JESSE TREE EARLY YEARS

ISAIAH 11:1 "A SHOOT SHALL COME OUT FROM THE STUMP OF JESSE, AND A BRANCH SHALL GROW OUT OF HIS ROOTS."

Advent and Christmas are a joyful time of year, but between busy school schedules, family gatherings, presents and great food it's understandable how for some children the reason why we celebrate Christmas becomes lost. Children have an extraordinary capacity to learn through activities. In preparation for Jesus being born, families are reminded that Jesus' birth was part of a long family history, promises and prophecies coming true from the beginning of time.

THE GOAL IS FOR CHILDREN TO:

- Learn key images and events and people from the bible.
- Learn about the family tree of Jesus.
- Take turns hanging the ornaments.
- Draw or design ornaments.
- Make a beautiful prayer space.
- Make connections between Old Testament stories and Jesus.

YOU WILL NEED:



- Printouts of the following pages (card would be best)
- Bible or www.biblegateway.com
- Card
- Colour pens/pencils
- Scissors
- Glue/Tape
- Hole punch
- Ribbon/string
- A space to hang the ornaments: blue tack a shape like a tree on a wall, use string across the wall to display the ornaments, use a vase and sticks or twigs to tie/hang the ornaments to.

HOW TO DO IT EACH DAY:



Keep it simple (Set a time 5-10 minutes). Pre-read the scripture references, symbol and discussion question, adapt if needed.

STEP 1: ASSIGN ROLES:

Rotate responsibilities, children may need support:

- Scripture Finder: look up the next person, moment or object for the Jesse Tree.
- Reader: Reads aloud the scripture reference, says what the item or person is.
- Discussion Leader: asks the questions.
- Decorator: Cuts, colours and hangs the ornament. OR each child can paste their own copy into a scrap book.

STEP 2: READ THE SCRIPTURE VERSE:

Having pre-read the scripture, you can have a child read the scripture reference. Then tell the story in your own words.

STEP 3: DISCUSS

Use questions like:
What happened in this story?
What does it teach us about God?
Who showed faith or courage?
How might this point us to Jesus?
What surprised you?

STEP 4: ADD THE ORNAMENT

Whether you have a string across the room or a vase of twigs, or a window or window sill, or scrapbooks for your Jesse Tree. Decorate and colour the prepared ornament and add them to the story of Jesus' family (see templates below).

JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS



1. Creation
Reference: Genesis 1:1-31
Symbol: Sun
Discussion: What is something God made that you love?

2. Adam and Eve
Reference: Genesis 2:7-9, 18-25
Symbol: Apple
Discussion: Who made Adam and Eve? Who were they made like?

3. Noah
Reference: Genesis 6-13-22
Symbol: Ark
Discussion: What does the rainbow remind us of?

4. Abraham
Reference: Genesis 12:1-7
Symbol: Map
Discussion: How can we trust God?

5. Isaac
Reference: Genesis 22
Symbol: Father & Son looking at stars
Discussion: How does God take care of us?

6. Jacob
Reference: Genesis 28:10-22
Symbol: Ladder
Discussion: What did God promise Jacob?

7. Joseph
Reference: Genesis 37; 45
Symbol: Coat
Discussion: Can God help us when things are hard?

8. Moses
Reference: Exodus 3
Symbol: Burning bush
Discussion: How can we listen to God?

JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS cont.

9. Passover
Reference: Exodus 12
Symbol: Doorway
Discussion: How did God keep His people safe?

10. Ten Commandments
Reference: Exodus 20:1-17
Symbol: Stone tablets
Discussion: Why does God want us to make good choices?

11. Rahab
Reference: Joshua 2:1-21
Symbol: Red cord in window
Discussion: When have you been brave?

12. Ruth
Reference: Ruth 1
Symbol: Ruth, Naomi and bag of wheat
Discussion: How can we be a good friend?

13. Samuel
Reference: 1 Samuel 3
Symbol: Ear
Discussion: How can we listen to God?

14. David
Reference: 1 Samuel 17
Symbol: Slingshot
Discussion: Who helps us be brave?

15. Solomon
Reference: 1 Kings 3:5-12
Symbol: Crown
Discussion: What is a wise choice?

16. Elijah
Reference: 1 Kings 19:11-13
Symbol: Fire
Discussion: How did God speak to Elijah?

JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS cont.

17. Jonah
Reference: Jonah 1-3
Symbol: Whale
Discussion: Why does God give second chances?

18. Isaiah
Reference: Isaiah 9:2-7
Symbol: The promised Saviour
Discussion: What hope does Isaiah announce?

19. Jeremiah
Reference: Jeremiah 31:31-34
Symbol: Prophet's Scroll
Discussion: What is a new covenant?

20. Daniel
Reference: Daniel 6
Symbol: Lion
Discussion: How can we stay faithful?

21. John the Baptist
Reference: Luke 3:1-6
Symbol: Stepping stones
Discussion: How do we prepare for Jesus?

22. Mary
Reference: Luke 1:26-38
Symbol: Mary
Discussion: How did Mary trust God?

23. Joseph
Reference: Matthew 1:18-25
Symbol: Carpenter tools
Discussion: Why was Joseph courageous?

Insert extra ornaments here before the 24th ornament, for longer Advent Seasons. See below.

