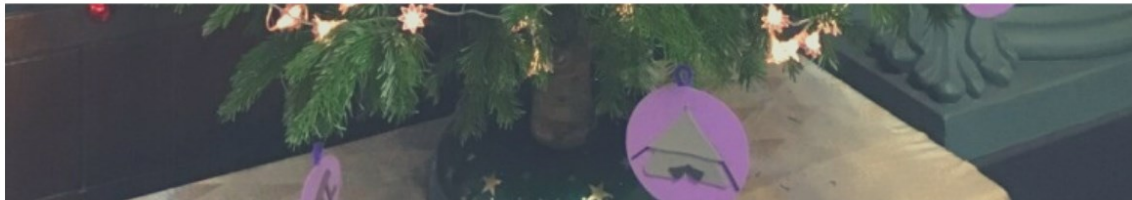


A REPRODUCTION BY ST MARYS CF10 OF AN ADVENT
RESOURCE CREATED FOR THE SOCIETY OF OUR LADY OF
PENRHYS



THE JESSE TREE

THE TALE OF OUR
SALVATION IN A TREE



WELCOME

Welcome to the **Jesse Tree** Resource Pack which was created over ten years for the Society of Our Lady of Penrhys and now reproduced by ST MARYS CF10.

This pack is designed to be used with the accompanying hand crafted, colourful foam symbols which were available at the time but you can also create your own

This resource is designed to help you enrich the Liturgy and Worship of the Church during Advent and to provide a fun, interactive and meaningful activity for children and young people. It can be used effectively in parishes, schools or in the home and can be easily incorporated into the Sunday Mass or be used as a Sunday School activity.

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Contents

What is the Jesse Tree?	3
Why this Resource?	4
How to use this Resource	5
Exploring the Jesse Tree with Children	6
First Week of Advent	7
Second Week of Advent	9
Third Week of Advent	11
Fourth Week of Advent	13
Jesse Tree Hymn	15
A Jesse Tree Liturgy	17
Blessing of the Christmas Tree	19
Homily Ideas for the Jesse Tree	20
Society of Our Lady of Penrhys	21

The Templates for children can be found in a separate Resource Pack which also includes Jesse Tree Bingo, Memory Cards and other Activities

An Image of Jesse from the remnants of a larger 15th century sculpture at St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny





WHAT is the JESSE TREE?

The Jesse Tree takes its name from a passage in the book of the prophet Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots." It is, in short, the family tree of Jesus illustrating his descent from Jesse of Bethlehem, the father of David.

In the New Testament the lineage of Jesus is illustrated by two of the Gospel writers: Matthew and Luke. Luke describes the 'generations of Christ' in Chapter 3, beginning with Jesus and tracing backwards through his 'earthly father' Joseph all the way to Adam.

The Gospel according to Matthew opens with the words, 'The genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham. (1:1). Jesus is explicitly represented as being from God's holy people, descending from Jesse and even further back to Abraham.

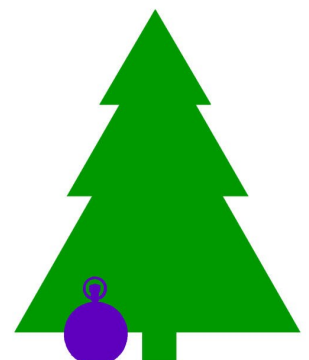
The Jesse Tree has often been represented in art, particularly during the Medieval period, although there are also many modern examples. They show a symbolic tree or vine with spreading branches to represent the genealogy. The most typical form which the Jesse Tree takes is to show the figure of Jesse, often larger than all the rest, reclining or sleeping. From his side or navel springs the trunk of a tree or vine, with branches on either side. On the branches are figures representing the ancestors of Christ. The trunk of the tree ascends to Mary and then to Christ, or there will be an image of Christ in the arms of his mother.

The number of figures depicted varies greatly, depending on the amount of room available for the design. If the longer ancestry from Luke is used, there are 43 generations between Jesse and Jesus.

The prophecy of Isaiah 11 illustrated in the Jesse Tree has also come to include the Prophets, and their foretelling of Christ. The Jesse Tree windows of St Denis and Chartres Cathedral both include columns of prophets. They are also represented in this particular resource.

In *The Jesse Tree Box* you will discover 25 symbolic representations of important figures in the genealogy and foretelling of Christ, beginning with the creation of the world and culminating, of course, in the birth of Jesus. There is no depiction of Jesse as he is illustrated within the tree itself as the stump or root from which all the branches emerge.

Although evergreens are typically a Christmas decoration there are occasions when this particular kind of decoration slips into Advent (for example, the Advent wreath). The purple symbols of the Jesse Tree in this resource adorn the tree in Advent colours and, with no illuminations, express the Advent longing for light and provide a natural transition from Advent to Christmas. If bare branches are used for your Jesse Tree they could then be adorned with evergreen and lights at Christmas. But more of this over the page!





