



Star of David



Lily of Mary

The Jesse Tree

An Activity for Children in Advent



The symbol of the Jesse tree traces the roots of Jesus' people from creation to his birth. "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of its roots." This symbol comes to us from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah [11:1]. The Jesse tree, Jesus' family tree, encompasses a wide variety of people, events, and circumstances which are celebrated during Advent and Christmas. Church art, particularly in the Middle Ages, portrays the Jesse tree on candlesticks and in stained-glass windows, telling the story of Jesus'

ancestry.

This well-founded custom used in Advent and at Christmas time is developing a more contemporary focus. "Roots" has become a familiar term in this culture. The questions "To whom do I belong?" and "Who are my people?" are frequently asked as the popularity of tracing genealogies confirms. Creating the traditional Jesse tree renews and reviews favourite biblical characters, packed with the history of their faith and God's faithfulness.

Family-tree tracing helps to recall key persons who have influenced a family and heightens the ability to recognize the particular influences that have affected their lives. Incorporating the concept of the Jesse

tree with a family's genealogical search, clarifies our common heritage through baptism as brothers and sisters of Jesus. Many of Jesus' ancestors were not Jewish, or were morally questionable, just like the members of our own families. We may learn from this that God's faithfulness may bring good things out of difficult or evil circumstances.

The symbol of the Jesse tree can have any number of characters represented by symbolic creations, but usually a manageable number between twelve and fourteen is chosen. Creativity is strongly encouraged when choosing the symbols to represent the characters for the Jesse tree or the family tree. This activity strengthens the conscious perception of the reality of Jesus and our own personal histories as members of a long continuing lineage.

Creating a Jesse Tree

Needed items:

1. Branch from a tree or a large piece of cloth for a banner
2. Cardboard and/or felt to cut out symbols
3. Pegs and material for making figurines
4. Scissors for cutting
5. String for tying figurines and/or symbols onto the branches
6. Glue for pasting

The following characters, symbols, and passages from Scripture may be referred to for this activity:

Character	Symbol	Scripture
Jesse family	Star of David [base of tree]	Isaiah 11:1
Jesus	Chi rho symbol [at top of tree]	Luke 2:1-4
Adam, Eve	apple or sun	Genesis 2:4-7

Noah	ark or rainbow	Genesis 9:15-17
Abraham & Sarah	tent	Genesis 18:1
Jacob & Rachel	ladder	Genesis 28:12-15
Judah & Tamar	Belt and staff	Genesis 38:18
Joseph	coat of many colours	Genesis 37:3-4, 12-34
Ruth & Boaz	Mantle or cloak	Ruth 3:9
David & Bathsheba	crown or harp	2 Samuel 5:1-5
John the Baptist	horn	John 1:19-23
Joseph	hammer	Luke 1:26-27
Mary	rose or lily	Matthew 1:18-19

The family tree can also include immediate family members, immediate and distant relatives, and close friends. Pictures and symbols can be created to characterize the person and express his or her special meaning to the family. When the Jesse tree and the family tree have been completed, share some time together in prayer.



chi ro (first two letters of "Christ" in Greek)