



## Christmas Resources for Primary Students

The following resources are designed to assist you in the RE classroom in celebrating Christmas in a multi-faith country.

Just over two-thousand years ago, a young Hebrew woman bore her first child. This child was a refugee-a child under threat. Mary, Joseph and infant Jesus had to flee. As we cherish again the stories of the holy family – perhaps this Christmas we can re-imagine that birth and journey and align it more readily and sympathetically with the journeys of those who look for welcome on our shores’ Ann Rennie, The Australian Catholic Youth Prayer Journal

### Christmas: Joy to the World

*For woods and fields,  
For sea and sky,  
For flowers, trees,  
Family and friends,  
All the creatures around me,  
And all your gifts,  
Thank you, God!*

Sally Ann Wright, 365 Children’s Prayers

## Suggestions on how to use this prayer

1. Print in large font and have the children read it together. Students create appropriate pictures that make it more meaningful. The prayer can be divided into four parts (see below), which explains the Christmas story.

### To do:

- (a) The class can be divided into groups and the following verses can be read aloud
- (b) Each group can draw these parts of the Christmas story
- (c) Each group can act a scene.

**Part 1.** The Foretelling of Jesus' Birth: Angel Gabriel tells Mary about giving birth to a baby boy who would be called Jesus.

**Luke 1: 26–38**

**Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics, p. 1494**

**The Catholic Children's Bible, p. 1572**

**Part 2.** Jesus' birth: why there was no room at the inn and how Jesus was born in a stable and placed inside the manger.

**Luke 2: 1–7**

**Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics, p. 1497–1498**

**The Catholic Children's Bible p. 1576**



**Part 3.** Shepherds: the shepherds come and worship at the stable where Jesus is born after the angels appear to them.

**Luke 2: 8–20**

**Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics, p. 1498**

**The Catholic Children's Bible p. 1576**

**Part 4.** Three Wise Men: three wise men from the east who come bearing gifts to baby Jesus and why they need to keep it a secret from King Herod.

**Matthew 2: 1–12**

**Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics, p. 1397**

**The Catholic Children's Bible p. 1447, 1450**

2. Students each write a 'Thank You' prayer for the child Jesus, based on the four part scripture readings of the Christmas story.

'Thank You, God, that the Angel came to Mary...'



3. Create a nativity scene. Students help to make the nativity scene using a choice of these gifts:

**SEASONAL GIFTS:** flowers, bark, river pebbles, leaves, blossoms, gum nuts, feathers, twigs

**HAND MADE GIFTS:** bookmarks, hand made toy, finger puppet, colourful pipe cleaners made into shapes

**CULTURAL GIFTS:** to indicate a child's cultural background, something is made from home. This relates to the Jesse Tree concept in the Scripture Study Section.

### Useful Reference Materials:

My Christmas Activity Book, C. Owens

- Picture of the shepherds and the scripture to colour in and fill
- A Valentine Day card to Jesus to thank him
- Gifts from the Magi to label.

Learning Links to Christmas, Teacher Resource, M. Ryan

- Excellent resource with activities that can be photocopied and used as activity sheets on all things Christmas. It includes: story-boarding Christmas, Venn Diagrams, Analysing a Christmas Carol, Research project on life in Bethlehem using cross curriculum links to Humanities, Flow charts and prayers.

# Scripture Study Worksheet – Advent & Christmas

## THE JESSE TREE

### ADVENT IS FOUR WEEKS LEADING UP TO CHRISTMAS

#### LITURGICAL DATES FOR 2013

- 1st Sunday of Advent: December 1, 2013
- 2nd Sunday of Advent: December 8, 2013
- 3rd Sunday of Advent: December 15, 2013
- 4th Sunday of Advent: December 22, 2013

The Jesse Tree is a way of teaching many of the Bible stories to children during the Advent season that is connected to Jesus' family tree.

The scriptural basis for this idea comes from Isaiah 11:1. 'A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.' Since Jesse was King David's father, and Jesus was of the lineage of David, the Jesse 'family' tree is used to trace back Jesus' heritage.

Advent is a great time to do the Jesse tree, as it suggests the 'waiting' for the 'coming' of Jesus and how many generations it took for him to be born.

