

# The Jesse Tree

"A shoot will spring forth from  
the stump of Jesse, and a  
branch out of his roots."

Isaiah 11:1

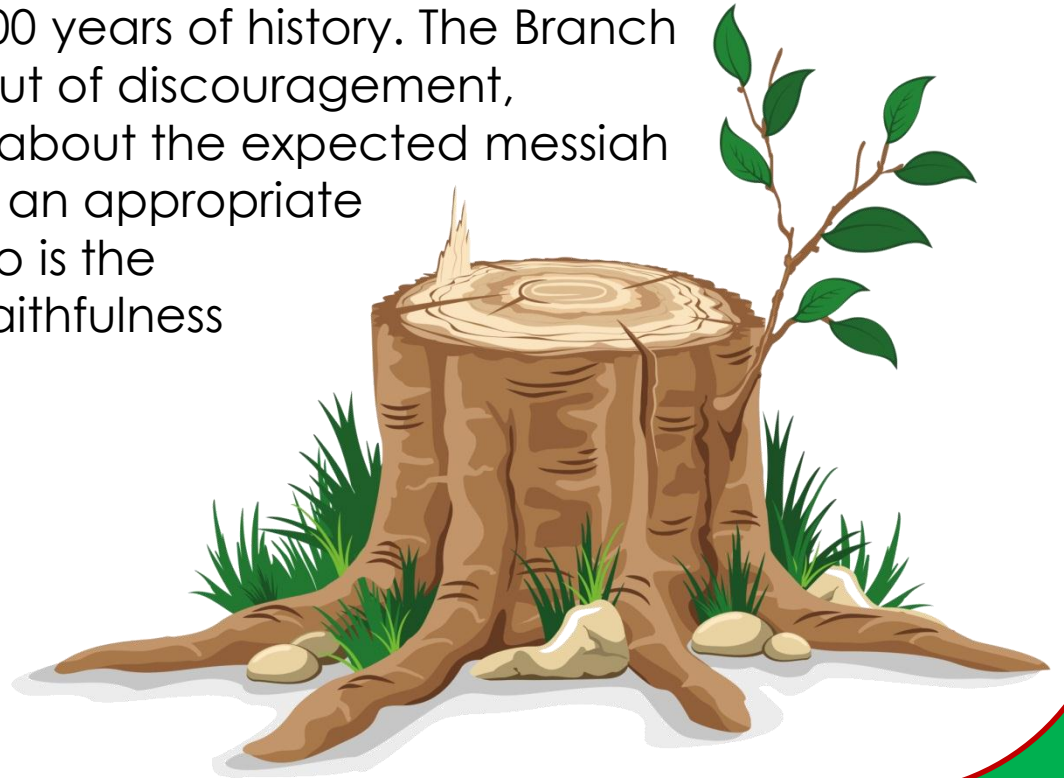


# Jesse Tree

1

## Scripture Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

The Jesse Tree is named from Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots." It is a way to tell the Story of God in the Old Testament, and to connect the Advent Season with the faithfulness of God across 4,000 years of history. The Branch is a biblical sign of newness out of discouragement, which became a way to talk about the expected messiah (read, Jer. 23:5). This makes it an appropriate symbol of Jesus the Christ, who is the revelation of the grace and faithfulness of God.



# Waiting

2

## Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

God has a plan for everything! Long before Jesus was born lived a man named Jesse. Jesse had seven sons, the youngest of which was named David. When David grew up, he became a great king of Israel. God had a plan for Jesse and David, even before they were born.

Jesus was also part of Jesse and David's family tree, born many, many years after David. People waited a long time for the birth of this savior. The season of Advent is a time of waiting for us, too! We wait for Christmas Day! The time we celebrate the birth of Jesus! It's hard to be patient, isn't it? Especially when we are waiting for something as wonderful as Christmas! But it is important to learn to be patient and to trust God's plans for our lives!



# Creator God

3

## Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:3



Take a short walk outside. Now list all the wonderful things you viewed. Did you see the blue sky, tall trees, mountains? Did you hear the sounds of birds or the rippling of a creek? Did you smell a wood fire or the sea salt air? All this and more God created! He made the world and everything in it! When He finished creating our world it was perfect!

