



The Jesse Tree:

**Advent Series
Ages 3-6**

Credit must go where credit is due! Inspiration for this series came from:

- Ann Voskamp's "The Greatest Gift" Advent Book & Accompanying Tools
- "My Jesse Tree" (www.myjessetree.com)
- Ministry Ark (www.ministryark.com)
- Future Flying Saucers & Anne Marie Gosnell for their awesome Jesse Tree idea!

Additional resources for this series:

- The Jesse Trees we are giving out are simple sticker sets ordered from Open A Party (the Canadian partner of Oriental Trading).
- There are lots of free printable Jesse Tree ornaments online to use in your classroom. This is my favourite set and the ones we will be using:
http://fenlason.net/BrightShinyThings/the-jesse-tree-free-printable-ornaments-and-devotional/#.W_SM-IFKjnH.

Please feel free to edit this series to make it work for you and your setting. We use this series in a Children's Church setting (about 45 minutes per Sunday) in a group of 7-12 kids.

Children's Church: Ages 3-6

Week 1

“The Jesse Tree” Advent Series

Christmas is just around the corner! We can't wait to celebrate Christmas with our church family. From now until December 23rd, we will be anticipating Christmas with the **Jesse Tree**.

What is a Jesse Tree? I'm glad you asked!

The Jesse Tree is an ancient tradition for the weeks leading up to Christmas. From December 1st to Christmas Day, kids learn about a different member of Jesus' family tree. Since he comes from “the line of Jesse”, we call it the Jesse tree. The point of the Jesse tree is to remind kids of God's family line, where Jesus fits into it, and how we can fit into it too!

To make this idea come alive, a Jesse Tree is created from pretty well anything (a real tree, branches, cardboard, etc.) and ornaments are added each day as a Bible story is read. On the first of December, kids will take home their own Jesse Tree to use with their family, so we will just be hitting the highlights on Sunday mornings.

Today, we'll be introducing the idea of the Jesse Tree and creating our own to start using soon!

Lesson Introduction

Have kids sit in a circle or in their seats and pass around **a tree branch**. (*Remind kids to be careful*)

Ask the kids to tell you their name and **their favourite thing about trees**. If they struggle, prompt them with questions like - Have you ever climbed a tree? Do you jump in leaves of trees? Have you ever picked fruit from a tree?

SAY: Over the next few weeks, we are going to be learning about a very special tree. It is called a Jesse Tree! The Jesse Tree helps us learn more about Jesus' family during Christmas.

Story

Objects Needed: Megaphone (can just be made out of paper), Sheep (figurine or printed onto a sheet of paper), Scroll

SAY:

(based on Isaiah 11)

Thousands of years ago, God used special people to give His messages. Those people were called **prophets**. (Ask kids "can you say prophet!?)

Prophets would stand in temples or the streets and proclaim God's messages. They would tell people good news about God! (Use your megaphone and yell "There is good news!" Allow kids to repeat after you.)

One of God's prophets was named Isaiah (Have kids say Isaiah). God gave Isaiah special messages about Jesus. Jesus wouldn't be born for hundreds more years, but God told Isaiah to start telling people about His special son that would be born.

One message that God gave Isaiah was that His son, Jesus, would come from "the root of Jesse." Jesse was a shepherd (show kids sheep; ask them if they know what shepherds do) who was King David's dad. Jesus would be their great-great-great (a lot of times great!) grandson.

Isaiah wrote down his message (show kids scroll), and today we have it in the Bible! At Christmas, we can learn about Jesse, David and all of Jesus' family. One way we can do that is by decorating a special tree. We call it a Jesse Tree! I can't wait to make our own Jesse tree together!

Discussion Questions

1. Is a prophet someone who hears messages from God or messages on TV? (messages from God)
2. What was the prophet's name who had a message about Jesus? (Isaiah)
3. Who was Jesse's great-great-great, lots of time great, grandson? (Jesus)
4. We remember Jesus' family by making a Jesse Tree. Who is someone in Jesus' family? (Let kids brainstorm!)

Activity

SAY: Today we will make our own Jesse Tree! Over the next few weeks, we will be sticking special ornaments on there to remind us of Jesus' family.



1. Have kids trace their hands on to green construction paper. They can trace several handprints!
2. If kids are able to cut, have them cut out their handprints. If not, have you and the helper cut the handprints.



3. Glue the handprints on to the piece of bristol board provided. You can use brown paper to make a stem.

4. Tell kids that we will be sticking ornaments to this in weeks to come.

With remaining time, kids can color, play and have a snack!

