



# Simply Christmas

# The Jesse Tree

## What is it?

An Activity over 4 weeks to encourage families to think about themselves and their relationship with God by using Jesus' family tree (the Jesse Tree). The Jesse Tree is described in Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

## What is the aim?

To encourage families to read scripture and pray together, and to teach that Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

## What do I need?

A Christmas tree in church. Some cardboard and string or ribbon.

## What do I do?

Invite families in your parish, perhaps through your local school, to an informal service in church when your Christmas tree has gone up. At that service explain the concept of the Jesse Tree, i.e. it is Jesus' family tree, we all have a family tree. The Jesse Tree shows us that Jesus is just like us and also God! How wonderful to think that God knows just what it's like to be us, how we think and feel, what we need, what is good for us and what is not.



Send the families home with a symbol to cut out from cardboard and to which they can add a ribbon. Invite them back next week for a short service of prayers, songs and a bible reading when they can hang their symbol on the tree. Repeat for 4 weeks using this following scheme:

Week 1: Adam and Eve. Symbol: praying hands. On one side write something you're sorry you did. On the reverse write a prayer saying sorry to God and thanking Him that He will always forgive you. Bible reading: Genesis 2. 7-9

Week 2: Jesse: Symbol: a crown. On one side describe a time when you were frightened but everything turned out okay. On the reverse write a prayer thanking God for that time, and ask Him to help you to trust in Him. Bible reading: 1 Samuel 16. 1-13.

Week 3: David: Symbol: a stone. On one side write the name of someone whose courage you admire. On the reverse write a prayer asking God to help you always stand up for the faith and what is right. Bible reading: 1 Samuel 17. 12-51 (you can always shorten this by using your own words!)

Week 4: Mary. Symbol: the Christ-child in the manger. On one side write the name of someone who cares for you, on the other side write a prayer thanking God for them. Bible reading: Luke 2. 1-7

Make week 4 a celebration service: Emmanuel, God is with us!

**Merry Christmas!**