

The Jesse Tree: An Advent Celebration

The Jesse Tree Advent tradition marks each day from the first Sunday in Advent to Christmas. But instead of a traditional Advent calendar, the Jesse Tree uses ornaments to highlight moments in the Biblical storyline from Creation to the Cross. The tradition of the Jesse Tree dates back to the Middle Ages, with the name "Jesse Tree" coming from Isaiah 11:1, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit." Jesse is the father of King David. The savior was to come from David's family line.

During the Advent season, a Bible Story is read which relates to Jesus' family or God's people. After the daily Bible story is read and discussed, an ornament is placed on a "tree." The internet is filled with templates and craft ideas to create ornaments. You can buy them or make your own, whatever fits your household. You can hang them on a real tree, a houseplant, or stick them to a wall or refrigerator.

Use the guide below to help you locate the stories for yourselves and discuss them with those around you. To add interest and excitement, you can watch these stories on videos provided by a collection of church leaders from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the ELCA.

11/29/2020

On the first day of Advent, take some time to look at, talk about, or create a simple version of your own family tree. You may have one in an old family Bible, or a digital version online. For simple templates, take a look at the Internet and choose one that fits the needs and interests of your family. If your family has an Advent wreath, it may be fun to light the candle(s) during this devotion time each day.

11/30/2020

On the second day of Advent, introduce the Jesse Tree activity and how it will be a daily activity until Christmas. Now is the time to select which tree you will use and get the area and supplies gathered.

Date	Bible Story	Bible passage	Symbol	Discussion	Prayer
Sun., Nov. 29	Family Tree			We all have a family tree – branches filled with mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Name some people in your family tree and talk about them.	God bless my mom and dad and... (<i>name other family members</i>). Please love my whole family! Amen.
Mon., Nov. 30	Jesse Tree	Matthew 1:1-16	The big tree!	Read about Jesus' family tree. Matt 1:6 tells us that Jesse is Jesus' ancestor. The prophet Isaiah wrote "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Have you seen a new tree grow from a stump? This is a Jesse tree! It's a sign of God's hope for us!	Dear God, you started out a long time ago. You gave me good roots. I'm glad to be connected in you. Amen
Tues., Dec. 1	Creation	Genesis 1:1-25	The Earth	God made the earth and everything in it, on it, and around it. Name your three favorite things that God has made.	Thank you, God, for sparkly trees, blue skies, and for gray clouds. Thanks for all living things. Teach us to take care of it all. Amen.
Wed., Dec. 2	Adam & Eve	Genesis 2:7-9, 16-17	An apple	Being made in God's image means that people get to show the whole world what God is like. How can we show the whole world God's love?	Wow, God! The whole world shows what you are like. You look like love. Help me look like your love, too. Amen

Date	Bible Story	Bible passage	Symbol	Discussion	Prayer
Thur., Dec. 3	Fall of (Hu)Man(ity)	Genesis 3:1-6	Serpent	Have you ever done something that hurt someone? Gods want us to know that is wrong. God wants us to do good and helpful things. When you hurt someone, apologize. Practice telling someone that you are sorry you hurt them.	Today was hard, God. I want to do good things, but sometimes I make mistakes. Please help me do better tomorrow. Amen.
Fri., Dec. 4	Noah	Genesis 6:13-22, 7:17-20, 8:1-12, 9:12-17	Rainbow	A covenant is a promise. God's promise is that God will always love us. When have you seen a rainbow? Did you remember that God always loves you?	Dear God, thank you for rain and snow, but don't make too much at one time. Keep us safe in your ark. Amen.
Sat., Dec. 5	Abraham	Genesis 15	Brazier	It is hard to move from one place to another! Have you moved to a new home? What changed? What stayed the same? Abraham trusted God and moved to a new home. What did God promise Abraham?	Dear God, sometimes I'm scared of new things or going to new places. Please be with me and help me calm down when changes come. Amen.
Sun., Dec. 6	Isaac	Genesis 22:1-18	Bundle of wood	God wants us to know that God loves us. God also wants us to know that we love God. How did God help Abraham know that he loved God?	Dear God, I know you love me, my family, and my pets. Thank you for keeping us safe in your love because of Jesus. Amen.

Date	Bible Story	Bible passage	Symbol	Discussion	Prayer
Mon., Dec. 7	Jacob	Genesis 28	Ladder	God showed Jacob that God was with him and that God loved him even though Jacob disobeyed God. How do you know that Jesus is always with you and always loves you?	When I do something wrong, God, I want to run away. Instead, help me say I'm sorry, and please forgive me. Amen.
Tues., Dec. 8	Joseph	Genesis 37; 45:3-15	Bag of Coins	Joseph's brothers were not kind to him. But Joseph took care of them anyway. This helps us understand how Jesus loves us even when we are not kind to others. Have you been kind to someone who wasn't kind to you?	Nobody likes to be bullied, God. Please turn bullies into friends instead. Amen.
Wed., Dec. 9	Moses	Exodus 20:1-20	Ten Commandments	What rules help your family live together and be happy? God gave rules to help us all live together in harmony. Jesus came to show us that keeping these rules helps us know that God loves us. Do you know one of these commandments that God gave us and Jesus showed us how to keep?	Sidewalks are good. They show us where to ride our bikes safely. Thanks for commandments that show us how to live safely. Amen.
Thurs., Dec. 10	Samuel	1 Samuel 3:1-10	Oil Lamp	Samuel was a young child when God let Samuel know that Samuel would have a special job to do. No one is too young to be God's helper! How can you help God?	Are you calling me, God? I'm ready to help. I want to be your servant. Amen.