Children's Church: Ages 3-6

The Jesse Tree Series

Week 2

“The Jesse Tree” Advent Series

Last week, we introduced our kids to the “Jesse Tree.” In case this is your first time teaching, here’s a quick review:

The Jesse Tree is an ancient tradition for the weeks leading up to Christmas. From December 1st to Christmas Day, we learn about a different member of Jesus’ family tree. Since he comes from “the line of Jesse”, we call it the Jesse tree. The point of the Jesse tree is to remind kids of God’s family line, where Jesus fits into it, and how we can fit into it too!

Kids will take home their own Jesse Tree to use with their family, so we will just be hitting the highlights on Sunday mornings. Today, we will be distributing Jesse Trees and talking about **how to keep Jesus at the center of Christmas.**

Lesson Introduction

Have kids pass around an **unbreakable Christmas bulb** and say their name **and favourite ornament on their Christmas tree.**

SAY: Last week, we made our own Jesse Tree with handprints! We are going to decorate the tree every week to remind us of Jesus and his family!

Bible Lesson

Objects Needed: Christmas present, Santa figurine or Elf, Monopoly money, picture of Christmas tree

SAY:

I love Christmas! I bet you guys do too.
There are a lot of great things about Christmas.

Show present. I love getting presents on Christmas.

Show Santa or elf. Santa is a fun part of Christmas!

Show picture of Christmas tree. Christmas trees are one of the best things about Christmas! They are so bright and colorful. **Do you have your Christmas tree up yet?**

All of these things about Christmas are fun!
They are not the true meaning of Christmas though.
We have Christmas because we are celebrating the birth of Jesus.
If Jesus was never born, there would be no Christmas!

In all the fun of Christmas, we need to remember to keep Jesus in the center of it!

Discussion Questions

1. Is Santa the most important part of Christmas (no)
2. Whose birthday is on Christmas - Jesus or the Grinch? (Jesus)
3. Who is the center of Christmas? (Jesus)

Activity**Give kids a blank Christmas present outline.**

Tell them that one of the ways we can keep Jesus important at Christmas is by giving Him a special gift. That gift can be something we have or something we can do.

Some kids may need help brainstorming ideas. You can brainstorm as a class!



Have them draw or colour their special gift for Jesus, and stick it on the wall beneath the Jesse Tree.

Have a snack and allow free play.

Distribute Jesse tree packets at the end of the class.

Children's Church: Ages 3-6

The Jesse Tree Series

Week 3

“The Jesse Tree” Advent Series: Adam & Eve

This is our third week of “Jesse Tree.” In case this is your first time teaching, here’s a quick review:

The Jesse Tree is an ancient tradition for the weeks leading up to Christmas. From December 1st to Christmas Day, we learn about a different member of Jesus’ family tree. Since he comes from “the line of Jesse”, we call it the Jesse tree. The point of the Jesse tree is to remind kids of God’s family line, where Jesus fits into it, and how we can fit into it too!

Kids have received their Jesse Trees and should have completed the first day yesterday. Today, we will be embarking on the first “story” (Adam & Eve) of the Jesse Tree and hanging our first ornament.

Lesson Introduction

Have kids pass around an apple and say their names and **heir favourite thing about December.**

SAY: I love December because it is the month we finally get to use our Jesse Trees. Every day during December, we can read from the Bible and learn about one of the members of Jesus’ family. Today, we’ll be learning about the very first people in Jesus’ family - Adam and Eve.

Bible Lesson

Text: Genesis 3

OPTIONS:

Read “The First Sin” from the Beginner’s Bible

OR show the story of “The First Sin” in the Bible App

After story say: That sin made God very sad! But he gave Adam and Eve a promise. He promised that one day, someone would come from Adam’s family who would crush Satan. He would defeat him once and for all. That someone would be Jesus! Even thousands of years before He was born, there was hope that God would send a Saviour to the World.

ASK:

- What did Adam and Eve eat that they weren’t supposed to? (Fruit)
- What did they do when they ate it? (Hid away)
- What did God do? (Find them, send them out of the garden, make a promise)
- Who did God say would come? (Someone to rescue them - Jesus)

Activity

Give each child their first Jesse Tree ornament on the tree (printed and attached).

They can each stick their Jesse Tree ornament to the tree.

Allow kids to have snack and play at end of class.

Children's Church: Grades 2-6

The Jesse Tree Series

Week 4

“The Jesse Tree” Advent Series: The Passover

This is our fourth week of “Jesse Tree.” In case this is your first time teaching, here’s a quick review:

The Jesse Tree is an ancient tradition for the weeks leading up to Christmas. From December 1st to Christmas Day, we learn about a different member of Jesus’ family tree. Since he comes from “the line of Jesse”, we call it the Jesse tree. The point of the Jesse tree is to remind kids of God’s family line, where Jesus fits into it, and how we can fit into it too!

