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次の英文を読み、11 ページの 1～4 の文の下線部に当てはまる語句として適切なものをそれぞれア～エの中から一つずつ選び、記号で答えなさい。

Once, there was a cat who lived in a town. The cat was very good at hunting *mice. The mice in the town were slow, so the cat caught lots of them. The cat knew where all the mouse holes were, so he could sit outside the mouse holes and wait for the mice to come out. Soon, the cat hunted all the mice in the town. Then the cat went into the fields to hunt mice. But the mice who lived in the fields were much quicker than the town mice. The cat tried to hunt them, but he didn't catch any mice.

The cat had an idea. He left the fields for a few weeks and waited. Then he put some *prayer beads around his neck and sat outside a mouse hole. He closed his eyes and started *purring. He purred and it sounded like a *prayer.

Soon, a mouse came out of the hole and saw the cat with his prayer beads.

“Oh no, a cat!” he said, and quickly went back into the hole.

“Why do you run away?” said the cat quietly. “I am an old neighbor who has come back from training, but you do not say hello. You run away when you see me. Do not be afraid. Come and talk and pray with me.”

The mouse was very surprised. He stayed in the hole, but he spoke to the cat.

“Why should I come and talk with you? You hunt mice, don't you? If I come and pray with you, you will eat me just like you ate my brothers and sisters.”

“Ah!” said the cat. “That's true. I have done many bad things. I hunted many mice. But I am very sorry. Look at these prayer beads. I do not hunt now, but I pray and read *holy books. I have studied hard and learned many holy books, so I am different now.

“Go and tell your family about this,” said the cat. “Tell them that I am sorry for my mistakes, and that I am working to be a better cat. Tell them that I want to

speak and pray with them.” The cat started purring again, like he was praying.

The mouse went and told his family, and they were also very surprised. Each of them went and looked out of the hole, and saw the cat with his prayer beads. He was purring in a holy way. The mice all talked and decided to *test the cat. They sent one mouse out to test the cat.

The mouse came out of the hole but stayed far away from the cat.

“Hello, friend,” said the cat, and went back to his praying.

The mouse stayed outside a long time to test the cat. The cat prayed for a long time. But really, the cat was waiting for other mice to come out to eat them. He sat there and was purring all day, but still there was only one mouse there to test him. He got hungrier and hungrier. Finally, he could not wait.

The cat moved to eat the mouse, but the mouse was ready. When the cat moved, the mouse quickly ran into the hole.

“Why are you running away?” said the cat. “I wanted to *give you a friendly hug! You have tested me—I prayed all day, didn’t I? I have studied the holy books, right?”

“A bad person can pray all day, but if he does bad things later, that means nothing,” said the mouse. “Maybe you have studied the holy books, but you have not stopped hunting mice.”

The cat moved so quickly that his prayer beads fell, but he did not catch the mouse.

“Oh no!” said the cat.

The cat returned to the town. But there were no more mice there. So every day the cat had to purr and ask for food from people. Sometimes, he tried hunting in the fields, but he never caught another mouse.

(注)

mice : mouse の複数形 prayer beads : 数珠のような祈りの道具

purr : ゴロゴロと喉を鳴らす prayer : 祈り holy : 神聖な test : 試す

give... a hug : ～を抱きしめる

1. The cat came to the field because _____.
- ア. the mice in the fields were more delicious than the town mice
 - イ. he wanted to find a new house
 - ウ. he wanted to say sorry to the town mice
 - エ. he already caught all the mice in the town
2. The cat put some prayer beads around his neck to _____.
- ア. make himself look rich
 - イ. give them to the mice
 - ウ. show he was nice and not dangerous
 - エ. show his respect to the mice
3. When the mice decided to test the cat, _____.
- ア. they didn't think he was a bad cat
 - イ. they didn't believe he could read holy books
 - ウ. they thought that he was a very interesting cat
 - エ. they were afraid that he was going to eat them
4. The most important lesson is that _____.
- ア. someone will always help you when you are hungry
 - イ. you cannot hide what you are truly thinking
 - ウ. praying for others brings you luck
 - エ. a friendly hug can save you from accidents