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Fri., Dec. 11	Jesse	1 Samuel 16:1-13	Shepherd's Staff	Jesse had a lot of sheep! Shepherds use a staff to take care of the sheep. What tools does God give us to help us take care of God's creatures?	God bless our leaders – teachers, pastors, governors, and president. Help me be a good leader, too. Amen.
Sat. Dec. 12	David	1 Samuel 16: 13-23	Harp	David played the harp to make King Saul feel better. Is there a song that makes you feel better when you are sad?	I love music, God. I'm glad you like it, too. Let music bring happiness and peace. Amen.
Sun., Dec. 13	Solomon	1 Kings 3:3-28	Scales of justice	Solomon wanted to be a good leader so he asked God to help him be wise. When you pray, what do you ask God to help you with?	Dear God, I'm tired of COVID. Please help it go away, and please protect us all, so we don't get sick. Amen.
Mon., Dec. 14	Joseph	Matthew 1:16-25	Hammer & Saw	Jesus had an earthly father named Joseph. Joseph was a carpenter. In a dream God helped Joseph understand that he would help Mary take care of Baby Jesus. Maybe he made toys for Jesus from scraps of wood! What do you do to make Jesus glad?	Thank you, God, for anyone who is like a father to me. Bless our relationship and help me learn about growing up. Amen.

Date	Bible Story	Bible passage	Symbol	Discussion	Prayer
Tues., Dec. 15	Mary	Matthew 1:8-25, Luke 1:26-38	Crown of Stars	Mary was just a young girl when the angel told her "You will be the mother of God's son." Mary was not chosen because she was good or smart or strong. God showed great kindness and love to Mary by choosing her for this important job. Mary asked for God's help to do this. When have you asked for God's help?	Thank you, God, for anyone who is like a mother to me. Bless our relationship and help me to be loving and caring. Amen.
Wed., Dec. 16	John the Baptist	Mark 1:1-8	Baptismal Shell	John was Jesus' cousin. John told people about Jesus, and baptized some people. If you have been baptized, you were baptized with water, just like John used! When you touch water, remember that you are baptized! If you have your baptismal candle you could light it today with your advent wreath and give thanks for your baptism.	Thank you, God, for my whole family, and for my church family, too. We belong to you. Amen.
Thur., Dec. 17	Wisdom	Psalm 119:105 (Sirach 24:2, Wisdom 8:1)	Open Bible	The Bible tells us stories about God. Do you know a story from the Bible? Can you tell it?	Bless all teachers and students so we get a good education. Help us to learn through stories. Amen.

Date	Bible Story	Bible passage	Symbol	Discussion	Prayer
Fri., Dec. 18	Lord	Exodus 3:2	Burning Bush	God appeared to Moses in an unusual way: in a bush that was on fire but didn't burn up! What have you seen that reminds you that you are connected to God?	Whoa, God! You surprised Moses by talking to him through a bush on fire! How will you surprise me today? Amen.
Sat., Dec. 19	The Root of Jesse	Isaiah 11:1-3	Flower	Jesus is part of Jesse's family tree – like a flower on a tree. What does this passage tell us about Jesus?	Thank you, God, for soap that smells like flowers. Thanks for Jesus, who is like a flower, to make me clean on the inside. Amen.
Sun., Dec. 20	The Key of David	Isaiah 22:22	Key	What are keys used for? How is Jesus like a key?	God, you sent Jesus to be a key. Jesus unlocked the door to heaven for us. Thank you. Amen.
Mon., Dec. 21	The Radiant Dawn	Isaiah 9:2	The Rising Sun	Most plants, animals and people need sunlight to grow. We need sunlight to live! Jesus is like the sun. How does Jesus help us grow?	Dear God, even when the night is dark, I know the sun will rise again. I wait for Jesus who will come again. Amen.

Date	Bible Story	Bible passage	Symbol	Discussion	Prayer
Tues., Dec. 22	King of All Nations	Psalms 2:7-8	Crown	Sometimes we think of Jesus as a king because he cares for the whole world. Kings wear crowns so we know who the King is! Have you ever seen a picture of Jesus wearing a crown? What did the crown look like?	Jesus, you are the king in my life. You are a good king. Teach us all how to be strong leaders and servants for your world. Amen.
Wed., Dec. 23	Emmanuel	Isaiah 7:14	Chalice & Host	Emmanuel means "God with us." Emmanuel is one of Jesus' names. Jesus is with us when we share bread and wine at communion. What words do we say that remind us of this?	Be with me today, God, so I can share your love. Amen.
Thur., Dec. 24	The Light of the World	John 1:1-14	Lit Candle	When it is dark and you light a candle or turn on a light, what happens? Why do you think Jesus called himself "the light of the world?"	When the nighttime seems too dark, God, please be my light. Let a candle remind me that you are always here. Amen.
Fri., Dec., 25	Jesus is Born	Luke 2:1-20	Baby in Manger	Jesus was born a long time ago. Why do you think we still tell this story?	Thank you, Jesus, for being born into my heart today. Bless all your dear children. Amen.