Kids have received their Jesse Trees and should have completed up to December 9. Today, we will be embarking on the story for today - the Israelites & the Passover.

Lesson Introduction

Pass around a fake piece of food from the toy kitchen and **ask kids their favourite food to eat at Christmastime.** If they’re stumped, give some examples - it could be turkey dinner, a certain dessert or a special sweet they get in their stockings.

SAY: Last week, we stuck our first ornament on the Jesse tree. What other ornaments have you stuck on your Jesse trees at home? (Allow kids to answer) Today, we are going to be learning about a **special feast that God’s people - the Israelites - ate, and how it can remind us of Jesus!**

Bible Lesson

Text: Exodus 12

Read: “The Ten Plagues” in The Beginner’s Bible

After reading say: God’s people had a special feast to celebrate and remember what God did for them in Egypt! They had to prepare a special meal - with special bread and meat- and tell the story of how God saved them! It was called the Passover.

We don’t eat the Passover anymore, but when we celebrate Christmas, we can remember that God has sent someone to save us. Just like God rescued the Israelites from slavery, Jesus has rescued us from the slavery of sin!

Discussion Questions:

- What were some of the plagues that God sent on the Egyptians?
- Did God send frogs or flies? (Both!)
- Did Pharaoh finally set God’s people free? Yes)

Activity

Have the kids colour their ornaments for today and place them on the Jesse Tree!

In extra time, play “Let My People Go” game!

Have kids line up in a straight line (horizontally) behind you. Tell them you will turn back on, and every time you say “Let My People Go” they can move towards you. When you say “NO!” they have to freeze!

See which kids can make it to you first!

Children's Church: Ages 3-6

The Jesse Tree Series

Week 5

“The Jesse Tree” Advent Series: Elijah

This is our fifth week of “Jesse Tree.” In case this is your first time teaching, here’s a quick review:

The Jesse Tree is an ancient tradition for the weeks leading up to Christmas. From December 1st to Christmas Day, we learn about a different member of Jesus’ family tree. Since he comes from “the line of Jesse”, we call it the Jesse tree. The point of the Jesse tree is to remind kids of God’s family line, where Jesus fits into it, and how we can fit into it too!

Kids have received their Jesse Trees and should be more than halfway through! Today’s story is about Elijah and the story of Baal.

Lesson Introduction

Pass around a trophy or medal and ask kids if **they have ever won something**.

. If they’re stumped, give some examples - like a sports competition, game, etc.

SAY: We are continuing to learn about people who are a part of Jesus’ family. Today, we are learning about the prophet Elijah and how he was part of a contest that showed who the one true God was!

Bible Lesson

WATCH: “Fire From Heaven” on the Bible App

SAY:

Elijah showed the people of Israel that God was the TRUE God!

Thousands of years later, when Jesus was born, He showed us that God was the only God worthy of worship again.

Even as a baby, people - shepherds and wisemen - came from near and far to worship Him. They knew He was God and needed to be worshipped!

Questions:

Did God send fire or water from heaven? (Fire)

Who was the true God - Elijah's God or Baal? (God)

Was Baby Jesus God? (Yes)

Activity

Have the kids colour today's ornaments and place them on the Jesse Tree.

If time permits:

Provide kids with rocks, stickers and markers.

Tell them to decorate their rocks as a reminder that God is the one True God!

In spare time, play and have a snack.

Children's Church: Ages 3-6

The Jesse Tree Series

Week 6

“The Jesse Tree” Advent Series - Mary

We are in our last week of the Jesse Tree series! Today's Jesse Tree story is Mary. Tomorrow is Christmas Eve, so kids should be getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus. As you talk about Mary today, emphasize the Good News and promise of Jesus' birth.

Lesson Introduction

Pass around a Christmas bow and ask kids to share **the best surprise gift they've ever gotten at Christmas.**

SAY: On the very first Christmas, Mary received a bigger surprise than we could ever imagine. An angel showed up and told her she was going to have a baby.

Bible Lesson

CHOOSE from reading “The Story of Mary” in The Beginner's Bible
OR “An Angel Appears to Mary” from My First Hands-on Christmas Bible

Discussion Questions:

- What appeared to Mary - a superhero or an angel? (An angel)
- What news did the angel tell Mary? (She would have a baby named Jesus)
- Do you think Mary was excited or scared? (Maybe both)

Activity

Color and stick the final ornament on the tree.

Ask kids if they liked doing the Jesse Tree, and what they learned from it.

In spare time, let kids play, do a worksheet (provide Christmas ones), and have a snack.