

The JESSE TREE

An Advent Tree that provides an overview of Biblical history and God's redemptive plan

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ornament</u>	<u>Story</u>
1	Globe	Heaven & Earth
2	Apple	Adam & Eve
3	Rainbow	Noah
4	Tent or Knife	Abraham
5	Ram	Isaac
6	Camel or Water Cistern	Rebecca
7	Ladder	Jacob
8	Colorful Coat	Joseph
9	Sack of grain	Judah
10	Lamb	Passover
11	Tablets	The Law through Moses
12	Grapes	The Promised Land
13	Wheat	Ruth
14	Stump or branch	Jesse
15	Slingshot	David
16	Temple or Key	Solomon
17	Whale	Jonah
18	Scroll	Isaiah's Prophecies
19	Lion	Daniel
20	Legos or other wall	Nehemiah
21	Paper & Pen	Zechariah & Elizabeth
22	Manger	Joseph & Mary
23	Staff	Shepherds
24	The Star	A Star Appears (wise men)
25	Crown	Jesus is King of Kings

HOW IT WORKS:

Jesse Trees can be adapted for any age, but the key is to find (or make) ornaments to represent the 25 days of people and their events.

1. Acquire a small or narrow Christmas Tree.
2. Each day, add the ornament for that day.
3. After each ornament is hung, talk (or read) about the event(s) and the people represented by that ornament.

Tip: Make it Stick! Before hanging the ornament for a given day, start at the beginning with the globe hung on December 1st and explain from memory the meaning of each of the ornaments previously hung – in order.

Younger kids can recite what they're able ... older kids and adults can dig into the Bible readings and/or discuss the spiritual implications and ripple effects for each event.

This is a great way to learn (or review) the big picture of God's plan for redeeming mankind and how He has been working in the lives of men and women throughout history.

However you create your Jesse Tree, may the Lord richly bless your Christmas!

DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR THE JESSE TREE

- 1) **Heaven & Earth** (globe) – In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Read Genesis 1 & 2.
- 2) **Adam & Eve** (apple) – God gave man one rule, but man chose to follow the logic of the serpent instead of obeying God. As a result, sin entered the world, and man was expelled from the Garden. Read Genesis 3.
- 3) **Noah** (rainbow) – Sin continued to spread, and eventually all of Adam’s descendants turned away from God and pursued their own selfish, evil ways; except for Noah. God found Noah righteous, spared him and his family from the great flood, and established the rainbow as a reminder not to flood the earth ever again. Read Genesis 6 – 8.
- 4) **Abraham** (tent or knife) – God called Abram out of Ur and promised to make his descendants a great nation. Abram believed the Lord, and his belief was credited to him as righteousness. Even when God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his own son, Abraham obeyed. Read Genesis 12 and/or 15 and/or 22.
- 5) **Isaac** (ram) – When Abraham only begotten son was on the altar and Abraham was poised to kill him as God instructed, God provided a ram with its horns caught in a thicket as a substitutionary sacrifice. In large part, Isaac’s life is a symbol of Jesus, the savior of the world. Read Genesis 22.
- 6) **Rebecca** (camel or water cistern) – Abraham instructed his servant to get Isaac a bride from his own family in Haran. The servant prayed that God’s choice for the bride would offer him water, and offer to water his camels, too. And that’s exactly what happened when Rebekah came to the well. Read Genesis 24.
- 7) **Jacob** (ladder) – Isaac sent Jacob to find a wife from his family in Haran. On the way, Jacob dreamt of a ladder, with the LORD at the top and angels climbing up & down. Jacob built an altar & worshipped. Read Genesis 28.
- 8) **Joseph** (colorful coat) – Jacob made Joseph a very ornate robe. When Joseph’s dreams were about his brothers bowing down to him, they sold him to traders and tricked Jacob into believing he’d been killed. But Joseph was sold into Egypt and eventually became its prime minister. Read Genesis 37, and Genesis 39 – 41.
- 9) **Judah** (sack of grain) – When the famine hit, Jacob sent his sons (except Benjamin) to Egypt to buy food. Joseph (whom they did not recognize) sold them food, but kept one as a prisoner. On their 2nd trip, Joseph revealed himself & sent for his whole family. Eventually, Jesus was born from the line of Judah. Read Genesis 42 - 47.
- 10) **Passover** (lamb) – The Israelite population grew, and Pharaoh had them enslaved. After hundreds of years of slavery, God raised up Moses to lead them out. The final blow to the Egyptians was the plague of death, from which God spared the Israelites through the blood of a Passover Lamb—another vibrant symbol of the coming Messiah and how His blood would redeem mankind. Read Exodus 12 (and Exodus 1 – 11 as a prequel).
- 11) **The Law through Moses** (tablets) – After leading the Israelites out of Egypt, God told them that if they would fully obey His law, He would make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. He then gave them a series of laws, including what we know as the 10 Commandments. Read Exodus 20 (with Exodus 19 as a prequel).
- 12) **The Promised Land** (grapes) – Moses commissioned 12 men to enter the land God promised Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob and bring back a report. The land was rich and fruit was abundant, but ten of the scouts gave a bad report, and the people grumbled. So God kept that generation from entering. Read Numbers 13 – 14.
- 13) **Ruth** (wheat) – Ruth, a Gentile (non-Israelite) wife to an Israelite, becomes widowed. Her widowed mother brings her to Israel, where a kinsman named Boaz allows Ruth to collect extra wheat gleaned from his fields. Eventually he marries her, and their son becomes the grandfather of King David. As the “kinsman redeemer,” Boaz’s actions represent how Christ redeems us – even redeeming the Gentiles. Read Ruth 1 – 4.

