

The “I AM” Names of Jesus: A Children’s Church Lesson

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This is a lesson plan for Children’s Church on the “I AM” Names of Jesus, but it can be adapted for any children’s ministry setting. It is intended for 1st – 5th graders.

Bible Basis: God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you. God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob- has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. ” – Exodus 3:14-15

Bible Story: Jesus calls himself “I AM”

Scripture: Various passages from John

Target Age Group: Age 7 – 12 (U.S. 1st – 6th Grade)

Time: 20 Minutes

Learning Context: Children’s Church

Printer Friendly Bible Lesson:  [PRINT](#) this lesson plan

You Can Help: Please leave your feedback and suggestions for this lesson plan. Others will benefit from your ideas.

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Learning Objectives: After this lesson, the children will be able . . .

1. To identify the “I AMs” of Jesus and their corresponding meanings.
2. To apply the “I AMs” of Jesus in their lives.

Materials:  [PRINT](#) this lesson plan, Bibles, post-its with simple nouns on them (one for each child), Optional Nametag Necklaces with jobs written on them (reader, writer, presenter, illustrator), small pieces of paper with the following verses on them: **John 6:48-51, John 8:12, John 10:7-9, John 10:14-16, John 11:25-26, John 14:6, and John 15:1-2**, tape, pencils, construction paper, paper, markers, alphabet beads, beading string, white board/chalk board and writing implement

Anticipatory Set: “Who or What Am I?”

1. Distribute post-it notes with simple nouns on each. Stick them on each student’s forehead.
2. Each student should attempt to figure out their noun. Have them ask questions that have yes or no answers. (Do I have four legs? Am I an animal? Do I meow?) Help as needed.
3. The student ends the guessing game by stating, “Oh, I am a _____ (cat.)”
4. Say: As you saw in our game today, every person, place, or thing has a name. It could be the name of a teacher or president, a church or a baseball field, a giraffe or a book. Just like everything has a name that describes it, Jesus has names that describe Him. Some of the names that describe Him seem crazy, funny, and strange. Today we’ll learn more about what some of those names really mean. You won’t believe what Jesus calls Himself! Let’s get started!

Bible Lesson:

Part I: “A Burning Bush and God’s Forever Name”

1. What if someone asked you your name and you said, “I Am.” They would say, “You are what?” “I am,” you say.

“You are what?” “I Am.” They would probably be very confused, right? This is what happened to poor Moses in Exodus 3. Moses is minding his own business, keeping watch over sheep, when all of a sudden he is staring at a bush that is on fire. But this bush is different. This one doesn’t burn up. So he goes closer. And God calls Moses’ name. (Yes! The bush is talking!)

2. God asks Moses to not only take off his shoes (that was the easy part), but he asks him to save His people, the Israelites, who are slaves in Egypt. Moses is scared and doesn’t think he can handle such a big job (remember, he is just taking care of sheep!) So he says in Exodus 3:13, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘the God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

3. Do you know what God says? Let’s look up Exodus 3:14 together and read it aloud. (Help the students find this verse in their Bibles.) **“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.’”** Poor, poor Moses. Can you imagine what the Israelites may have thought of him? (This guy takes care of sheep and he is supposed to save us? He hears God talking from a burning bush? And God’s name is ‘I AM?’ I AM what?)

4. But God had a very good reason for this name. I AM means that God was and is and is to come. He has always existed, even before any ocean or star or person. He still exists now. And He will always exist and be there, forever and ever and ever. In Hebrews 13:8, it says that God is the same, **“yesterday and today and forever.”** That’s what I AM means. Maybe Moses wasn’t so crazy after all. Turns out, the leaders of Israel did trust him, because they knew the I AM God. Unfortunately, the leaders of Egypt did not trust him, because this God wasn’t their own.

5. God says that, “I AM” is His name forever, “by which [he is] to be remembered from generation to generation. In the Old Testament, God called Himself, “I AM.” In the New Testament, over a thousand years later, He still calls Himself, “I AM” through His Son Jesus. Let’s learn what Jesus called Himself!

Part II: “He Calls Himself Bread and More! The Names of Jesus”

1. Divide the students into teams of 2-4 students. Give each student a job on the team (or let them choose.) If it’s a team of 2 students, one can be the reader and the other can be the writer. If any more students are added, give them the jobs of presenter and illustrator. (You may want to make nametag necklaces with the jobs on them for future lessons.)

