

The Circumcision and Name of Jesus

Middle School · Parent Edition

For the parent: Read each part aloud and work through the questions together. Your answers are printed in blue italics, so no preparation is needed. Your child uses the Student Edition.

Step 1 Understand the Collect

Most collects follow a five-part pattern: the **address** (the One to whom we pray), the **reason** (what God has done or promised), the **petition** (what we ask), the **purpose** (what we hope will result), and the **ending** (the closing that names the Trinity).

Lord God, You made Your beloved Son, our Savior, subject to the Law and caused Him to shed His blood on our behalf. Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit that our hearts may be made pure from all sins; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

1. Mark each part of the collect. Are any parts missing?

Answer: Address: "Lord God." Reason: "You made Your beloved Son, our Savior, subject to the Law and caused Him to shed His blood on our behalf." Petition: "Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit." Purpose: "that our hearts may be made pure from all sins." Ending: "through Jesus Christ, our Lord..." All five parts are present.

2. What does "the true circumcision of the Spirit" mean?

Answer: Not a cut in the body, but God's work in the heart: cutting away sin and marking us as His own. Paul says "circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit" (Romans 2:29).

3. The collect says God "caused" His Son to shed His blood "on our behalf." Why does that wording matter?

Answer: Jesus' obedience and suffering were the Father's saving plan, not an accident. "On our behalf" means in our place: He kept the Law and bled for us.

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

Luke 2:21

21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Also read. "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

1. Circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:10-12). Why did Jesus, who had no sin, receive it?

Answer: To place Himself under the Law as a true son of Abraham and keep it perfectly in our place (Galatians 4:4-5).

2. "Jesus" is the Greek form of "Joshua," which means "The LORD saves." Why did God, not Mary and Joseph, choose the name?

Answer: The name announces the Son's mission. It was God's promise, not a family preference.

3. Luke says the name was given "before he was conceived." What does that show?

Answer: God's plan to save came first. Jesus was sent for a purpose before He was ever born.

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

1. Find at least two places where the collect's words appear in the Gospel. Explain each one.

Answer: "Subject to the Law" matches His circumcision on the eighth day (Luke 2:21). "Shed His blood on our behalf" matches the first blood He shed as an infant. "Hearts... made pure from all sins" matches the name Jesus: "he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Any two, well explained, are enough.

2. Colossians 2:11-12 says, "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands... having been buried with him in baptism." How does this connect the collect to Baptism?

Answer: Baptism is the "circumcision made without hands." In it God cuts away the old sinful self and joins us to Christ's death and resurrection. It is how we receive the purity the collect asks for.

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Second Commandment. 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.

Cross-reference. "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

1. Luther says we should "call upon it in every trouble." Why is the name Jesus good to call on in trouble?

Answer: His name means "The LORD saves." Calling on His name is calling on His promise.

2. Many people say "Jesus!" as an exclamation. Why does that break the Second Commandment?

Answer: It turns the saving name into a swear word and empties it of meaning. That is misusing His name.

3. Philippians 2:9 begins with "Therefore." Read verse 8. Why did God give Jesus the name above every name?

Answer: He "humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." The obedience that began at His circumcision ended at the cross.

Parent note: the question they may ask. "What exactly is circumcision, and why did God command it?" It is the removal of the foreskin of a baby boy on his eighth day. God gave it to Abraham and his descendants as the sign that they belonged to His covenant (Genesis 17), and it pointed ahead to the promised Offspring who would come from Abraham's line. Christ fulfilled it, so God no longer requires it (Acts 15; Galatians 5:6). Now Baptism, for boys and girls alike, is how God brings us into His people (Colossians 2:11-12).

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

1. Write a short collect of your own for this day. Use all five parts.

Answer: Answers will vary. Example: "Lord Jesus, You received the name that means "The LORD saves." Teach us to call on Your name in every trouble, that we may praise You and give thanks all our days; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

2. What does the name Jesus tell you He does for you?

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible. Small Catechism quotation from Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, © Concordia Publishing House.

Answer: *He saves me from my sins. That is what His name means, and He did it by keeping the Law and shedding His blood for me.*