

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Three Names Are Sacred activities



Overview

These three *Names Are Sacred* story-sharing activities aim to explore the significance of names, their evolution, and their impact on individuals' identities, especially within marginalized communities. Participants will engage in reflective discussions and exercises to understand the value of using chosen names and recognizing the dignity inherent in each person's name journey.

Objectives

- To foster empathy and understanding regarding the importance of using chosen names.
- To encourage participants to reflect on their name journeys and the significance of names in their lives.
- To promote a respectful and inclusive environment where everyone's names are valued and acknowledged.

Notes for all activities

- Be prepared to hold sensitive and emotional discussions. Underscore confidentiality to assist in creating a brave space where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences.
 - Adapt the discussion and prompts to the needs of the participants.
 - Respect participants' limits and boundaries. Not everyone may feel comfortable sharing personal experiences.
 - Remember that this activity aims to foster empathy, awareness, and understanding, and to encourage participants to create a more inclusive and respectful environment for all name stories.
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ACTIVITY #1: QUICK SHARE

Duration: 5+ minutes

Materials: No materials are needed.

Introductions (1–2 min):

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself. (Optional: share your pronouns.)
- Provide a brief overview of the activity's purpose and goals as described in the activity description.
- Emphasize the commitment to using chosen names and valuing the dignity of individuals' name choices.
- Don't pressure anyone to share. Not everyone may feel comfortable sharing personal experiences.

Sharing (1–2 mins for each participant):

1. Ask participants to go around in a circle and share:
 - "My name is..."
 - (Optional: share your pronouns.)
 - "My family and friends call me..."
 - "You can call me..."

Closing and Commitments (10 minutes):

- Invite participants to commit to using chosen names and fostering an inclusive environment in their communities.
- Direct participants to the Names Are Sacred website (plu.edu/namesaresacred) for further learning.

ACTIVITY #2: THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS

Duration: 5–20 minutes

Materials: Note cards

Video: www.plu.edu/namesaresacred

Additional Context for Classrooms and Learning Spaces:

It provides faculty with the opportunity to set the stage for learning – and because we are teaching students, not content – establishing an environment that builds relationships is central to an inclusive environment.

Rather than calling names off of a roster — where a mistake in pronunciation or calling the wrong name can damage trust before the term has even begun — invite students to introduce themselves.

Small moves significantly communicate to students that you see and care about them as unique people and are invested in their success in class.

Introduction (1–2 min):

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself. (Optional: share your pronouns.)
- Remember that the first day of class is perhaps the most important day of class.
- Provide a brief overview of the activity's purpose and goals as described in the activity description.
- Emphasize the commitment to using chosen names and valuing the dignity of individuals' name choices.
- Emphasize the importance of creating an inclusive and respectful space for the discussion.

Discussion and Sharing (1–3 mins for each participant):

1. Ask students to write the name they use on this card, plus a phonetic key for pronunciation. Invite students to share their pronouns if they would like to do so.
2. To spark interest in the class overall, ask students what they may already know about the subject matter, or use a “real-world” scenario to establish a context for their learning.

Closing and Commitments (2 minutes):

- Invite participants to commit to using chosen names and fostering an inclusive environment in their communities.
- Direct participants to the Names Are Sacred website (plu.edu/namesaresacred) for further learning.

ACTIVITY #3: SHARING NAME STORIES

Duration: 20–45 minutes

Materials: Paper (small or large), pens, and markers

Group size: Decide whether to stay in a group or break into smaller groups of dyads and triads.

Video: www.plu.edu/namesaresacred

Introduction (1–2 min):

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself. (Optional: share your pronouns.)
- Remember that the first day of class is perhaps the most important day of class.
- Provide a brief overview of the activity's purpose and goals as described in the activity description.
- Emphasize the commitment to using chosen names and valuing the dignity of individuals' name choices.
- Respect participants' limits and boundaries. Not everyone may feel comfortable sharing personal experiences.

Reflection (5–10 minutes):

1. Ask participants to reflect on and consider their name journeys.
 - “Names hold stories, memories, and identities. They are a connection to our past and a representation of our present.” What is your name story? What are your names? How did you get them, and when? Do different people call you by other names?
2. Invite participants to begin illustrating their name stories. (Possible approaches below.)
 - *A linear journey* — Participants could map out a timeline of their names and where they received them.
 - *Clustering* — Participants can create circles around their names and attach the names of people or groups who call them specific names, e.g., family, friends, colleagues, or teams.
 - Encourage participants to be as creative as they feel comfortable being.

Discussion and Sharing (5–10 minutes):

1. Invite volunteers to share their stories and reflections with the group.
 - **Note:** You will be invited to share stories in pairs and/or in a large group. There is no pressure to share more than you are ready to share. You will determine the extent to which you want to participate.

Group Reflection (5–10 minutes):

1. Bring the groups back together, and lead a group discussion on the following questions:
 - How did it feel to share your name journey with others?
 - What common themes or experiences emerged from the discussions?
 - How do our names contribute to our identities and sense of self?
 - How can we better understand and support individuals with changing names?

Closing and Commitment (3–5 minutes):

1. Summarize the key insights and takeaways from the activity.
2. Invite participants to commit to using chosen names and fostering an inclusive environment in their communities.
3. Direct participants to the Names Are Sacred website (plu.edu/namesaresacred) for further learning.

Feedback and Closure (1–5 minutes):

1. Thank participants for their engagement and openness.
2. Provide contact information for further questions or discussions.
3. When possible, ask for feedback on the activity's effectiveness and impact.