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The Tradition of the Jesse Tree

The Jesse Tree is a centuries-old family Advent devotion that has enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in recent years. It has particular value since it helps both kids and adults alike to locate Jesus, the Messiah, within the lineage of the shepherd boy who became King of Israel--David, son of Jesse.



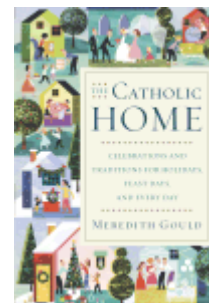
The whole idea of the Jesse Tree comes right out of a classic Advent passage from the prophet Isaiah: "A shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (Is 11:1). The Jesse Tree is hung with ornaments representing Old Testament people and events and lead up to Jesus. The traditional symbols hung on the tree are based on the genealogy of Jesus as recounted by the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew.

Set up a tree or branches with or without leaves. For the ornaments, you can either buy a Jesse Tree kit or just craft them yourself. Traditionally, there is one ornament for each day of Advent. You start at the base of the tree with Adam and Eve. At the top of the tree at the very end of the season comes a crib representing the baby Jesus. There's a brief scripture reading for every symbol (see below). If you read these readings and contemplate them and the symbols to which they are linked, by December 25th you and your family will have a much deeper understanding of the history of salvation and the meaning of Christmas!

(the material for this page comes to you in large part thanks to Meredith Gould, author of The Catholic Home. For more great ideas for celebrating Advent, Christmas, and other seasons and feasts in your home, get a copy of her wonderful book--[Dr. D'Ambrosio](#))

The Catholic Home - Meredith Gould

Want to really make your family's experience of Advent and the Christmas Season extra special this year? Get a copy of [Meredith Gould's The Catholic Home](#) before Advent begins! This book is a treasure trove of Catholic customs and traditions for all throughout the liturgical year, but is especially invaluable as we approach the Christmas Season. This book is a fun read but very practical as well. It's full of ideas for prayers, devotions, and decorations for liturgical feasts and saints days and even provides recipes for holiday foods from all over the Catholic world!



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From a Catholic Home - this a chart for the Jesse Tree Symbols

The World is Created – **Globe** – Genesis 1:24-28
Adam and Eve – **Snake and Apples** – Genesis 3:1-24
Noah and the Flood – **Rainbow** – Genesis 6:11-22; 8:12-17; 9:11-17
Abraham – Camel – **Genesis** 12:1-7;13:2-18; 18:1
Sarah – Baby – **Genesis** 18:1-15; 21:1-7
Isaac – Ram – **Genesis** 22:1-14
Jacob – Ladder – **Genesis** 27:41-28:22
Joseph – Multicolored Coat – **Genesis** 37:1-36
Moses – **Burning Bush** – Exodus 3:1-10
Miriam – **Tambourine** – Exodus 15:19-21
Samuel – **Lamp** – 1 Samuel 3:1-21
Jesse – **Branch** – Isaiah 11:1

David – **Harp** – 1 Samuel 16:14-23
Solomon – **Crown** – 1 Kings 3:3-28
Isaiah – **Throne** – Isaiah 6:1-8
Jeremiah – **Tablets of Law** – Jeremiah 31:31-34
Angels – **Angel** – Hebrews 1:1-14
Malachi – **Trumpet** – Malachi 3:1-4
Zechariah and Elizabeth – **Baby** - Luke 1:39-45
Mary – **Angel** – Luke 1:29-35
John the Baptist – **River** – Matthew 3:1-6
Joseph of Nazareth – **Hammer/Saw** – Matthew 1:18-25
Bethlehem – **Star** – Matthew 2:1-12
Birth of Christ – **Crib** – Luke 2:1-7