

Hello, my name is

Name above all names


 child is
 BORN FOR US,
 he is named
Wonderful
Counsellor,
 MIGHTY GOD,
Everlasting Father,
PRINCE OF PEACE.
 ISAIAH 9:6

Philippa Dand explores how we can get to know more about Jesus through the names given in our Isaiah Advent reading. This outline could be used in a December family celebration, an all-age service, or during afterschool club.

Somewhere to start

Names are very important to us. Invite people to share any special stories about their name. Ask the children: Does your name have a special meaning? Were you named after someone? Was there another reason you were given that name? For parents, how did they choose your child's name?



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God is called by many different names in the Bible, and those names often tell us something special about who God is, or what God will do.

Share the Word

Isaiah 9:2-7 [WEB](#)

Switched on

You will need: a torch; a large outline of a child with a question mark on them, drawn on flipchart paper or similar; name stickers/labels with the names from the passage (v.6): Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

- Make the room as dark as possible. Ahead of time, invite a child to stick the name stickers onto the picture during the reading of Isaiah 9:6.
- Say: God's people feel like they are walking in darkness – they feel lost and can't see a way forward. The prophet Isaiah brings them good news (switch a torch on, and point it to the picture). He tells the people that someone very special is coming, and this person will bring joy, peace and justice. This news feels like a light going on for God's people!
- Read Isaiah 9:2-7.

Explore & respond

Christmas tree decoration

Putting God's name at the centre of our Christmas celebrations

You will need: coloured paper, bauble template [WEB](#) (or pre-cut circles), decorative materials, scissors, glue, ribbon, printouts of Christmas song lyrics (template on [WEB](#)) and highlighters; (optional) Christmas tree.

- Choose a Christmas song from the selection on the template to play or sing. Look together through the printed lyrics and ask the group: How many names for God can you find in the Christmas songs we sing? You may want to ask children to highlight the names, or do this ahead of time for younger children. Explain any names that are unfamiliar.
- Hand out bauble shapes/circles and help the children to cut out a name for God from the lyrics and stick it onto their bauble shape, (or artistically write it on), then decorate it and attach a ribbon. Add all the completed baubles to a Christmas tree or display to remind the children who we worship at Christmas.

Conversation point: How many names can you find for God? What Christmas carols do you know/have you sung this year? Can you think of any names of God in those?

Name Bingo

Recognising some of the names we use for God

You will need: Bingo cards [WEB](#), calling cards [WEB](#), counters/pencils.

- Choose someone to be the caller. Explain the rules: When the caller says/shows a name that is on your card, cover it with a counter.
- The winner is the person who covers a full line of names on their card first.

Conversation point: Have you heard these names used for God? Are there any names you haven't heard used before? Any that you don't know what they mean?





Lego™/play dough names

A chance to reflect on the meanings of God's names

You will need: Lego™ or play dough; a list/display of names for God [WEB](#).

- Invite the children to choose a name for God from the suggestions, or think of a name they might use for God, then to use the Lego™/play dough to create a picture of the name.
- You could take photos of their creations to show on a large screen later in the session, or on your church social media in the week.
- While they create, invite everyone to reflect on the discussion questions, and perhaps try to find the name they have chosen in the Bible.

Conversation point: Why might God have that name? What does that name tell us about God?

Prince of Peace crowns

Decorate biscuits to celebrate the Prince of Peace

You will need: round biscuits (digestives or rich teas) or bake some in advance (using a 'crown' card template to cut round); icing, iced gems/jelly tots/sprinkles.

- Invite the children to decorate a biscuit using icing and 'jewels', to look like a crown fit for the Prince of Peace.



Conversation point: What might our country or our world look like with a 'Prince of Peace' in charge?

Paperchain prayers

How do we relate to God?

You will need: strips of coloured paper, a list/display of names of God [WEB](#).

- Talk about how one person can be known by different names, but it might feel strange to call your dad 'Mr [surname]'! Or call a teacher by their first name. Depending on our relationship to that person, some names feel more comfortable to use than others. The same is true for God – perhaps 'Abba Father' feels natural, but 'Mighty Ruler' doesn't connect.
- Invite everyone to write or draw on a strip of paper some of the names or words that make God feel close to them. Help them to add their strip to the paperchain.

Conversation point: Which name for God feels most helpful to you? Which name for God do you find challenging?

Jesus name plaque

Make a dynamic symbol

You will need: square wooden dowel rods; either stickers and grid templates (template on [WEB](#)), or rectangular plaques, glue, or Lego™ and backing plates.

- Show the children how to place lengths of dowel rods on a plaque, then carefully follow the picture/diagram on the template provided, so the negative space spells out 'Jesus'.

Conversation point: What does the name of Jesus mean to you? What space could you make for Jesus this Christmastime?



Suggestions for a short all-age talk

- Reflecting on the power of names – our legal name, or nicknames, pet names, titles (mummy/grandpa/son). Some of those names might give a clue about what we mean to someone.
- The awkward feeling of using a 'different' name – calling your parents 'Mr/Mrs'; calling your teacher their first name, or worse, "mum/dad"! If someone you don't know called you by your special nickname, how would it feel?
- God's many names – formal (e.g. Jesus), names about God's character (e.g. Abba Father, Wonderful Counsellor), names about God's acts (e.g. Creator, Redeemer).
- Reflect on the names in Isaiah 9:6 – what do they mean? Do they feel familiar or 'awkward'? What do they tell us about the Jesus who we are celebrating this Christmas?
- How can we know God through these names?

Table Talk during a shared meal/snack time

Share some simple food and drink while you reflect back on the session

- What names might we give to Jesus, from our own experience, e.g. prayer-answerer; good listener; always-with-me?
- What names might God give to us?

Somewhere to finish

Is there a new 'side' of God that you have seen today, from thinking about God's many names? Over the Christmas season, listen out for different names of God in Christmas songs or stories. When you are praying, perhaps try using some of God's different names as you pray, e.g. Creator God or Wonderful Counsellor, which can help you remember other aspects of God's character.

Finish by singing a Christmas carol that uses different names for God – see song suggestions in the Christmas tree decoration activity.