

The Jesse Tree



Nov 2012

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Get into the spirit of Advent with your family with this guide to Jesus' Family Tree.

Nov 2012

This Month...

- Th 1 **All Saints Day**
Fr 2 **All Souls Day**
Sa 3 St Martin de Porres
Su 4 **Ord Time 31
The Greatest Commandment**
Sa 10 St Leo the Great
Su 11 **Ord Time 32
A True Gift**
Remembrance Day
Mo St Josephat
Su 18 **Ord Time 33
End Times**
Th 22 St Cecilia
Su 25 **Christ the King
King of Kings**
Fr 30 St Andrew



Contemplating God's Family & Ours

Children learn about love from being loved, and for most of us that love comes from our families. We develop our sense of identity, purpose, security and belonging largely from our families.

It's no different in our faith family.

Just as we each have a family tree, a history of our ancestors linked by marriage and blood, so also does Jesus. In the Advent tradition of the Jesse tree we trace Jesus' family history and learn about the love of God for us as revealed through real-life ancestors of Jesus.



What is the Jesse Tree?

A Jesse Tree is either a real tree or a representation of one, decorated with symbols which mark the journey from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ. The symbols represent the ancestral characters depicted in the Jewish scriptures and the gospels.

The 'tree' is a common symbol throughout scripture, most memorably featured in the fall of Adam and Eve. Jesus used images of trees, vines and branches to explain the power and life of God. Jesse was the father of King David.

The prophet Isaiah said of the Messiah that, "*a shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots*". (Isaiah 11:1, NRSV)

Thus, in its most original form the Jesse tree illustrates Jesus' human royal lineage, from King David down to Mary. It shows the fulfilment of God's promise of a miracle to the childless Abraham and Sarah, that although both of them were nearing 100 years old, "***kings of peoples shall come from her***". (Genesis 17: 16, NRSV).

Jesse Tree Origins

The depiction of Jesus' ancestry as a tree or vine based on Isaiah 11:1 goes back to the Middle Ages. There is a famous example in a stained glass window at Chartres Cathedral in northern France, where the tree arises from the side of the sleeping Jesse.

The image inspired Christian artists everywhere and it is found in many mediums: mosaics, paintings, murals, tapestries, stone reliefs and carvings.

Today we are most likely to see the modern adaptation in our Jesse tree in homes, parishes and schools. It is usually not strictly limited to Jesus' royal ancestry, but is a means to tell the story of God's faithfulness over the thousands of years of human history up to the quintessential moment of God's grace and mercy – the birth of Jesus.



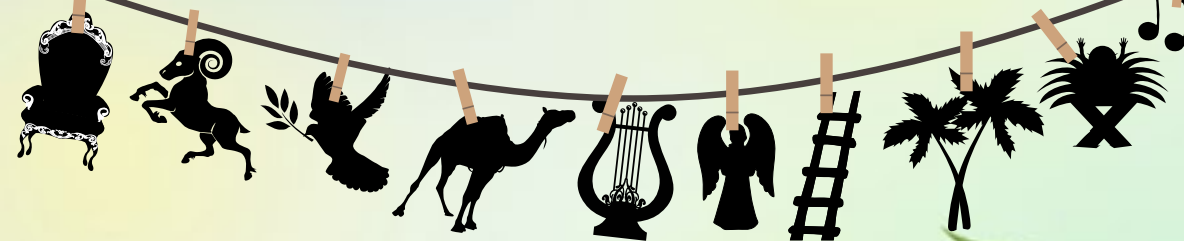
Why have a Jesse Tree?

A Jesse tree is especially useful for helping children to enter into the spirit of Advent, a spirit of expectant, joyful longing for the God who loves and saves us. It is an engaging way to impart knowledge of our salvation history and the momentous place of Jesus' birth within it.

When we contemplate The Jesse Tree we realise ever more deeply the intimate relationship between God and our own humanity. It helps us to connect with the humanity of Jesus, who, like us, came from a family line that was in many ways imperfect.

Thus while the Jesse Tree is about the journey of the people of God, it also sheds light on our own life journey. It connects us more deeply to scripture, through which Christ never fails to reveal himself to us here and now.





How do I make a Jesse tree?

The greatest meaning comes out of making your own Jesse tree. You can use a small living tree, or a bare stick and branches, a wall hanging, or a poster with cardboard cut-outs.



