

THE JESSE TREE

YOU WILL NEED

- Purple Cloth for underlay
- Christmas tree or branch of tree in bucket with rocks or sand or drawing of tree with branches on cardboard on wall
- 2D illustrated symbols (See RE Online, Primary Curriculum and Resources), laminated to put on Jesse Tree
- Old Testament Big Books
 - Joseph the Dreamer
 - Moses
 - King David
 - Jonah

Person	Scripture references on which stories are based. Students are not expected to read all of these as some are a number of chapters.	Image
Noah	Genesis 7:1-5, 17-23, 8-17	ark
Abraham & Sarah	Genesis 12: 1-7 & Hebrews 11:8	stars in the sky
Joseph (the dreamer)	Genesis 37:2-36; 39:1-46:34	coat of many colours
Moses - Birth	Exodus 2:1-10	Tablets of the Commandments
Moses - Burning Bush	Exodus 3:1-12	
Moses - The Exodus	Exodus 14-15	
Moses - Ten Commandments	Exodus 20:1-17	
Ruth	Ruth 1:16-18, 22	gathered barley
Jesse	Isaiah 11:1-2	branch growing from the roots of tree
David anointed as King	1 Sam 16: 1-13	crown
David and Goliath	1 Sam 17	
Isaiah	Isaiah 7:14-15; 9:5-6	scroll with words of Isaiah

Jonah	Jonah 1-4, (4 short chapters)	large fish
John the Baptist	Matthew 3:1-11	camel hair coat
Mary	Luke 1:26-38	mother & child
Joseph of Nazareth	Matthew 1: 18-24	carpentry tools
Jesus	Luke 2:1-20, Matthew 1:18-24	child in manger

PREPARATION - Invite the children to enter the storytelling space, have them seated in a semicircle, ready to listen to the story. Ensure that all materials are prepared in a basket (gold box for parables) and that a Bible is in close proximity, elevated off the floor on a book stand.

TELLING THE STORY - Story is a key part of our faith tradition. Young children, with their capacity for intuitive learning, are particularly able to find meaning through story.

WONDERING - At certain times during this story, the children engage in some “I wonder” statements. “I wonder” statements engage children with the story and invite reflection. Wondering together teaches the art of dialogue, of listening to others, accepting and learning from others’ ideas and contributions.

Hold the Bible in your hands...

The Jesse Tree is a way of preparing for Advent, by journeying through the stories in Jesus’ family tree. Because this story is from the Bible we will light the candle as we listen to the story.

Place the Bible back on the stand.

Begin by rolling the purple cloth in front of you and say:

Purple is the colour for getting ready. It is the colour of Advent which is the beginning of the Church’s year. In the season of Advent we get ready to celebrate the great feast of Christmas. Advent is also a time of waiting, longing and preparing for Christ’s coming at the end of time.

Bring over the tree in bucket or put up cardboard with drawing of tree on wall.

During Advent we use symbols to help us prepare for the coming of the Saviour. These symbols remind us of people who waited and prepared the way for the long awaited Saviour.

Pointing to the tree say:

The name Jesse Tree comes from the words of the prophet Isaiah (11:1-2), “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots”. Jesse was the father of King David and the Bible tells us that Jesus would be born “of the house of David”.

Sit back and say:

As we prepare for the great feast of Christmas, we remember some of God's people who recognised that God was with them through some surprising events in their lives.

Bring out, one at a time, laminated illustrations of symbols representing the people of God mentioned in the story. Use the scripts below as you place the symbols on the branches. The students may be able to help you recall / retell the stories. You might only do two or three at a time. Engage the students with recalling and wondering about each of the symbols and the characters' stories. Students might wish to hear / read some of the stories again. The K-2 Big Books could be utilized for this purpose.

Noah and the Ark - image of the Ark and animals

The story of Noah is a very old story. Evil and violence had filled the earth. God told Noah to make an ark for himself, his family and two of all the animals and birds. He was to take food and provisions. Then waters came and flooded the earth and washed away all the evil people and all living creatures. Noah, who had been faithful to God, and all his family and every creature on the ark were saved. Eventually the waters dropped and the earth dried and Noah and his family and all the animals came out of the ark. God blessed Noah and his children and told them to "be fruitful and fill the earth." God made a covenant with Noah and all creatures, promising that never again would the earth be flooded and all life washed away. He placed a rainbow in the sky which would be a reminder of this covenant God made with the earth.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder....

- if you remember any more of the story of Noah and the Ark.
- if you know another time when God told people to "be fruitful and fill the earth."
- what the rainbow in the sky means to you.

Abraham and Sarah - image - stars in the sky

The history of God's chosen people begins with Abraham and Sarah. In faith Abraham and Sarah obeyed God's command to leave their home country. On their journey they discover that God is with them in every place. Abraham is promised as many descendants as the stars in the heavens. Although very old at the time Sarah has a son, Isaac, who marries Rebekah and they have children and these children have children and so begins the great family which is as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder....

- if there's something else you can remember about Abraham and Sarah.
- if anyone remembers Sarah's reaction when God first told them they would be the parents of a great nation.
- what you like about the story of Abraham and Sarah.

