



Advent 2013 Rediscovering Identity

3. How our name speaks our identity

Preparation

It is important to set aside an Advent space, however small, where your materials and notes can remain undisturbed for the Advent season.

Materials

*something to write names

on: paper, name tag, etc*

Bible

pen and notebook

matches

candle (you will use this same candle every week)



Begin

Calm down. Adjust to the setting. Acknowledge your relationship with God. Light the candle to remind you that you that this is devoted time; set apart. Place the candle in its dedicated Advent space where it can remain for the week.

Contemplate

Our name says something about who we are.

Read [Matthew 1:18-25](#), [Luke 1:26-38](#)

Reflect *if in a group by discussion or if alone through journaling*

Jesus' name is significant; it spoke his identity.

: He is not given a name from his family. His father Joseph – a descendent of the great King David – is given specific instructions on what to call him. God gives him a very specific name which has meaning for his unique identity.

: He is to be named Jesus meaning 'God saves.' His name declares his unique identity as saviour of the world.

: He will be called Immanuel. This means 'God with us.' In Jesus, God saves by coming and living with us.

Respond

Your name provides a unique opportunity to declare who you are, yet you did not choose it.

: What does your name mean? (Look it up if you don't know)

: Where did your name come from? Is it a family name? Why did your parents choose this name for you? Is there a story?

: How are you living out the meaning of your name?

Prayer

Lord, what name do you call me? Who do you say that I am?

How can I live out my unique identity declared by the name you call me? By the name my parents gave me? Reveal to me the names you have for me throughout the week. Amen.

Follow-up

Now and throughout the week:

1. Make a name placard for Jesus which says his name and what it means.

2. Make a name placard for yourself which says your name and what it means.

Place both of these in your Advent space.

[Matthew 1:18-25](#)

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" which means "God with us". When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

[Luke 1:26-38](#)

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called[a] the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.