

John is his name...unless John was that third grader who threw spitballs

This morning at Mass we listened to the story of John the Baptist's birth and naming. There's that wonderful moment when everyone present assumes the child will be named Zachariah for his father, but Elizabeth says he'll be named John. The family and friends assembled are shocked, and then Zachariah writes, "John is his name." And so it is settled.



If only naming a child were always so easy, with both parents in absolute and immediate agreement—and with input from God sent via an archangel.

For the purposes of this blog, I use carefully selected pseudonyms for our sons—trying to offer them a little bit of privacy. The names Leo and Daniel are names associated with saints who have a connection to our boys and family. They are wonderful names, but they are not our boys' real names.

Choosing our son's actual names presented us with a totally new challenge. You would think that, if you waited for five years to become parents, you would have had some time to discuss names. But we never had—not seriously, anyway. When we did talk about it, it seemed we had negative or positive associations with many names that ruled them out somehow. We also noticed that lots of the good saint names were already sort of taken by other family members who became parents first.

We also wanted to consider the fact that our sons already had Chinese names before we met them—names that will always be special to them. When we were matched with Leo, we found he came with a Chinese name that led us directly to his new

American name. It was not a name we had considered, but it fits him perfectly—and that decision took about two minutes.

When we were matched with Daniel, we had known we would almost certainly be matched with a second boy, and yet we had no list of names. We both wanted to see what he looked like and read about his personality before we made a decision. It took us a few days to pick his name—while folding laundry together—and again we went with a name that was inspired by what little we knew about our new son who was still a few thousand miles away.

Listening to the Gospel this morning, I found myself enjoying the concept of an angel naming your child. It's one of the first big decisions you make for your child. It's a joy and an enormous responsibility—but then, so is parenthood.

How did you choose your children's names?