

WHAT'S
IN
A NAME

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Daily Overview for *What's in a Name?*

Day	Scripture	Theme	Story	Campers Will
Day 1	Exodus 3:1-15	Name Dropping	Burning Bush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider how the presence of spirit makes a place holy examine ways God has been faithful through generations ponder how the act of naming reflects a deeper knowing be assured that God knows us by name
Day 2	Luke 19: 1-10	Name Calling	Zacchaeus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand that Jesus loves beyond assumptions and divisions identify how our personal labels create limits identify their power to transcend labels covenant to move beyond labels and practice acceptance
Day 3	Luke 1:57-66	Given Name	Elizabeth names John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore the expectations placed on them identify ways they are pressured to follow the crowd learn that challenging norms can be liberating see the ways God is nurturing something new in them
Day 4	Ruth 1	That's Not My Name	Naomi names herself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discover people in the Bible named difficult feelings be empowered to claim their own identity be encouraged to respect the experiences of others consider faith may not lead to easy answers
Day 5	Genesis 32:22-31	Name Tag	Jacob becomes Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider how pivotal moments can change their identity explore how a spiritual encounter can reroute one's path acknowledge moments that have forever changed us examine how we mark important moments
Day 6	Mathew 16:13-18	What's in a Name	Simon becomes Peter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize names can be a reminder of their potential realize potential is not always immediately fulfilled embrace failure as part of their story be empowered to live into their story
Day 7	Exodus 3:1-15	More Than A Name	Burning Bush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize that identity lies more in who you are than what you're named know encountering the holy cannot be limited by words

Through time and in sacred moments, names take on meaning beyond the spoken syllables. Our attempts to name God show the relational power of names and remind us that no name will fully encompass God. We also try to name ourselves in ways that give meaning or make sense of the world. Sometimes naming and labeling can become divisive or hurtful. Other times, the way we name others can defy expectations, like Jesus calling Zacchaeus into relationship. Sometimes advocates in our lives empower us beyond the limits of expectations and society's structures, such as Elizabeth defying tradition to give her child a new name. Often it is our own experience and struggle that forges our identity. In scripture, Naomi demonstrates the power of naming our emotions and the ways they mark us. While she is identifying her sorrow, we can see her strength and find the confidence to name our own reality. Facing his own struggle, Jacob finds himself transformed so much he is given a new name. His story shows us how wrestling with our feelings and our faith can change us in profound ways and remembering such moments can give new meaning to our lives. While Jacob was grasping for a blessing, Peter was wrestling with expectations and potential. Jesus blesses him and makes bold proclamations that unfold over time. Through betrayals and biases, failure shapes Peter into a powerful leader whose service still impacts us today. As we reflect on these stories, the names of characters, and the names of those who have shaped us, we are comforted by a God who is bigger than all our questions. We are accompanied by a God who transcends our words. We go out to serve in the name of God, who empowers us to name every moment and every place as holy ground.

Images for Each Day

These images represent the themes of each day of *What's in a Name*. They are simple to reproduce, and they can be found in the Art folder.



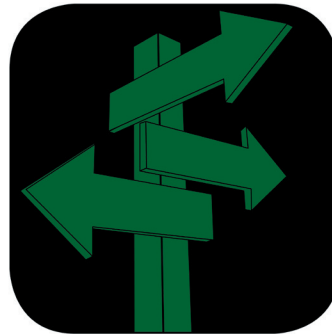
Day 1
Name Dropping
Exodus 3:1-15



Day 4
That's Not My Name
Ruth 1



Day 2
Name Calling
Luke
19: 1-10



Day 5
Name Tag
Genesis 32:22-31



Day 6
What's in a Name
Mathew 16:13-18



Day 3
Given Name
Luke
1:57-66



Day 7
More Than A Name
Exodus 3:1-15

By the grace of God, we all have an original calling to be pure and innocent. We are made to be curious. We are made to love, welcome, and accept one another. We are made to share what we have—money, food, friendships, gifts—to keep resources and love flowing so that we can sustain our community. Learn from Jesus, commit to staying with one another, sit down and get to know one another’s stories. Listen for what things have changed since yesterday in one another’s lives. What have we learned about being part of the beloved community of Jesus? Give to one another generously; like Zacchaeus, reclaim our innocence and recapture the gracious purpose of the things we own and share.



Day 3: Given Name

Luke 1:57–66

The name Zechariah in Hebrew means, “The Lord has remembered.” Zechariah was also the name of a king and a prophet. In our story, Zechariah was the son of a high priest. Since the name Zechariah had a great tradition of association with kings, prophets, and priests, It would be natural for him to continue the tradition of naming his son with the same honorable name. It was a good name, but with its meaning being “the Lord has remembered,” it represented the past. In this story, God had a different plan—a plan that would help people change the future and not be stuck in the past. The naming of John the Baptist was about the future.

Elizabeth was Zechariah’s wife and the mother of John. In Hebrew, Elizabeth means “my God is abundance.” She was another person who felt that she was mis-named because she was already old and had not been able to have child. In those

days, a woman with no male son had no status in society. So Elizabeth did not experience this societal abundance for most of her life. Now God had a plan to change all that. God sent the angel Gabriel, who appeared to Zechariah to inform him that Elizabeth would have a child and that he should name him John, which means “God is gracious.” This new name, breaking from tradition, was the signal for change. But Zechariah, representing the past, did not believe at first, citing that he and Elizabeth were too old to have a child. So Gabriel silenced him and he couldn’t talk for the duration of the pregnancy. He could only speak again after he and Elizabeth had named their son John, which affirmed the change that God wanted from “the Lord has remembered” to “God is gracious”—from God of the past to God of a gracious future that welcomes changes.

Because Zechariah still couldn’t talk when it was time to do the naming ceremony, Elizabeth was left to defend God’s decision to name the baby John against the long tradition of the past represented by their relatives and neighbors. What gave Elizabeth the courage to tell her relatives that she was going to break with tradition was also her ability to live up to her name, “My God is abundance.” She had experienced it personally with having a child when she had felt hopeless in her old age. Living in God’s abundance, she knew she was going to be okay. She knew that the abundance of God would be able to support and include this major change.

With a name that broke with tradition, “What then will this child become?”

Beginning with John, we see a new movement that shows the grace and abundance of God. Naming the child John signaled a break from the past in which society had not been gracious and generous but was oppressive to people who were powerless. We learn in the gospel that John prepared the way for Jesus to further demonstrate the abundance and grace of God. We know that by the way Jesus shared with women, children, the excluded, and the poor. Jesus challenged his community to not be afraid to share everything, knowing that with God’s abundance there is always enough.

Change is hard. Change is difficult, especially when you are weighed down by the past with people saying “we have never done it that way before,” or “we are too old to change,” or even “we are too young to make any change.” We human beings do not like change. The fear of change is often about scarcity—that there isn’t enough. We think that if we do the new thing, we will lose the things we have and we may not have anything left. Therefore, the first step to change is to believe and live the abundance that is God. In that abundance, we can respond positively to God’s call to change, like Moses did at the burning bush when he accepted the challenge to go back to Egypt to change the oppressive suffering of the Israelites.

The next step toward faithful change is to name the change. Like Elizabeth, we need to have the courage to break with tradition and to name the change—name the new future that we can live into by the grace of God. Throughout history, many movements have succeeded in empowering the powerless while silencing the powerful to effect constructive long-lasting change. We remember these movements of change by their names, such as the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa, and more recently Black Lives Matter. Mahatma Gandhi named his overall method of non-violent action “Satyagraha,” which influenced amazing people including Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. in their struggles for freedom, equality, and social justice. Non-violent Movement is another name that changed the way we protest, exercise our freedom of speech, and to assemble to effect change without violence. By giving the movement a name that signals a change, we can recognize it, deal with it, participate in it. Once we name the change, we can live into the movement, making the change reality.

God has a plan. God’s plan is always about inviting us to be partners for faithful change to bring peace and justice to the world so that all—rich and poor, old and young, all races and ethnicities—can experience the grace and abundance that is God.



Day 4: That’s Not My Name

Ruth 1

Naomi in Hebrew means “pleasantness.” Naomi’s life started out very pleasant—she got married, eventually had two sons, and watched them grow up and get married. But then the pleasantness stopped. Suddenly Naomi’s name didn’t match her experience. First her husband died, then her two sons died too. Can you imagine the grief that she experienced? Not only that, in the society of her time, if a woman did not have a man in her household, she had no status. All she had left were her two daughters-in-law. One of them followed Naomi’s advice to leave her for a better life with her birth family and possibly a new husband. The other daughter-in-law, Ruth—whose name means “companion”—decided to stay with Naomi. Still, imagine the risk they faced as to two women with such little protection from society.

Ruth and Naomi decided to go back to Bethlehem where people knew Naomi by name. It was there she changed her name to Mara, which means “bitter.” She further explained that “I went away full, but the LORD has returned empty. Why would you call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has deemed me guilty?”

When we experienced harsh or bad times, people around us might say things like “Don’t worry, you will be fine,” or “This will pass, and you will be okay again.” These are hopeful things to say; yet they may not be helpful to the person who is experiencing the hardship. These statements may come across as denial of the feelings and experiences of the person who is suffering. When victims of racism, for example, finally find the

Staff Devotions

Day 3: Given Name

Luke 1:57–66

In Elizabeth's ancient society, she didn't have the power to name her own son without people looking for confirmation from her husband. When she first tried to name him John, those around her looked to her husband before believing that John was this new baby's name. While that might not seem like a relatable problem for you today, there are still many times in our life when we feel like Elizabeth: unheard.

Even though she knew that people wouldn't believe her, Elizabeth decided to speak up. She named her son, but she also named her truth. She named her right to declare God's call on her life. She believed in herself and she believed in God, so at the end of the day, the opinions of anyone who waited for her husband to name the child didn't matter. There are times in your life where you'll be surrounded by people who don't believe you or believe in you. In those moments, Elizabeth is a role model.

Questions for Reflection:

- How do you think Elizabeth was feeling in this story? What pressure do you think she felt? Who do you think she felt the pressure most fully from?
- Have you ever felt scared or nervous to speak up?
- What do you feel called to do with your life? It's totally okay if you don't have an answer to this yet! Another way of framing the question is, what are you passionate about? What do you feel drawn toward? Is there any area of your life that just feels "right," even if you can't explain why?
- How do your friends and family, or even society, respond to your hopes for your future?
- What kind of support do our campers need from us in relation to their hopes?

Prayer: Holy Parent, you have called us each by name to live out our lives in your beautiful creation. Thank you for the passion you place in our hearts. Thank you for drawing us here to camp. Give us the courage to stand up for what we believe in, even when it feels as if the whole world has turned its back on us. Amen.