24. Jesus' Birth
Reference: Luke 2:1-20
Symbol: Manger
Discussion: Why was Jesus born in a manger?

20-24. EXTRA PARTS FOR LONGER ADVENT SEASONS:

No room at The Inn.
Reference: Luke 2:1-7
Symbol: Animal stable
Discussion: Have you ever felt left out? How can we make others feel welcome?

Host of Angels.
Reference: Luke 2:13-14
Symbol: Angels
Discussion: What do the angels tell everyone about Jesus?

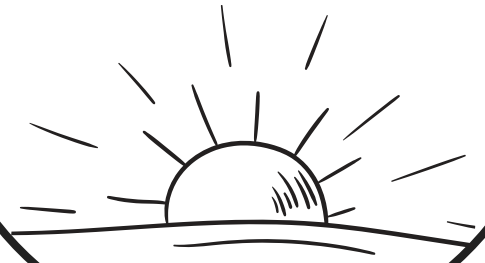
The Three Wise Men.
Reference: Matthew. 2:1-12
Symbol: Camel
Discussion: How else does God speak to us through creation in the scripture?

The Shepherds in the Field.
Reference: Luke 2:8-12
Symbol: Shepherd and Sheep
Discussion: Why do you think God chose the shepherds to hear the good news first?

FAMILY/TEACHER TIP

Let the children create as many ornaments as possible themselves. Offer a time of free drawing on paper or in their art books as a time of reflection once the ornament has been hung.
By Christmas, they'll have created a visual timeline showing how God's promises unfold throughout salvation history and lead to Jesus and his love for each generation.