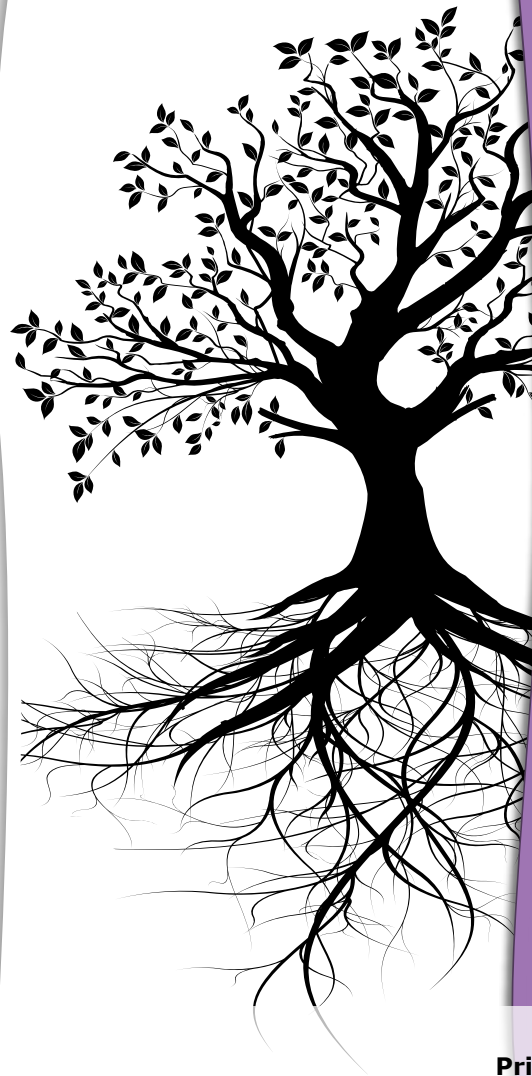
Last year in our parish we used a large piece of triangular wire, bought at a bargain shop as a free-standing Christmas card holder. Willow branches woven across it made it look tree-like. Each week the children pinned to it the symbols from that week's reading and their own made-up prayer. Adult parishioners were also invited to add their prayers. It was a moving and memorable way to celebrate Advent. - Mary

Jesse Tree Reflection

Roots are important parts of a tree. As people we need to know our roots, to help us to know who we are and the kinds of people we want to be. At this time of the year with parties and holidays coming up, we go from one thing to another without reflecting on who we are or why God is important to us. As we create our Jesse tree this Advent season, let us pause and look at the lives of our relatives in faith. They show us what is really important.

Notes:

Bible references are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.



Advent Prayer

for dinner time,
bedtime, or catechesis

*Lord God,
may we, your
people,
who look forward to
the birthday of Christ
experience the joy
of salvation and
celebrate that feast
with love
and thanksgiving.*

*We ask this through
Jesus Christ Our
Lord,
Amen.*

Authors: Marilyn Rodrigues & Francine Pirola

Print version

FEATURED PRODUCT

The Jesse Tree

Vic O'Callaghan | Susan Daily IBVM

The Jesse Tree

The Jesse Tree takes the reader on a pilgrimage through the royal blood lines of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Providing adaptations to our current world through the use of poetry, images and reflection questions, this book is a delight to the senses.

Ideal for use as:

- Prayer resource for teacher inservice
- Preparing for the seasons of Advent and Lent
- Christmas Gifts
- Classroom Resource
- P&F Gift

On Sale
\$14.95
Inc. GST



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Jesse Tree Resources

The Spiritual Ancestors of Jesus

CathFamily's short introduction to the Jesse Tree and the many traditions surrounding it.

Making Your Own Jesse Tree

Get started on your family's Jesse Tree with these helpful ideas and instructions. Comes with a downloadable template and a list of ancestors and their symbols.

Jesse Tree Prayer

Connect with Jesus' family tree with this simple prayer ritual with an optional Jesse Tree Litany.

Jesse 'Tea' Party

Why not host a tea party with an Advent flavour? Serve Gingerbread cookies with Jesse Tree symbols, or draw inspiration from the following ideas:

- **Adam's Apple**- cut apples into thin 'chips'
- **Noah's Ark**- remove the flesh of 1/2 a watermelon, fill it with watermelon balls
- **Abraham's Star**- use star fruit
- **Isaac's Bundle of Sticks**- use pretzel sticks
- **Jesse Tea**- any kind of tea or iced tea
- **Joseph's Coat**- use a stencil to make a coat out of sprinkles on a cookie or cupcake
- **Moses' Burning Bush**- broccoli florets with chilli dip
- **David's Crown**- cucumber rounds with smoked salmon on top
- **Mary's Heart**- heart shaped cookies



Gingerbread Jesse Tree Cookies

Make a batch of gingerbread and roll it out on a board. Use a cookie cutter to make round shapes 5-8cm. If you wish to hang your cookies on the tree, cut out a small hole near the top.

Bake until golden and allow to cool.

Using a piping bag and royal icing (or prepared icing pens), draw the Jesse symbols. When set, thread ribbon through the hole and hang on the Jesse Tree.

Here's some ideas for decorating:

www.domestic-church.com

www.cakecentral.com/gallery

Royal Icing Recipe

Gingerbread Recipe



Family History

Francine & Byron Pirola

When my baby sister was born with a life-threatening condition, my family became completely absorbed in supporting her for several months. As a four year old, the experience left me with a deep insecurity – I've discovered that my adult drive and competitiveness, which is often destructive, has its roots in this experience.

We all come from a family; a unique combination of ethnic, religious, historical and personality factors. Our family of origin is the most powerful influence in the formation of our attitudes and beliefs about marriage and family. Our childhood experiences, both positive and negative, continue to affect us and our marriage in the present.

My grandparents were married for 64 years. They were so in love, even in their nineties. When people say that marriages don't last because people are living longer, I think of them and I know that it is possible to stay married no matter how many years.

Reflecting on these experiences is one practical way that we can bring the influence to our consciousness where we can proactively choose to adopt or reject the messages and values.

Questions for Reflection

1. Reflect on a childhood frustration. How does it influence you in the present?

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2. What couples in your extended family provided a good role model of a healthy marriage for you?

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All Saints Day | Nov 1

Celebrate the many saints, both officially recognised and not with the Litany of Saints. Check out this CathFamily post for more.

Christ the King | Nov 25

Celebrate Christ the King with this special liturgy at home.

