

Jesse Tree

Schools Resource



From The Go Team



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

Jesse Tree for schools

This resource is designed to help children in schools prepare for Christmas and the celebration of Jesus' birth. It traces Jesus' family tree from creation through to the visit of the wise men, in the tradition of the Jesse Tree, retelling many of the Bible stories that led up to Jesus' birth. The symbol of the Jesse Tree comes from Isaiah 11: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Furthermore, we have tried to link this schools resource into the Understanding Christianity resources used by many schools across our Diocese (see overview for specific links).

To make a Jesse Tree, use a small artificial tree, a shapely tree branch in a pot, or you may choose to hang the symbols from a string or tinsel, like bunting.

The start date for Advent varies from year. This resource is designed to be adaptable and is divided into 4 weeks worth of material that you can complete once a week in Collective Worship throughout Advent. We suggest that you use the text included for Week 1-3 in a weekly act of worship, reading out the text and prayer, before hanging the symbols for the week onto the Jesse Tree (We have larger symbols later in the booklet that you can cut out or photocopy). Often, you will have broken up for the Christmas holidays by the time the 4th week of Advent arrives, so we suggest doing 'Week 4' in your final Collective Worship of the term or in your school Carol service, as the final few days specifically focus on the Christmas Story itself.

We hope this is something that you will enjoy doing and find helpful in understanding the big picture of the Bible, as well as understanding some of the lead up to the birth of Jesus.

Please share your Jesse Tree story with us on social media, tagging @BathWells and @GoTeamAdvisers on Twitter and/or Instagram.

This version of the Jesse Tree is based upon <https://www.rca.org/resources/jesse-tree-family-devotions> and was adapted by Cheryl Govier and Tony Cook.

The symbols were illustrated by Jon Birch <http://www.birchmultimedia.com/>

Overview of the Jesse Tree

Symbol	Bible story	Bible reference
Week 1: links to Understanding Christianity include 'Creation' and 'The Fall'		
Tree stump, with a single branch	The Jesse Tree	Isaiah 11: 1-2
The Earth	Creation	Genesis 1: 26-31
Tree with fruit / an apple	Adam and Eve (The Fall)	Genesis 3: 1-19
Rainbow	Noah	Genesis 6: 11-22, 9: 8-13
Tent	Abraham and Sarah	Genesis 12:1-7 & Hebrews 11:8
Ram	Isaac	Genesis 22:1-14
Ladder	Jacob	Genesis 28:10-22
Week 2: links to Understanding Christianity include 'The People of God'		
Multi-coloured coat	Joseph	Genesis 37: 1-36
Ten Commandments	Moses	Exodus 20: 1-17
Sheaf of corn	Ruth	Ruth 1: 1-22, 2: 1-3
Horn of Oil	Samuel	1 Samuel 16: 1-13
Crown	David	2 Samuel 5: 1-5
Bonfire	Elijah	1 Kings 18: 17-24; 36-39
Trowel and Spear	Nehemiah	Nehemiah 4: 15-23
Week 3: links to Understanding Christianity include 'The Fall' & 'Incarnation'		
Lion	Daniel	Daniel 6: 10-23
Hammer and Sword	Isaiah	Isaiah 9: 2-7
Praying hands	Zechariah and Elizabeth	Luke 1: 5-25
Shell	John the Baptist	Matthew 3: 1-11
White lily	Mary	Luke 1: 26-38
Tools	Joseph of Nazareth	Matthew 1: 18-25
Angel	Angel	Luke 2: 9-14
Week 4: links to Understanding Christianity include 'Incarnation' & 'Gospel'		
Shepherds staff & sandals	Shepherds	Luke 2: 8-12, 2: 15-19
Star of Bethlehem	Bethlehem	Luke 2: 1-5
Manger	The Manger	Luke 2: 4-7
The Chi Rho	Jesus Christ	John 1: 1-18

Week 1

Read: God created a perfect world. Christians believe the universe and human life are God's good creation. Humans are made in the image of God. Humans chose to spoil it when they chose not to live God's way. Humans often choose to go their own way, rather than follow the creator. Christians call this attitude sin. It all started with the first humans, Adam and Eve, we often call this story 'The Fall', where humans ignored God resulting in a separation between them and God.

The early stories in the Bible set a pattern for those to come, with people disobeying God, but with those who chose to live God's way being saved, like Noah. God restored order through Noah, when he asked him to build an ark. Noah was obedient and his family was saved. God sent a rainbow to remind us of his promise, that he will never again destroy the world.

Next up, was a man called Abraham. Abraham married Sarah and God promised to bless everyone through Abraham's family if they lived God's way. God repeated this promise to Abraham's son Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob.

Pray: Thank you, Creator God, for making our wonderful world. Thank you for creating humans, thank you that we are all different, with different gifts and skills. Help us to remember that your promises are true and that you are with us every day. Amen.

Do: Cut out the Jesse Tree symbols for week 1 and hang them on the Jesse Tree.



