



KING OF GLORY

A LUTHERAN COMMUNITY

Calling God by name

Point: We don't even really think about it any more, do we? We hear people take God's name in vain all the time. At school, in the movies, even on TV. We have become so desensitized to the power of the name of GOD that it hardly bothers us when we hear people take the name of God and use it in an insensitive or disrespectful way.

The name of GOD is one of the most Holy of all words. Before the time of Christ, Jews would refuse to even speak the name of God. It was considered one of the worst of all sins. The name was so holy that no human was even considered worthy to utter it. Some Orthodox Jews still to this day will not utter the name of God. Yet, in our society, we throw the name around to show surprise, dismay, anger, frustration and sometimes... to call on God.

We believe that GOD wants for us to call on Him. God wants us to be comfortable using His name in times of prayer, praise, worship and thanksgiving. But God is quite clear that we should not call on Him at times when we are disrespectful, angry or just want to express surprise. It is simple: we shouldn't do it. Instead, we should use God's name in positive ways that will help strengthen our relationship.

Scripture: Psalm 68:4

Questions:

1. We start thinking about the power of names. Names have a lot of power. For example if you are walking down the hallway, and I call your name, I can make you stop and turn around with just a simple word! People give their children names for many reasons. Often they just like the sound of it, but sometimes there is a lot of meaning behind it. Ask if students' names have any meaning and if they know why they were named what they were named.
2. Kids use negative names all the time. These names have power just like positive names do. Think of all the negative names that you have heard. Does this list include obscenities? How long is this list?
3. Generally, people use these kinds of names to do 2 things that are interrelated: to bring down the esteem of someone else, and to lift up their own self-esteem. It is sad that people can make themselves feel better by tearing apart someone else. One interesting follow question is: we know calling a person a negative name hurts them, but how does it also hurt the one who uses the name?

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

4. Remind students that *God* is a name. Think about why people use that name disrespectfully, or take the name in vain. They probably have never thought about *God's* name. What would it be like if every time something negative happened people shouted out their name? How does it feel when their parents shout out their name? How does the tone or attitude of someone calling out your name affect how you feel or respond?
5. We want *God* to feel joy when people call on him out of need or praise. What would *God's* reaction be when we use his name in a negative way?
6. Remember when this Psalm was written the Israelites were people waiting for *God*. They wanted their own nation. They had been defeated in battle and exiled. Yet, what did the Psalmist write of? He wrote of praise to *God* and glorified His name. What observations do you make about this verse? Is there a parallel between the Psalmist's relationship with *God* and our relationship with friends?
7. Luther is quite clear about what we should and should do. A name is to be used to show love and respect.
8. How can using *God's* name strengthen our relationship with *God*?

Student Questions:

Calling God by name!

1. Think about your name for a minute. Is there a story behind your name? What does your name mean? Write down a few details and be ready to share.....

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

2. Make a list of the names that you have heard people called within the last few weeks that would have hurt your feelings if you would have been called it. (no obscenities.)

Why do you think people like to use these kinds of names?

3. Why do you think people take God's name in vain?
4. How do you think God feels:
 - A. When we call on God's name because we need him?
 - B. When we call on God's name as we use it in vain?

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

5. Read Psalm 68:4. What does this tell us about the importance of God's name?

What should we do?

6. How can you show more respect to God's name?