

# 5 Ways to Teach Your Child the Names of God

My husband and I have 10 children. Yes, you heard that right... we are a family of 12—with three biological and seven adopted children!

Growing up I wanted a big family, and one of my favorite things to do as a child was dream of names for my someday, future kids. I thought about how names sounded, but I didn't really think much about their meaning.

When I was a pregnant teen (read my story in *Teen Mom: You're Stronger Than You Think*), I chose the name *Cory* for my son because it sounded cool. After I married John, we chose *Leslie* for our daughter because it was the only name we could agree on and *Nathan* for our son for the same reason! It turns out *Cory* means "God's peace," *Leslie* means, "Garden of Holly," and *Nathan* means, "Gift of God." Not bad for blind selection!

With our seven adopted children name choices were a balance of *their* choices and *ours*, since most of our adopted kids were old enough to help decide. Our youngest son has the middle name James, after the book of the Bible we were reading when God confirmed we were to adopt him. Three of our adopted daughters have the middle names Faith, Hope and Grace. (I couldn't convince another daughter to let us use Love as a middle name!)

**Over the years, learning about the meaning of names as been a wonderful discovery.**

One Christmas, as a preteen, I received a Bible and a bookmark. The bookmark read, "Tricia: Noble woman." It also included this verse:

*"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and*

*loving favor rather than silver and gold” (Prov. 22:1).*

A name represents all of who you are. When you hear someone's name an image fills your mind of their personality, their values, and their trustworthiness. A name is more than a moniker that reflects the latest trends, it's the essence of who a person is. And likewise, the names of God reflect who He is.

Each of God's names tell us something about who He is.

It reflects His work and His responses. It's important to teach our children the meaning behind their names. It's even more important to help them understand the meaning of God's.

## **5 Ways to Teach Children the Names of God**

### **1. Memorize**

Psalm 9:10 says, “Those who know Your name will put their trust in You.”

The more we understand the meanings behind the names of God, the more we'll learn to trust.

### **2. Read**

Pick up the children's devotional *I Am: 40 Reasons to Trust God* by Diane Stortz. Read it daily with your child. The stories in this book begin with Genesis and end with Revelation. Each devotion includes a Bible story that gives young children an age-appropriate example of the meaning of the name. Names include: Creator, God of all Comfort, Holy One, The Lord Will Provide ... and many more. My children and I really enjoy reading it together.

### 3. Reflect

Get a glass jar and slips of paper. Write out the names of God on the paper and fold them and put them in the jar. Every night at dinner pull out a name and reflect how God has displayed His character in that way in your day. For example, if you pull out “The Lord Is My Rock.” Reflect on how rocks are firm, strong and solid and how we can depend on Him. Ask your children to share their thoughts on that name of God too.

### 4. Create a Name Board

Get a sheet of computer paper or poster board and have each person create a name board for themselves. Ask: What are your attributes? What do people think of when they think of you? Then connect these things to the attributes of God. Finally, discuss ways each of us can become more like God.

### 5. Listen to Songs about the Names of God

A few of my favorites are:

*Good, Good Father* by Chris Tomlin

*How Deep the Father's Love* by Selah

*Praise Adonai* by Paul Baloche

*Names of God* by Laurell Hubick

Teaching our children the names of God is a wonderful way for them to understand the depths of His character. It also helps children to reflect on their own character and attributes, and how we can each reflect God, too.

**Tricia Goyer** has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such

as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31, *and* HomeLife Magazine.