Day 3: Given Name

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Luke 1:57–66

Scripture Focus: Luke 1:66

“What then will this child be?” Indeed, the Lord’s power was with him.

Theological Summary: John’s parents, like most parents, choose his name. However, Zechariah cannot speak, so Elizabeth must make the declaration. This is an unusual turn of events and she isn’t believed, but Zechariah backs her up; so John is John. They obey the Lord in doing this new thing, and although people are shocked, they do what they need to do. God is starting a new thing with John, and that is signified by his name. Elizabeth was brave and stood for what she knew God wanted her to do.

Today, campers will...

- Explore the expectations placed on them.
- Identify ways they are pressured to follow the crowd.
- Learn that challenging norms can be liberating.
- See the ways God is nurturing something new in them.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Family Names	PLAY LEARN	Last name game
__ Renaming	PLAY	Game about changing names
__ Write It Out	LEARN	Journal building
__ Following Friends	PLAY LEARN	Follow the Leader pairs
__ Different Drawing	CREATE LEARN	Progressive drawing activity
__ A New Clay	PRAY CREATE	Creating with clay
__ Am I...?	PLAY LEARN	More than our names
__ Sacred Places	PRAY SERVE	Naming and praying for spaces

Leader Notes: Some campers will have more understanding of family names and tradition than others. Be sure not to make anyone feel excluded because their family story is not as fully known or shared as others.

Prayer: Dear God, we love you. Thank you for loving us, for naming us as your children, and for helping us to do all the things you call us to do. Help us to always remember that you love us, that you always know our name. Amen.

Daily Activities

Family Names

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Parachute (or similar material)

How: Invite all campers to share their last name, something they may not have focused on while meeting others. Invite campers to grab the edges of a parachute. As they lift it up above their heads, call out two last names. Those campers must then run and switch places with each other. Repeat until everyone has had a chance to move. Next, repeat the activity, but the campers standing next to the person who is called will run and switch places. For example, if you call out Green and Lee, then Jane Watson and Susie Garcia, who are next to John Green, should run to change places with Kim Reyes and Sam Johnson, who were next to George Lee. You can also call out your group's name and have all campers run and try to get a new spot before the parachute falls. Afterward, spend some time talking about the difference between first and last names, or "family names." Think about places last names are used and wonder about why. Ask if there are any common first names in their family that are passed on.

Try This: This could be done without a parachute, just trading places in a circle. You could also have a caller in the middle who calls names and tries to take one of their seats.

Renaming

PLAY

Supplies: None

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 with the campers. Remind them that John wasn't an unusual name, just not a name in Zechariah and Elizabeth's family. God chose a new name for this person that was going to be part of this new big thing. Divide campers into groups of four. Each group should choose an object in camp and decide on a new name for it. For example, cabin might be called widget, or penguin, and so forth. After the new name has been chosen, have each group describe their object to the other groups using the new name, while trying to make it so the other campers can't guess it right away. For example, "We like to go to our penguin. It's made of wood. It's surrounded

by rocks. We keep our shoes and our clothes there. Our penguin is really a fun place!" Repeat until every group has had a chance to play. How did changing the name make it hard to guess? Ask the campers if there are any places at camp or at home that might be better with a different name. Would they prefer to spend days at the "learning zone" or "school"? Maybe a "prayer park" sounds more fun than "church."

Try This: Adopt the new names as a whole group for a day, both within your group and in other camp settings. See if other campers can figure out what you are talking about.

Write It Out

LEARN

Supplies: Camper Journal pages (Extras section) for each camper, paper, hole punch, yarn

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 together. Point out that Zechariah could only write his portions of the story, and sometimes we do better writing things down or drawing them as we try to remember or learn. Explain that when we write things we want to do or things we want to talk to God about, it helps us see what we should do. Give each camper some construction paper to make a cover for their journal, then let them hole punch one side to make a binding. They'll need at least three holes to help it hold, but more is fine. You could include some blank paper along with the journal pages to give them room for creativity.

Try This: Find a time to let campers work on their journal each day. This might be in a morning devotion or before bed. You could include it in your afternoon group time.

Following Friends

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Colored paper (two different colors)

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 together, then point out that Elizabeth and Zechariah had to work together to go against what everyone wanted them to do. Have two activity leaders hold up a piece of colored paper so campers can see them; each should have a different color. Divide campers into pairs and assign each pair one of the two colors to follow. Ask one camper in each pair to close their eyes, and have the other walk alongside of them, guiding them with their voice only. The activity leaders will guide their pairs of campers on a short

walk, crossing paths regularly. The seeing camper may not touch the other camper, but will use only their words to help them know which way to go. After a while, have campers switch roles. Ask campers to reflect on what made that the activity easy or hard. Ask them what they expected from their partners and how they relied on each other. Spend some time talking about who we follow in our lives and how hard it can be when different people expect different things or give us different directions on how to act.

Try This: Have the partners stand apart from each other and yell the directions. Compare which was easier. Spend some time talking about those who care enough to walk with us in life compared to those who just shout directions at us.

Different Drawing CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Papers, marker

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 with the campers. Remind them that John was the start of something new—and no one knew quite how it would look. Have campers take their piece paper and fold it into thirds. Then have each camper draw the feet of an imaginary animal on the bottom third of the paper. When they are done, they should fold the paper to hide the feet and hand it to the next camper. That camper will draw the middle of an imaginary creature, fold the paper to hide all but the top of the drawing, and hand it to another camper to draw the top of the creature. At the end, unfold the creatures and see what was created. Ask campers how things changed and how it was different from what they expected. Ask them how they handle things that are different than they hope for and how we can see positives when things change.

Try This: Give the campers directions about what type of animal they are drawing. Does this make it easier or harder? Talk about the difference between telling someone what they must do and offering advice.

A New Clay

PRAY CREATE

Supplies: Modeling clay (or similar air-dry clay), small plates, plastic cling wrap

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 and explain that Elizabeth and Zechariah gave John a name that was new to their family, which was very different from their customs. They didn't know exactly what God had planned, but they knew that God had something in mind for John. Give campers a ball of modeling clay and invite them to make something that tells others something they may not know about them. This could be an activity they always wanted to try, or a place they dream of visiting, or what they want to be when they grow up. After they have shown these through their clay, invite them to reshape the clay into the first letter of their name and place it on the plate. Remind them that like John, God has plans for them. Invite campers to pray for something they would like God to help them with, either aloud or silently. Close with the prayer for the day or other suitable prayer. Campers could keep the clay as a reminder that God is molding them into something amazing!

Try This: Campers could use toothpicks to etch designs into their names that reflect things they would like to be or like to try.

Am I...? PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Name tags, pencils, tape (if needed to attach nametags)

How: Campers should write their name on a name tag, along with one or two things about themselves. Gather campers in a circle. Ask campers to say their name and one or two things about themselves that they wrote on the name tag. After everyone has shared, gather all the name tags and attach one on the back of each camper—making sure no one gets their own name. Have campers try to guess who they are by asking people questions. If they are getting frustrated, allow for extra hints to be given. When they find out “who” they are, they should find that person and walk with them as they try to find out who “they” are. At the end of the game, everyone should be walking more or less together!

Remind campers that we are more than just our names; we are all the things we do and say and dream about.

Try This: This could be done as a large group activity for the full camp. Different groups could start out in different locations, creating a “hunt” activity as they try to find the camper whose name they are wearing.

Sacred Places

PRAY SERVE

Supplies: Paper, markers

How: As a group, choose a location of the camp that all campers use. Create a sign and put the name of the location at the top. Write underneath: “We call this place ‘[place name],’ but it is more than just a name.” Have campers write all the positive feelings and things they can think of about the place on the sign. For example, the Dining Hall might be “the place we are fed; the place where I laugh; the coolest place in camp; a place that reminds me of home; a happy place,” and so forth. At the bottom of the sign, write down some things people might pray about while they are there, such as “Pray for people who don’t have food; pray for our cooks; pray for each other.” Close by having your group pray for the things they have listed.

Try This: Have campers go to each location and pray for the people there, mentioning in their prayers the things they appreciate about each place.



Story Resources

Moana (Disney, 2016). Moana goes against the rules of her people and follows her heart, which allows her to save her people. A story about learning about yourself and being true to what you know is right. A good movie to talk about staying true to yourself.

Brave (Disney, 2012). A young girl goes against all the rules of her people. In doing so, she causes grief and heartache. But in solving the problem, she learns about herself and her family and how to solve a problem. A good movie to talk about how doing what we think is right is sometimes filled with pitfalls. How do we make sure that what we want to do is the right thing to do?



Day 3: Given Name

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Luke 1:57–66

Scripture Focus: Luke 1:59–60

They wanted to name him Zechariah because that was his father’s name. But his mother replied, “No, his name will be John.”

Theological Summary: Tradition bids us to do the same thing over and over, but God continually calls us to something new. It takes courage to answer that call, but challenging traditions and norms can lead to liberation.

Today, campers will...

- Explore the expectations placed on them.
- Identify ways they are pressured to follow the crowd.
- Learn that challenging norms can be liberating.
- See the ways God is nurturing something new in them.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ What I Like	PLAY CREATE	Identify challenging callings
__ Great Expectations	PLAY	Card stacking challenge
__ What’s in a Name?	PRAY LEARN	Reflect on family expectations
__ Under Pressure	PLAY LEARN	Balloon challenge
__ Ready for Launch	PLAY CREATE	Catapult building
__ Tradition Reporters	SERVE LEARN	Investigate camp traditions
__ My Meaning	PRAY CREATE	Showing our names and lives

Leader Notes: The issue of family names could be problematic for a camper who has been adopted or who is in foster care. Be sensitive to those who don’t have or know family stories.

Prayer: Loving God, you know each of our names. Help us to fill those names with all of your goodness, today and every day. Amen.

Older Children

Daily Activities

What I Like

PLAY CREATE

Supplies: None

How: Invite campers to sit in a circle with one person in the center. The camper in the center should choose another camper and ask a question about something they like. For example, “What is your favorite color?” The person answering should simply give their opinion. Have the camper in the center respond by telling the person answering why they should like something else instead. If the person seated laughs, they move to the middle and can ask someone else a new question. If the person seated does not laugh, they can respond with either, “You convinced me, ___ is better” and take the person’s place in the middle, or they can say, “I know what I like” and the camper in the middle has to ask their question to someone else.

Try This: You could add a layer of group building to this by taking notes on answers and making a group trivia game out of it for later. Who actually remembers what others like?

Great Expectations

PLAY

Supplies: Playing cards or similar-sized pieces of cardstock

How: Demonstrate to the campers how to build a card house. Invite them to try building one of their own. Some will try to replicate your version, but don’t require it. Let them be creative. Once everyone has had time to build, spend some time talking about the different approaches they took. Compare what was expected to what was attempted. Ask the campers where following someone else’s example is helpful in life and when it’s good to figure out your own way.

