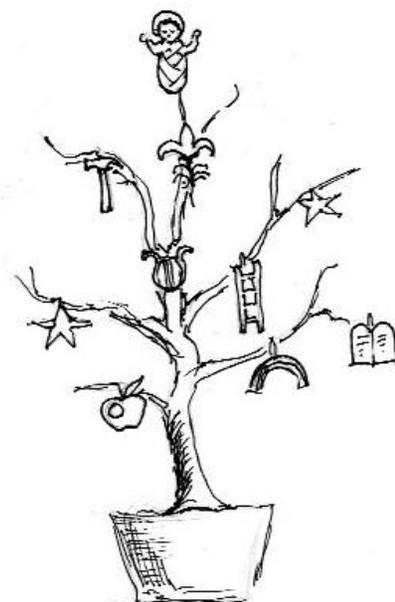


# Celebrating Advent: The Jesse Tree for Families



(Parent's Manual)



December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013

“God Has a Plan for Everything”

Isaiah 11: 1-2

This reading helps explain the meaning of Advent and “waiting”. After reviewing the verses above consider discussing why waiting is hard, what it teaches us, and how God is with us in seasons of waiting.

Prayer Point:

Thanking God for being with us and helping us to be patient while awaiting Christ’s birth.

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

“God is the Creator of all Things”

Genesis 1:26-31

Discuss God as Creator, from the air and the sea to the birds and the bees, down to our teeny tiny pinky toenail. Explain how at the beginning of creation all was perfect and although there is now sin in the world, we can help care for the beauty God placed around us in the beginning.

Prayer Point:

Thankfulness for the good things on our planet.

December 3rd, 2013

Genesis 3:1-9

“God Promises His Love”

In today’s reading, we learn about how Adam and Eve disobey God. Yet, even in this act of defiance, God’s love doesn’t fail. Discuss why God needed to punish Adam and Eve. How might we make God unhappy today?

Prayer Point:

Ask God to help us stay away from doing things that would sadden him.

December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Genesis 6: 11-14; 7: 17-8: 3; 9: 8-13

“God Keeps His Promise”

In Noah’s day, sin was flooding the earth. Therefore, God decided to destroy all those who would not turn to him and continued to do ill with a great flood. Noah and his family were the only ones to turn to God. Once the flood was over, God promised never to flood the world again. How was this promise displayed? Can you name other promises God keeps? Can you think of a time you chose to be like Noah, when others decided to do wrong?

Prayer Point:

Gratitude for the many promises God has kept.

December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Genesis 12: 1-7

“God Befriends Abram”

Discuss the ways God leads us to hard places and hard tasks. How did God call Abram? Did Abram struggle despite his obedience? How was he blessed for his obedience? Is there evidence of God continuing to keep his promises? Do you see how God shows you when He is asking you to do something?

Prayer Point:

Beseeking the Lord for help to walk in obedience to do the things He wants us to do.

December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Genesis 21: 1-7

“Isaac is Born!”

In this reading, we learn the great desire Sarah has for a baby. However, much time has passed and she continues to get older. Have you ever waited for something it took a long time to receive? What was it like when your prayers were answered?

Prayer Point:

Thanking God for answered prayers.

December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Genesis 22: 1-14

“Abraham Obeys God”

Have you ever had a close call? A time when you thought you were going to lose something very dear that was saved in the nick of time? That surely must have been how Abraham felt! We see how Abraham thanks God for coming through for him again, how have you honored God when he has protected you?

Prayer Point:

Continued protection when we must do things that grieve us.

December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Genesis 28: 10-22

“God is Always with Us”

Do you know that God is with you wherever you go? When have you seen this displayed in your life? Have you ever felt like Jacob and needed to be reminded of the promises meant for you?

Prayer Point:

For remembrance that God is with us each day.

December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Deuteronomy 5: 1-22

“I am the Lord Your God”

How do you know you are cared for by your family and friends? Do you try to show your loved ones that they are important to you? One way to show others what they mean to you is by keeping good rules for living. Moses received the best rules for life, the 10 Commandments. How do you work to keep them each day?