WHY this RESOURCE?

Even before Advent begins, the shops are geared up for Christmas. Decorations adorn their windows, streets are illuminated, Christmas music spills from the radio and Santa Claus appears in many guises! Many families too are eager to decorate their homes, office Christmas parties are celebrated, Christmas concerts begin and Carol Services are held in churches, even before we are half way through Advent.

There can be a generally unhappy tension between what happens outside the life of the church and what the church is trying to accomplish by celebrating the Advent season. Those outside the worshipping community may even view the church as a killjoy in trying to halt the Christmas celebrations. As frustrating as it may be for liturgical purists perhaps even these secular celebrations express the human longing for light and warmth in the midst of darkness and cold and there is a genuine need to attempt to engage with them. Advent is such a beautiful and important season, full of rich symbolism, sights, smells and sounds. It is a joyful time: a time of unfulfilled expectancy and anticipation. To engage in Advent is to enrich our Christmas celebrations.

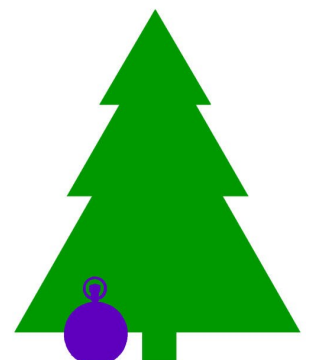
This is where *The Jesse Tree* can make its appearance! At the beginning of Advent, an evergreen tree (one that would, during the Christmas season, be used as a Christmas Tree) could be erected in the sanctuary or nave or some other appropriate area—or if in school in the main assembly hall or classroom—which, week by week (or day by day) is decorated with symbols representing the genealogy of the Jesse Tree.

At Christmas, this tree then becomes the Christmas Tree, adorned with the symbols of Christ's

birth, crowned with a Star and illuminated. As an alternative, you could also, of course, have a two dimensional tree on a board or wall, although a real tree is far more effective and richer in symbolism.

The symbols added to the tree day by day or week by week tell the story of our Salvation from the creation of the world to the coming of Jesus. Each symbol represents an important person or event in the life of God's people. The story that will unfold over the weeks will tell of a God who, despite the weakness and waywardness of his people, constantly shows love, compassion and patience towards us. As the tree gets filled with those who prepared for and prophesied the coming of Jesus into the world a sense of anticipation and rhythm is generated. There is a sense of progress, of moving closer to the time when we celebrate with great joy the Incarnation.

We hope this resource will enrich your Advent celebrations and help you to prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. Feel free to use it creatively and according your own circumstances. The ideas in this pack are only suggestions but we hope that, in whatever way they are used, God will bless your ministry and enlighten your hearts and minds. Happy Advent!





HOW to use this RESOURCE

Parish

If, during the Parish Eucharist, the children have been celebrating their own Liturgy of the Word in another place perhaps they could hang the symbols on their return to the assembly (perhaps during the hymn for the Preparation of the Gifts) A suggested hymn (specially written) is enclosed in this resource to accompany them.

The hymn has been written so that it is appropriate for the whole worshipping community to sing, and not just a song for children. Each verse celebrates the person or event represented by the particular symbol.

Perhaps during the Children's Liturgy of the Word or Sunday School Time, each of the symbols for that particular Sunday can be briefly explored by the children so that, by the beginning of Christmas, the children will have explored, in short, the whole history of Salvation!

Perhaps they can create, colour and cut out their own symbols to take home and hang on their own Jesse Tree. This is a good way of fostering Faith at home and linking parish celebrations with family devotion. You will find a colouring sheet in this Resource Pack. The children could also be given a small tree made from a bare branch and held secure in a plastic pot with clay or they could be encouraged to hang their symbols on their Christmas Tree at home—and therefore transforming it into a Jesse Tree—pleasing those who can't wait to decorate their homes for Christmas even before Advent even begins—but enabling them to glimpse the beauty of the season!

School

In a school setting, the symbols could be added daily during prayer time at the beginning of the

day. It can be used both within a classroom setting or when the whole school gathers together for corporate worship. Appropriate prayers can be said for each symbol or group of symbols, and accompanied by other prayers and hymns. (Examples of prayers are given for each symbol later in this booklet). You could also celebrate a Jesse Tree Service where all the symbols are added to the Tree. An example of a Jesse Tree Service is also included in this resource.

Home

Even Christian families are pressurised to decorate their homes early and whilst Advent is celebrated when they gather as a church community—when they return home they are met by Christmas tinsel and lights! Why not halt the Christmas celebrations and erect an evergreen tree and add the symbols say by day with the appropriate prayer. The children will take great delight in adding the symbols each day, with a sense of excitement and anticipation! Make the activity a priority in the morning or use it as an end of day, 'going to bed' activity.