Try This: Consider having groups work to build their own card structures to represent a “church. This could open up a conversation on what traditional parts of church campers like and what new things they might imagine for the church.

What’s in a Name?

PRAY LEARN

Supplies: Large paper, markers

How: Write an identifying word such as “teacher,” “coach,” or “minister” at the top of a large piece of paper. Ask the campers to brainstorm things they assume to be true about this person or things they expect from this person. Discuss how many of these are fair and how the person might feel about the expectations. On another sheet, write a famous last name, such as Kardashian, and ask the campers what expectations they have for someone with that name. Spend some time talking about how fair or unrealistic these expectations may be. Ask campers what expectations come with being part of their family and where those expectations come from. Talk about the difference between internal family expectations and what those outside of their family expect of them because they are part of a particular family. This might be something genetic, such as growing to be really tall, or something behavioral, such as always going to church. Be mindful of negatives. Don’t discourage honest sharing, and be sure to spend some time talking about how we respond to negative expectations. Read Luke 1:57–66 together and explain that John’s name means “God is gracious.” Ask the campers what expectations they think that created for John growing up, and how John might have felt about his own name. Close with a moment of silent prayer, allowing campers time and space to pray about what expectations they have for themselves and how they feel about those.

Try This: You can do the same expectation reflection with the word “Christian.” See what campers see as assumptions, good or bad. Spend some time talking about how we can change or improve negative assumptions.

Under Pressure

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Balloons (or balls, pool noodles, etc.)

How: In advance, blow up a balloon for every camper. Invite the campers to line up single file at one end of a play space. Give each camper standing behind someone a balloon and instruct them to place their balloon between the back of the person in front of them and their own chest; once the balloons are placed, they may not use their hands to hold them up. Instruct the campers that when you say, “green light,” they need to move to the other side of the space as quickly as possible, without dropping the balloons. When you say, “red light,” they must stop. You may stop and start them as often as you wish. You can have them restart or give a penalty for dropped balloons, but it’s not necessary. After the activity, spend some time talking about how the balloons might have felt, stuck between two people they could not control. Ask campers when they have felt pressured to make different decisions by different people, such as friends, parents, and so forth. Read Luke 1:57–66 together and ask the campers how the pressures of the community and family might have felt to Elizabeth. Ask the campers how they think this moment might have impacted John as he got older. See what advice campers might have for Elizabeth and John.

Try This: You could invite campers to write on the balloons things that pressure them, or issues where they feel pressured by others on.

Ready for Launch

PLAY CREATE

Supplies: Wide popsicle sticks (ten per camper), rubber bands (six per camper), plastic spoon (one per camper), a variety of lightweight objects to launch (pom poms, small rocks, bits of wood, etc.), Catapulting Expectations Handout

How: Give each camper their supplies and guide them through the building process. Take eight of the popsicle sticks and fix them together with a rubber band on each end. Next, attach the spoon to one end of one remaining popsicle stick so that the spoon’s handle overlaps one-half of the stick. Take that stick and the last one and attach them together at the opposite end. Pull those two sticks

apart just enough that you can place the thick group of sticks crossways in between, creating a spring. Use the last rubber band to keep the two connected sticks centered on the stack of eight. Before using, invite campers to make predictions about how well their catapults will work and how far they will launch things. Let them play around with the launchers, making sure they are not aiming at one another. Afterward, spend some time talking about how their expectations matched the results. If you have time, spend some time talking about how expectations determine the outcome.

Try This: If you have a mature group, you might make the analogy of the launchers to their family. When campers are “launched” into the world, what expectations do their family members have of them, and where do those people expect they will land in their lives?

Tradition Reporters

SERVE LEARN

Supplies: Paper, pencils, large paper, markers

How: Invite campers to divide into small interview teams and send them out to ask camp staff or older campers about camp traditions, including where they came from and why the camp keeps them. Once campers complete their task, let them share what they learned with one another. Make a list of the traditions and ask campers to reflect on how each started, how it changed, and how important it is now. Ask them if there are traditions they would change or eliminate. Explain that, at their best, traditions connect us to others and God, or teach us about God and our community. Ask the campers to review the tradition list again, identifying how it connects us to God and others.

Try This: This could be set up as a camp-wide “press event,” with staff scattered around and campers going from person to person to ask their questions.

My Meaning

PRAY CREATE

Supplies: My Meaning Handout, markers

How: Invite the campers to write their name inside the person on their handout. They can write it simply or be creative. Invite them to think about things they like to do or gifts they have, and ask them to fill in the space of their person with pictures and colors to reflect these joys and gifts. Now, ask them to think about the ways they treat others, and have them write or draw those things around their person. Explain that their name means something, and invite them to think about what others think and feel when their name is said out loud. Invite campers to look at their handout and think about what their name means to others. Provide some quiet time for them to think about their answer, why their name has that meaning, and how their actions can change that meaning (for good or bad) in the future.

Try This: You could do larger versions of this activity without the handout, letting campers trace one another's shadow or body on paper or on the ground with chalk.