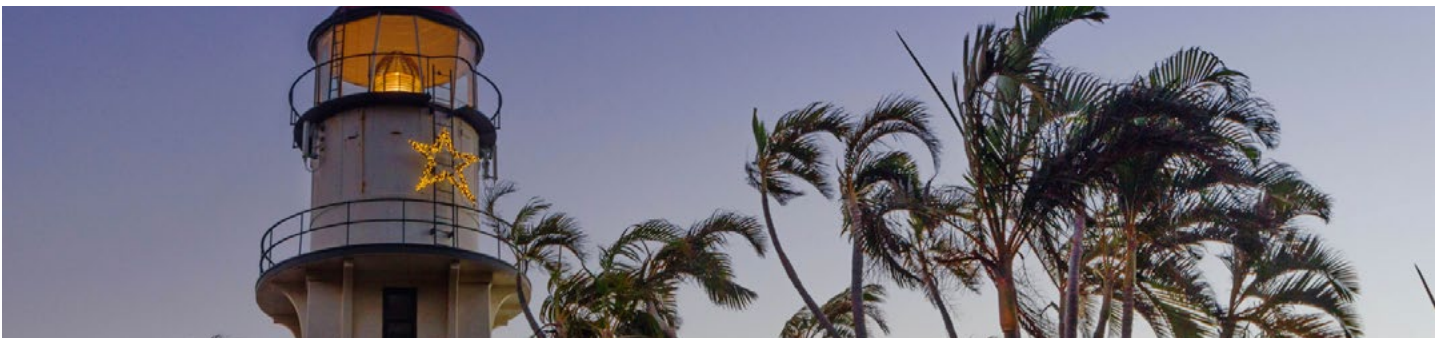
There is a symbol for each bible story. For example, the harp represents King David, corn represents Ruth, jewels and crown represents Esther, the ark represents Noah, etc.

All stories and symbols are available for use and photocopy in Meeting Jesus Through the Jesse Tree by Ann, E. Neuberger.



THE JESSE TREE	
STORIES & SYMBOL IDEAS	SUGGESTED VERSES
CREATION(earth and moon over water)	Genesis 1:1-2:4
ADAM AND EVE (fruit, tree, snake)	Genesis 3: 12-4
NOAH (ark, rainbow)	Genesis 6:5-9:17
ABRAHAM (stars)	Genesis 12:1-7; 15:1-6
SARAH (tent)	Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7
JACOB (ladder of angels)	Genesis 25:19-28; 27:1-29; 28:10-22
RACHEL AND LEAH ( three hearts intertwined)	Genesis 29; 30: 1-24; 35:16-20
JOSEPH (12 brothers, coat)	Genesis 37-46
MOSES AND MIRIAM (ten commandments, baby in basket)	Exodus 2:1-10; 14:15-16; 15:20-21; 16:1-3; 31:18
RUTH (wheat or barley sheaves)	The Book of Ruth
SAMUEL (temple)	1 Samuel 1:1-11; 3:1-20
DAVID (harp)	1 Samuel 16; 17:1-50; Psalm 23
SOLOMON (crown)	1 Kings 3:4-28; 5:9; 6:7;10:1-13
ELIJAH (raven, chariot)	1 Kings 17:1-24; 18:20-46; 2 Kings 2:1-13
ISAIAH (tongs of fire and coal)	Isaiah
NEHEMIAH (wall)	Nehemiah
JONAH (fish/whale and ship)	Book of Jonah
ESTHER (jewels)	Book of Esther
TOBIAS (angel, fish)	Book of Tobit
DANIEL (lion)	Daniel
ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH (incense burner, angel)	Luke: 5-14
MARY (rose or Mary on a donkey)	Luke 1:26-38
JOSEPH (hammer, saw, carpentry tools)	Matthew 1: 18-25
JESUS (star, stable, manger)	Luke 2: 1-20

Reference: All stories and symbols are available for use and photocopy in Meeting Jesus Through the Jesse Tree by Ann, E. Neuberger (Garratt Publishing).