**Prayer Point:**

Thankfulness for God’s guiding rules.

December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Joshua 2: 1-21

“God’s Unlikely Helper”

Talk about what is considered brave in today’s society. Would the two Israelite men have been thought of as brave? Would Rahab? Can you think of a time when you were brave enough to help someone in the face of adversity?

**Prayer Point:**

Request God grant courage to assist those in need.

December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Ruth 1: 15-2: 3

“God Does Not Forget Us”

Naomi and Ruth lost some of the dearest people in their lives. In the face of this loss, Ruth chooses to be brave and follow Naomi back to Bethlehem. Despite it being unclear whether or not the two women would end up just being a burden to each other. However, God uses Ruth’s courage for good and blesses both she and Naomi through Boaz. Can you remember a time when you were very sad? How have you been made glad again?

Prayer Point:

Thanking God for his nearness during our trials.

December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013

1 Samuel 16:1-13

“God Sees & Knows”

Here we see David being anointed. At the time this occurred, David wasn’t even considered grown-up enough to be invited to the dinner hosted for Samuel. But God saw David in the field and his faithfulness and called him to be Israel’s future king. How can you be faithful in the small and big ways for God?

Prayer Point:

Dear God, grant us guiding wisdom to serve you in all we do.

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

1 Kings 18: 17-24, 36-39

“Praise God at All Times”

In today’s lesson, we learn how the Israelites had wandered from God and began to worship a false idol named Baal. So in order to get His people’s attention, God sent Elijah. At first, they were hard hearted and would not listen to Elijah. It was not until God performed miracle of fire. Then they turned and praised God. Are there times in your life when you are forgetting to praise God until His ways are evidenced?

Prayer Point:

Praise God for all he has done and will do for us.

December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Esther 4

“God is Always On Time”

Esther, as a woman in a culture where women were seldom valued, saw little worth in herself. However, her uncle Mordecai tells her that God finds importance in everyone and we each have a part to play. This gives her the courage to speak up for her people, a task only she can do, with her level of access to the king. Can you think of a job only you can do to glorify God?

Prayer Point:

Pray for eyes to see God’s plan for each of us.

December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Isaiah 9: 2-7

“Remember the Coming Savior”

Isaiah is called to remind God’s people that he has not forgotten them and that He will keep his promise to send the Savior. Are there times when you need to be reminded of God’s promises in your life?

Prayer Point:

Thank God for the promises He makes to His people.

December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Isaiah 11: 6-9

“God Restores Our Peace”

Prior to sin, there was no need to be afraid and there was danger. There was no hunger or hurt. God designed a peaceful world. However, the sin of man turned things upside down. Someday, God will restore the peace He intended for us to enjoy. One way that is explained is that the “Lion will lay with the Lamb”. Can you think of other ways this peace may be exhibited? How can you help to bring peace into life today?

Prayer Point:

Ask God to help us bring peace to our world.

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Jonah 3:1-5

“God Loves at All Times”

Can you think of a time when you tried to hide from God? That’s exactly what Jonah does in this story. But is Jonah really hiding? Of course not! God sees us in all things and is simply waiting for us to return to His love and follow Him in obedience.

Prayer Point:

Thank the Father for watching over us at all times.

December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Daniel 6

“God is Most Important”

Daniel remembers what most people in his day have forgotten: God comes first. Even though Daniel knew he would lose his life, he would not stop praying to, and worshipping, the one true God. Daniel knew that man’s law was not the above God’s, and continued to seek God despite the laws enacted. God honored Daniel’s trust.

Do you love God most?

Prayer Point:

Request God grant us the trust and capability to love Him best each day.

December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Micah 5:1-5a

“Be Ready!”

Many years before Jesus’ mother, Mary, arrived in Bethlehem, the prophet Micah wrote Jesus would be born there. However, the little town forget this declaration and was not alert and therefore had no room to welcome Him. How are you preparing for Jesus’ birth this year?