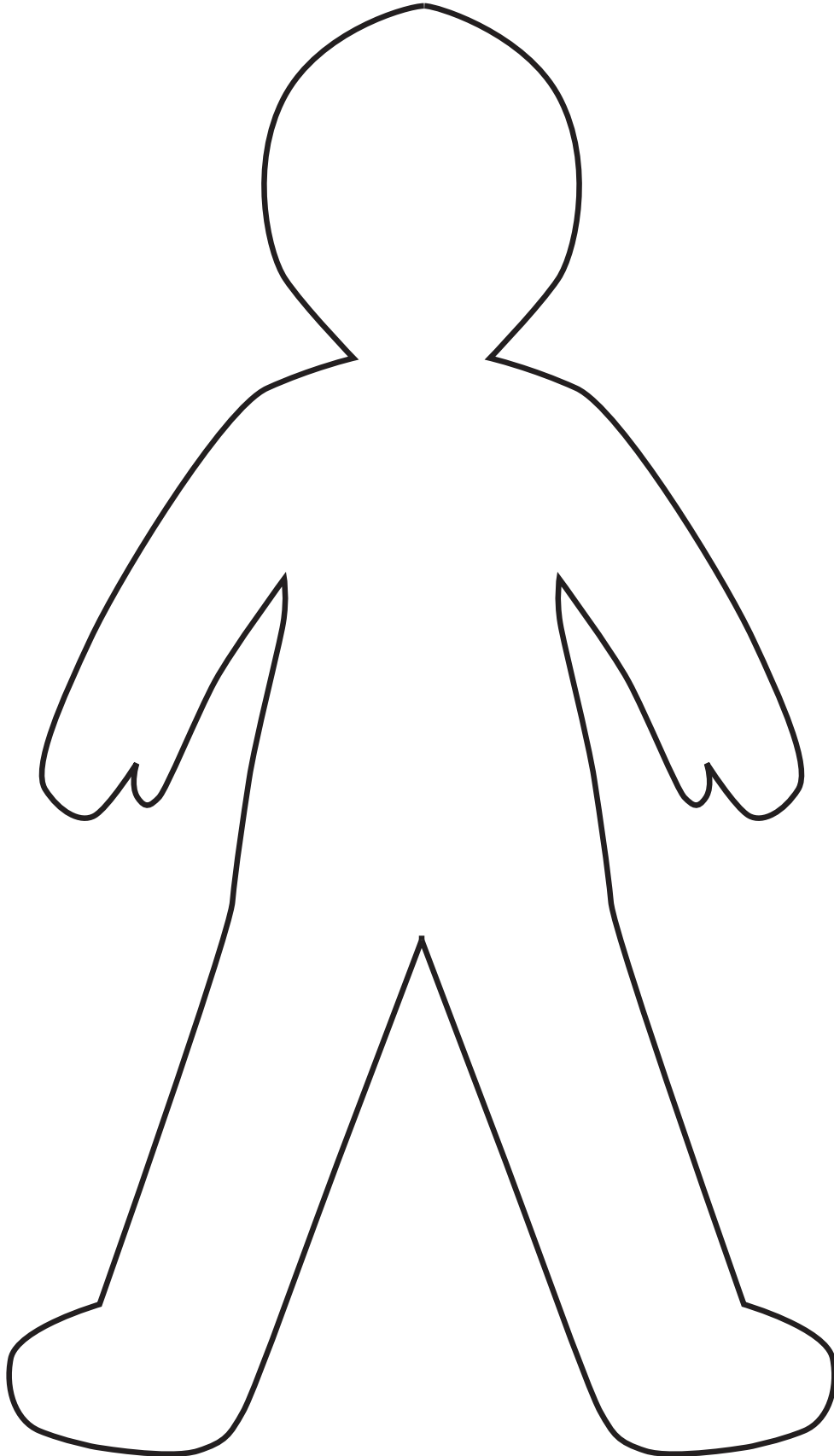


Story Resources

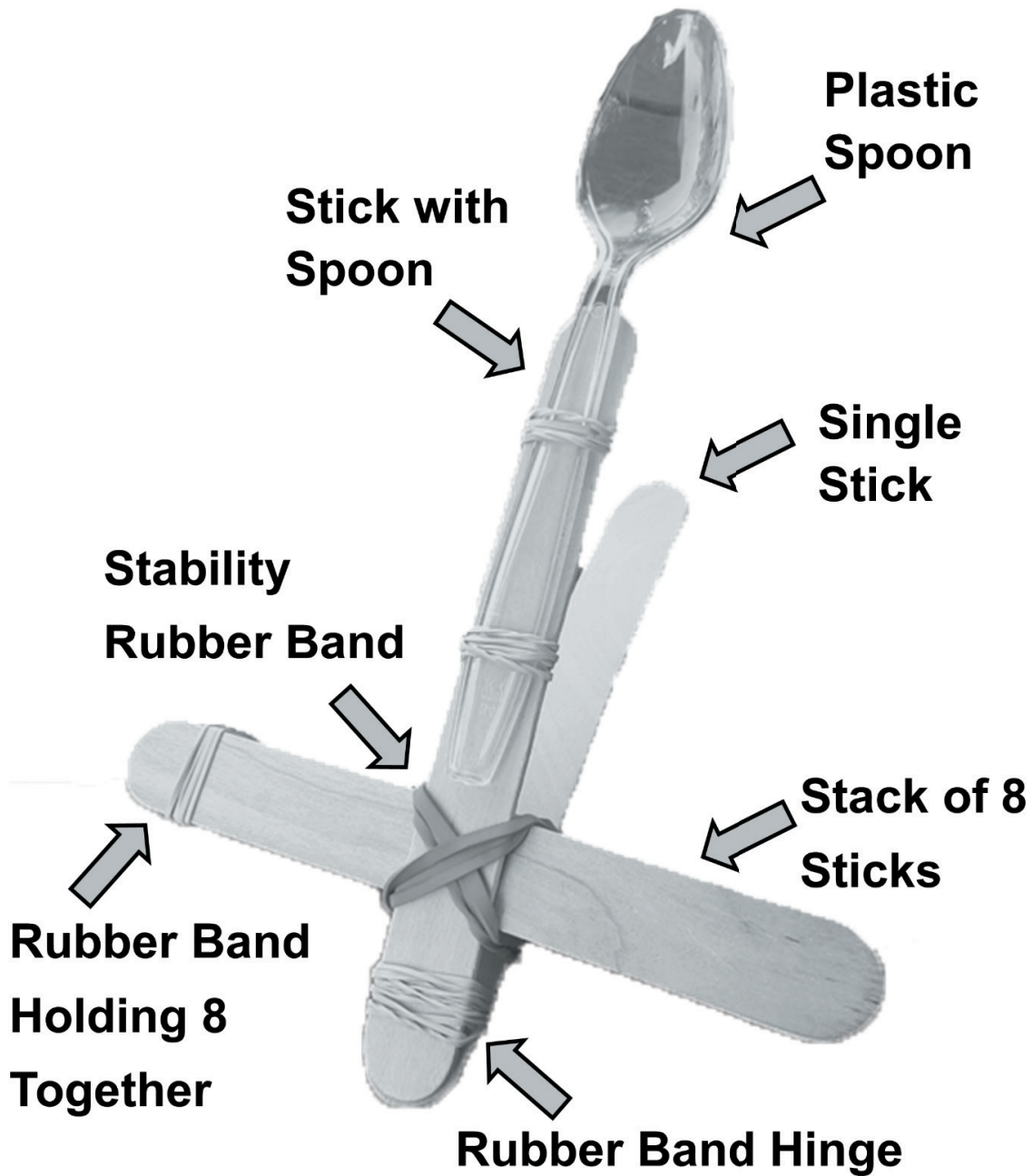
***I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban*, by Malala Yousafzai (New York: Little, Brown, 2013).** The whole book is a bit long, but the story of a girl who bucks tradition and stands up for her rights and a new way of being is inspirational, and it dovetails well with today's scripture lesson. Her bravery brought awareness of needed changes to a world well beyond her village.

***Wreck It Ralph* (Disney Pixar, 2012).** Wreck It Ralph is a video game character who is tired of being seen one way. He literally breaks out of his role, creating something entirely new in the process. It's messy, but with some help it turns out well. Campers will likely have seen this before and may well see the connection as Ralph bucks video game tradition.

My Meaning Handout



Catapulting Expectations Handout





Day 3: Given Name

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Luke 1:57–66

Scripture Focus: Luke 1:66

All who heard about this considered it carefully. They said, “What then will this child be?” Indeed, the Lord’s power was with him.

Theological Summary: Bucking norms can set us apart, and it takes strength and courage of conviction to remain on our paths.

Today, campers will...

- Explore the expectations placed on them.
- Identify ways they are pressured to follow the crowd.
- Learn that challenging norms can be liberating.
- See the ways God is nurturing something new in them.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Name Toss	PLAY	Calling names
__ Truth in a Name?	PLAY	Icebreaker with a twist
__ Naming Names	CREATE LEARN	Naming a character
__ Renamed, Renewed	PRAY	Praying for our future by name
__ Camp or Common	SERVE LEARN	Tradition and expectations reflection
__ Name It, Nurture It	CREATE LEARN	Stick building activity
__ Decoder Prayer	PRAY	A prayer activity with some added fun

Leader Notes: Campers who don’t like their names may be uncomfortable with John’s story, so focus on the lessons we learn rather than the naming itself. Also be mindful of those who don’t know their family’s history, and make sure no one is shamed.

Prayer: We praise God for giving us the courage to be who we are called to be rather than who the world wants us to be. Amen.

Daily Activities

Name Toss

PLAY

Supplies: Balls or other items to toss

How: Have campers partner up, then face their partner and practice tossing a ball back and forth. Ask them to say the name of someone in their family each time they toss the ball. When they run out of family names, they can use names of friends or even other campers. After each person tosses the ball, have them take one step backwards so that the distance keeps growing. See if they run out of names before dropping a pass. Afterward, spend a few minutes talking about the ways we respond to names and what the names of loved ones mean to us. Are the comforting or anxiety-provoking? Do they make us think about our behavior or giggle at a memory?

Try This: You could have campers write names on a piece of paper, opening it to add a name on each turn. The one who catches it reads the name out loud, then adds one and tries to throw it back. See how far they can actually throw it, and see if there are some fun mispronunciations.

Truth in a Name?

PLAY

Supplies: None

How: Like other similar icebreakers, campers will share three things on their turn. Only two will be true. Have campers take turns introducing themselves to the group. Ask them to share some combination of this information: their full name, how they were named, what their name means, or how they named a pet, making that one of their statements is false. Then have the other campers guess which story is not true. Challenge campers not to make it too obvious. When everyone has had a turn, ask them to reflect on how the story of a name adds to its meaning.

Try This: Provide campers with a list of camp buildings and write how they were named on individual note cards. Invite them to work in pairs or small groups to come up with alternative

stories for the names and write them on their own note cards. For each building, read the various stories and see if the rest of the group can guess which are true.

Naming Names

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Paper, markers or pens

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 together. Ask the campers why it was important to Elizabeth to name her child John. Read the passage again if needed. Explain that John may seem like a common name to us, but in this time and place it was not expected and had a meaning to it. Divide campers into teams of three and ask them to create a fictional character who is a leader. They can be from any genre the campers chose. The only catch is, they cannot give them a name. Encourage them to have a good backstory as well as a description of this person that explains why they are a leader. Give each team time to present their hero, then let the rest of the campers try to name the character. The creating group gets no input and cannot complain in the moment. After all characters have been named, spend some time talking about how it felt to have others naming your character. Invite the campers to think about Elizabeth's feelings when others were trying to correct her about her own child's name.

Try This: You could do a faster version of this where you present a character and let the campers argue over their name, then share your frustration over not being asked what you think, since you created them.

Renamed, Renewed

PRAY

Supplies: None

How: Invite the campers to imagine they are John at twelve years old and hearing this story for the first time. Read Luke 1:57–66. Ask then what John might have been thinking and feeling. Remind the campers of expectations that were placed on John at his birth, and invite the campers to imagine what other hopes and dreams John might have had for himself. Invite campers to share any expectations they feel from their family and how they match or conflict with their own

hopes and dreams. Once everyone has had the opportunity to share, invite campers to take a moment of prayer for one another. Call a name, then provide a moment of silence for everyone to lift a silent prayer for that camper and the hopes and dreams they carry. End the moment of silence by repeating that camper's name. Do this for each camper in the group.

Try This: You might invite campers to create a new name for themselves that reflects their own hopes and dreams. This could be part of the prayer ritual, becoming the name you close the silence with.

Camp or Common

SERVE LEARN

Supplies: None

How: Standing in the middle of your gathering space, invite campers to move to one side or the other based on their responses to your prompts. List things that are common at camp. Instruct campers to move to one side if this is also common at home and move to the other side if it is only common at camp. Some examples include singing prayers, praying before meals, sharing a room with more than eight people, eating around a table, spending time outside every day, worshipping at the same time daily, and so forth. Include things that are part of your camp's spiritual traditions. After the activity, spend some time talking about how the expectations of camp felt the first time we experienced them. Those who are new this year will be honored voices of wisdom in this conversation. Ask the campers if there are things common to camp that we could do better or explain better, and how changing expectations cause us to change or adapt.

Try This: If you hear concerns about camp traditions, consider letting campers brainstorm solutions that you can share with other leaders. This is a great time to self-reflect on our camp expectations.

Name It, Nurture It

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Popsicle sticks, markers.

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 together. Remind campers that this is the same child who responded from the womb when Mary visited, and the same John who baptizes Jesus when they are older. Point out that God has been in these people's lives in active and quiet ways for many years. Ask campers to consider how God is nurturing something in each of them. Have them think about what they are passionate about and what they are good at. Invite the campers to write their answers on popsicle sticks, then use those to build something that symbolizes what God might be shaping them into. They could create something that reflects their future goals, a way of serving that is special to them, or another creative expression. Let those who are willing share their creations, and be sure to affirm everyone for their gifts and constructions.

Try This: This could include a second round where all the sticks are combined into one bigger creation, using everyone's gifts. Explain that whatever they build is a "church" because it is the gifts of God's people combined. You could also make a list of all the words on sticks and consider what, if used together, these gifts could accomplish.

Decoder Prayer

PRAY

Supplies: Decoder Prayer Handout, paper, pens.

How: Using the decoder wheel instructions included, have each camper create a decoder wheel. Their code is specific, though, and the letter they choose should be the first letter of an expectation they feel from others, such as "O" for obedience. The number should reflect how often they think about this expectation or are reminded of it in a normal week, such as "my parents remind me to do what they say at least once every day." This would make the code O7. Using their wheel and code, have everyone write a coded prayer for another camper, giving that camper their hopes for breaking free of frustrating expectations or fulfilling exciting ones.

Try This: Have campers dream up fun new expectations for each other and use the decoders to pass them to each other throughout the day, or have leaders write prayers for each camper and let the campers decode the individualized messages.



