

A Family Jesse Tree



With Advent about to start, why not think about making your own Jesse Tree at home? It's a wonderful opportunity for families to prepare together for Christmas while learning about the ancestry of Jesus. And it can soon become a memorable family tradition.

The Jesse Tree tells the heritage of Jesus in stories and symbols and encourages us to revisit many of the Bible stories that lead to his birth.

The Jesse Tree itself comes from Isaiah 11: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him." Jesse was the father of King David, and it was in his line that Jesus was born a thousand years later.



Your Own Tree

There are lots of resources you can find on line, but essentially you will need a "tree" and symbols to hang on it. In church, we will be hanging four symbols each Sunday on our Parish Jesse Tree, but at home you could add a symbol each day of December as your own Advent Calendar.

What you will need

A Bible, to help understand the symbols and the stories behind them.



The "tree". This could be a branch from the garden, or a small artificial tree, anchored in a pot of sand or gravel. The tree branch can be painted white and sprinkled with silver glitter while the paint is still wet. Alternatively, use a drawing of a tree on cardboard or poster board hung on the wall.

The third thing needed is a set of symbols to hang on the tree. These are best if they are homemade by various family members.



The Symbols

It's up to you how many symbols you decide to make. There is a list of possible ideas on the back of this sheet. There are plenty for each family member to make. It can be a good activity for Sunday afternoons during Advent.

Before you make a symbol we would suggest you first read the relevant Scripture verses. Then pick out one or two short verses that give the main idea. Copy these verses on the back of the symbol.

You can keep it simple or get very creative. You can use pictures from magazines or old greeting cards. Or draw pictures or symbols yourself. Colour them with crayons, pencils, markers or paint. Look around the house for bits and pieces that will make your design beautiful!

JESSE TREE SCRIPTURE AND SYMBOLS SUGGESTIONS FOR DECEMBER

1 Creation: Gen. 1:1-31; 2:1-4 *Symbols:* sun, moon, stars, animals, earth



2 Adam and Eve: Gen. 2:7-9, 18-24 *Symbols:* tree, man, woman

3 Fall of Man: Gen. 3:1-7 and 23-24 *Symbols:* tree, serpent, apple with bite

4 Noah: Gen. 6:5-8, 13-22; 7:17, 23, 24; 8:1, 6-22 *Symbols:* ark, animals, dove, rainbow



5 Abraham: Gen. 12:1-3 *Symbols:* torch, sword, mountain

6 Isaac: Gen. 22:1-14 *Symbols:* bundle of wood, altar, ram in bush

7 Jacob: Gen. 25:1-34; 28:10-15 *Symbols:* kettle, ladder

8 Joseph: Gen. 37:23-28; 45:3-15 *Symbols:* bucket, well, silver coins, tunic

9 Moses: Ex. 2:1-10 *Symbols:* baby in basket, river and rushes

10 Samuel: 1 Sam. 3:1-18 *Symbols:* lamp, temple

11 Jesse: 1 Sam. 16:1-13 *Symbols:* crimson robe, shepherd's staff



12 David: 1 Sam. 17:12-51 *Symbols:* slingshot, 6-pointed star

13 Solomon: 1 Kings 3:5-14, 16-28 *Symbols:* justice scales, temple, two babies and sword

14 Joseph: Matt. 1:18-25 *Symbols:* hammer, saw, chisel, angle

15 Mary: Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38 *Symbols:* lily, crown of stars, pierced heart

16 John the Baptist: Mark 1:1-8 *Symbols:* shell with water, river

During the last 8 days of Advent, the anticipation increases as the birth of Jesus draws nearer. The Evening Prayer of the Church includes what are called the "O Antiphons" (each begins with "O"). They highlight the great biblical titles of Jesus. These can also be found in the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel".

17 Jesus is Wisdom: Ecclesiasticus 24:2; Wisdom 8:1 *Symbols:* oil lamp, open book

18 Jesus is Lord: Exodus 3:2; 20:1 *Symbols:* burning bush, stone tablets

19 Jesus is Flower of Jesse: Isaiah 11:1-3 *Symbols:* flower, plant with flower



20 Jesus is Key of David: Isaiah 22:22 *Symbols:* key, broken chains

21 Jesus is the Radiant Dawn: Psalm 19:6-7 *Symbols:* sun rising or high in sky

22 Jesus is King of the Gentiles: Ps 2:7-8; Ephesians 2:14-20 *Symbols:* crown, sceptre

23 Jesus is Emmanuel: Isaiah 7:14; 33:22 *Symbols:* tablets of stone, chalice and host

24 Jesus is Light of the World: John 1:1-14 *Symbols:* candle, flame, sun