Jesse Tree



Creation



Adam & Eve
(The Fall)



Noah



Abraham &
Sarah



Isaac



Jacob

Week 2

Read: The Old Testament tells many stories of God’s plan to reverse the impact of ‘The Fall’, to save humanity. There are many people of God, who God chooses to model a restored relationship with him, but there are many ups and downs along the way. This week, we see a range of God’s chosen people trying to do just that. Jacob had a son called Joseph. Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him and sold him into slavery in Egypt. A number of years of hardship followed, with God’s people being captured but God set his people in Egypt so they could live his way. During a famine, Jacob and his family joined his son, Joseph, in Egypt. Their family grew so large that the king of Egypt was afraid and made them into slaves. After many years, God sent Moses to free his people.

God provided a land for his people where they could live his way. Through Moses, God gave the people rules so they would always know how to live his way. But they ignored God, so he let them wander in the desert for 40 years. Joshua finally led them into the Promised Land.

Naomi and Ruth lived in Bethlehem. A kind farmer called Boaz married Ruth. Soon they had a baby boy. God looked after their little family.

Many kings came and went, some good, some bad. David was a shepherd and God chose him to be king. God’s servant Samuel poured oil on David’s head and anointed him as the future king of Israel. Shepherds make the best kind of king. They are humble and care more about people than power. David wasn’t perfect, but he had the spirit of a shepherd even when he was king.

The people of Israel had forgotten to worship God. Instead, they were worshipping a false god named Baal. God sent his prophet Elijah to remind the people about the true God.

Years later, God’s people were being held like prisoners in a place called Babylon, they longed to return to their homeland someday. Nehemiah helped the people of Israel to rebuild their city walls. It seemed like an impossible task, as there was lots of opposition, but Nehemiah trusted God.

Pray: Loving God, thank you that you have a plan for all of us, even when we feel lost and afraid. Help us to trust in you and put you first. Amen.

Do: Cut out the Jesse Tree symbols for week 2 and hang them on the Jesse Tree.



Joseph



Moses



Ruth



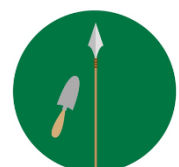
Samuel



David



Elijah



Nehemiah

Week 3

Read: Daniel was a Godly man. He put God before all things, even when he knew he risked losing his life. People learned of God's power through Daniel, and many others worshiped God because Daniel had trusted and honoured God.

After King David died, the people longed for a new King, a king like David who could restore their broken world. Isaiah was a prophet, he listened to God and God told him that someday a Saviour would come to rescue all people.

John the Baptist was born to an elderly priest called Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. Zechariah and Elizabeth honoured God and God loved them, but they still did not have a child. John was a very special son, he called God's people to prepare for the coming of their Saviour.

God was looking for an earthly home for baby Jesus. Jesus was going to need a mother and father who loved and trusted God. God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother and Joseph of Nazareth to be Jesus' father. The New Testament presents Jesus as the answer, the Messiah and Saviour, who will repair the effects of sin and the Fall, offering a way for humans to be at one with God again. For Christians, Incarnation means that Jesus is God in the flesh, and that, in Jesus, God came to live among humans.

Angels are mentioned lots of times in the Bible, they are often used as messengers of God to bring good news. The angels played a significant role in the Christmas story, bringing good news about the birth of Jesus.

Pray: Lord God, thank you that Jesus offers everyone hope. Thank you that the Christmas Story teaches us that nothing is impossible with you. Help us to be like Mary and Joseph, listening to you when you speak. Amen.

Do: Cut out the Jesse Tree symbols for week 3 and hang them on the Jesse Tree.



Daniel



Isaiah



Zechariah &
Elizabeth



John the
Baptist



Mary



Joseph of
Nazareth



Angel

Week 4

For your final Collective Worship/Carol Service of the year

Read: It was to shepherds watching their flocks on a hillside near Bethlehem that the angel appeared and announced the birth of Jesus. They went and found Jesus just as they were told.

God often does things that surprise us. God chose the small town of Bethlehem for the birthplace of Jesus. In Bible times, most rulers in important families were born in bigger cities, but Jesus was born into an ordinary family in a small village.

In that manger lay the Christ Child that had been talked about by the prophets. Jesus was from the root of Jesse, yet the greatest sign of God's great love for his people. Jesus was the Messiah, the Chosen One and the new King. But he was not born like a king, he was born in a place where animals were kept, because there was no room. He was laid on a bed of straw in an animals feeding box.

On Christmas day we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who was born into the family tree of Jesse. He was a descendant of David, the child of Mary but the Son of God. Two Greek letters, *chi* and *rho* form a symbol for Jesus Christ. They remind us that it was not just an ordinary baby who was born in the stable years ago in Bethlehem, it was God's Son. God became a human being, just like us (Incarnation).

Christians believe Jesus' incarnation is 'good news' for all people, Christians often use the word 'gospel', which means 'good news'.

Pray: Father God, thank you for sending the promised one, Jesus, into the world at Christmas. Help us to make time for Jesus and remember him in amongst all the celebrations this Christmas time. Amen.

Do: Cut out the Jesse Tree symbols for week 4 and hang them on the Jesse Tree.



Shepherds



Bethlehem



The Manger



Jesus Christ











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