All Ages

Use the Jesse Tree resource as an opportunity for exploring the prophets and the (often overlooked) books of the Old Testament with the whole congregation. Reproduce the text and prayers for the Jesse Tree symbols in your monthly parish magazine or as a separate resource for people to take away as a basis for study and reflection.





EXPLORING the JESSE TREE with CHILDREN

Ask the children if they know what a family tree is.

A family tree shows us who our ancestors are: our parents and grandparents and great grandparents through many, many years. Some people can trace their family tree back hundreds and hundreds of years!

Perhaps the children/young people could attempt to create their own family tree from the people they know, even sticking photographs of their family members onto a picture of a tree. (See the accompanying template in this resource pack).

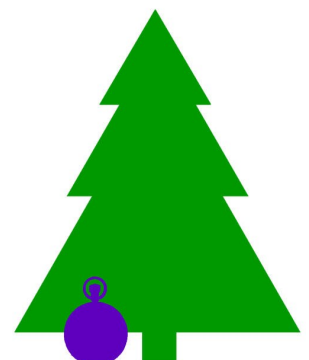
During Advent, as we prepare for Christmas, we are going to be thinking about the family tree of Jesus. We will be thinking about all the important people in Jesus' family, and all the important people who came before him to prepare the way. We will be thinking about all the things that God has done for the world through those people. We will meet some very special and holy people and learn about some amazing events.

We call this family tree of Jesus 'The Jesse Tree' – because a long time ago a prophet called Isaiah said, "A shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots." Jesse lived in Bethlehem and was the father of David the shepherd boy, who became a great king of God's People. Jesus was born into the family line of Jesse and David. It was in Bethlehem, the city of David, that Jesus was born.

Each week we will hang different symbols on our Jesse Tree. These symbols will remind us of

these special people and events. We are going to start right at the very beginning, when the world was made and journey through the lives of many different people who prepared the way for Jesus.

Each week, you could invite the children to colour in or stick coloured pieces of paper or card onto the templates provided in this pack. These templates can then be cut out and laminated and taken home each week and hung on their own tree.





FIRST week of ADVENT



The Creation of the World (Genesis 1)

Symbol: The World

In the beginning God created the world and everything in it. He made light and dark, day and night, sun and moon and stars, creatures that flew through the sky and wriggled in the earth and ran across the plains. He made plants and flowers and trees. He made man and woman and gave them everything they needed to live wonderful lives. God was pleased with everything he had made. It was a wonderful world!

*God our Creator,
in the beginning you made everything that exists
and saw that it was good.
Help us to see your powerful hand
in the world you have made,
and lift our eyes to heaven to see the One who is to come.*



Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)

Symbol: Apple

Adam and Eve lived in a perfect world in the beautiful Garden of Eden but sadly they didn't listen to God and live as God wanted them to live. God told them not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God was very upset when they didn't listen to him and so he sent them out from the garden.

*Father,
you give us the gift of freedom.
Help us to make good choices in life
and to look to Jesus as the One who
takes away the sins of the world.*



Noah (Genesis 6:11-22)

Symbol: Rainbow and Dove

God was very disappointed by the way people were living. He told Noah that he was going to destroy the world. He told him to build an ark for himself and his family and for two creatures of every kind. God made it rain for forty days and forty nights. Then it stopped raining and a rainbow shone in the sky. Noah and his family were safe. God said the rainbow was a sign that he would never destroy the earth again. It was his promise.

*All Powerful Father,
you saved Noah through wood and water
and set your colourful promise in the sky.
Help us to see Jesus as the one who saves us
through his death on the cross
and who keeps his promise to be with us always.*





Abraham (Genesis 12:1-7)

Symbol: Stars

God called Abraham and told him that he would make him the father of many people. He said that his descendants (his children and his children's children) would be as many as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore: too many to count! Abraham obeyed God and did what he wanted!

*Great and Good Father,
when we look to the night sky
and see the stars shining through the darkness
we remember the generations of people who have come to know you through the faith of Abraham.
Keep our faith strong
and help us to be ready
for the coming of Jesus into our lives.*



Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19)

Symbol: A Ram

God wanted to put Abraham to the test. He wanted to see how strong his faith really was. So he asked him to do a very difficult thing. He asked him to sacrifice his own son. Can you imagine what he must have felt like? But just as Isaac was about to do as God wanted an angel stepped in to stop him. God provided a ram for the sacrifice. God now knew that Abraham would do anything for him.

*God our Father,
as Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son, Isaac,
so you sent your Son Jesus Christ into the world
as the sacrificial lamb
to share your love and give us life.*



Jacob (Genesis 28:1-17)

Symbol: Ladder

Jacob was going home to see his brother, Esau. He had upset Esau and wanted to make amends. One night as Jacob slept on the ground he dreamed that a ladder stretched from earth to heaven with angels going up and down. When he woke up he realised that he had been in God's presence.