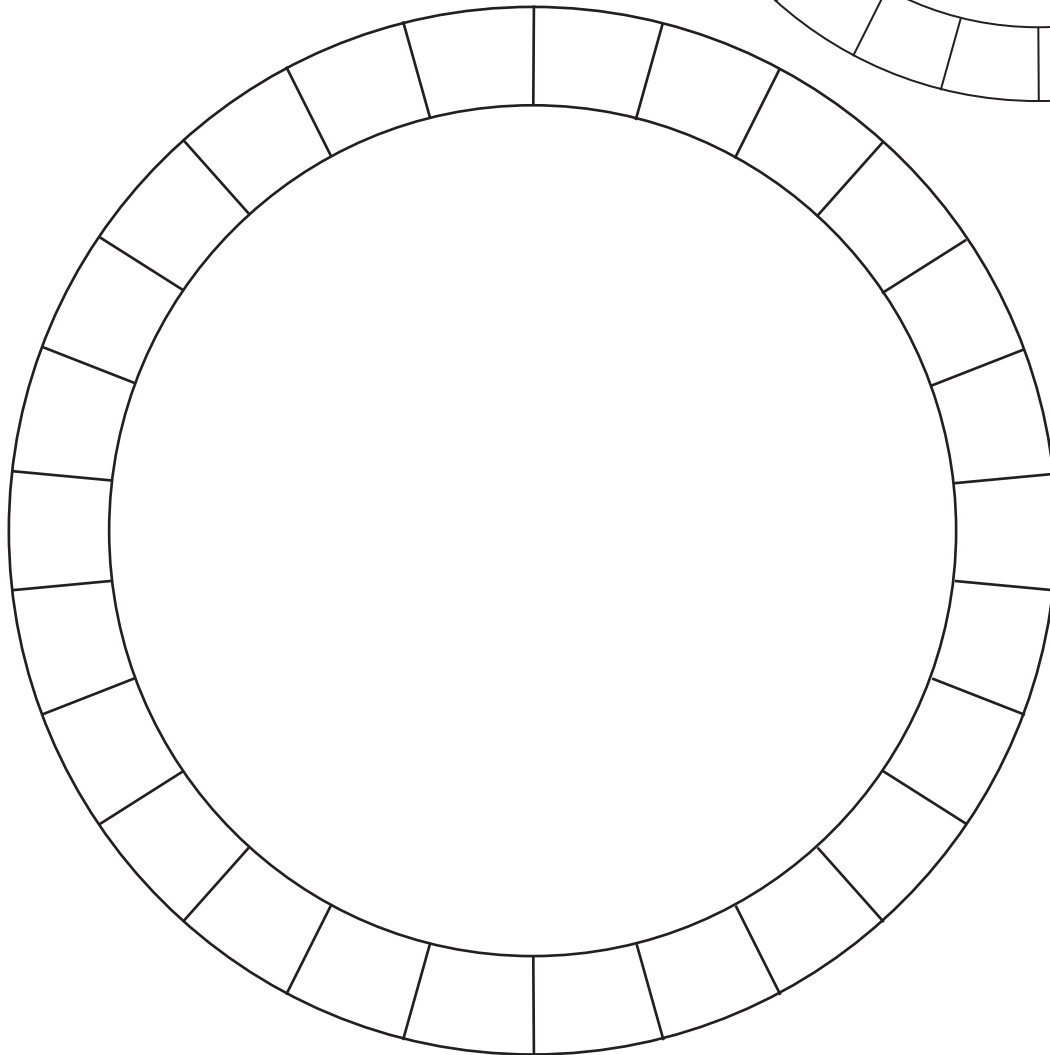
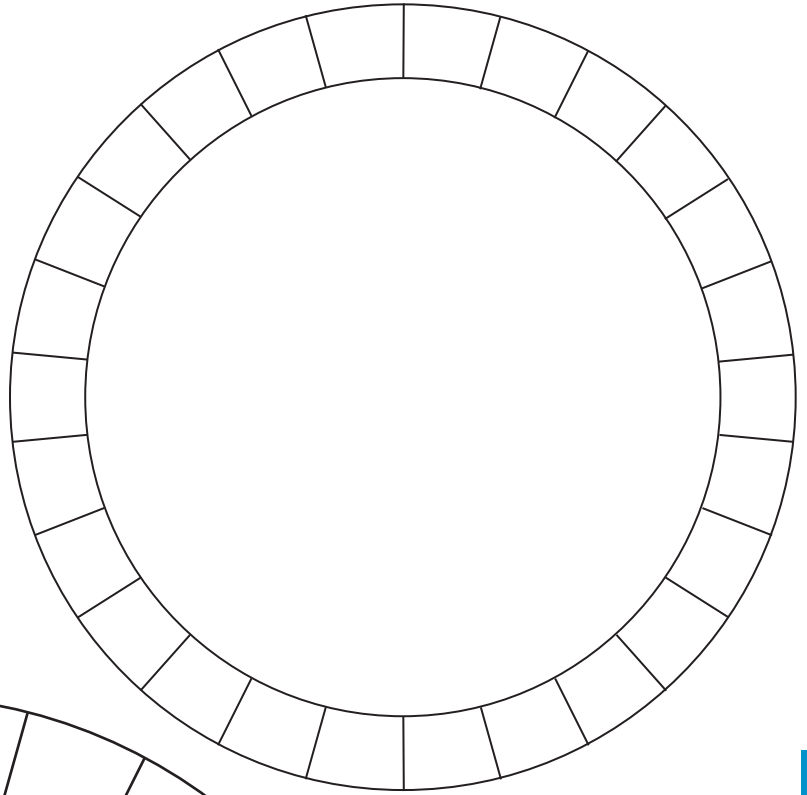
Story Resources

“Who Is Captain America?” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7slY-yjQ0M>). This video runs through the multiple characters who have taken on the name of Captain America through the years in the Marvel comics. Use this video to talk about how the name Captain America shapes the destinies of whoever uses the name, and connect it to the way John’s name is part of his destiny.

Decoder Prayer Handout

Cut out both circles

- Write out each letter of the alphabet in the boxes on the larger circle, and the numbers 1–26 in the boxes on the smaller circle.
- Use a split pin paper fastener to join the two circles together.
- Follow the instructions in the curriculum to write an encoded prayer for someone!
- Cut out both circles
- Write out each letter of the alphabet in the boxes on the larger circle, and the numbers 1–26 in the boxes on the smaller circle.
- Use a split pin paper fastener to join the two circles together.
- Follow the instructions in the curriculum to write an encoded prayer for someone!





Day 3: Given Name

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Luke 1:57–66

Scripture Focus: Luke 1:60–64

But his mother replied, “No, his name will be John.” They said to her, “None of your relatives have that name.” Then they began gesturing to his father to see what he wanted to call him. After asking for a tablet, he surprised everyone by writing, “His name is John.” At that moment, Zechariah was able to speak again, and he began praising God.

Theological Summary: Elizabeth was trusted by God to be a leader, even though as a woman society would not have chosen her. Elizabeth and John both rose above the expectations placed on them, stood out from the crowd, and made way for something new.

Today campers will...

- Explore the expectations placed on them.
- Identify ways they are pressured to follow the crowd.
- Learn that challenging norms can be liberating.
- See the ways God is nurturing something new in them.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
___ Elizabeth Says	PLAY	Simon Says with a twist
___ Mounting Expectations	PLAY LEARN	Exploring expectations
___ Poetry by Elimination	CREATE LEARN	Explore the power of words
___ One Word Prayer	PRAY	Simple prayer exercise
___ Recycled Struggles	PRAY	Let go of worries and fears
___ The Game Plan	SERVE	Prepare for situations after camp
___ Any Other Name	LEARN	Bible’s original language

Leader Notes: Today’s themes will hit different campers in different ways. Some refuse to admit they are impacted by others’ expectations, and others find social safety in “fitting in.” Watch for tender places in conversation while encouraging conversation that is deeper than typical peer pressure.

Prayer: God of surprises, keep showing us the way forward, even when it is not what we expected. Keep our eyes open for the unique, creative, and quiet ways you are working in this world. In your name we pray, Amen.

Daily Activities

Elizabeth Says

PLAY

Supplies: None

How: This is a familiar game with a couple of adaptations. Instead of “Simon Says,” replace “Simon” with “Elizabeth” (or Liz, Lizzie, Ellie, etc.), and assign one person to be “Zachariah.” Give them paper and something to write with. To play, “Elizabeth” gives the directions, but she does not call anyone out. “Zachariah,” who cannot speak, writes down names of those who make mistakes. Once Zachariah has written down all but one player’s name, they may speak to announce that player’s name, thus ending the game. Play a few rounds, letting different campers take turns leading. Afterward, read Luke 1:57–66 together and ask the campers how the character’s roles in the story compare to their roles in the game.

Try This: You can flip the rules after a few rounds, requiring campers to only follow directions that don’t begin with “Elizabeth says.” Spend some time talking about what happens when we change expectations. Ask campers why they think people get angry when expectations are challenged or changed.

Mounting Expectations

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Popsicle sticks, markers

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 together. Ask the campers what expectations they think this particular choice of name might have brought or eliminated. Invite campers to write expectations that others have for them on popsicle sticks. These can be from parents, friends, or society in general. Once you have a large stack of sticks, invite campers to build something together from the sticks. After completing that building, ask the campers to tear it apart and build something else. After a couple of builds, pause and ask them to how they are choosing what to build. See if they can identify whose expectations they are following and how those are expressed. Adapt the activity

by changing it to a game of Jenga, stacking the sticks in a tower and letting campers try and pull some out. Afterward, have a conversation about how changing one expectation impacts the others in our life. Finally, lay out all the sticks and ask campers to sort the sticks into categories such as fair and unfair, personal and public, or healthy and unhealthy.

Try This: Adapt this activity to fit your group of campers by spending more time in one phase of the activity or another. Other options include decorating the sticks with different colors or turning them into a collage by gluing them all together.

Poetry by Elimination

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Copies of Poetry by Elimination Handout, black markers

How: Explain that blackout poetry is a poetry tradition of discovering your own poem within the words of someone else. Give each camper a copy of the Poetry by Elimination Handout, and invite them to create a poem by selecting the words they want to by blacking out the rest with a marker. Assure them that it does not have to rhyme or fit any particular model. They can make it as simple or as elaborate as they want. Afterward, read Luke 1:57–66 and talk about which words jump out to them. Ask the campers how much of this scripture could be left out while leaving the heart of the story and its meaning to them still intact. If you have time, invite campers to reflect on the power of words and how much power one word can have. Ask the campers how it might have felt for Elizabeth to own her words in a time when the words of women weren’t always taken seriously. Ask the campers how they feel about the power of their own words to impact the world around them.

Try This: You can also do this activity with a Psalms or any other publication you might have. Consider using newspaper, magazines, or old books. Maybe churches could donate books from their libraries if they don’t use them anymore.

One Word Prayer

PRAY

Supplies: Paper, writing utensils

How: Read Luke 1:57–66 together. Explain that Elizabeth and Zachariah both offered prayers by giving their child the name “John,” which means “graced by God” or “God is gracious.” It expressed their hope for their child and their faith that God would be with him through his life. Give each camper a piece of paper and invite them to write one word in the middle that expresses something they want to lift in prayer. Assure them that whatever word they choose, God will understand. It can be a name, an emotion, or anything important to them.

Try This: There are many possibilities for this prayer. You can let creative campers draw pictures or decorate their prayer. You can invite campers to share their word with a partner and lift up each other’s words as a prayer. You could let campers keep it in their pocket, by their bedside, or throw it in the campfire at the end of the night.

Recycled Struggles

PRAY

Supplies: Recyclable materials such as cardboard, markers

How: Talk to campers about how, throughout the Bible, God takes difficult situations and makes something beautiful out of them. Explain that twice in the Bible we see couples who had given up on their ability to have a child (Elizabeth and Zechariah, Sarah and Abraham), but God chose to bless them instead of a couple for whom pregnancy would have been easy. Invite the campers to write out their fears, worries, struggles, insecurities, or other negative thoughts on pieces of cardboard. Then, invite campers to toss their prayers into the recycling, and invite God to work with them to recycle their worries into something good. Remind campers that prayer doesn’t have to mean sitting still in silence with your hands folded, and that an activity like this is just as much a prayer as anything else.