Joseph – image – coat of many colours

Joseph was the son of Jacob. One day Jacob gave Joseph a coat of many colours. Joseph's eleven brothers were jealous, and so they kidnapped him and sold him into slavery in Egypt. There, with God looking after him, Joseph rose to a position of power. When famine came to the land of Joseph's father and brothers, they went to Egypt for food. Joseph was the governor. He gave his brothers plenty of food but he also tested them to see if they had changed. When he saw that they had changed he greeted them with the words, "I am your brother Joseph."

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder....

- if you remember anything else in the story of Joseph.
- how the brothers felt when Joseph greeted them as their brother.
- how Joseph's father felt when he saw his son again.

Moses – image – Tablets of the Commandments

Moses was one of the greatest leaders of the Hebrew people. God chose Moses to free the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt. As Moses tended his flock near the mountain of Horeb, he saw a burning bush and heard the voice of God telling him to take off his sandals as he was standing on holy ground. It was here that God called him to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.

You may remember the story of Moses asking Pharaoh to let his people go. Finally Moses was able to lead the people out of Egypt, through the Red Sea and into freedom. It was here in the desert on Mt Sinai that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, the laws that guide us all in the best way to live.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder....

- if anyone remembers the story of Moses' birth.
- which part of Moses' story you like the most.
- why Moses is considered such an important leader of God's people.

Ruth – image – gathered barley

The symbol of gathered barley reminds us of Ruth who collected grain from the fields of an Israelite farmer. Do you remember Ruth's story? She was a foreigner who married an Israelite. After her husband's death Ruth looked after her mother-in-law, Naomi and returned to her husband's land and remained faithful to his family and God. Later she married the farmer, Boaz in whose fields she worked, and God blessed her goodness by giving her a son named, Obed. Obed became the father of Jesse and Jesse was the father of the great Jewish king David.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder....

- why the story of Ruth is important.
- what we can learn from Ruth and her life.

Jesse – image – branch growing from roots of a tree

It was in the family line of Jesse that Jesus was born in fulfilment of the prophecies. Many years after Jesse lived, the prophet Isaiah would speak of the coming of the Messiah and would trace Jesus' ancestry back to Jesse, the father of King David.

King David – image – crown

God chose David to be king. David had great faith in God. He trusted God and tried to obey him. David made many mistakes, but he continued to turn to God for forgiveness and guidance. Israel became a strong nation under his leadership.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder....

- if you can remember the story of David being anointed as King or the story of David and Goliath.
- what we can learn about God... about David in each of these stories.
- what else you know about King David.

Isaiah – image – scroll of the prophet with words from Isaiah

Isaiah is one of the great prophets in the Old Testament, who gave hope to the Israelites that peace, would come to their nation. He also spoke of the birth of a special child who would be called 'Emmanuel' which means 'God is with us'.

Jonah – image – large fish

Jonah is the prophet who does not want to go where God sends him. He tries to run away from God. He boards a boat, God sends a storm and Jonah is tossed overboard and swallowed by a large fish. Jonah prays to God to forgive him. He is saved and he then does what God wants and takes the message of salvation to the people of Nineveh.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder....

- what else you remember about Jonah.
- why Jonah didn't want to follow God's call and go to Nineveh.
- if you've ever felt like that.

John the Baptist – image – camel hair coat

John was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. He was Jesus' relative. He announced the coming of Jesus. When John grew up he preached that the people should turn away from sin and be baptized. He baptized many people in the river Jordan, including Jesus.

Mary – image – mother and child

God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary in Nazareth. The angel told her that God was with her and that she was chosen among all women to bear God's son, whom she should name Jesus. Her trust and faith in God enabled her to do what God asked of her, to be the mother of God's son, Jesus.

You may wish to include reading and work on Luke 1:26-38 – The Annunciation at this point - see Unit Content 3

Joseph of Nazareth – image – carpentry tools

Joseph, a descendant of David, worked as a carpenter. An angel appeared to him and told him that Mary had conceived a son by the power of the Holy Spirit, and this son would be named Jesus. He loved and protected Jesus, the Son of God, as his foster son. He also loved and cared for Mary, his wife.

You may wish to include reading and work on Matthew 1:18-25 – The Birth of Jesus - see Unit Content 3

Jesus – image – child in manger

We know the rest of the story. God was faithful to the promise and Jesus, son of God was born in Bethlehem.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder....

- what the birth of Jesus means for you.
- how the prophets and holy people knew that God was speaking to them.
- how we can know what God is saying to us.
- how we prepare ourselves for the season of Christmas.
- how we can be a sign of God's presence in our world.
- if you know people in this world who point the way to Jesus.

Carefully pack the story materials back into your basket. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away should they choose to engage with the story during exploring.

EXPLORING - Provide an opportunity for individual/small group exploration in order to respond to the story. This provides students with time to focus on and explore the story or aspects of it, which have significance for them. For this reason, students choose from a variety of materials and types of work. This is an opportunity for students to respond to what they have heard in whatever way they choose, it should be seen as a prayerful opportunity for dialogue between the student and God. The 'work' itself is often an expression of the child's experience or feelings. Children may share their 'work' only if they wish.

PRAYER - Conclude the session with prayer. Children come closer to God through the experience of prayer. Teachers help students to pray by praying with them, providing a variety of prayer experiences. These may include laying of hands over students' works,

spontaneous prayer, prayer related to the Scripture, prayers found in KWL, informal or formal prayers, or a hymn.

Carefully pack story materials back into your basket. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.