Even though we no longer live in a perfect world, it is still a gift to us. God wants us to enjoy this gift, but also wants us to treat it with care. What are some ways you can take care of the things that God has blessed us with in this world?



# The First Sin

4



## Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:1-19

Yesterday we read about God creating the perfect world, including perfect people. In the reading for today we read how those perfect people, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God. God had given them everything and had asked of them only one thing – to not eat the fruit of one special tree. But they did eat the fruit and by doing so brought sin into the world.

God still loved them, but He had to punish them for disobeying Him. God sent them away from the beautiful garden and they had to work for their food. But God also made a promise – that He would always love them and someday would send a Savior to redeem them!

**Scripture Reading:**

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



# The Flood

When people sin (do wrong things) God is sad. There came a time when there was so much sin in the world that God had to find a way to remove the sin from the world. There was one man and his family who remembered God and followed His ways. That man was Noah. God asked Noah to build an ark so He could save his family as well as the animals. God then sent rain, LOTS of rain, and flooded the world. God destroyed all the people and animals that were not on the ark.

When the flood was over and Noah and his family were safe on dry ground, God made a promise with Noah – to never send another flood that would destroy the world. As a sign of this promise he put a rainbow in the sky. Even in a sinful world, God still loves us and keeps His promises.



# The Promise

6

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 12:1-7

Have you ever had to do something really hard? How about when your mom asks you to be good when it would be so much easier – and sometimes more fun! – to be naughty? Sometimes God asks us to do hard things – go places and do things we'd rather not do.

God asked a man named Abram to take a long trip, to leave his home, family, and friends behind. But in return God made promises to Abram. God promised Abram that he would be blessed. Abram still had problems and struggles, especially when he forgot to listen to God's directions, but God kept all of the promises made to Abram. He will keep His promises to you, too!



# Prayers

7



**Scripture Reading:**  
Genesis 21:1-7

Have you ever wanted something so badly you thought you would die without it? It's hard to be happy when we focus on the things we don't have, instead of the things we do have.

Sarah, Abrams wife, wanted a baby more than anything else in the world. She prayed a lot and tried everything she could think of, but still didn't have a baby. As she got older she finally decided that God would not give her a child. But when she was 90 years old God gave her a son, and she named him Isaac, which means laughter! Sarah was very grateful to God for giving her a son even when she had given up on her dream. How has God answered your prayers?



# Protection

8

## Scripture Reading: Genesis 22:1-14

If you asked your parents, I bet they would tell you that they would do anything to keep you safe, including giving their own lives. Abraham loved his son Isaac very much and was willing to do anything to protect him. But Abraham loved God more than he loved Isaac. One day God asked Abraham to take Isaac on a journey. Abraham obeyed. God also asked Abraham to kill Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham loved God. Abraham was sad, but he knew he had to obey God. He trusted that even though he was asked to do something very difficult and terrible, God would make everything right. As he was getting ready to sacrifice his son, God sent an angel to stop him and saved Isaac's life. God had protected him. When did you feel protected by God?



# Present

9

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 28:10-22



When Isaac was grown he married and had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Like many siblings they argued and didn't get along. Jacob had done some unkind things towards his brother, but instead of saying he was sorry, he ran away. He lived away from his family for many years, but eventually it was time to meet with his brother and face up to the things he had done wrong. When Jacob ran away he may have thought he was running away from God, too. The night before Jacob was to meet Esau, God spoke to him in a dream. He reminded Jacob of promises He had made to both Abraham and Isaac, his grandfather and father. Those promises were meant for Jacob, too. Jacob thought he could run away from God, but He was always present!

# Kindness

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**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 37:1-36; 50: 15-21

Sometimes love and parents cannot protect us from bad things. Other kids might be mean to you, or you might fall and break your arm. It doesn't mean it wasn't in God's plans for you. Let's look at Joseph, one of Jacob's sons. Joseph was loved very much by his father, but his brothers hated him. So they sold him to a man who made him a servant and even put him in prison. But God gave Joseph a special gift of understanding dreams, and he was able to use his gift to help others. He was rewarded for his help by being placed second in command. While he was doing his job he met his brothers, who did not recognize him! Joseph could have been mean, but he recognized that all that had happened had been apart of God's plan and that He had been with him through all the terrible times. With that in mind he forgave his brothers and used the power he had to help them.



How can you be kind today?





