



The Jesse Tree:

**Advent Series
Grades 2-6**

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)

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: Grades 2-6

The Jesse Tree Series

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 introduce themselves and share **one tradition they have for counting down to Christmas**. If they're stumped, some examples could be a chocolate calendar, an Elf on the Shelf, another kind of countdown, etc.

SAY: Over the next few weeks, we are going to be experiencing a very special



countdown to Christmas. It is called a Jesse Tree! The Jesse Tree is a way to help us learn more about Jesus' family in the days leading up to Christmas

Story

Objects Needed: Bible open to Isaiah 11

SAY:

Thousands of years ago, God used special people to give His messages. Those people were called **prophets**. **Prophets** would stand in temples or the streets and proclaim God's messages. Sometimes, they would warn people about God's judgment or the sins they were committing, and other times they would tell people good news about God and give them messages of hope for the future.

One of God's prophets was named 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 is found in Isaiah 11.

Have kids open up Bibles and read Isaiah 11:1-4.

God told Isaiah to proclaim that His son, Jesus, would come from "the root of Jesse." This would be Jesus' family tree.

Ask kids **what are some other things we can learn about Jesus from this passage?**

Using a Jesse Tree helps us see the many members of Jesus' family tree, and count down to Christmas using the Bible. Over the next few weeks, we will create our own Jesse Tree and learn about a few characters in Jesus' family. **Can you think of anyone who was a part of Jesus' family?** On December 1st, you'll all get your own Jesse Tree package to take home and use with your family!

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. Roll out a full roll of brown kraft paper. Tell kids we will create a tree on this. The goal is for it to look something like this:

Each week, we will create an ornament to stick on the tree with a different member of Jesus' family.



When the Jesse tree is completed, have kids stick it on the wall.

With remaining time, kids can complete wordsearch, have snack, use Legos in free time.

Wordsearch found here:

<https://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/support-files/wordsearch-christmas-prophesies-and-names-of-jesus.pdf>

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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 introduce themselves and share **one way they celebrate Jesus' birth during the Christmas season.** If they're stumped, give some examples - like attending church services, reading the Christmas story, setting up a nativity set in their home, etc.

SAY: Last week, we made our own Jesse Tree and talked about how it's a special tradition to help us remember Jesus and where He came from! Can anyone remember why we call it a Jesse Tree? (**Answer:** Because Jesus came from the line/family of Jesse)

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. **What are some of your favourite things about Christmas?**

There are a lot of great things about Christmas.

Show present. I love getting presents on Christmas. **What is the best present you've ever gotten?**

Show Santa or elf. Santa is also really popular on Christmas! **Do you have a favourite Christmas movie or show about Santa?**

Show Monopoly money. People also spend a lot of money on Christmas! They have to buy presents, food, decorations and so many more things! **Have you ever bought an expensive gift for someone?**

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 important. It can be so easy to get caught up in them all, and forget about the true meaning of Christmas. Without the birth of Jesus, all these things are pointless. We need to work hard to remember the real meaning of Christmas and keep Jesus at the center of it.

The Jesse Tree is just one of many ways we can do that! Let's brainstorm some other ways we can keep Jesus at the center of Christmas. **Make list on easel of ways you can do that.**

Activity

Have kids open their Bibles to Luke 2 (copies will be printed for those who forgot their Bibles).

Put kids into partners or groups of three, depending on size of the class.

Instruct them to read Luke 2, and then use Legos to construct a part of the Christmas story from this passage.

As they build, encourage them to remind themselves of this part of the Christmas story and why it's important during Christmas.

Distribute Jesse tree packets at the end of the class.

Children's Church: Grades 2-6

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 introduce themselves and share **their 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

SAY: Everyone who has ever lived can be traced back thousands and thousands of years to the very first humans - *Adam and Eve*.

Adam and Eve were the first people who ever lived, and they were placed in the beautiful home God made for them - the Garden of Eden. There, they got to talk to God, walk with God and live in the most beautiful place you could imagine.

There was only one rule that God had given them - not to eat from the tree in the center of the garden. That tree was the “tree of knowledge of good and evil.” God was trying to protect them by giving them that rule.

Satan - God’s enemy, and ours - didn’t want Adam and Eve to obey God. He didn’t want them to be safe. He wanted their relationship with God to be ruined. So, he came into the garden as a snake. He convinced Eve - who then convinced Adam - to eat from that tree.

As soon as they ate, everything was different! They felt shame - which meant they were embarrassed and knew they did wrong. They could no longer be close to God - they hid away from them. It was the very first *sin to ever enter the world*.