Try This: Before getting rid of the recycling items, you could let campers write positive words in response, then make a video of the images and set it to music.

The Game Plan

SERVE

Supplies: The Game Plan Handout or large paper, markers

How: Explain that serving others often starts with caring for ourselves. Remind campers that Elizabeth spent time with Mary while they were both pregnant, allowing both women to have someone to support them. Invite campers to create a self-care plan using The Game Plan Handout. You can write the prompts on a large piece of paper or give each camper a copy of the handout. Afterward, invite them to share any reflections and talk about who they lean on when they need support.

Try This: Campers could do these anonymously, and then leaders could share the answers with all campers as “wisdom of the camp” that everyone can draw from.

Any Other Name

LEARN

Supplies: Any Other Name Handout, pens

How: Invite campers to review names, and talk about how it feels to learn new names and how it feels when people get our names right or wrong. Remind them that the names of our spiritual ancestors represent lives with expectations, hopes, and pressures. Explain that the names we read in scripture are English equivalents of Greek and Hebrew names. Give campers the Any Other Name Handout and see if they can match the two columns. Afterward, spend some time talking about the meaning we place on these old names, and invite the campers to imagine what power their own names might have one day.

Try This: Campers might have experience with having a different name for a foreign language class. Invite them to talk about how it felt to have a different version of their own name and how it feels to be called by a name other than their own.



Story Resources

***Incredibles 2* (Pixar, 2018).** This film is filled with characters who are burdened by the labels placed on them and seek to transcend the assumptions placed on them. How do the experiences of these characters from their past inform their choices in the present? What happens when characters who previously felt alone find one another and create community? How are superpowers portrayed as bad versus good throughout the movie?

The Game Plan Handout

When life is getting you down, it can be really hard to figure out what to do in the moment. That's why it's a good practice to plan things out beforehand. Use this worksheet to prepare for moments when you aren't sure what to do.

- When I'm feeling peer pressured, I can:

-
-
-

- When I have a difficult decision to make, I can talk to:

-
-
-

- When I feel I am not being taken seriously, I can:

-
-
-

- When I am feeling overwhelmed by expectations, I can:

-
-
-

- Three things I like about myself that I can remember when I feel insecure are:

-
-
-

- Some hobbies I can enjoy when I'm feeling stressed are:

-
-
-

Poetry by Elimination

Luke 1:1-29

Many people have already applied themselves to the task of compiling an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used what the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed down to us. Now, after having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, I have also decided to write a carefully ordered account for you, most honorable Theophilus. I want you to have confidence in the soundness of the instruction you have received.

During the rule of King Herod of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. They were both righteous before God, blameless in their observance of all the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to become pregnant and they both were very old. One day Zechariah was serving as a priest before God because his priestly division was on duty. Following the customs of priestly service, he was chosen by lottery to go into the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense. All the people who gathered to worship were praying outside during this hour of incense offering. An angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to your son and you must name him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many people will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the Lord's eyes. He must not drink wine and liquor. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth. He will bring many Israelites back to the Lord their God. He will go forth before the Lord, equipped with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and he will turn the disobedient to righteous patterns of thinking. He will make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? My wife and I are very old

The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in God's presence. I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. Know this: What I have spoken will come true at the proper time. But because you didn't believe, you will remain silent, unable to speak until the day when these things happen."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered why he was in the sanctuary for such a long time. When he came out, he was unable to speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he gestured to them and couldn't speak. When he completed the days of his priestly service, he returned home. Afterward, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She kept to herself for five months, saying, "This is the Lord's doing. He has shown his favor to me by removing my disgrace among other people."

When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

Any Other Name

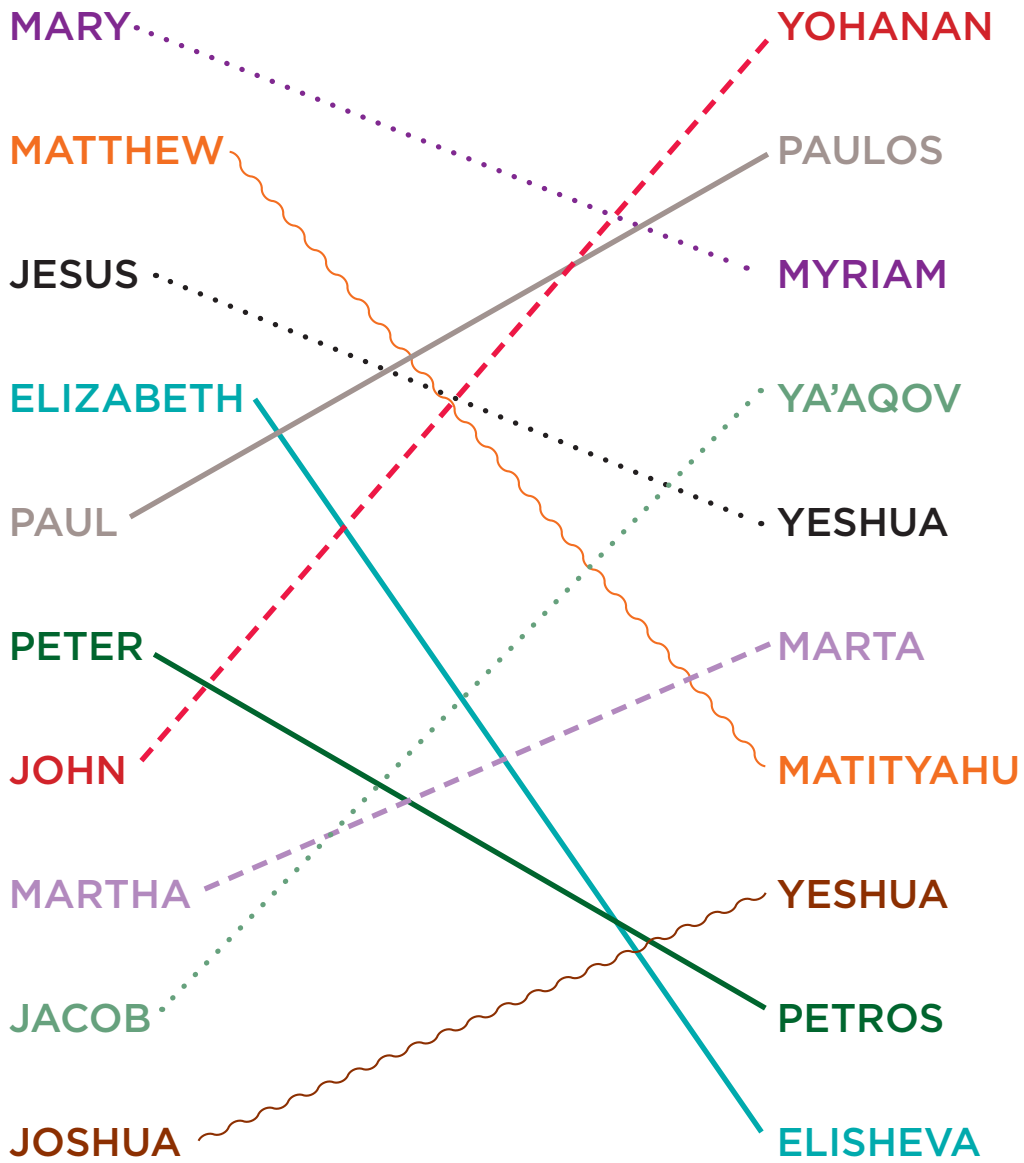
Draw a line to connect the Biblical name with its English translation!

MARY	YOHANAN
MATTHEW	PAULOS
JESUS	MYRIAM
ELIZABETH	YA'AQOV
PAUL	YESHUA
PETER	MARTA
JOHN	MATITYAHU
MARTHA	YESHUA
JACOB	PETROS
JOSHUA	ELISHEVA

Draw a line to connect the Biblical name with its English translation!

MARY	YOHANAN
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ELIZABETH	YA'AQOV
PAUL	YESHUA
PETER	MARTA
JOHN	MATITYAHU
MARTHA	YESHUA
JACOB	PETROS
JOSHUA	ELISHEVA

Any Other Name Answer Key





Day 3: Given Name

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Luke 1:57–66

Scripture Focus: Luke 1:60–61

But his mother replied, “No, his name will be John.” They said to her, “None of your relatives have that name.”

Theological Summary: Elizabeth named her child John, defying expectations. Jesus often pushed back on the expectations of others, and we are called to stand for God even if it can be uncomfortable. Courage can lead to new opportunities through God.

Today, campers will...

- Explore the expectations placed on them.
- Identify ways they are pressured to follow the crowd.
- Learn that challenging norms can be liberating.
- See the ways God is nurturing something new in them.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ What’s in Your Name	PLAY LEARN	Choose your own name
__ Random Name	CREATE	Use the generator for a new name
__ Name News	CREATE LEARN	Retell John’s naming
__ A Different Path	PLAY LEARN	Guessing game
__ Courage Prayers	PRAY SERVE	Prayers for each finger
__ What Do You Expect?	PLAY	Identifying expectations for yourself
__ Goal or No Goal	PLAY	Guess the real goal

Leader Notes: Not every camper has a positive or known story attached to their name. Others are trying to overcome circumstances or live up to impossible standards brought on by their name. Be sensitive to issues of adoption and family conflict today.

Prayer: God, thank you for knowing our names and loving us. Help us to love one another. Amen

Daily Activities

What's in Your Name?

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Name tags, markers

How: Read Luke 1:57–66. Explain that naming a child can be difficult, with some valuing tradition and others creativity. Invite campers to share any stories they know about their names or the names of close family members. Ask the campers how they would go about naming themselves if they did not have a name already. Pass out name tags and markers, then invite campers to give themselves a new name based on a unique talent or trait they have or hope to have for their future. Allow campers to share why they chose this name. Ask them how their family might respond to this new name, and what expectations might come with this name.

Try This: Revisit these names after a week at camp. At the end of the week, ask them to reflect on their choice and whether they lived up to the expectations of that name, whether they used it or not. This is a conversation more about identity and expectations than about naming a person.

Random Name

CREATE

Supplies: Markers, name tags, Name Generator Handout

How: Using the Name Generator handout, invite campers to come up one at a time to determine their new randomly generated name, and then present them to the rest of the group. You can make a silly spectacle about proclaiming their new name, such as “knighting” them with a fallen tree branch or plunger. Afterward, spend some time talking about the difference between an intentional name, a chosen name, and a randomly made-up name. Ask how they feel about their own real name and what it means to them.

Try This: It might be fun to randomly generate some names for cabins, animals, or even some trees. Let the campers have some fun with this, then invite them to imagine how the cabins, animals, or trees feel about those names.