*Heavenly Father,
in his dream Jacob saw heaven opened.
On waking he realised that he had been in your presence.
Help us to know that you are always with us,
and to turn our gaze to heaven,
from where Christ will come again in glory.*





SECOND week of ADVENT



Joseph (Genesis 42:1-45)

Symbol: Coloured Coat

Joseph's brothers thought that he was dead but he had become a very important leader in Egypt. There was a famine in the land and everyone was hungry. His brothers came to him looking for food but they didn't realise who he was. Joseph gave them a bag of grain.

*Generous God,
you showed your loving care through Joseph.
Help us to be filled with generosity and love
so that when Jesus comes at the end of time
he may find us watching and waiting.*



Moses (Exodus 1:1-14; 3:1-12)

Symbol: Burning Bush

God asked Moses to do a very special job for him. He wanted Moses to lead the People of Israel from their life of slavery to the Egyptians to freedom. God showed himself to Moses in a bush that, although it was ablaze, didn't burn.

*Father of Light,
from the flaming
branches of an unburned tree
you called Moses to lead your people to freedom.
Help us to know your presence in our lives,
calling us to freedom from all that separates us from you.*



Torah (Exodus 19:16-20)

Symbol: Stone Tablet

After Moses led the people out to freedom in the desert, he went to the top of a mountain to be alone with God. God gave him Ten Commandments to take back to the people. The commandments were how God wanted his people to live.

*All Powerful Father,
you spoke to Moses on the mountain
and gave him a law for us to live by.
Help us to listen to you
so that we may be ready for Jesus' coming into the
world.*





Joshua (Joshua 6:1-16)

Symbol: Trumpet

Joshua was an apprentice of Moses, and was appointed by him to be leader of Israel after him. Joshua led the Israelites to victory at the city of Jericho where the trumpet call caused the walls of Jericho to fall down!

*God our Father,
Joshua shows us that you do the most amazing things.
Help us to follow you wherever you lead us
and to never stop trusting in you.*



Gideon (Judges 2:6-23; 6: 1-6; 11:8-28)

Symbol: Clay Water Pitcher

Gideon was a very unlikely hero and extremely unsure of himself. He couldn't believe that God was asking him to do a very important job, so he asked God for two miracles. When Gideon was convinced that God was calling him, he destroyed the town's altar to a foreign god. He gathered together men from different tribes in order to fight the army of Midian who had crossed the Jordan River and who were camped in the Valley of Jezreel. God insisted that there were too many men in Gideon's army and continuously instructed him to send some away until his army had been reduced from 22,000 to 300. Gideon won the battle because he had faith in God and not because he had a great army!

*God on High,
Gideon was surprised when you called him
but he finally trusted you and accepted your plan.
You showed him how powerful you are
by giving him victory over the army of Midian.
Help us to trust in you too
and to do everything you ask of us
so that when Jesus comes again
we may share in his victory over death and darkness.*



Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-10; 10:1)

Symbol: Crown

Samuel was a prophet who asked God on behalf of the people for a king. God was very reluctant to give them a king but answered their request. Saul was chosen and anointed privately by Samuel. Later, Samuel was also given the responsibility to find a replacement for Saul. He went to Bethlehem to a man called Jesse. Each of the sons of Jesse were rejected, except David the youngest.

*God our Father, King of Kings,
through the prophecy of Samuel you gave Israel a King.
May we who wait for the coming of Christ the King
live according to his law of love.*





THIRD Week of ADVENT





David (1 Samuel 16:1-23)

Symbol: Shepherd's Crook

David was the youngest son of Jesse. He was a shepherd boy who was called to be the leader of God's people. This surprised everyone, especially his older brothers! He became a great King. Bethlehem, where Jesus was to be born many years later, was called the City of David.

*Almighty Father,
you called King David above all his brothers,
and made him a great king to lead your people..
As we prepare to celebrate
the birth of Christ our King in David's city of Bethlehem
open our lives to his kingdom of light and peace.*



Elijah (Elijah 18:21, 30-37)

Symbol: Stone Altar

Elijah was a prophet who told people to stop worshipping other gods and only to worship the One True God. A prophet is someone who speaks for God to his people.

*God our Father,
you call us to worship and adore you
and to turn our hearts to your law of love.
Help us to reject all the things that spoil our worship of you
so that we may worship you, and you alone!*



Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1-19; 19:32-37)

Symbol: Tent

Hezekiah was a great King of Judah and helped to make sure that people were worshipping God properly. He removed from the Temple anything that wasn't to do with God. He destroyed the shrines and focussed the worship of God at Jerusalem, and restored the Passover pilgrimage.