2. Explain to the students their roles, but clearly state that they are to work together as a team to teach us all about each name of Jesus.

Reader: Your job is to read the Bible verses clearly and just loud enough for your group members to hear.

Writer: Your job is to use the paper and pencil given to you to write down your group’s thoughts about the Bible verse. What does your group think that it means? Who does Jesus say that He is? Why?

Presenter: Your job is to share with our class what your group thinks the verse means. You may use the writer’s notes and the illustrator’s picture to help you.

Illustrator: Your job is to draw a picture of the verse. (If Jesus says that He is a boat, draw a picture of a boat with Him in it.) Be creative!

3. Distribute any other supplies the students may need: Bibles, paper, pencils, construction paper, and markers. Also distribute the following verses on small pieces of paper or post-it notes: **John 6:48-51, John 8:12, John 10:7-9, John 10:14-16, John 11:25-26, John 14:6, and John 15:1-2**

4. Allow the students to work on their name of God for about 10 minutes. Assist as needed. Give the teams a 2 minute warning before the time is up.

5. Have a white board/chalk board ready to jot down quick notes from each team (as a visual). Have the presenter from each group share the findings and teach the class about their particular I AM of Jesus. The illustrations can be taped to the board. Give each team a round of applause after they teach. Here are some additional, clarifying notes to make to help the students understand.

The I AM sayings of Jesus

1. **I AM the Bread of Life (John 6:48-51):** Our bodies need food to live (like cereal, apples, pop tarts), but food won't get us to heaven. Our hearts need Jesus. When we accept Jesus into our hearts, we will live forever. Plus He makes it so that we are satisfied.
2. **I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12):** This world is dark with sin, but Jesus gives us light. He takes our sin away and shows us (like a flashlight) how to walk in the dark and where to go next.
3. **I AM the Gate for the Sheep (John 10:7-9):** In the sheep pen, the shepherd was like a gate or a door, letting sheep in and protecting them. Jesus is the gate to God – the only one. We have to go through the gate (or door) to see God and be saved from our sins.
4. **I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:14-16):** Just like a shepherd takes care of sheep, Jesus takes care of us. He will do anything to save His sheep, even die for them. And that's what He had to do so that we might have life.
5. **I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25-26):** When Jesus rose again, He defeated death. Death doesn't have to make us afraid anymore, if we have Jesus in our hearts. Not only that, but Jesus is life! Those who follow Him have, "Life to the full!"
6. **I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6):** Jesus is the only way to God. He is everything true. He is life for those who follow Him!
7. **I AM the True Vine (John 15:5):** Jesus is the vine, His followers are the branches. The branches need to have the vine to grow. If they don't, they're going to fall off and be of no good. We all need to stay connected to Jesus (through His word, church, prayer) in order to grow.

Application: Say: Don't answer these questions out loud, but think about them in your heart. Do you know Jesus? Do you believe who He says He is? He has a lot of names and now you know what they mean. But have you done anything about them? Have you ever asked Jesus to be your Savior? If you haven't, think about doing that today.

For some of you, Jesus is living in your heart. But maybe you need to remember that Jesus is the Bread of Life (He makes us happy, not stuff.) Maybe you are confused about something and you need Jesus to be your Light and help you to see. If that's you today, please take a moment to ask Jesus to help you know Him better. This is a prayer we can all pray! (Take a moment to close the lesson in prayer.)

Bible Lesson Review Game:

1. Review each illustration of the name of God one last time.
2. Hide the illustrations and erase the board. Distribute paper and a pen.
3. In their original teams, the students will be challenged to remember every name of God that we discussed. (There are 7. A bonus goes to the team that thinks of just name "I AM.")
4. The first team to think of all 7 wins.

Art Project: "I AM Bracelets"

Materials: letter beads and beading string pre-cut

1. Distribute supplies. Demonstrate.
2. Have the children tie a knot at one end of the bracelet.
3. Have them figure out what they want to say and lay out the beads. Here are some suggestions: I AM His. He is I AM. Way, truth, life.
4. String the beads in order to say the phrase chosen.
5. Tie the other end of the string into a knot.
6. Tie the bracelet onto each child's wrist.

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