

What's in a Name?



Theme: There is salvation in the name of Jesus. Advent 4-A

Object: A book on the meaning of names which should be available at the library. You could also use the cards found in most gift shops and bookstores with names and their meaning.

Scripture: She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. Matthew 1:21 (NIV)

What's your name? That is a question we hear quite often, but has anyone ever asked you what your name means? Do you know what your name means? When your mom and dad found out they were going to have a baby, they spent a lot of time choosing a name. They may have looked through a book that gives the meaning of names. I looked up a few names to see what they meant. (You might like to look up the meaning of the names of several of the children that are in your group. If you do not have a book, there are numerous sites on the Internet that give the meanings of names.)

John is a very popular name for boys and Joan or Joanna for girls. Their name means "God's gracious gift."

Have you ever known anyone named Daniel or Danielle? Their name means "God is my judge."

I have known quite a few boys named Michael and girls named Michaela. That is a great name that means "one who is like God." One of the angels in the Bible was named Michael.

When Mary and Joseph found out that they were going to have a baby, they didn't have to go to the library and get a book to choose his name. In fact, they didn't choose his name at all. God sent an angel to tell Mary and Joseph, "You will have a son, and you will call his name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sin." You see, the name Jesus means "the Lord saves." God loved us so much that he sent his only Son to die on the cross to save us from our sin. The Bible tells us that there is no other name that can save us.

What's in a name? If the name is Jesus, there is salvation!

Father, we thank you that there is salvation in the name of Jesus. During this holiday season, help us to remember that it is his birthday that we celebrate. In his name we pray, amen.

NAME GAME: Blindfold one child and have children move around the room. When teacher says to FREEZE, children will stop and let the blindfolded child touch one of the children and ask them to say SALVATION IN JESUS. The child will try to change his/her voice and say that phrase and see if the blindfolded child can guess the NAME of that child who said SALVATION IN JESUS. After the child guesses, he/she takes off the blindfold to see if he/she was correct. Whether right or wrong, the other child puts on the blindfold and the game continues.

"WHO AM I" Game: Children can make the sound of an animal that may have been around Jesus in the stable and have the teacher or another "IT" guess what the animal NAME is. Discussion about our lesson today and "What's in a Name"!

CHRISTMAS TREE Wall Hanging: The teacher can give each child a large cut out green triangle or another idea for a Christmas tree. Children will draw a very large cross on the tree (use bright neon color for the cross) and write JESUS on the trunk. Discussion about the NAME of JESUS.

MANGER ART: Make a nativity stable outline with craft sticks and glue some pieces of straw in the stable. Have children write JESUS IS SALVATION on the "roof" craft sticks of the stable.

TREES POSTER: Have children draw or trace 3 trees on a poster board. Under each tree, children can draw 1) boat; 2) manger; 3) cross. The 3 trees wanted to do something special for God and each one was used in a wonderful way. Have children write JESUS IS SALVATION under the cross picture and decorate their poster!

TOOTHPICK STABLE ART: Teacher can give each child a recipe card. Glue toothpicks in the shape of a stable and roof over the stable (big enough to cover half the card). Glue lima beans upright (vertical) for Mary and Joseph. Glue a little black eyed pea at the top of each lima bean for the heads and one with the little dark spot on top on the ground between Mary and Joseph and it will look like a little manger with baby Jesus in it. Children can write JESUS IS HIS NAME... or JESUS IS SALVATION, over the top of the toothpick stable.

Jesus Is Coming to Town



Theme: Jesus brings us the gift of love. The fourth Sunday of Advent, Yr. A

Object: A toy Santa or you might choose to wear a Santa hat.

Scripture: She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."
Matthew 1:21

One morning last week a tune started going through my mind. As you might imagine, that is not unusual. I often wake up in the morning with a song on my mind and often go to bed at night with a song on my mind. But this particular morning was different. I woke up with the tune "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town" running through my mind, but the words that came to my mind were not the usual words to the song. Here are the words that came to my mind.

Wipe away your tears, get rid of your fears;
Here's the best news you've heard in years!
Jesus Christ is coming to town.

He's makin' a list in the Book of Life,
That'll be the end of your trouble and strife!

Jesus Christ is comin' to town.

He loves you when you're sleepin',
He loves you when you're awake;
He loves you when you're bad or good,
But be good for Jesus' sake!

Now put on a smile, get rid of that frown,
Spread the "Good News" all around;
Jesus Christ is comin' to town.

At this time of year, many people are thinking about Santa Claus coming to town and thinking about all of the great gifts that Santa will bring them. But the real reason for this season is the celebration of Jesus Christ's coming--and he brings us the greatest gift of all. He brings the gift of God's love. The Bible says, "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." Yes, he loves us when we're bad or good, what a great love that is!

Dear Lord, we thank you for your great love. We thank you that you showed us that love by sending your son, Jesus, to save us. In his name we pray, amen.

CEREAL SCRAMBLE: Provide small cups and paper plates and some alphabet cereal. Each child will be given some cereal in their small cups. The teacher will have words from today's Bible lesson written on the chalk board or a poster board. Tell the children to use the cereal to spell a word on their paper plate. When the time is up, the children will carefully pass their plate to the next person and each child will read the word that was written on their classmate's plate. Continue as time allows and then children can snack on their cereal.

JESUS IS COMING TO TOWN SHOUTING: Before class, the teacher will make up many slips of paper in red and green colors and write JICTT and hide the slips of paper around a designated area. When the game starts, the children will run to get a slip of green or red paper and shout out JESUS IS COMING TO TOWN. After shouting, the child will begin looking for another slip of paper and will continue shouting every time they find a paper with JICTT!

LIGHTS AND BELLS PREPARATION: Let children hang some Christmas lights and cut out and glitter some bells (that children prepare), on the classroom door and large cut out letters for JESUS IS COMING TO TOWN! Children can add glitter to the bells and cut out letters to decorate.

STAR STICKS: Let children cut out and color a STAR. Encourage children to write an important word from today's Bible lesson on each point of the star. (Children can take turns reading all the words on the points of their stars to retell our Bible story today). Tape the star to a craft stick and let children march around a designated area singing JESUS IS COMING TO TOWN!

CROSS ORNAMENT: Give children supplies to trace and cut out a cross. Provide stickers and glitter, markers and sequins, to decorate their cross ornament. Hang the cross by a green, red or gold ribbon (if available), and hang on the classroom Christmas tree. Encourage children to write THANK YOU JESUS FOR YOUR GREAT LOVE, or other words on the cross from today's lesson.

CANDLE LIGHT: Provide each child with an empty toilet paper roll, construction paper to cover the roll. After writing today's lesson Bible verse or prayer on the construction paper, the children can place around the toilet paper roll and glue a yellow flame to the top of the roll. Children can then take a small paper plate and some molding clay or play dough to set the candle "roll" on the clay for the base of the candle.

GIFT HUNT: Draw and cut out small gift pictures. Write one word from our Bible verse today on each gift and tape the gift pictures around a designated area. Children will HUNT for the gifts and then

bring the little picture "gifts" back to a poster board that is decorated like a gift with a ribbon wrapped around it. The children will tape their little Bible verse gifts in the correct order to then recite the Bible verse together. Recite the verse several times and each time the verse is repeated, the children will say, JESUS IS COMING TO TOWN!!!

SONG CARD: Give each child a piece of their choice of construction paper color. Provide a copy of the JESUS IS COMIN' TO TOWN for children to tape or glue to their construction paper. Fold the paper in half and stand on the table. Encourage children to take their song card home and sing with the family.