*Father,
as Hezekiah cleared the Temple
of everything that stood in the way of worshipping you,
so may our lives be cleared of all the clutter
that stops us from serving you, the One True God.*



Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-13)

Symbol: Burning Coals

Isaiah was a prophet chosen by God to call his people to be holy. In the opening chapters of the book of the prophet Isaiah we hear how he was called by God, and how his lips were touched by burning coals, enabling him to speak for God to his people. 'Then one of the seraphs flew to me holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs...' (Isaiah 6:1-8)

*Holy Father,
Isaiah spoke boldly to your people.
Help us to speak to others about your wonderful
love
and the good news of Jesus who has come into the
world.*





FOURTH week of ADVENT



Jeremiah

Symbol: Tears

Jeremiah was chosen by God to explain to the people why bad things were happening to them: it was because they had broken the covenant (promise) that God had made with them. They were worshipping other gods, and so they were exiled to a foreign land. 'O that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears,' says Jeremiah (8:22)

*God our Father,
Jeremiah spoke your word
to the people exiled from the promised land.
Help us to know your presence wherever we are,
and to long for the promised land of heaven.*

Habbakuk (Habbakuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4)

Symbol: Stone Watchtower

Habbakuk was a prophet. He complained to God and even questioned him. However, he learned that we should trust in God, no matter what happens around us. In Chapter 2 of the book of the prophet Habbakuk we read, 'I will stand at my watch post, and station myself...I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint.'

*God our Father,
Habbakuk waited and watched for an answer to his prayers.
Help us to wait on you,
to listen to your voice
and to follow wherever you lead us.*

Nehemiah

Symbol: City Wall

Nehemiah had heard about the terrible condition that the city of Jerusalem had fallen into, and it made him very sad. When he arrived in Jerusalem he looked over the city under cover of darkness, drawing up plans to restore it. Nehemiah restored the city wall within 52 days.

*Father,
we live in a world broken by selfishness and sin.
Help us to work together to make the world a better place
and to build up your kingdom here on earth.*





Zechariah (Luke 1:5-22)

Symbol: Pencil and Tablet

Elizabeth and Zechariah were the parents of John the Baptist. They thought that they were too old to have a child. When Zechariah was told the news he couldn't believe it! The angel who visited him said that because he didn't believe the news he would be unable to speak until the child was born! When he was asked by people what the child's name was he had to write it on a tablet of stone. They thought he would be named after his father. But the angel had told Zechariah to call him John.

*Father of Old,
Zechariah couldn't believe his ears
when he heard that he would have a son.
Help us to be open to your plans
and to be ready for all the wonderful things
you have in store for us.*



Elizabeth (Luke 1:23-25; 39-45)

Symbol: Hills

As soon as Mary received the news that she was to be the mother of Jesus she rushed to the hill country of Judaea to greet her cousin Elizabeth. She was also expecting a child, even though she was very old. Mary and Elizabeth were full of joy for all that God was doing in their lives and in the world. Elizabeth's unborn child leaped in her womb at the presence of Mary and the special unborn child she was carrying in her womb.

*Father of every generation,
Elizabeth was filled with joy at everything you were doing.
Help us to be excited about Jesus' Birthday
and to share his love with everyone.*



John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-8)

Symbol: Water

John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the way for Jesus. He told people to stop leading selfish lives and to follow Jesus, whom he called the Lamb of God. He baptised people in the river Jordan.

*Father,
John the Baptist pointed people to Jesus
and prepared them for his coming into the world.
Help us to show Jesus to others
and to be ready for his coming into our lives.*

Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

Symbol: 'M' for Mary

Mary was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus. The angel Gabriel visited her to tell her the news. Mary was a bit confused at first but she said to the angel, 'Let everything you have said happen to me. I am the Lord's servant.' It is because of Mary's faith and response to God that Jesus came into the world.

*God our Loving Father,
you chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus, your only
Son.
Help us to be like Mary
and to receive Jesus into our lives.*





The JESSE TREE Hymn

*This Hymn has been written so that it can appropriately be sung by people of all ages, and may accompany the hanging of the symbols on the Jesse Tree. Suitable tunes that can be used include **Finlandia** (Be Still my Soul) or **Unde et Memores** (And Now of Father, mindful of the Love). Two extra verses are included at the end of the hymn which may be sung each week if the hymn is used at the Preparation of the Gifts (Offertory)*

WEEK 1 CREATION

Before the world and all that came to be
your Spirit breathed across the stormy sea.
Your Word brought life and gave us all we need.
Your pow'r and grace displayed for all to see.

*We sing the praises of the One to come:
the tale of our salvation in a tree.*

ADAM AND EVE

In Eden's green and pleasant perfect land
Adam and Eve took wisdom in their hand.
They disobeyed and so you sent them out.
They fell from grace and from the garden banned.

NOAH

In the Great Flood you showed your pow'r and might
Destroyed the earth in water from the heights
You saved us through the wood of Noah's ark,
the wood an image of the cross of Christ.