# Courage

12

## Scripture Reading: Joshua 2:1-21

God's chosen people, the Israelites, were ready to enter the land that God had promised them. They sent two men into the land to investigate and bring back information about the people and land itself. It was very dangerous and the two spies ended up being captured. They were set to be executed, except for the bravery of one woman, Rahab. She hid the two men in her house and helped them to escape. She knew the promise God had given to the Israelites to inhabit the land. She also believed that God is a powerful God. In return for her bravery, the Israelites protected Rahab and her family. God remember Rahab and took care of her the rest of her life, even including her in the family lineage of Jesus!





# Sadness to Happiness

## Scripture Reading:

Ruth 1:15 - 2:3



Has there ever been a time in your life when you have been really sad? Did you ever think you would be happy again? Two women in the Bible were really sad. Ruth and Naomi had lost all the people they loved. Naomi's two sons, one of them was Ruth's husband, had died as well as Naomi's husband.

Naomi was living in a foreign country, Ruth's homeland. When all was lost, Naomi decided to move back home to Bethlehem. Ruth could have stayed with her family, but she chose to follow Naomi. Naomi was so sad. She thought that God had forgotten her. In those days women couldn't get jobs, so they went to local farmer fields to gather grain that was left behind. Ruth went to these fields and met Boaz. He turned out to be a relative of Naomi's and took care of them. Boaz and Ruth married and had a son. It was then that Naomi's sadness turned to happiness. She realized that God had not forgotten her, even when she was sad.



Even though you are a child, God still has a plan for your life! God sees into our hearts and knows what kind of people we are and what kind of people we will become. When David was young, people saw him as just the kid who tended sheep, but while he was still young God saw the man he would become and chose him to be a king! Samuel, a servant of God, poured oil on his head and anointed him as the future king of Israel. God has plans for us! You may not be a king, but you can serve God in important ways. You just need to listen for God's call and find ways to honor Him with your life. What are some ways that you can serve God?

A glass pitcher is tilted, pouring a stream of yellow oil. The oil is captured in mid-air, creating a smooth, curved path from the spout of the pitcher. The background is white, and the entire scene is set against a green border.

## Plans

**Scripture Reading:**  
1 Samuel 16:1-13

# Care

15



## **Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 5:1-5

Who takes care of you? What does taking care of you look like? Does your mom feed you? Does your dad help you with your school work? Even though David was chosen to be a king at a young age, he didn't actually take the throne until he was thirty years old! Before that he was a shepherd. That may seem like a small job, but it taught David how to care for a flock, what was good for them, and how to protect them. God was training him to care for His people. As a shepherd he learned wisdom and gained strength. He learned to battle and protect his flock against the enemy. All these things that he learned he used when he became a king.

What are you learning to care for that you might be able to use when you are older?

# Prophets

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## **Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 9:2-7

Many, many years before the birth of Jesus, people called prophets would bring God's message to the Israeli people. These prophets would remind the people of what God wanted them to do. God wanted them to be kind to one another and to worship only the one true God. The prophets also reminded the people that God had not forgotten His promise of a savior. God wanted them to know that no matter how bad things appeared to be on Earth, He still loved them and would send a child who would grow to be the world's savior.







# Peace

**Scripture Reading:**  
Isaiah 11:6-9

Before Adam and Eve sinned, the world was at peace. Adam and Eve never had an argument and all the animals got along with each other. There was no danger! You could walk right up to a lion without fear of getting your head bit off! But once sin entered the world, all that peace left. Someday God will return and restore peace to the world and people and animals will once again get along. Can you imagine a wolf sitting with a lamb? There will be no more war and no more pain! What a wonderful world that will be! For now, what are some ways that you can bring peace to your house this month?





# Surprises

**Scripture Reading:**  
Micah 5:1-5

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Do you like surprises? Do you enjoy opening a gift or going someplace your parents haven't revealed? God likes to surprise us! Take Jesus' birth. In Bible times, most rulers in important families were born in bigger cities, but Jesus was born in a small village into an ordinary family. God chose the city of Bethlehem many years before Jesus was born, as you just read in our scripture reading. Even though Bethlehem knew it was the city of the big event – they weren't ready. There was no place prepared for God's Son to be born. Christmas day is only 7 days away – how are you preparing your heart to celebrate His birth? Are you learning contentment, peace, happiness?



