

Travelling Day Camp 2022
Bible Study Curriculum

“What’s in a name?”

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Day 1: Name Calling

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Luke 19:1–10

Scripture Focus: Luke 19:6

So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.

Theological Summary: Zacchaeus is a man without friends and without much joy in his name. He hears Jesus is coming to town and does anything he can in order to see Jesus. This leads to Jesus' giving Zacchaeus a chance to change everything about his life. Zacchaeus meets Jesus and is transformed by Jesus' calling him by name.

Today, campers will...

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.

Leader Notes: Campers may connect with Zacchaeus, or they may connect with the crowd. Be aware of campers trying to label others in their group in unkind ways—even through teasing.

Prayer: Dear God, we love you. Help us to remember that you see our hearts, not our labels. Help us to always welcome you in our hearts. Amen.

Daily Activities

Calling All Cars

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Large paper with color and movement listed

How: Ahead of time, list various colors and different corresponding movements on a large sheet of paper. Each color may only move in a certain way. For example, reds can move sideways, greens can walk backwards, blues can jump, oranges can twirl, and so forth. Have each camper pretend to be a car, and let them choose the color of their “car,” which also determines how they can move. Have the leader stand at one end of the play space with all the “cars” at the opposite end. The object is to get to the leader first. The leader should close their eyes or turn around, and call out one or two car colors. Campers of that car color move in their own way to try to get to the leader before the leader turns around. The leader may also call out “Change color” (everyone picks a new color) or “Calling all cars” (everyone moves at the same time). After a few rounds, invite campers to talk about what made the game easy or hard. Did changing their color/label make it easier? Invite campers to wonder about how we can change our “labels.” Do we always have to do things the same way? Remind them of the scripture story and ask them how Zacchaeus changed his label.

Try This: Instead of cars, you could use objects in nature; for example, birds fly, fish swim, deer walk, frogs hop, and so forth.

Take a Chance

PLAY

Supplies: Balls (large and small), spoons, balloons, paper, marker

How: In advance, write the letters of the name “Zacchaeus” on individual pieces of paper, twice so that there is a set for two teams. Write the “chance” options on a large piece of paper and post it where everyone can see. Remind campers that Zacchaeus took a big chance going to see Jesus. In this race, campers will take a chance to see if they can spell Zacchaeus as a team before the other team wins. Divide campers into even teams, and line each team up at

one end of the area. At the other end, opposite each team, place a corresponding set of letters (face down and not in order). Each camper must decide if they will take a little chance to take one letter or a big chance to take two letters. Little chances are easier: stepping side to side, crab walking, walking backwards, carrying a ping pong ball on a spoon, or jumping like a frog. Big chances are harder: doing jumping jacks down the field, carrying a larger ball on a spoon, balancing a balloon on their nose, crab-walking with a ball on their belly, or doing somersaults. For their turn, each camper must decide which chance to take, perform that activity all the way to their pile of letters, grab one or two letters as indicated, and race back to their team. Then it's the next camper's turn. Once they have all the letters, they must put them in order to spell Zacchaeus. The first team to do it wins!

Try This: To make it a group cooperative game, mix up ALL the letters, so that no one team can spell Zacchaeus on their own, but must work together to spell out Zacchaeus for each team.

Day 2: 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.

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

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.

Day 3: That's Not My Name

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage Ruth 1

Scripture Focus: Ruth 1:16

“Don’t urge me to abandon you, to turn back from following after you. Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.”

Theological Summary: While the story of Ruth has a positive ending, the beginning is filled with loss and sadness. Naomi has lost everything and returns home with no means of support. Ruth stays with her, not denying her loss but instead living with her in the middle of it.

Today, campers will...

Discover that people in the Bible named difficult feelings.

Be empowered to claim their own identity.

Be encouraged to respect the experiences of others.

Consider that faith may not lead to easy answers.

Leader Notes: If you have children who have lost parents, this might be a difficult story. It also might be confusing to them why Naomi couldn’t work to earn money, so you may need to explain it to them how their culture was different from ours.

Prayer: Dear God, we love you. Thank you for loving us when we are joyful, and for loving us when we are sad, hurt, or angry. Help us to remember that you are with us no matter what we feel. Amen.

Daily Activities

Moving Day

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Sidewalk chalk

How: Using sidewalk chalk, make a large square (house) for every two campers. Pair up campers, and designate one camper in each pair as “Ruth” and the other as “Naomi.” When you call out “Moving day!” campers have to move to a new house. Explain that each house should have a “Naomi” and a “Ruth,” but they cannot share a house with the same person twice in a row, and they cannot stay in the same house. Once they find a new house, ask them to share an emotion with their partner that might come up when someone has to move. Each new “household” can act out their two emotions for other campers to guess. Call out “Moving Day!” again and the activity starts all over. Afterward, spend some time listing the emotions named and talk about which are easier to manage and which are more difficult.

Try This: Consider having campers write their named emotions in chalk inside the squares, or decorate the last square they land in with their newest partner to make it look like a real house.

Traveling Tag

PLAY

Supplies: Small balls or other item (one per camper), container

How: Remind campers that Ruth and Naomi had to work together to travel. Divide campers into two groups. One group is “It.” Place a container at one end of the playing area. The other group will each get a small ball or other item. They will try to put their item in the container without being tagged. They can throw their item to another player if needed. If they are tagged, they must run back to the starting point and try again. The game is over when all the items are in the basket or a pre-designated amount of time is reached.