14) Jesse (stump or branch) – Jesse, the grandson of Ruth & Boaz, has seven sons. One son, David, is a shepherd. The Prophet Samuel was sent to Jesse to anoint one of his sons king. And, Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would come through Jesse. In fact, Jesus came through the line of Jesse and David. Read Samuel 16 and Isaiah 11.

15) David (slingshot) – When David was sent to deliver food to his brothers in the army, he learns about all the benefits King Saul will give the man who slays Goliath. Using just a sling and a stone, he slays the giant. Eventually, David replaces Saul as God’s chosen king over Israel. Read 1 Samuel 17 and 2 Samuel 5.

16) Solomon (temple or key) – When David’s son Solomon was made king, God told him to ask for whatever he wanted. Solomon asked for a discerning heart (a key for wisdom) so he could rule wisely. God was so pleased with Solomon’s request, He also granted Solomon great riches and a long life. Solomon wrote most of the Book of Proverbs and also had God’s temple built. Read 1 Kings 3 and also 4:29-34.

17) Jonah sent to Nineveh (whale or fish) – As a prophet in the time of King Jeroboam II, Jonah is told by God to go to Nineveh and prophesy against them for their great evil. Jonah tries to evade the assignment, but God sees to it he goes. The story highlights God’s mercy and His desire that people doing evil repent. Read Jonah 1 – 4.

18) Isaiah’s Prophecies (scroll) – The Prophet Isaiah recorded many prophecies, with many of those being about the coming Messiah. Read some of them in Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 35:4-6, 40:1-9, 50:6, and 53:1-12.

19) Daniel (lion) – As a captured Israelite, Daniel is eventually made an officer in court of the King of Persia. His enemies devised a plan to have Daniel killed, but Daniel was faithful to God. Reluctantly, the king has Daniel thrown into a den of lions, but God keeps him safe. Such was not the fate of his accusers. Afterwards the king proclaimed that everyone should acknowledge the greatness of God. Read Daniel 6.

20) Nehemiah (legos or other wall) - Nehemiah was an exiled Israelite and cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia. Calling on God’s promise to gather his people, Nehemiah sought and gained permission from the king to return to Israel and begin rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. God was faithful and provided. Read Nehemiah 1 – 2.

21) Zechariah & Elizabeth (paper & pen) – Zechariah was told by the angel Gabriel that his barren wife would have a son named John. A disbelieving Zechariah asked for a sign, so Gabriel made him unable to speak until his son was born & named. He communicated by writing, and his son became known as John the Baptist! Read Luke 1.

22) Joseph & Mary (manger) – Because Joseph was from the lineage of King David, he went to Bethlehem to register for the census. Mary, his wife, was about to deliver, but because of everyone coming to Bethlehem for the census, no rooms were available for rent. Read Micah 5:2, Luke 2:1-7, and Matthew 1:18-25.

23) Shepherds (staff) – At the birth of Jesus, the angels could not contain their joy. They appeared to shepherds and proclaimed the good news, which caused the shepherds to go see the new-born king. Read Luke 2:8-20.

24) A Star Appears (the star) – Common lore is that the wise men (magi) from the east visited Jesus at the manger. The truth is that they were guided by the appearance of a star in the sky, and it may have been more than a year before they arrived to present their gifts to Jesus. Despite the error of the common lore, we celebrate the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, with a star at the top of a Christmas Tree. Read Matthew 2.

25) Jesus is King of Kings (a crown) – Our savior, Jesus, the Messiah, is the Christ – the only begotten Son of God. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and through Him we receive eternal life. By his becoming a man & taking the punishment that was proclaimed for us, Jesus provided a way for Israelites and Gentiles alike to be redeemed. All we have to do is believe and receive—by faith—his act of love, and ***we will have eternal life with Him.*** Read 1 Timothy, 6:15 and Revelation 1:5, 17:14, and 19:16.