Christmas is less than a week away! Waiting can be so hard, can't it? We wait for so many things, some of them happy, some not so happy. Waiting means we are looking ahead to the future.

Before Jesus was born, the people were looking for a savior. They had faith that God would one day fulfill His promise. They waited a long time, and some of them forgot to keep looking. They no longer cared about his arrival and when He did arrive, they didn't recognize Him. But those that did remember and recognized Jesus realized their wait was FINALLY over! They praised God for his faithfulness and for giving them the patience they needed. Are you learning patience?



# Patience

**Scripture Reading:**  
Habakkuk 2:1-4



# Silence

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**Scripture Reading:** Luke 1:5-25

Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary's aunt and uncle, honored God, and God loved them, but they had no children. They prayed for many years, but the answer they wanted did not come. Until one day while Zechariah was working in the temple, an angel brought him a message from God, saying that he and Elizabeth were going to have a very special son and his name was going to be John. Zechariah wasn't sure he believed the message, so God took away his voice as a sign of His power. Imagine having wonderful news and not being able to share it! We have wonderful news – our Savior has been born! Don't be silent this season – shout it from the rooftops the good news of our Saviors birth!



# Believing

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**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 3:1-6



Elizabeth and Zechariah's son grew up to be John the Baptist. He was Jesus' cousin. John didn't look like other people and lived in the desert. Some people probably thought he was a little strange, but God had chosen him to tell people about Jesus.

John wanted people to know that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised savior they had waited for so many years. He wanted them to believe in Jesus. He baptized people as they professed to believe that Jesus was the savior and that only He could forgive them of their sins.

Do you believe?

# Impossible

**Scripture Reading:**  
Luke 1:26-38

Have you ever come across a situation that seemed impossible? How did it work out? With God, nothing is impossible (Phil. 4:13), including Jesus' birth. God knew He needed a woman who loved and trusted God and would be smart, strong, and loving. God found Mary. He sent an angel to talk with her and tell her the good news. Mary wasn't sure she would be a good mother to Jesus, but the angel reminded her that God would be with her every step of the way. Mary loved God with all her heart and knew that nothing was impossible while serving God. It is the same today! Nothing is impossible with God. The next time you come across something impossible – give it to God. He'll work it out!



# Listening

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**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 1:18-25

Sometimes it is hard to listen. Your mom gives you a task to accomplish and you choose to ignore or not listen to what she says. Then there are times we are focused on other things and don't really hear what someone tells us. Sometimes it's hard to listen to God, too. Joseph wasn't sure about Mary being the mother to Jesus. He was just a carpenter – how could he care for God's son? God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream who explained that God had chosen Mary and that the baby would be very special. When Joseph woke up, he knew that he and Mary were a part of God's plan. He chose to listen and trust God. How does God speak to us today? Do you listen? Ask God to help you listen to his voice.



# Journeys



**Scripture Reading:**  
Luke 2:1-5



Do you like to go on trips? Some trips are fun, like when you go on vacation. Other trips, like to the doctor when you are sick, aren't as fun. Either way, when we go on a journey we usually experience or learn something new.

Mary and Joseph had to go on a journey. The country's ruler commanded that everyone go back to their homeland to be counted in a census. Mary and Joseph prepared to go home to Bethlehem. They knew it was all part of God's plan. While on their journey they learned that they could trust Him to take care of them.

What did you learn about God this year?



# Jesus is born!

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 2:6-21

Our waiting is over! Happy Birthday, Jesus!!! When sin first entered the world, God made a promise. Even when the people forgot about God and the promise, He never forgot about the people. God guided the people, protected the people, and loved the people, even when they were sinful. God was faithful, and today is the day we remember that the promise has been fulfilled!

Thank God for the most wonderful gift of His son, Jesus!



# Looking Forward

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**Philippians 3:13-14**

No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven. (NLT)



Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (NIV)

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## Learning from the Past

Hebrews 12:10-11





## God's Timing

**Ecclesiastes 3:11**

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (NIV)



# Waiting on the Lord

Psalm 37:7



Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. (NLT)

# Each New Day is Special

## Lamentations 3:22-24

The unfailing love of the LORD never ends! By his mercies we have been kept from complete destruction. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!" (NASB)



## Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”





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