

# The Jesse Tree Advent Calendar

This is an Advent calendar that is based on the idea of the Jesse tree. If you are not familiar with the Jesse tree, it's a traditional Advent symbol, inspired by the passage from Isaiah (11:1-2) – “A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...” This passage has been read as a prophecy about the coming of Christ, which identifies Jesse (King David's father) as his ancestor. A Jesse Tree identifies many of the ancestors of Jesus Christ – sometimes going all the way back to Adam. The point is not so much to focus on a bloodline, but to highlight the fact that the Bible tells one great story with many faithful (and not so faithful!) people trying to follow God since the beginning of time, ultimately culminating in Jesus Christ.

This Advent calendar draws from the idea of the Jesse tree, which is to give the “big picture” of salvation history as we journey through Advent. On each day of Advent, a scripture story is told, starting with the creation of the world and ending with the birth of Jesus. Jesus is the culmination of an exciting, dramatic, and often rather messy story of God's relationship with his people – This calendar will take you through some of the highlights of this story as it leads to Christ. Remember, the main point of this story is that God never gives up on His people – He has loved us since the beginning of time, and He will always love us, no matter what.

## How To Use This Calendar At Home

Because Advent lasts a different number of days each year (depending on what day of the week Christmas falls on), this calendar is designed with 25 days, beginning on December 1<sup>st</sup>, so that it can be used any year. On November 30 or on the first day of Advent, set out your Jesse tree and talk to your kids about how you'll be using it this Advent. Read the scripture verse (from Isaiah) listed on the chart, and bless your Jesse tree.

Starting on December 1st, there is one round paper symbol for each day. Look at the chart to find out what symbol you need. Then introduce the story that goes with it. There are several options here. Do whatever works best for your family!

- 1) You can read the scripture passage listed on the chart. (I've tried to cut down the stories to a manageable length, but it's hard!) This will give you the best overall picture of the story, but may only work for older kids with a longer attention span.
- 2) You can read the shorter scripture passage listed on the chart – To shorten things up, some bits of the story may be cut out, so you may have to introduce the story a little bit in your own words first.
- 3) For younger kids, the best option may be to find these stories in a children's Bible and read them from there, where the words will be simple and there will be good pictures to share. However, a few stories (Nehemiah, for one!) may not be in a children's Bible, even though they are important to the overall Biblical story.
- 4) You can also just tell these stories in your own words. (It might help to review the passage yourself first.) -If you're not familiar with one of these stories, don't worry about it. This calendar can be a learning experience for the whole family!

You can decide what kind of “tree” these symbols will go on - You can glue or tape them to a paper tree, hang by hooks or string on a small artificial tree, or anything else you'd like to do!

You may want to do this daily ritual in conjunction with your Advent wreath or at dinner time or bed time – Do whatever works for your family. We have this calendar at home, and our kids really look forward to doing it every year. And every year we get a little better grasp of what this whole story is all about – Which gives us a greater sense of the significance of Christ's birth at Christmas. He is the climax of this incredible story!

If you have questions about this project, please feel free to contact me.

~ Sara Larson (larsonsa@archmil.org, 962-2443)

## Jesse Tree Symbols and Readings

Date	Symbol	Event	Scripture	Shorter Scripture
	<i>Introduce and Explain the Jesse Tree (No Symbol Today)</i>		Isaiah 11:1-10	Isaiah 11:1-3
December 1	Dove	God Creates the World	Genesis 1:1-2:3	Genesis 1:27,31
2	Apple	Adam and Eve - The First Sin	Genesis 2:15 -17, 3:1-13, 23-24	Genesis 3:1-6
3	Ark	Noah and The Flood	Genesis 6:5 -8, 11-14, 18-22, 9:8-17	Genesis 9:8-13
4	Stars	God's Promise to Abraham	Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6	Genesis 15:1-6
5	Ram	The Offering of Isaac	Genesis 22:1-18	Genesis 22:15-18
6	Ladder	God Renews His Promise to Jacob	Genesis 28:10-15	Genesis 28:12-13
7	Sack of Grain	Joseph Saves His Family From Famine	Genesis 27, 45:4-8	Genesis 45:4-8
8	Burning Bush	God Calls Moses to Free the Israelites	Exodus 3:2-15	Exodus 3:2-10
9	Lamb	Passover Before Israelites' Flight from Egypt	Exodus 12: 1-3, 6-8,11-15, 31-32	Exodus 12: 11-13
10	Stone Tablets	Giving of the Law to Moses	Exodus 20:1-17	Exodus 20:1-17
11	Ram's Horn Trumpet	Joshua and the Fall of Jericho - Reclamation of the Promised Land	Joshua 1:1-11, 6:1-20	Joshua 6:1-5, 20
12	Crown	Samuel's Call and Israel's First King	1 Samuel 3:1-10, 8:4-7	1 Samuel 8:4-7
13	Shepherd's Crook	The Anointing of David as Israel's Second King	1 Samuel 16: 1,4-13	1 Samuel 16:10-13
14	Stone Altar	Elijah and the Temptation of False Gods	1 Kings 18:21-38	1 Kings 18:21-24, 36-39
15	Fire Tongs with Hot Coal	Isaiah Sent as a Prophet	Isaiah 6:1-8	Isaiah 6:1-8
16	Tears	Jeremiah Preaches Repentance, Warns of Coming Exile	Jeremiah 7:1-7	Jeremiah 7:2-3
17	City Wall	The Israelites Return from Exile: Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem	Nehemiah 1:3-4, 2:3-5 6:15-16	Nehemiah 2:3-5
	<b>Start of New Testament</b>			
18	Pencil and Tablet	Zechariah Names His Son John	Luke 1:5-25, 57-80	Luke 1:57-64, 76-79
19	Scallop Shell	John the Baptist Prepares the Way	Luke 3:1-16	Luke 3:3-4, 15-16
20	White Lily	The Annunciation	Luke 1:26-38	Luke 1:26-38
21	Mother and Child	Mary Visits Elizabeth	Luke 1: 39-56	Luke 1:39-45
22	Hammer	Joseph Trusts God	Matthew 1:18-24	Matthew 1:18-24
23	Chi-Rho Symbol	The Word Made Flesh	John 1:1-18	John 1:1-5, 14
24	Manger	Birth of Jesus	Luke 2:1-7	Luke 2:1-7
25	No Symbol	The Angels Appear to the Shepherds	Luke 2:8-20	Luke 2:8-14













