

“It has been one month since Ichiro’s mother entered the hospital. He has decided to give a prayer with his younger brother at a temple every morning so that she will be well soon. There are 18 ten dollar bills in Ichiro’s wallet and just 22 five-dollar bills in his younger brother’s wallet. They have decided that they will take one bill from each of them and put them in the offering box and continue the prayer until either wallet becomes empty. One day after they were done with their prayer, when they looked in their wallets, they noticed the younger brother had more money than Ichiro. How many days has it been since they started praying?”¹

¹ This problem was taken from a Japanese 8th grade lesson that was part of the TIMMS Video Study Project. Video and lesson materials available at <http://www.timssvideo.com/49>