Name News

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Three Bibles or copies of the scripture

How: Read Luke 1:57–66. Divide campers into three groups and explain that they are now an investigative news team covering the story. Encourage them to get information and quotes from Elizabeth, the neighbors and relatives, and John. Challenge each group to include a prediction of some kind about what the events mean for the child's future. Let each news team give their report to the rest of the group as “breaking news.” Encourage them to be creative and include everyone in their presentation.

Try This: Depending on the size of your camp, news reports could be shared with the full camp at dinner, campfire, or other setting.

A Different Path

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Note cards, pens

How: Read Luke 1:57–66. Explain that Elizabeth was doing something very different for the time because male children were often named for their father, even following in their father's footsteps for their vocation. Everyone was expecting that the baby would be named Zacharias and would grow up to be a priest like his father. Ask campers to think about ways that they might be different from what their family and friends think they should be. This might include personality, education, interests, job, talent and ability, and so forth. Give each camper a note card and pen. Invite them to write down one expectation from their family or friends that does not align with who they really are. For example, “My friends want me to stay on the soccer team, but I really want to be in band,” or “My family expects me to be serious but I prefer to make jokes when I'm nervous.” Collect the cards and shuffle them. Choose a card from the top of the deck, read it aloud, and invite campers to see if they identify with the person who wrote it. Protect the identity of the campers. They can reveal themselves if they feel comfortable. Spend some time talking about the difference between responsibility and expectations, and how we know when it's okay to break from expectations and make our own path.

Try This: You can reverse the conversation. Have campers list expectations they have for family and close friends, and talk about what happens when those people act in a different way. This might include being disappointed, or discovering unknown talents.

Courage Prayers

PRAY SERVE

Supplies: None

How: Read 1:57–66 and discuss the courage Elizabeth needed to go against the naming tradition. Explain that we can pray for others who might need courage and hope that others pray for us. Using their fingers and thumb as a guide, invite campers to follow along as staff members lead them in a one-sentence prayer for the following:

- Thumb: God, please help others with my first name have courage.
- First finger: God, please give courage to those who have a name they love.
- Middle finger: God, please give courage to those with a name they hate.
- Ring finger: God, please give courage to those who are afraid they cannot live up to the expectations of their name.
- Pinky: God, please give courage to those who are in conflict with others.

Remind campers that we all need courage for a variety of things, and we can ask God to help us be courageous.

Try This: Invite campers to identify five areas in which they may need courage for themselves, and use that for a personal finger prayer.

What Do You Expect?

PLAY

Supplies: Notecards, What Do You Expect? Handout

How: In advance, print the What Do You Expect? Handout and cut as indicated. Make sure you have enough activity slips for each camper. Let campers draw one slip randomly. Ask them to not look at their paper till instructed. Once everyone has drawn, explain that there is an expectation on their paper. When they read it, they can keep that one, but if it is something they do not want to do, invite them to try and trade their “expectation” with someone else. After a few minutes of trading expectations, invite the campers to sit and listen to Luke 1:57–66. Explain that when Elizabeth named her son John, she defied expectations for the ceremony and for the child’s life. Invite campers to share what expectations they have for themselves and their peers over the next ten to twenty years.

Try This: You could do this a large group, or as an all-camp activity. Make multiples of each expectation, and after allowing trades, have campers find other campers who have the same expectations. Spend some time talking about motivations for keeping that expectation.

Goal or No Goal

PLAY

Supplies: Notecards, pens

How: Pass out a notecard and pen to each camper. Explain that they are to consider one thing they really want to accomplish in life. Younger campers might think about what they want to be when they grow up; older campers may consider a life goal they have yet to achieve. They are to write this “true thing” as along with two made up goals on their cards. When everyone is finished, invite campers to read their goals and allow the group to guess which is true. When everyone has had a turn, read Luke 1:57–66. If you have some time, talk about how campers chose their one goal and what plans they might have for making it happen.

Try This: Consider brainstorming how they can help one another achieve their goals. This could be a prayer list or even an action list for after camp. Generational partners could even team up to help each other achieve their goals at home.



Story Resources

Brave (Pixar, 2012). Princess Merida isn't your usual princess. She wants to create her own path, capitalize on her own abilities, and be responsible for her own success, much to the chagrin of her family. They feel she just doesn't respect tradition. This is the story of what happens when a girl carves out her own life while learning to appreciate, if not living, the traditions of her people. It is a helpful reminder of the courage it takes and the fallout to come when we choose a way that is contrary to the way we have always done things.

Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun, by Maria Dismody (Wixom, Mich.: Cardinal Rule Press, 2008). If you have ever struggled with having a different idea than everyone else, this is the book for you. Campers will identify with the courage it takes to do something different, such as eating spaghetti in a hot dog bun for lunch when everyone else is eating "regular" food. This book is a great example of the courage it takes to be different and celebrates going against the expectations of everyone at the lunch table.

"101 Ways to Teach Kids Courage," by Marnie Craycroft (<https://carrotsareorange.com/ways-teach-kids-courage>). Elizabeth and Zachariah needed courage to go against the tradition of the day. This resource gives 101 practical tips and activities to help teach campers how to tap into their own courage when they need to do something different.

You Are Special, by Max Lucado (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1997). The Wemmicks are a community of people who have become habitual judgers. Punchinello seeks a way to feel worthy, following his curiosity with another Wemmick who seems to live in joy. Along the way he connects with his creator and his own self-worth.

Random Name Handout

Your random name is based on your birthday:

FIRST NAME = BIRTH MONTH

January	Blue	July	Orange
February	Red	August	Crimson
March	Green	September	Gold
April	Purple	October	Silver
May	Teal	November	Bronze
June	Yellow	December	Gray

MIDDLE NAME = BIRTH DAY

1	Talking	9	Creeping	17	Listening	25	Surfing
2	Singing	10	Encouraging	18	Running	26	Living
3	Eating	11	Hiding	19	Flying	27	Skating
4	Drinking	12	Laughing	20	Napping	28	Cooking
5	Skipping	13	Leading	21	Sleeping	29	Writing
6	Debating	14	Serving	22	Playing	30	Cleaning
7	Joking	15	Walking	23	Swimming	31	Gaming
8	Dancing	16	Looking	24	Staring		

LAST NAME = BIRTH YEAR ENDING IN...

0	Turtle	5	Horse
1	Goat	6	Octopus
2	Dog	7	Butterfly
3	Shark	8	Elephant
4	Bear	9	Alligator

What Do You Expect? Handout

PLAY PIANO

WIN A CHESS
TOURNAMENT

MAKE STRAIGHT A'S

CLIMB A MOUNTAIN

COMPETE IN A
CHAMPIONSHIP
GAME

SWIM WITH
DOLPHINS

FIND BURIED
TREASURE

CREATE AN APP

MAKE A SCIENTIFIC
DISCOVERY

STAR IN A FILM OR
PLAY

WRITE A NOVEL

LEARN A LANGUAGE

BECOME A MINISTER

GO TO COLLEGE

LEARN TO FIX A CAR

FLY AN AIRPLANE

CREATE A WORK OF
ART

TRAIN A DOG

LEARN TO COOK A
FANCY MEAL

BUILD SOMETHING I
DESIGNED

BECOME PRESIDENT

READ THE ENTIRE
HARRY POTTER
SERIES

TRAVEL TO EVERY
STATE

CREATE A BUSINESS

Day 3: Given Name

Luke 1:57–66

GATHERING

Say: We are often creatures of habit. We want to be comfortable and follow a familiar path. But that is not always how we grow. We begin worship today with something new. Everyone stand up, find someone you have so far not spent a lot of time with at camp, and sit down together in a spot new to both of you.

After everyone has sat, **say**, “Come, let us worship the God of the old and the new, the familiar and the unknown, the past, the present, and the future. Come, let us worship our God.”

LITANY

Designate two people to read part A and B. Invite campers to say “We trust you” after the person reading part B finishes.

A: To our God of past, present, and future,

B: the God who remembers us and is with us.

Campers: We trust you.

A: To our God of tradition,

B: the God who welcomes change.

Campers: We trust you.

A: To our gracious God,

B: the God who forgives us.

Campers: We trust you.

A: To our abundant God,

B: the God who provides for us.

Campers: We trust you.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Supplies: Prayers of the People Handout, scissors.

Cut the paper into designated strips before worship. Recruit volunteers to read the bolded line on their piece of paper. Let them know that the plain text line on their paper is the part of the prayer right before theirs and serves as a cue to read next. Spread volunteers around the worship area so their voices “popcorn” around. If you don’t want to use multiple readers, you can simply have someone share the prayer provided.

God, we admit we are stubborn to change.

We sometimes get comfortable and stuck in our ways.

We can feel pressure to fit a mold or stay the same.

At times, we resist the path you have for us.

God, be with us even in these moments.

Reveal your path for us.

Help us trust in your ways.

Give us the confidence, courage, and hope we need.

Inspire us to be brave and to be bold. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Perform Luke 1:57–66 as a skit. Remember, whatever creativity the campers bring to this story, Zachariah cannot speak.

RESPONSES

Celebrating

Say: Our God is a mysterious God who switches things up when we least expect it. Our God is full of surprises and welcomes change. When we only see one way, our God rotates us and shows us a new way. And our God stays with us during the whole process.

Split campers into groups with no more than seven people. Ask campers to stand shoulder to shoulder in a line facing the leader. Introduce each element to the game (see four movements below). Make sure campers practice each movement before adding a new movement. After campers practice all movements, the leader will shout, “Switch” “Change,” “Rotate,” or “Stay,” and campers will respond. Repeat until campers are comfortable with all movements.

Movements:

Switch—The campers on the right side of the middle person switch with the campers on the left side of the middle person. If there are an even number of campers in the line, designate the two most center people as the middle.

Change—The camper on the farthest right side runs to the far left of the line. There is new middle.

Rotate—All campers rotate 180 degrees to face a new direction.

Stay—No campers move.

After each movement have campers shout, “God is still here!”

Centering

Say: For the next few moments, think about the many expectations, responsibilities, and ways of operating we have in different spaces and around different people. Use your fingers to guide you and keep track. I’ll prompt us for the first five fingers and then let you think on your own for the rest. When you are done, fold your hands together into “prayer hands.”

Look at your thumb and think about how you would describe yourself at home.

Look at your pointer finger and think about how you would describe yourself at school.

Look at your middle finger and think about how you would describe yourself around your friends.

Look at your ring finger and think about how you would describe yourself at church.

Look at your pinky and think about how you would describe yourself at camp.

Pause and allow campers time to think on their own. Continue after everyone displays prayer hands.

Say: In all that we have been, in all that we are, and in all that we will be, our God is with us, encouraging us, and loving us. Thanks be to God.