That sin made God sad, and he sent them out of the garden. But he gave them 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:

- Adam and Eve hid from God when they sinned. What do you do when you mess up?
- Because of Jesus, we no longer have to hide from God! What can we do instead?

Activity

Have kids stick their first Jesse Tree ornament on the tree (printed and attached). After the class has stuck the Jesse Tree ornament to the tree, kids can color their own Jesse Tree ornament for this day.

If time permits: Game from www.ministryark.com

Have kids split into two teams. Boys v Girls.

How to Play: Kids run around and try and put all the ballpool balls in the bag. Have names of Bible characters on the balls [attach them using tape or simply write them on]. Tell the kids that they are to try and put the balls in the bag of characters that sinned against God. All the balls should come back. Remind the kids that all have sinned except Jesus. If a team has the Jesus ball/s then they get minus ten points.

Bible Characters:

Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Esau, Moses, Saul, David, Jonah, Jesus, Daniel, Esther, Paul, Peter, John the Baptist, Peter, Mary, Martha.

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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

Have kids introduce themselves and **share 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

SAY:

Jesus was part of the people of Israel. Today, we know them as *Jews*. Thousands of years before Jesus was born, His people were slaves in a place called Egypt. The king of Egypt - Pharaoh - and many of the other Egyptians - treated the Israelites horribly. They had to make bricks and they were beaten when they didn't do it fast enough or make enough.

The Israelites were sad and tired of being slaves. God sent Moses to rescue them. Through God's power and guidance, Moses became the person who led the people of Israel out of slavery. In order to do this, God had to get the king's attention. He did this by sending horrible things to Egypt called plagues. **Do you know any of the plagues God sent?** (Ex. frogs, flies, etc.)

The last plague was the worst - the Egyptians weren't listening and weren't letting God's people go. God gave them one last warning, and said if they wouldn't let the Israelites go, he would kill the firstborn son in every house. He wanted to protect the Israelites though. So, they had to prepare a special meal - with special bread and a cooked lamb - and spread blood over their doorways. This would keep them safe.

Every year, they were to cook a special feast called the Passover, to remind them that God had kept them safe and saved them.

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! We can celebrate that at Christmas, and all year round.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think the Israelites felt at the first Passover? How do you think they felt after they had been rescued?
- How did Jesus rescue us from sin?

Activity

Place the ornament for Israelites on the tree. Have kids create their own Jesse Tree lamb ornament.

Supplies: Mason jar rim, white yarn, construction paper for lamb face and legs, markers, glue, scissors

1. Have kids cover mason jar rim with white yarn. Tie knot in back/tape to secure when completed.
2. Have them draw and cut out a face and legs for their sheep. Glue them onto the rim.
3. Make a loop of yarn and attach to the ornament to hang on tree.

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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

Have kids introduce themselves and **ask them if they have ever been a part of a competition or challenge.**

. If they’re stumped, give some examples - like a sports competition, science fair, 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 competition that showed who was the true God!

Bible Lesson

Video: “Elijah & the Prophets of Baal” (Approximately 4 minutes)

Available for download from Rene Pfitzner at <https://vimeo.com/115040406>

***Show the video on Pastor J’s computer - will be set up ***

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

He was the only God worthy of worship.

Thousands of years later, when Jesus showed up, 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:

We may not worship false gods like Baal, but other things can take our attention away from God. What are some things that take your attention away from God?

How can you worship God this week?

Activity

Place the ornament for today on your Jesse Tree.

Have kids build a fire ornament for their own Christmas trees at home.

See <https://www.myjessetree.com/diy-jesse-tree-ornaments/>.



Materials Needed: Pipecleaners (Yellow, Orange, Red), String, Glue, Sticks

1. Glue sticks together (hot glue gun will work best).
2. Stick pipe cleaners to the sticks to resemble a



fire, and then fill in as necessary.

3. Hang a string from the ornament!

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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

Have kids introduce themselves and 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. That must have been one crazy day!

Bible Lesson

Instead of telling today's Bible story, kids will have a unique opportunity to tell it in their own words. Print the words of Luke 1:26-38 for kids to read, as well as a template of a newspaper.

Have kids read the story of the angel coming to Mary, and then create a newspaper article of what that may have been like. What would the headline have said? What would the news article say? What would the picture look like?

Kids can get into groups to do this.

After they've completed the activity ask:

- How do you think Mary felt knowing that her baby was going to be God's chosen Saviour?
- Why is the good news that the angel gave Mary good news for all of us?

Activity

Stick the final Jesse Tree ornament on your tree. Ask kids if they liked doing the Jesse Tree, and what they learned from it.