## HOW TO USE THE JESSE TREE

1. Choose the bible stories relevant for the age group.
2. The Story:  
Discuss what happened to the people in that bible story.
3. Special Qualities:  
What qualities or 'traits' did those people have that made them special. For example, Moses was true to God's laws. He had total trust in what God told him.
4. Achievement:  
What did the person in the story achieve?
5. Reflection:  
(a) Write a reflection on what we learnt from the person and how grateful we are for their [qualities] Eg. Daniel had courage being in the lion's den. What was their gift to us?  
(b) Write a reflection on what you learnt from one of the members of your family tree. What was his or her gift to you?
6. Illustrate:  
(a) Illustrate an appropriate symbol for each bible story.  
(b) Illustrate an appropriate symbol of your ancestor. For example, if it was your great grandfather in the war, then perhaps a war medal would be a good symbol.  
(c) Make a symbol of yourself and hang it on a branch of the Jesse tree. What branch are you on? these gifts (list the three gifts) relevant?  
(e) Read Matthew's Gospel and interpret the scene of the magi literally, answering the questions above. Then, search the internet for historical references to the story.  
(f) Compare the two versions. What conclusions do you make about the magi and their existence? Can it be taken metaphorically? If so, what did it mean to the listeners of the gospels of the day? In other words, what was the message Matthew and Luke were trying to give early Christians?  
(g) Buddha's birth was also unusual. Look up details of Buddha's birth and compare and contrast to Jesus' circumstances. What conclusions do you draw from your research?



## Suggested Classroom Activity: Make a Jesse Tree

1. Take a branch of a tree and place it in a bucket of rocks/earth, draped over with green cloth or paper. Hang ornaments made from the symbols above.
2. Cut the shape of a tree out of green or brown felt and glue it to a piece of heavy cardboard. Glue little wooden pegs onto the tree to hold the ornaments.
3. Take a branch of a tree and suspend it from the ceiling with fishing line, so you can create a Jesse tree mobile.

## Facts and inquiry worksheet ~ Christmas in a multi faith community

### THE GIFT OF GIVING: SPIRITUAL GIFTS. WHAT GIFTS DID JESUS GIVE US?

The main theme of the liturgical time of year of Advent is the concept of giving at Christmas. Students will understand why giving in a materialistic sense or expectation of gifts is not what the original Christmas was about. It is the spiritual gifts such as: GRATITUDE, LOVE, ACCEPTANCE, TOLERANCE, PATIENCE, SELFLESSNESS, KINDNESS, GENEROSITY ... AND MORE.

1. Make an Advent Calendar made from Spiritual Gifts. Instead of a chocolate treat, the advent calendar will contain 'treats' of a different kind.

An example of seven days in the Advent calendar:

**Monday:** A neck massage for Dad. LOVE.

**Tuesday:** Wash the dog's food and drink bowls, then feed it. KINDNESS.

**Wednesday:** Put the groceries away for Mum. SELFLESSNESS.

**Thursday:** Write a thank you card to my teacher. GRATITUDE.

**Friday:** Pick a flower from my garden and give to our elderly neighbour. GENEROSITY

**Saturday:** Let my sister use the bathroom first. PATIENCE

**Sunday:** Let a new boy or girl at school join our group. ACCEPTANCE.

## Lesson Plan

The lesson plan for Christmas is available below.

Subject/Course: Religious Education  
Topic: Advent and Christmas  
Lesson Title: What are the Gifts of Christmas?

### Lesson Objectives

- To understand the importance of giving at Christmas - not material gifts, but spiritual gifts, such as gratitude and love.
- To be aware of the original Christmas feast day in the Christian calendar.
- To enable students to participate in Advent activities.
- To understand Jesus' lineage through the Jesse Tree and have an appreciation of their own heritage.

### Summary of Tasks/Actions

- Scripture Lesson Plan: Verses from the Gospel relating to this liturgical season.
- Facts and Inquiry Activity Sheet: narrative text, new vocabulary, visual literacy, creative activities, research assignment.
- Theme Prayer Sheet: Advent and Christmas prayers/carols.

### Material/Equipment

Paper, coloured pencils, scissors, pictures of the crib, shepherds, wise men, calendar, glue, glitter, sketch of a tree with branches (Jesse tree), stickers (stars), seasonal offerings

### References

- Break Through' Bible for Young Catholics
- '365 Children's Prayers', B.James
- 'My Christmas Activity Book'
- 'St Nicholas', J. Stiegemeyer
- 'The Jesse Tree', T.M. Shuman
- 'The Jesse Tree', R and G Anderson
- 'Meeting Jesus Through The Jesse Tree', A. Neuberger
- 'Learning Links To Christmas, Teacher Resource', M. Ryan
- 'Jesse Tree, Advent Song for Children' CD and music, dennis j. newman

