

Baptism of Jesus Intergenerational Event

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Event Overview:

At the beginning of the season of Epiphany comes the celebration of the Baptism of our Lord Jesus. This intergenerational event puts the emphasis on the naming of Jesus as God's son at his baptism and on our naming at our baptism. Possibly you could plan this event rather than a Christmas program. This event also could be used at another time during the year when you wish to emphasize baptism.

Background:

At time of his baptism, Jesus is called, "My son, Beloved," by a voice from heaven. In addition, other names are given to Jesus by his disciples and Jesus gives himself several names in the "I am" statements in the gospel of John.

The importance of the name of Jesus is stated at several places in the Scriptures. Paul says that God exalted Jesus and gave him the name that is above every name. Jesus tells us to ask in his name whenever we wish God to hear our prayer.

Another interesting focus is on the many names given to God in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms. Our worship life and prayer life is richer when we can use many names for God and see the many ways in which God is present in our lives.

Names are important for us also. Our name becomes an important part of our identity. At the time of our baptism, we are given an additional name and called "child of God." Other names also are given to baptized Christians in the New Testament. Knowing the various names and identities for who we are as baptized persons will deepen our understanding of our baptisms. Moreover, our baptism is connected to the names of God for we are baptized "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

The focus of this intergenerational event is on the names of God, of Jesus, and of baptized Christians connected to the remembrance of the baptism of our Lord Jesus. The event ends around the baptismal font with a remembrance of the baptisms of all the participants.

Outline of Event

Gather

Materials needed: markers and large sheets of paper

- As each person enters, have him or her put on a nametag and then write their name on the large sheets of paper crossing their name with the name of Jesus Christ or with someone else's name. Parents help smaller children by writing their names.

Examples:

	J				J O H N
	E				E
C H R I S T			C H R I S T		
	U				U
	S				S U S A N

- Gather the participants into groups.
- Ask each participant to tell about a pet or toy that he or she named and how it got its name.
- Now tell others about your name. How did you get your name? If you were named after someone, who was that person and why was he or she important to those who named you? If you had been born the opposite gender, what would have been your name? Do you know the meaning or origin of your name? (These questions could be put on a piece of paper.)
- Read these two Bible passages and discuss in the large group why the name of Jesus is important.
Philippians 2:9-11 (God has exalted Jesus as Lord)
Colossians 3:17 (do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.)
- Discuss why we end our prayers "in the name of Jesus." Read John 16:23 and John 14:13-14.

Hear

Materials: large sheets of newsprint or the super size Post It Notes, paper, pencils, Bibles, recording of Handel's Messiah, a copy of In God's Name by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, Jewish Lights Publishing (1994), copies of the Bible verses.

- Ask everyone to listen for the many different names of God as the story, In God's Name, is read.

- At each table begin a list of all the names of God that were heard on a large piece of newsprint. Assign one person at each table as the recorder.
- Listen to the song, "For Unto Us A Child is Born" from the Messiah by Handel. This is Isaiah 9:6. List all the names of God that you hear on the newsprint. Put up on the walls of the room.
- Split the group into three sections to do a search for names using the Bible citations provided. One group looks for more names for God; one group looks for names given to Jesus; one group looks for names given to baptized Christians. These Bible verses can be typed and distributed without the information included in parentheses. Have each group put the names on large sheets of newsprint and post around the room.

Additional names of God

Psalm 23:1 (my shepherd)
 Psalm 27:1 (my light and my salvation)
 Psalm 28:7 (my strength and my shield)
 Psalm 59:17 (my fortress)
 Psalm 18:2 (rock, fortress, deliverer, shield, stronghold)

Names of Jesus

Matthew 3: 16 – 17 (my son, Beloved – when he is baptized)
 John 1:35-36 (Lamb of God)
 Matthew 16:16-17 (Messiah, the Son of the living God)
 John 3:2 (Rabbi, teacher)
 John 6:35 (the bread of life)
 John 8: 12 (light of the world)
 John 10:9 (the gate for the sheep)
 John 11:25 (the resurrection and the life)
 John 14:6 (the way, the truth and the life)
 John 15:1 (the true vine)

Names given to Christians

2 Corinthians 6:18 (sons and daughters)
 John 15: 12 –14 (friends)
 I Corinthians 3: 16 (God's temple)
 Ephesians 5:9 (children of light)
 Romans 8:14 (children of God)
 1 John 3:1 (children of God)

Celebrate

Allow participants to choose one of the following activities to reinforce and remember what has been heard.

Create a Shirt Design

Materials: fabric paint or markers, iron-on-crayons and paper, pencils, paper, t-shirts or sweatshirts.

Create a design for a t-shirt or sweatshirt to show your Christian identity. Include your name and one of the names given to the baptized in the Bible or a symbol of one of those names. Use iron-on crayons or fabric markers or paint to copy your design onto a cotton t-shirt or sweatshirt.

Names of God Mobile

Materials: heavy wire, scissors, yarn or string, various pictures of items that could represent God (rocks, castles or fortresses, shields, light bulbs, lamps and candles, shepherds and sheep) single-hole punches, glue, construction paper, markers.

Create a mobile using some of the names of God. With markers make a sign that says "Names Of God" about 8"x8". Fold in half over the wire hanger and glue. Then attach some of the pictures that portray the various names of God. Glue the pictures to construction paper, cut out and punch a hole in the top. Add string and hang the picture from the bottom of the "Names of God" sign.

Names of Jesus Cross

Materials: 9x12 white paper with outline of a cross OR wooden crosses cut out of light-colored plywood, markers.

Write the names of Jesus inside of the cross with the markers. Write the names all along the inside edge of the outline of the cross. Then fill in the inside by writing the names again and again in different sizes of letters using different colors.

Send

Materials: baptismal font with water

Make a large circle around the baptismal font. Each household stands together with children in front toward the baptismal font. One person from each household introduces themselves and then other family members in the pattern written below. Then the whole group responds, "God loves you (first name of the person) and so do we.

Person: I am (first name, middle name, last name.)

Group: Jesus loves you (first name) and so do we.

Family leader: This is (full name of another family member)

Group: Jesus loves you (first name) and so do we.

Then everyone at the same time whispers his or her name three times. (Listen for the cascade of names, like a rush of water.)

The leader of the event then dips a finger in the water of the baptismal font and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each head of household saying, "You are a child of God." Each head of household in turn does the same to each member of their household.

To end, the leader dismisses the group by saying, "Go in peace. Remember your baptism each day. Live as a child of God, loved by God."