STEWARDSHIP

Supplies: Enough paper and writing utensils for campers to have their own

Say: Zechariah and Elizabeth broke their family tradition and the social customs to follow a different path God had for them and their new born baby. They named their son John, meaning “my God is abundance,” instead of Zechariah, meaning “the Lord has remembered.” They had a vision for a new abundant life, not a life stuck in the past. We know that not all of God’s creation experiences an abundant life. Part of stewardship is imagining a new way of life—one of hope and abundance for all creation—because a clear vision provides a road map for our actions of love and care. For our practice of stewardship today, we are going to practice imagining a life where all

of God's creation is valued, is respected, and has an abundant life. Write about your vision for a world where all feel loved and have the means to prosper. Write about how you see yourself contributing to an abundant life for all creation.

(Provide time for campers to write.)

COMMUNION

Supplies: Copies of the Lord's Prayer for campers to read along

Say: When we come to the table and accept these elements, we join in a long tradition of communion. When Jesus broke bread on the night of the Last Supper, he taught his disciples to pray this prayer of hope for Heaven on Earth. Read his words with me,

Read the Lord's prayer together.

Say: Close your eyes and imagine how you want the world to change. How could Earth resemble Heaven? What does a world of abundance and inclusion look like?

Pause and allow time for campers to imagine.

Say: Keep this image in your mind as you come and accept God's invitation to take part in Heaven on Earth.

CLOSING

Invite campers to say "Go in peace" at the end of each line.

You have visions, hopes, and dreams. (Go in peace.)

Follow these and change hearts, minds, and actions. (Go in peace.)

Share the truth of an abundant world. (Go in peace.)

It may not always be easy, but each of you is capable and worthy. (Go in peace.)

Plus, you are not alone. God will be with you in all that you do. (Go in peace.)

You already know what to do, so go do it. (Go in peace.)

Amen.

Day 4: That's Not My Name

Ruth 1

GATHERING

To be read before a processional.

Say: For some of us, it is easy to praise and worship God when things are going well and we feel joyous. We sometimes forget God is still with us when we are going through a hard time and feel down.

For others, it is easy to remember God during the hard times when we ask God to be near and help us. We sometimes forget about God when things are going well and we are celebrating things in our life.

It is important for us to remember God is supporting and loving us in all things and through everything that happens in our life. No matter where we are or what is going on, God calls us forward to worship and to love.

When you hear me call an emotion you are currently feeling, come forward and gather for worship. (Campers should sit in their typical spots.)

The leader should call a variety of emotions, such as energetic, agitated, thankful, hopeful, inspired, confident, shy, motivated, upset, and so forth. If campers remain near the entrance when the leader is done, invite those campers to name their own feelings and come forward when ready.

LITANY

Invite campers to say "Thanks be to God" after Leader B reads.

A: When everything is going our way and we feel on top of the world, our God is with us;

B: and when everything is going wrong and we feel defeated, our God is with us.

C: Thanks be to God.

A: When we feel hopeful, confident, and loved, our God is with us;

B: and when we feel sad, confused, and alone, our God is with us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Cabin Devotions – Youth

These devotions are designed to be conversational, followed by a brief prayer experience. They are best used in cabins before bed, but you could adapt them for mornings or even for an individual “Morning Watch” experience (printing out questions for each camper) that is self-guided. Devotions are divided into “Conversation Prompts” and “Prayer Suggestions.” Use these as they best fit your campers, but remember that your intentionality and ability to be completely present for these devotions will be the biggest factor in engaging campers.

Day 1: Name Dropping

Conversation Prompts

- If you could drop a famous person’s name in a conversation, who would it be and why?
- How does it feel to be welcomed by name?
- How does it feel to welcome others by name?
- How do you anticipate finding the presence of God this week in this place?

Prayer Suggestion: Take a moment of silence. Ask campers to imagine being alone in the outdoors and suddenly hearing their voice. Ask them to reflect on what it would be like for someone they didn’t know to call them by name and have a job for them to do. Ask campers to reflect on what it must have felt like to be a part of a story that changed people’s lives. Close with a short sentence prayer.

Day 2: Name Calling

Conversation Prompts

- When have you felt outside of a group?
- Who has created an unlikely friendship with you?
- What happens when we are called things that are demeaning?
- How can we build one another up this week at camp?

Prayer Suggestion: Take a moment of silence. Ask campers to imagine being considered an outcast to the community. Now ask them to consider what it might feel like to be desperate for a friend. What would it be like to be singled out by a new and loved person in the community? How grateful would they feel for someone to notice them as a person and not a title? What can we do to love others well in spite of differences? Close with a short sentence prayer.

Day 3: Given Name

Conversation Prompts

- What role does tradition play in giving people names?
- When has standing up to tradition served you well?
- When is it most difficult to make sure your voice is heard?
- How has your name set you apart this week at camp?

Prayer Suggestion: Take a moment of silence. Ask campers to reflect on times when they have made their voice heard in a difficult situation. Remind them that not everyone feels empowered to use their voice, and not everyone is inclined to listen. What can we do this week to make sure that everyone has a voice and that we listen with compassion when others speak? Close with a short sentence prayer.

Day 4: That’s Not My Name

Conversation Prompts

- If you could choose one emotion to feel forever, what would it be and why?
- If you could choose one emotion to avoid permanently, what would it be and why?
- How does learning to acknowledge our emotions help us grow?
- What emotions are you experiencing this week that may shape you in a positive way?

Song Recommendations

There is no designated music time, theme song, or music guide for this curriculum. Below are recommendations to help you prepare for opening gatherings, worship presentations, or a music session with children. Most are readily available in hymnals or with a simple online search. Many have videos on YouTube which you can use to lead children should you lack music leaders.

Day 1: Name Dropping

Exodus 3:1-15

Burning Bush

- Rainbow Connection (The Muppets, 1979)
- Turn the World Around! (Harry Belafonte, 1977)
- Light the Fire (Sonicflood, 1997)
- Pharaoh, Pharaoh, (Traditional)
- Spirit of the Living God (Hymn)
- You've Got A Friend In Me (Toy Story, 1995)
- God is Bigger than the Boogie Man (Veggie Tales, 1995)
- Big House (Audio Adrenaline 1993)
- As a Fire was Meant for Burning (Hymn)
- Who Am I (Casting Crowns, 2003)

Day 2: Name Calling

Luke 19: 1-10

Zacchaeus

- Nowhere Man (Beatles, 1965)
- Hey Jude (Beatles, 1968)
- Take a Chance on Me (Abba, 1977)
- Amazing Grace (Hymn)
- Tears of a Clown (The Miracles, 1967)
- Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man (Traditional)

- Circle of Friends (Jim Manley)
- These I Lay Down (Hymn)
- Hard to Say I'm Sorry (Chicago, 1982)
- In a Moment of Forgiveness (Indigo Girls, 2002)
- Jar of Hearts (Christina Perry, 2011)

Day 3: Given Name

Luke 1:57-66

Elizabeth Names John

- Amazing Grace / I've Been Set Free (Chris Tomlin, 2006)
- Fortunate Son (Creedence Clearwater Revival, 1969)
- Say My Name (Destiny's Child, 1999)
- Faith Like A Child (Jars of Clay)
- I Just Can't Wait to Be King (Lion King, 1994)
- You Can Go Your Own Way (Fleetwood Mac, 1977)
- Stand (REM, 1988)
- Breaking Free (High School Musical, 2006)
- Turn! Turn! Turn! (Byrds, 1965)
- Journey On (Elms District, 2013)
- The Joke (Brandi Carlile, 2018)

Day 4: That's Not My Name

Ruth 1

Naomi names herself

- That's Not My Name (The Ting Tings, 2008)
- Blackbird (Beatles, 1968)
- It's So Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday (Boyz II Men, 1991)
- Everybody Knows (Concrete Blond, 1990)



- How do you think a person's name should be chosen?
- What does it feel like when others question your plans?
- What is the most unexpected name you have ever heard, and what made it so?

DAY 3: Given Name

Youth

Youth

DAY 3: Given Name



- How do you think a person's name should be chosen?
- What does it feel like when others question your plans?
- What is the most unexpected name you have ever heard, and what made it so?

What's in a Name Journal

Day 3: Given Name

Luke 1:57–66 When the time came for Elizabeth to have her child, she gave birth to a boy. Her neighbors and relatives celebrated with her because they had heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy.

On the eighth day, it came time to circumcise the child. They wanted to name him Zechariah because that was his father's name. But his mother replied, "No, his name will be John."

They said to her, "None of your relatives have that name."

Then they began gesturing to his father to see what he wanted to call him. After asking for a tablet, he surprised everyone by writing, "His name is John." At that moment Zechariah was able to speak again, and he began praising God. All their neighbors were filled with awe, and everyone throughout the Judean highlands talked about what had happened. All who heard about this considered it carefully. They said, "What then will this child be?" Indeed, the Lord's power was with him.

Reflect:

Why did Elizabeth name the baby John?

What does your name mean, or what does it mean to you?

What do you want people to think of when they hear your name?

Respond:

Draw a picture of what you think you looked like as a baby. I wonder how much you looked like baby John.

Take Home Sheets

Day 3: Given Name

Scripture to Read: Luke 1:59–66

On the eighth day, it came time to circumcise the child. They wanted to name him Zechariah because that was his father's name. But his mother replied, "No, his name will be John." They said to her, "None of your relatives have that name." Then they began gesturing to his father to see what he wanted to call him. After asking for a tablet, he surprised everyone by writing, "His name is John." At that moment, Zechariah was able to speak again, and he began praising God. All their neighbors were filled with awe, and everyone throughout the Judean highlands talked about what had happened. All who heard about this considered it carefully. They said, "What then will this child be?" Indeed, the Lord's power was with him.

Questions for Reflection:

- How have the expectations of other influenced you?
- How have your expectations of others influenced them?
- When have you had to stand up to others who are questioning something you are doing? What happened?
- The neighbors were basing their expectation on traditions of the community. What traditions in your community need to be questioned?

Activities to Share:

1. As a family or a church, address an injustice in your community. This may be as simple as watching the news and writing a letter to one of your civic leaders about an injustice you saw. Or, if you are comfortable, it may mean taking part in some other action such as writing and circulating a petition for change, or even taking part in a rally for something you feel strongly about.
1. As a family or a church, create a new tradition. Maybe you can provide food for those who are homeless, or if you already do this, find a way to worship with them. Maybe you can find a new way to mark a holiday or celebrate a family event. After trying out a new tradition, talk about the experience together.

Challenges for Living It Out:

- Practice finding and using your voice when you need to speak up, even when others question you.
- Respect the struggle that others have when you go against tradition. Meet them with compassion.
- Don't assume that every tradition is still worthwhile just because that is how you have always done something.
- Encourage others to find and use their voice when they need to speak up for change.