Try This: This game can be played with the opposite goal—campers trying to take objects out of the container and to the other end of the playing area without being tagged.

Day 4: Name Tag

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Genesis 32:22–31

Scripture Focus: Genesis 32:26b

But Jacob said, “I won’t let you go until you bless me.”

Theological Summary: Jacob has already had an eventful life. When we reach this passage of Genesis, Jacob has deceived and is in the process of reconciling with Esau. Things have changed in him, and things will keep changing, including his name. Campers may not ever change their name, but like Jacob, they can keep wrestling with God until they themselves have changed and can see the new things God has for them.

Today, campers will...

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.

Leader Notes: For your young elementary kids, they may not fully know their identity yet, but they have all had moments that brought them great joy or sorrow.

Prayer: Dear God, we love you. Thank you for loving us, for never leaving us, and for letting us discover who we are in you. Help us to never give up, to see where you are, and to see where we need to go. Amen.

Daily Activities

Making Change

LEARN

Supplies: Large paper, marker, loose change (optional)

How: Read Genesis 32:22–31 together. Remind them that Jacob is making a big change. He is changing not just his name, but how he connects to God and to others. Invite campers to name the different coins they know names of. Write their answers on the paper along with how much each is worth. Invite the campers to think of things they would like to “change” in the world. See if they can think of penny-sized changes (small things) along with quarter-sized changes (bigger issues). You can write their answers on the paper or invite them to talk about their hopes for change with a partner.

Try This: Consider using this as a stewardship conversation before worship, reminding campers that when we give an offering, we are hoping God will help us change the world for the better. The change we donate can support the changes we want to make.

Stuck Like Jacob

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Chalk, playing area

How: In advance, mark out a grid with chalk, ten squares by ten squares, for a total of a hundred squares, with each square big enough for a camper to stand in. Ask campers to choose any square to stand in. Have them put an “X” in their square and then move to any square touching theirs that does not have an “X” in it. If they are blocked in, they put an “X” on their box and stay there. Play until none of the campers can move. Sit together and read Genesis 32:22–31. Point out that Jacob felt stuck. He wanted to make up with his brother but was scared to go there. In a time when he was scared about what to do, he “wrestled with God” and asked for a blessing. Invite campers to share times when they didn’t know what the right choice might be or felt as if they only had bad options to choose from. Encourage them to remember that prayer is a good thing to do when we feel stuck or it seems we don’t have any good choices.

Try This: You can adapt this for different size groups. Use tape on a floor if chalk is not available. Rocks or other items could be used to mark squares instead of drawing an “X.”

Jacob and Angels PLAY

Supplies: None

How: Pick one camper to be Jacob. All other campers are Angels. The object is for the Angels to run across the field to the other side without being tagged. If they are tagged, they become a Jacob. Jacob should start in the middle of the playing field. The game is over when everyone but one or two are Jacob.

Try This: To make it harder, have campers crab walk or jump from one side to the other (including the Jacobs).

Day 5: What's in a Name

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Mathew 16:13–18

Scripture Focus: Matthew 16:16

Simon Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Theological Summary: Simon Peter has been following Jesus but still not quite getting the whole picture. In this passage, Simon Peter says out loud what he knows: that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus says what he knows: that Simon is Peter, a rock on which the living church can grow.

Today, campers will...

Recognize that names can be a reminder of their potential.

Realize that potential is not always immediately fulfilled.

Embrace failure as part of their story.

Be empowered to live into their story.

Leader Notes: This passage requires campers to understand word play and figurative language. You may want to explicitly tell them that Jesus is saying Peter will help build the church on the earth. It's also important that they know it's ok to make mistakes. Children are not always affirmed for trying.

Prayer: Dear God, we love you. Help us to be like Peter, to be strong and firm in our love for you, and to always talk to you about the plans you have for us. Amen.

Daily Activities

Build as You Grow

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Paper, markers

How: Read Mathew 16:13–18 together. Invite campers to think about how Peter felt when Jesus said, “I’ll build my church on this rock.” Do they think he felt scared, confident, worried, joyful? Remind campers that Peter still had to learn and grow to be what Jesus called him to be. Give each camper a piece of paper and marker. Invite them to trace their hand on the paper. On each of the fingers, invite them to draw or write one way they want to grow to be more like Jesus. Close with prayer that God will help them to grow in these ways.

Try This: Campers could use large pieces of paper and trace their whole selves, labeling how they need to grow in their heads, hearts, hands, feet, and so forth.

Church Tag

PLAY

Supplies: None

How: Choose one camper to be “Peter.” Have the other campers line up facing “Peter” at one end of the playing room. Have campers call out “How many rocks, Peter?” When Peter calls out a number, campers must take that many steps toward Peter. Peter should randomly call out “Build a Church!” and try to tag as many campers as they can while the campers run back to the starting line. If a camper gets tagged, they are the next Peter. Continue as interest allows.

Try This: If the group of campers is large enough, have more than one Peter, or use different characters from the week and have each one choose how many steps (or jumps or hops) campers take.

Rock Guard

PLAY

Supplies: Ball

How: Place a ball as the “Rock” in the center of a play space. Choose one camper to be “Peter,” and the other campers will be “rocks.” Campers can approach the center from any direction. Their job is to try to reach the Rock in the middle of the playing area. They may only move when they are not seen. If Peter sees them talking or moving, they are out. The first one to touch the rock is the new Peter!

Try This: Adjust the size of the playing area to make the game easier or harder. Add in an additional “Peter” if group is large. You could even turn this into a full camp activity.