ABRAHAM

As stars across the deepest, darkest night
you scattered Abram's children like the light.
He followed you and so you kept your word
His children infinitely multiplied.

ISAAC

The sacrifice you asked of Abraham
to kill his son as though he were a lamb.
But you were pleased and so you gave him life,
And, in the thorns, a sacrificial ram!

JACOB

One night as Jacob slept upon the ground
his sleeping thoughts were stirred without a sound.
A ladder reaching from the earth to heaven
saw heaven's angels climbing up and down.

WEEK 2

JOSEPH

In time of famine when the land was bare
and all were scratching round for food to share,
at Joseph's hand you marvellously supplied:
a loving sign of providential care.

MOSES

To Moses in the fire of unburned tree
you showed your power as the one to free.
Led out your people from their shackled chains.
Through open seas you gave them liberty.

THE LAW (TORAH)

To Moses on the mountain top so high
you spoke your word for people to live by:
the Law of God abiding in their hearts
would bring them life and raise a heav'nward cry!

JOSHUA

From Moses' side a prophet to enthral:
his name was Joshua with trumpet call.
Empowered with faith and trust in God above
their trumpet breath made Jericho's wall fall!



GIDEON

Uncertain Gideon, hiding from your voice,
demanded signs before he made a choice.
You proved to him and so he took your call
and crushed the Midian army, one and all.

SAMUEL

Through Samuel's life you made your people great,
in Saul gave them a king in regal state.
Anointed David, Jesse's lowly son,
yet for Messiah's coming they would wait.

WEEK 3

DAVID

So Jesse's son, a shepherd boy so small,
you crowned as king to lead your people tall.
King David was the name on people's lips.
Through David's line, came Jesus for us all.

ELIJAH

Elijah's strong and loving, faithful heart
confronting other gods from foreign parts.
Destroyed the pow'r they reigned on Israel,
declared for them a new and humble start.

HEZEKIAH

King Hezekiah cleansed the temple court
destroyed the shrines and idols as though naught,
brought people back to worship you alone:
the pilgrimage at Passover restored.

ISAIAH

Isaiah's tongue unloosed to speak God's part:
his humble call to holiness of heart.
He beckoned them to leave their evil ways.
in his great suffering we see your heart.

JEREMIAH

Your people exiled from the land they loved,
they worshipped other gods before you, Lord.
And so in Jeremiah you declared
that only you the Lord should be adored.

HABBAKUK

Complaining Habakkuk cried out in sighs,
he watched and waited for a word from high.
You taught him how to place his trust in you.
The knowledge of your love his longed for prize.

NEHEMIAH

Jerusalem had fallen by the way
and Nehemiah's heart was in decay.
He browsed the city when the dark had come:
rebuilt the walls in two and fifty days.

WEEK 4

ZECHARIAH

Dumbfounded Zechariah's silent joy:
no speech or voice or shouting to employ.
For after year's of waiting for a child
held in his arms his longed for little boy.

MARY

The angel's greeting to the Maiden sweet
'Hail Mary full of grace' and words of peace.
Chosen by God to be the one through whom
the long awaited Christ his people meet.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth at home among the hills
rejoiced in all that God was doing still.
Her unborn child was leaping in her womb,
rejoicing in the presence of the king!

JOHN THE BAPTIST

And so in time, you gave the Baptist voice
to preach the message that the Lord was close
He pointed others to the Lamb of God
in whom the world would worship and rejoice

JOSEPH

And dreaming Joseph heard your plan of old,
you gave him faith to be so strong and bold.
Stood next to Mary, stood by her in life:
part of the greatest story ever told.

CHRIST

And so when all was silent and unheard
down from the heaven's leapt your mighty Word
in straw and sweat your Son incarnate born
declaring peace and love in all the world.

FINAL VERSES FOR SUNDAY

These verses are used if the hymn is used at the Eucharist for the preparation of the gifts

Our Advent Song is filled with holy love
as we await your coming from above.
Receive the bread and wine we bring to you
until at last we feast in heaven above.

With joy we wait the coming of the One
whose glorious light is brighter than the sun.
Our longing hearts cry out in joyful love.
In Christ the new creation is begun!





Jesse Tree LITURGY

An unadorned evergreen ("Christmas") tree is placed sensitively in position so that it does not dominate the liturgical space. The tree should not be illuminated: this act should be reserved for Christmas. The Jesse Tree symbols may be distributed to various representatives before the liturgy begins or placed on a table at the rear of the church or hall. The liturgy may be led by a priest or any other minister or by the children and young people themselves, with the words adapted according to the age group and ability of those involved.

A suitable hymn or song may be sung.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is coming into the world.

And also with you.

Introduction

We gather with an empty tree and, as beautiful and perfectly as God has created it, we will soon adorn it further with signs and symbols that speak powerfully of Jesus' coming into the world. As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, the city of David, let us pray that we will recognise Jesus in our lives.

