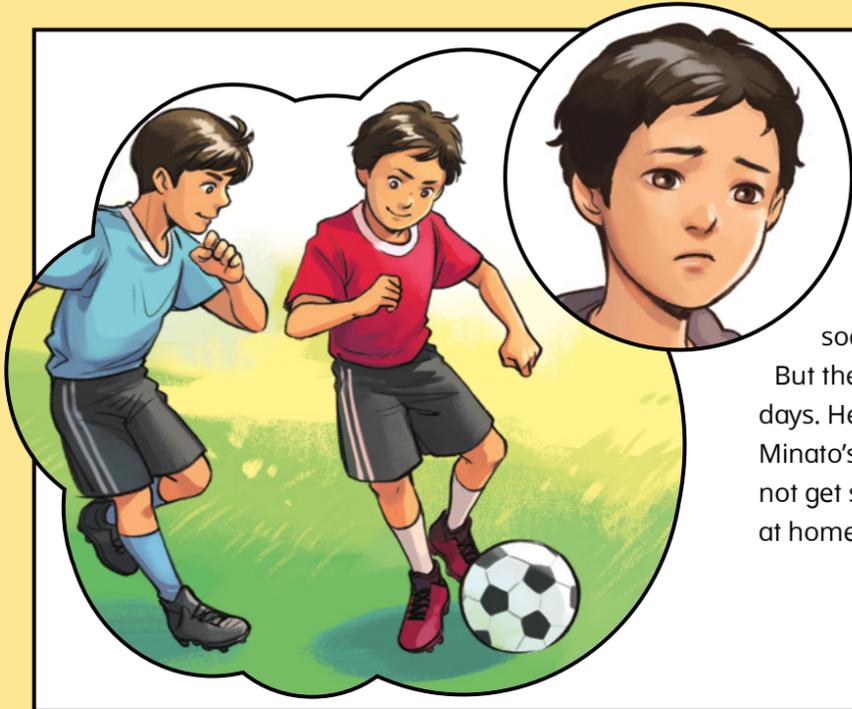


The Christmas Cake

By Richard M. Romney
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(Based on a true story)



Tomorrow was Christmas, and Kaiya was worried. He wasn't worried about getting a present or what the present would be. He was worried about his friend Minato. Kaiya and Minato played for the same soccer club. And they went to the same school. But then Minato did not come to school for three days. He missed soccer practice too. The teacher said Minato's father was sick. To make sure others would not get sick, Minato's whole family would have to stay at home for two weeks.

Kaiya was worried that Minato might get sick too. He asked Mama if they could check on him. They called Minato's mother. "Don't worry," she said. "We are fine. But we haven't been able to get our *kurumasu kēki* (Christmas cake)." Christmas cake was Kaiya's favorite. It had fancy white frosting and colorful decorations on top. It was a special treat in Japan. He thought Minato must feel sad to miss out.



After the phone call, Kaiya said, "Mama, let's take them *our* Christmas cake. And can we take them pizza too?" He knew that *saba* (fish) pizza was Minato's favorite.

Mama agreed. First they ordered the pizza. Then Mama put the Christmas cake in a box. Next they gathered some snacks and juice.

"This will help them get through the next few days," Mama said.



Papa and Kaiya went to pick up the pizza. Then they went to Minato's house to deliver everything. They couldn't go inside, so they set it all at the door, rang the bell, and left.

When Kaiya got home, Mama showed him a text message from Minato's mother. "I can't believe you brought us a cake!" it read. "The kids are really happy. Thank you very much."



A few minutes later, the doorbell rang. It was Brother and Sister Takahashi. They were members of the Church who lived nearby.

"We brought you some *higashi* (rice cookies) for Christmas,"

Sister Takahashi said. She held out a plate of cookies with beautiful designs. After dinner, Kaiya and his parents ate the cookies. "Are you sad we don't have Christmas cake?" Mom asked.

Kaiya thought about how he had helped Minato and his family. "Not really," he said. "After all, Christmas is about giving!" ●

This story took place in Japan.

