

Abba  
Mark 14: 35,36

Objective: God has invited us to know Him intimately.

Step 1 – Link

When children are first learning to talk, they use simple names for their parents. In English, children often call their parents Mama and Dada. What are the first names Japanese children call their parents?

When children use those names, what kind of feelings do they have for their parents? (Closeness and comfort. Maybe they want something. Maybe they are afraid. Or maybe they just want to be close to their parents.)

Step 2 – Background

Every language has simple names young children call their parents. Those names are usually made of simple sounds. ( They must be sounds that don't use teeth, because young children don't have teeth. )

Jesus spoke a language called Aramaic. In Aramaic, the simple name for father was Abba. It's very easy to say. (You don't need teeth to say it.)

It was the night before Jesus died. He knew He would die the next day. He didn't want to die. He took His three closest friends with Him to pray. Let's read about His prayer in Mark 14:35-36 [NCV, p. 956].

Step 3 – Questions

- 1) What name did Jesus call God? (v36 [NCV]: Abba, Father)
- 2) What did Jesus pray for? (v35 [NCV]: He would not have this time of suffering; v36 [NCV]: Take away this cup of suffering → that He wouldn't have to die)

Step 4 – Discussion

Jesus knew that something hard was about to happen to Him. He wanted to talk to His Father. He used the name a child would use. Are you surprised that Jesus used this name to talk to God?

What kind of feelings do you think Jesus had when He called God, "Abba?" Maybe Jesus wanted to feel close to His Father. Maybe He wanted

to remember that His Father was strong.

Now let's read something else from the Bible. Turn to Romans 8:14-16 [NCV, p. 1069]. This was written to believers in Jesus who were living in Rome.

#### Step 5 – More Questions

- 1) Who are God's children? (v14 [NCV]: those who let God's Spirit lead them → believers in Jesus (John 1:12))
- 2) What name may God's children call Him? (v15 [NCV]: Father – but see note at bottom of page in NCV – Literally, “Abba, Father”)

#### Step 6 – More Discussion

Maybe you were surprised that Jesus used the name “Abba” to talk to God. But this is even more surprising. When we believe in Jesus, God's Spirit lives in us and leads us. And we may call God by the name “Abba”, just like Jesus did.

Abba is a very intimate (close, personal) name. We can only use it to talk to someone (our father, because we are close to him.) we are very close to. (Question: Is “Abba” used for any other relative, or in any other situation? Even if so, is it critically important to say so?)

The Bible says we may call God, “Abba.” What kind of relationship does that mean we can have with God? (What does that tell us about a Christian's relationship with God? – it is very close, it is personal, it is intimate)

How can we be close to the God who made the world? How can we be close to the God who can do anything? How can we be close to the God who knows everything?

God is very great and very strong and very wise. But this very great God says that His children may call Him, “Abba.” When we need something, we may ask Him. When we are in a hard situation, we may ask Him to help us. We may even come to Him just to be close to Him. Isn't that amazing?

What do you think about what we read in the Bible today?

God made the world, but He invites you to be close to Him. How does

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Names of God

that make you feel?