Prayer Point:

Ask God to help us to be ready to serve Him.

December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Luke 1: 5-25

“Be Faithful!”

Have you ever been told something good would happen that you didn’t believe? That is exactly what happens in this story! Only once Zechariah’s lack of faith was evidenced, his voice was lost. How then was he able to tell others God’s good news? How can you share what God is doing for you?

Prayer Point:

Pray for the courage to tell others about God’s great deeds.

December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013

Matthew 3: 1-6

“God Forgives”

In yesterday’s reading we learn that Zechariah and Elizabeth will have son. This son grows up to be Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist. John was sent to prepare the way for Jesus. He reminds God’s people that God wants them, and us, to turn from our sins to be forgiven. They, and we, are reminded of this forgiveness through baptism. Do you remember when you need to ask for forgiveness?

Prayer Point:

Request forgiveness and ask for a heart that is prepared for Jesus.

December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

Luke 1: 26-38

“God Chooses”

In this reading, we read about Jesus’ mother, Mary. Mary is told she is chosen as the mother of baby Jesus and feels unsure she can fulfill the task. However, the angel tells Mary God would be with her. And her love for God and desire to serve him outweighs her doubt. Share about events that have seemed impossible that God made happen for you.

Prayer Point:

Express gratitude that, with God, nothing is impossible.

December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

Matthew 1: 18-25

“Hearing God’s Voice”

God also talks to the man who would be Jesus’ earthly father, Joseph. Joseph sees an angel in a dream and then has the confidence that, Mary and the baby in her womb are all apart of God’s plan. Can you think of other ways God speaks to us?

**Prayer Point:**

Help in hearing and listening to God’s voice.

December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Luke 2: 1-5

“Obeying God’s Word”

Joseph and Mary must travel to Bethlehem as dictated by the country’s ruler. As Jesus was so close to be born, this would have been a challenging journey for them. However, as Mary and Joseph learned, it was all part of God’s plan. Can you think of journeys this year which taught you more about God’s plan?

**Prayer Point:**

For guidance in our future, and all, journeys.

December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Luke 2: 6-21

“Jesus: the Promised Fulfilled!”

The wait is over! Our risen Lord, the Savior, is born! After the long wait, Mary was glad to welcome this beautiful baby. This beautiful baby, Jesus, evidence of God’s faithfulness. His faithfulness in remembering the promise, guiding His people, protecting His people and loving them, despite sin. And this promise is ours, too! What have you most enjoyed learning about the Christmas story?

Prayer Point:

Give thanks for God’s wonderful gift of His Son,  
Jesus!

## Other Traditions to Consider Incorporating

Try handcrafting ornaments with, suggestions found here:

<https://www.rca.org/page.aspx?pid=1625>

Begin or end your reflective time in song:

Phos Hilaron

<http://www.missionstclare.com/music/phos.html>

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

[http://www.carols.org.uk/o\\_come\\_come\\_emmanuel.htm](http://www.carols.org.uk/o_come_come_emmanuel.htm)

Add the O Antiphons to Your Readings 8 Days  
Prior to Christmas

(An additional Reading Each Day the week  
leading up to Christmas)

[http://www.gracehere.org/PDF/The\\_O\\_Antiphons.pdf](http://www.gracehere.org/PDF/The_O_Antiphons.pdf)

## Resources:

Amber (Last name, Unknown):

<http://www.classichousewife.com/2010/12/01/advent-ure-2010-a-jesse-tree/>

Ann Voskamp's:

[http://www.aholyexperience.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Jesse\\_Tree\\_Advent\\_Celebration1.pdf](http://www.aholyexperience.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Jesse_Tree_Advent_Celebration1.pdf)

Nicole (Last name, Unknown):

<http://tiredneedsleep.blogspot.com/2012/11/advent-2012-jesse-tree.html>

Ornament Patterns:

<https://www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=1628>  
<http://images.rca.org/docs/discipleship/jessepatterns.pdf>

Coloring Pictures:

Word, 2010 & Google Images Search