

Read: Galatians 4:4-7

Bumpa

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But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our heart, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

At 6'3" tall, Coach was a large and intimidating presence. When he stood at the entrance of the gymnasium, his frame nearly filled the entire doorway. With his arms crossed in front of his body, you knew that there would be no shenanigans happening on his watch.

Coach was a hefty man—not only in size, but also in reputation. He earned it from over forty years of experience in education, coaching, and athletic directing. That's why as the basketball coach, when he asked his players to do something they responded with, "Yes Coach!" and jumped to it. Everyone—players, coaches, even referees—addressed him with respect.

Everyone, that is, except for ten adorable bundles of energy who were his grandkids. They approached Coach without any fear or hesitation and got to call him a different name. These little people lovingly called him "Bumpa." Their special relationship of grandchild to grandpa gave them the right to call him something no one else dared to.

In Leviticus 11 we read about God and his daunting reputation. He demands that we be perfect in the way we act and speak. "I am the LORD your God," he reminds us. "So be holy as I am holy." How intimidating as he stands in the doorway of our lives, arms crossed and shaking his head because in his Word he clearly tells us to do something, and instead of jumping to it, we ignore him or walk away in the opposite direction. There is no way that on our own we can approach our just and holy God, let alone call him "Father."

That's when God, our coach, called a time out and benched us. He sent the perfect substitute into our game. When the time was just right God made the call to send Jesus to earth, not just to wear our human jersey, but to become one of us, our perfect teammate. Our jerseys were stained with sin and sweat, but Jesus' jersey stayed spotless. He played the perfect game of life. He won the game when he slam dunked death and rose victoriously from the grave. Because Jesus is on our team, we can approach our coach, not with trembling knees from all the missed shots in our lives, but we can joyfully jump into his arms because he's more than a coach. He's our Father on whom we can depend for everything. We call him "Abba, Father!" And that is a nickname even better than "Bumpa"!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Do you have a grandpa or grandma? What special names can you call them?
- Why can we call God our “Father”?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- The word “Abba” means “Father.” What are some other names for “Father”? What is the difference between the terms “Dad, Daddy, Pops, Father”? Which do you think is the most loving?
- If God is our “Abba” (Father), what does that make Jesus? How is it possible to call people that you aren’t related to “brothers and sisters”?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Do you have a nickname? How did you get that nickname? How did God get the nickname, “Abba”?
- Sadly, some children don’t have a good relationship with their earthly father. Why is it a comfort knowing you can call God, “Father”?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Abba Father, we are sorry for all the missed shots and opportunities to do your will. But praise be to God that because of our teammate Jesus, we are no longer slaves destined to lose but your sons and daughters through baptism. Thank you for being our Father! Amen.