

Jesus' Family Tree

A family conversation about the tradition of the Jesse Tree for Advent, December 25, 2005. Adapted from a script written by Dineen Dowling of Faith Lutheran Church, Akron, Ohio.

Permission is granted to use this skit in your ministry setting.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Parent(s), grandparent(s), guardians

Children

Cousins, friends

Family is gathered around the dinner table, living room, or common family space near their Christmas tree. You could read the script as a story. You could hang simple ornaments representing the bible stories on your Christmas tree.

Parent/Grandparent/Guardian: This time of year makes me think about Christmases in the past. When I do, I like to reflect on my past and my ancestors. It's fun to look at my roots. Do you know about your roots?

Child: Like roots from a tree in the ground? I remember we talked about being rooted in Jesus during DIG!

Parent/Grandparent/Guardian: Yes, I saw the vine and branches you made and the roots that remind us of those that came before Jesus. I am not talking about a real tree, but your family tree, yes. Just like the roots in a real tree give it nourishment and a strong foundation, your ancestors – the people who are your roots – can be your foundation.

Child: Yes, I get it you are *our (my) roots*, right Mom, (Grandma, Pop Pop, Aunt Sue)?

Parent/Grandparent/Guardian: That's right. We are reminded of God telling Abraham about all of his descendants that would be more than the stars in the sky, really uncountable!

Child: We all like to look at our family pictures in a scrapbook.

Child: I like to see when I was a baby, just like the baby Jesus.

Child: Did baby Jesus have roots?

Parent/Grandparent/Guardian: He most certainly did. We don't have photographs of his family album, but there are stories about all of his ancestors in the Bible. The Bible is kind of like Jesus' scrapbook.

Child: Without the pictures, though.

Parent/Grandparent/Guardian: Yes, without the pictures. But the stories are so amazing that when you hear them, you can imagine the pictures in your mind.

Children: Tell us a story Mom.

Parent/Grandparent/Guardian: You children remind me of when I was a little girl. I used to want my mother to tell me stories from the past, too. She had this one tradition every Christmas: she would tell me a story about Jesus' family tree each time she hung an ornament up on our Christmas tree. I remember it like it was yesterday....

Parent/Grandparent/Guardian: My mother called our tree the Jesse Tree. Before she would begin decorating she would read from the book of Isaiah in the Bible.....

(Parent reads from Bible...)

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a branch will bear much fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord—and? he will delight in the Lord forever. (Isaiah 1:11)

Parent/Grandparent/Guardian: Matthew lists another genealogy of Jesus, beginning with Abraham.

Matthew 1:1-17

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. ...17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation of Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Grandma: Then she would carefully open the ornament box and unwrap each decoration with such gentleness and love. The first one was an apple, to symbolize Adam and Eve.

Reader 2: Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2)

Grandma: Next was a rainbow. I bet you know who that represents!

John: Noah!

Grandma: That's right! I loved the rainbow ornament. Mostly because I just loved rainbows and how they symbolize God's love and promise for the world.

Mother hangs up rainbow ornament

Reader 3: And God said, "This is a sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. (Genesis 20)

Grandma: Then there was the ornament that looked like an altar. It reminded us of the story of Abraham at the beginning of his relationship with God.

Mother shows daughter the altar ornament and hangs it up

Reader 4: The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing....To your offspring I will give this land." So Abram built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. (Genesis 12)

Grandma: Let's see, then there was the colorful coat...

Ben: Was that for Joseph and his coat of many colors?

Grandma: Yes indeed! Next to the rainbow, that was my favorite. They both were so colorful and pretty!

Mother shows daughter coat ornament and hangs it up.

Reader 5: Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, and he brought their father a bad report about them. Now Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. (Genesis 37)

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Grandma: Then I remember this gray clay ornament that looked like the tablets of the ten commandments. Moses also came before Jesus. He tried to help the people follow God's ways, God's commands
Mother shows the tablets and hangs on tree.

Reader 6: Moses summoned all Israel and said, "Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us...These are the commandments the Lord proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. The he wrote

them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.” (Deuteronomy 5)

Grandma: I also loved the next ornament my mother got out. It was this beautiful gold harp to symbolize King David. You know Bethlehem is the City of David. Jesus was born in the city of his ancestor David!
Mother hangs up harp

Reader 7: So Saul said to his attendants, “Find someone who plays well and bring him to me.” One of the servants answered, “ I have sent the son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the Lord is with him.” (1 Samuel 14:17-18)

Rebekah: What came next Grandma?

Grandma: Well, I believe next came the story of Jesus’ own parents, and his relative Elizabeth. Yes, there was a cradle to remind us of Mary, the mother of Jesus.
Mother shows daughter cradle and hangs it on tree

Reader 8: The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.” “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered, “may it be to me as you have said.” (Luke 1:35-38)

Grandma: Then I always liked the next ornament. It was a small house to represent Elizabeth. Mary went to visit her when she was pregnant with baby Jesus.
Mother shows small home ornament and hangs it on tree

Reader 9: At that time, Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:39-42)

Grandma: A hammer was the ornament that represented Jesus’ earthly father, Joseph the carpenter.
Mother shows hammer...

Reader 10: An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She

will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:18-21)

Grandma: I loved that tree, filled with all the ancestors of baby Jesus.
Daughter hugs mother and they stand together admiring the tree.

Grandma: After all was told and hanging on the tree, I would stand with my Mother, in the dark of the living room, with only the lights on the tree, and admire all the people who came before Jesus, who point the way for his coming into the world.

Sarah: I like that Jesus had a family tree.

Grandma: Me, too. Now why don't we sing a few Christmas carols?

Children: OK!

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