God made all of creation



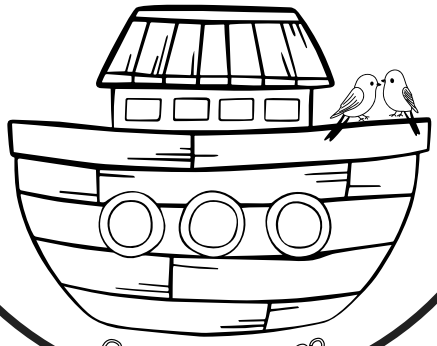
Genesis 1:1-31

God made us in his image



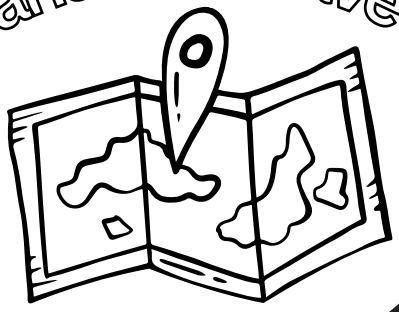
Genesis 2:7-9, 18-25

Noah trusted God



Genesis 6:13-22

Abraham heard God and was brave



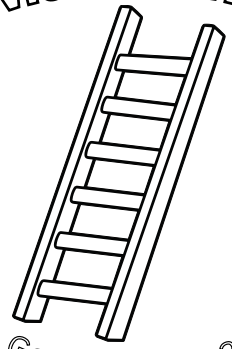
Genesis 12:1-7

God sent a ram so Isaac lived



Genesis 22

Jacob knows that God will be with him



Genesis 28:10-22

God has a special plan for Joseph



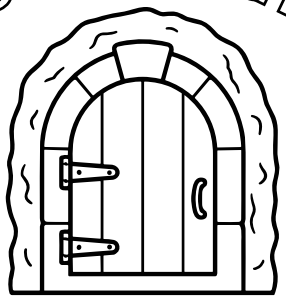
Genesis 37; 45

Moses does what God asks of him



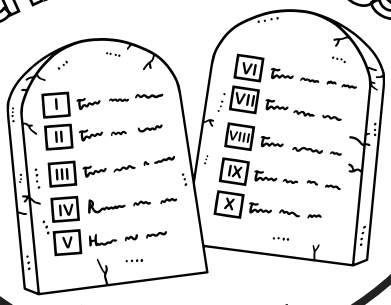
Exodus 3

The spotless lamb's blood saved them



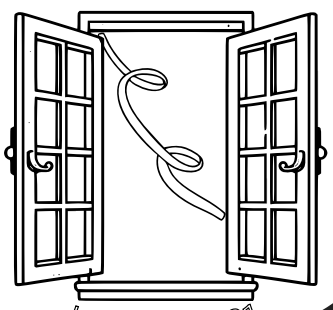
Exodus 12

God taught his people through Moses



Exodus 20:1-17

God helped Rahab protect her friends



Joshua 2:1-21

Ruth cared for Naomi



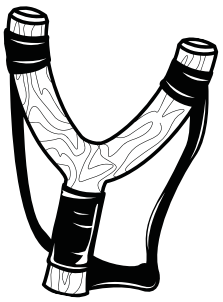
Ruth 1

Samuel learnt from Eli



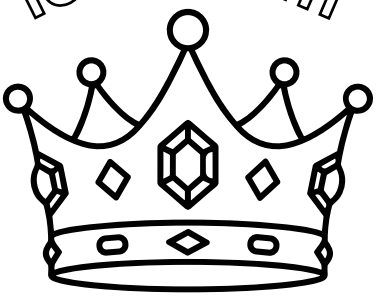
1 Samuel 3

David was a young shepherd boy



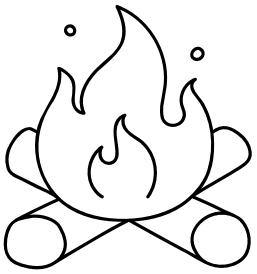
1 Samuel 17

Solomon asked God for wisdom



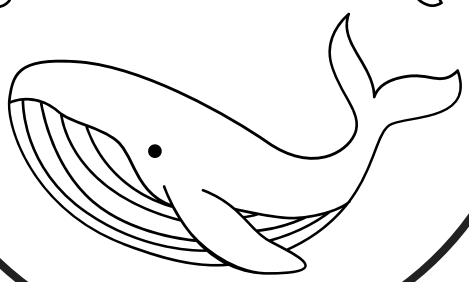
1 Kings 3:5-12

God spoke to Elijah in the quiet



1 Kings 19:11-13

God gave Jonah a second chance



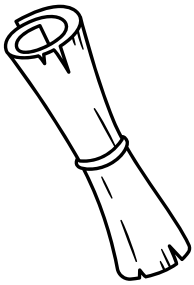
Jonah 1-3

God promises to send the Saviour



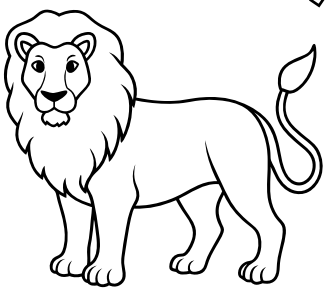
Isaiah 9:2-7

God promises to stay close



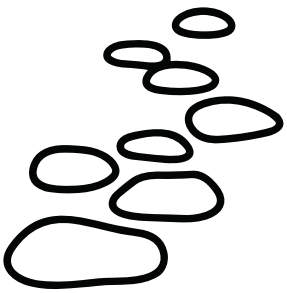
Jeremiah 31:31-34

God protected Daniel from lions



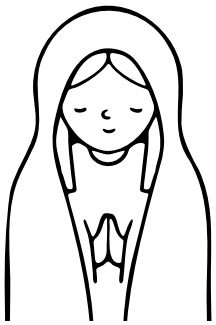
Daniel 6

John told people to get ready for Jesus



Luke 3:1-6

Mary says yes to Angel Gabriel



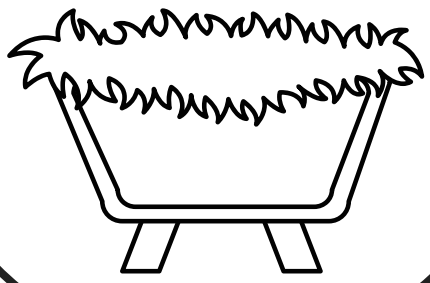
Luke 1:26-38

Joseph cared for Jesus and Mary



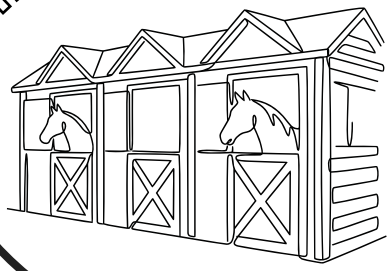
Matthew 1:18-25

Baby Jesus was born



Luke 2:1-20

They could not find a place to stay



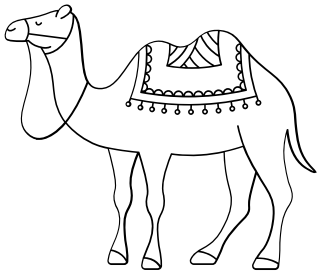
Luke 2:1-7

Angels shared the Good News



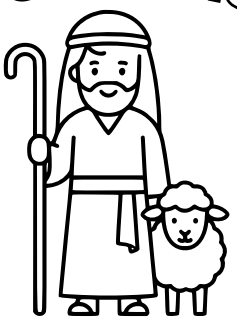
Luke 2:13-14

The wise men went to visit Jesus



Matthew. 2:1-12

The shepherds hear the Good News



Luke 2:8-12