Prayer

God our Father,
you prepared the world for the coming of your Son
through patriarchs and prophets
and holy men and women
who were alert to your presence
and rejoiced in your love.
May we, your family, receive Christ with joy
and readily proclaim his coming to all whom we meet.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading: Isaiah 11:1-4 (6-9)

Other readings may be incorporated, including a suitable Gospel reading: for example, Matthew 1:18-24 (where we hear that Jesus is born of Mary who was betrothed to Jo-

seph, son of David) or Luke 1:26-38 (when Mary is told that she will conceive and bear a son) or Luke 3:1-6 (where John the Baptist quotes Isaiah: 'And all people shall see the salvation of God') Perhaps you could think of a creative way of proclaiming the genealogies of Jesus featured in Luke 3:23—38 or Matthew 1:1-17. These are usually proclaimed in quite a monotonous and tedious fashion. Perhaps they could be proclaimed dramatically or rhythmically, with various voices. It's a challenge to which you may wish to rise!

Homily or a brief Explanation of the Jesse Tree

Jesse Tree Symbols

The following or similar words are used:

Here in the branches of this Jesse Tree we will see, in sign and symbol, the story of our salvation. Here we will see how God has prepared the world for the coming of Jesus. May the holy men and women who have listened to God's word and spoken to others of his love, inspire us to welcome Jesus into our lives and to share the story of Salvation.

The following hymn is sung, during which the symbols are presented and hung on the branches of the tree. If this is used during a whole school assembly, perhaps a representative of each class could present a symbol.

Hymn

Metre 65 65 D (At the Name of Jesus, etc)

**Hanging in the branches
of this Jesse Tree
see the love of Jesus
and his family.
Here we see his goodness
and his light and power
shining through the darkness
'til the final hour.**

**Prophets, men and women,
all received his word:
promise of the coming
of the mighty Lord.
Born into his fam'ly,**



Jesse Tree LITURGY (continued)

**in the church of God
may we share the faith of
God in flesh and blood.**

**So, in sign and symbol,
So, in branch and tree,
may we tell the story
of the One in Three.
Through the Holy Spirit
Christ is in our sight:
Promise of the Father
full of grace and light.**

Prayers

The following or other prayers may be used.

Now, let us pray together, opening our hearts
and lives to God.

God of every generation:

Hear our prayer.

The prophets proclaimed the coming of Jesus:
may we too share the good news of Jesus with joy
and wonder.

Jesus was born into a human family,
may all families know his presence in their lives.

Jesus was born in the Bethlehem, the city of David:
through our lives, may Jesus' presence be known
in our own communities.

Jesus' coming was anticipated by his ancestors:
may we leave a good and holy inheritance for generations to come.

Jesus was raised by Mary and Joseph with love and dedication:
may all parents be inspired and strengthened in their calling.

As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth,
may we be filled with eagerness to do his will and
share his love.

Lord's Prayer

As we raise our hands and hearts to the heavens
let us

pray for the coming of God's Kingdom.

Our Father...

Blessing

*The liturgy may end with a blessing or by saying the
Grace together.*

Either (if a priest):

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

May Jesus, born from the line of Jesse and of the
House of David, fill you with all joy at his coming,
and the blessing of Almighty God, the Father and
the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and
remain with you always. **Amen.**

Or:

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Some Suggested Hymns

As the deer pants
for the water
Longing for Light
(Christ be our
Light)
Shine, Jesus, Shine





BLESSING of the CHRISTMAS TREE

The Christmas Tree may be incorporated into your Christmas Celebrations in a number of ways: perhaps at a Crib Service early on Christmas Eve or at the beginning of a Christmas Vigil Mass or the Mass at Midnight. Once the tree has been adorned with the final symbol of the Jesse Tree (the figure of Jesus) as well dressed in lights and crowned with a star, the tree may be blessed. These prayers of Blessing are provided to offer a natural transition: the moment when the Jesse Tree becomes the Christmas Tree. The tree should be placed in a suitable position so that it does not interfere with the liturgical space.

Introduction

My brothers and sisters, in Bethlehem, the city of David, Jesus Christ was born: his birth fulfils our longing, fills our hearts with joy and enlightens our minds. May this tree, decorated and adorned, help us to welcome Christ among us; may its gentle light guide us to the perfect light.

Either:

Lord our God,
we praise you for the light of creation:
for the sun shining high in the sky
and the moon and stars that brighten the darkest night.
We praise for the light of Israel:
for the Law handed down to Moses,
for the prophets who spoke boldly of your love
and the wisdom of the Scriptures
enlightening our hearts and mind,
but above all, we praise you for Jesus Christ your
Son: the Light of the World,
who fills us with the wonder of your love.
Let your blessing come upon us
as we light up this tree.
As it lights the room and warms our hearts
may it be a sign of the joy that fills our lives.

