

Lesson 1 / June 1, 2008

That's Not a Name!

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 1 Focus:

Don't mess with
God's name.

Lesson 1 Bible Basis:

Exodus 19:3-5; 20:1-5a, 7; Acts 19:13-17

Students will look at the weird names celebrities give their children, and compare them to the rich meaning behind all of God's different names.

Do you have a really cool sounding name? Is it something sort of celebrity-bizarre like Harlow, Apple, or Lourdes? Or did it make the top ten this year, like Andrew, Emma, or Jonathan?

Names are important because they give us a tangible label—something we identify with throughout our life. They become part of our identity—good or bad—and without them, we'd just be generic like *Current Resident* or *Hey, You!* or *To Whom it May Concern*.

Who wants that? We need our names because they give us a unique identity.

To begin, have your students split into two groups to play a "Name Game" by answering these questions first, and then sharing their answers with the class.

- ▶ **Whose name in your group (first, middle, and last) sounds the coolest?**
- ▶ **Does anyone know the meaning behind your first name?**
- ▶ **If you could pick any name for yourself (first, middle, and last), what creative name would you invent?**
- ▶ **Can you name any of the top ten names (boys or girls) given to babies this year? (See website for statistics:**
http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/05/10/baby.names.ap.ap/index.html?eref=rss_topstories)
- ▶ **What are some of the reasons that influence parents to choose one name over another? (family tradition, sound, meaning, likeability)**
- ▶ **Have you ever heard of any really wacky names that people wrote on birth certificates? How about these:**
<http://www.divinecaroline.com/article/22099/43904-jermajesty-banjo--wacky-celebrity-baby>)

After you and your group have had some fun with this opener, focus their attention on the theme of today's lesson—the purity and respect we should give to the name of Jesus Christ.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher's Guide*; Step 4 appears below.)

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STEP 4 **Lesson 1
Focus:**Don't mess with
God's name.**Lesson 1
Bible Basis:**

Exodus 19:3-5; 20:1-5a, 7; Acts 19:13-17

During *Step Three*, your students were able to research some of the names for God in the Bible. As a further application of this activity, allow your students some time to reflect on the meanings behind these names. Students should realize that these are not merely nicknames for God—like calling someone “Charlie” or “Becca” for Charles or Rebecca—but a way of emphasizing a particular trait associated with God’s character.

For example, some athletes are given specific names to demonstrate to others their dominant trait. (Do you know who “The Refrigerator” is? What about *The Ice Maiden*, *Pacman*, *Dice*, *Mr. Clutch*, *Magic*, or *Tiger*?)

To apply this concept, assign each of your students a different name for God. (See website for a full list:

<http://christianity.about.com/od/biblestudyresources/qt/namesofgodjesus.htm>)

Each student will answer these questions about his or her assigned name:

- ▶ **What trait or traits does this name suggest about God?**
- ▶ **Look up your name in a biblical concordance. Can you find some places where this name is used in the Bible?**
- ▶ **What kind of person would be most drawn to this depiction of God? In other words, whom might this name appeal to?**
- ▶ **What do you like about this name for God? When you call God by this name, what does it make you think about?**

Depending on the size of your group, go around the room and have each student provide a quick overview of the name he was given, or ask for volunteers.

Conclude your lesson with a time of community prayer, encouraging students to pray to God by one of His many names. (“We thank you, God, for being our Shepherd . . . We give praise to our Redeemer . . . , etc.)

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