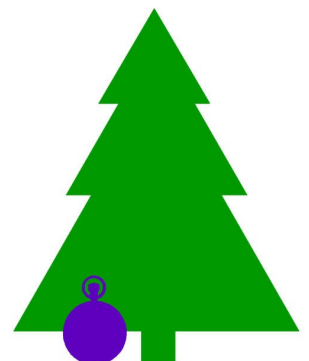
May all who take delight in this tree
come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or:

Holy Lord,
you rescued us from darkness and death
by making the cross a tree of light and life.
May this tree, which we have lovingly decorated,
turn our hearts and minds to the life giving cross
of Jesus, whose love shines in our hearts.
We ask this through Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

The candles or lights of the tree are then illuminated.

In the home the Christmas Tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, perhaps at a meal on Christmas Eve or at another suitable time on Christmas Day.





HOMILY Ideas

Who do you think you are?

In the last series of BBC's 'Who do you think you are?' comedian Alexander Armstrong (as many celebrities have done before him in this programme) traced his family roots. He was, unlike some celebrities, able to look back over 28 generations and discovered that he was a direct descendant of none other than William the Conqueror. He had suspected there was a line of privileged people in his family (landowners and gentry perhaps) but he wasn't expecting to be the great grandson x 27 of William the Conqueror of 1066 fame!

In looking back over the generations of Jesus' family in the Jesse Tree we won't find anyone greater than Jesus. Rather than looking back to some great secret or finding someone that gives Jesus worth, we discover that every person in the Jesse Tree (the family tree of Jesus) is looking forward to the greatness that will grow out of every generation until, finally, Jesus is revealed. Jesus is the one who declares the love of God, the one who brings salvation to the world, the one who shows us how to live, the one who leads us closer to God.

Jesus is born into the People of Israel, the chosen people of God but, of course, his origins are much more ancient than that. Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, he is the beginning and the end. He existed even before the world was created, even before Jesse and David, Abraham and Isaac was born. In Bethlehem, the city of David, Jesus is born: God comes to live among his people. Jesus is the one people have been waiting for, the one they have been expecting, the one promised by God. He makes us children of God, members of God's family. The Jesse Tree, as well as telling the story of Jesus' coming into the world, is our family tree. Who do you think we are? We are members of God's family. And this has been made possible by Jesus!

What are you waiting for?

Prepare a large colourfully and attractively wrapped gift—which you won't open so there doesn't need to be anything in it! Explain that it was left on your doorstep and you don't know who it is from. Should you open it? Toy with them about opening it, but finally say that you think you will wait!

How patient are you? Can you wait for Christmas? Do you find it difficult waiting for the bus? Do you get impatient in queues? Do you get agitated when waiting for someone to arrive? How long would you be willing to wait for something amazing and wonderful?

All the people featured in the Jesse Tree were people who had received wonderful gifts from God. God had blessed their lives and promised them great things. But one of those things wouldn't be realised for years and years, not until years after many of them had died. What was that promise? What were they waiting for? They were waiting for the promise of Jesus.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the promised gift of God. We already know the blessings of God's promise and how wonderful is his gift to us. We know how wonderful it is to know, love and follow Jesus. And yet, there is still more to come! Jesus promised that he would always be with us but he also promised that he would come again. And so we can look forward to the time when the whole world will see, in Jesus, the fulfilment of all God's promises. So even though we experience the promise of God now, there are still more promises to be fulfilled. We are always looking forward, we are always waiting, there is always more to come! So what are you waiting for? Jesus has already shown us how to live and how to love. Jesus has already shown us what kind of world he wants.

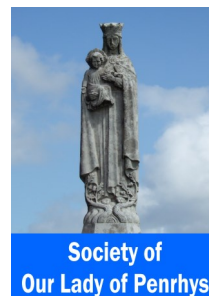




The SOCIETY of OUR LADY of PENRHYS

This resource has been created by and for the Society of Our Lady of Penrhys. Established in 2009, the Objects of the Society are:

- To honour Mary, the Mother of God and to deepen faith in Jesus Christ.
- To promote devotion to Our Lady and pilgrimage to the shrine at Penrhys.
- To further, with the aid of Our Lady's prayers, the conversion of Wales and all the nations, and the re-union of Christendom.
- To seek holiness of life through prayer, the scriptures and the sacraments.
- To proclaim the wonders of God through word and deed, and to seek peace and justice throughout the world.



Members of the Society are asked to say the *Magnificat* each day

More information about the Society of Our Lady of Penrhys and the Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine can be found at www.ourladyofpenrhys.co.uk

The Society also administers its own shop with a variety of good quality Christian items, gifts and resources. It is available for events and parishes. Purchases may also be made online at www.mypilgrimshop.co.uk. All proceeds from items sold go to support the work of the Society.

