

An Advent 'Jesse Tree'

In the weeks of Advent, the 'Jesse Tree' will stand as a visual reminder to all people who wait in faith for the coming of the Saviour. It is a tree of hope. A tree to remind us of all those peoples who await the coming of Christ the Saviour. You can do this in conjunction with the decoration and lighting of the Advent Wreath.

Each week the children of the house and the adults are encouraged to prepare symbols representing the different periods of salvation history. These tokens, or symbols are then hung upon the bare tree, starting with the lower branches at the weekly Advent vigil liturgy. Culminating in the final days before the Christmas celebration, with gifts for the poor and needy of our time. Finally, on Christmas Eve, the Jesse Tree can be transformed into the Christmas Tree with its lights, glitter and family presents under the tree.

ADVENT 1 People of the Old Testament

Symbols to represent the people and the events of the Old Testament, for example Adam and Eve, Moses and the Ten Commandments, Noah and the Flood, Abraham, Isaac, David, or other notable persons who prepared for the coming Messiah.

ADVENT 2 Prophets of the Old Testament

Symbols might represent those who had a particular role in announcing the coming Messiah. The Old Testament Prophets are good examples, particularly Isaiah. Maybe ending with the last of the Prophets John the Baptist - the precursor.

ADVENT 3 People of the New Testament

Symbols maybe highlighting the roles of Elizabeth, Zechariah, Anna, and Simeon in the Temple. The Apostles, including Paul and others who looked for the coming Messiah. A special place might be given to Mary, Mother of the Lord. The figure of the expectant mother to be, the second Eve who will bring forth the Saviour, and who is "full of Grace"

ADVENT 4 People of God through the ages until today

There are the figures through history, favoured saints of God, holy men and women, and significant Christian believers in our own times, or other well-known missionaries, teachers or apostolic workers for the Kingdom. All who wait for the coming kingdom of God.

CHRISTMAS EVE People who are poor, alone, sick, in prison, in want today

This is an opportunity to decorate the tree with symbols to represent absent friends and relations, or the poor and the needy of the world today. It can be useful to include real gifts or presents for the homeless, or the poor. If this conflicts with your own Christmas Eve arrangements, you could add this element to the celebration of the fourth Sunday.

SAFETY NOTE:

Make the symbols not larger than 3 x 3 inches, with a wire or thread to hang upon the tree. Don't make them too heavy or you may have an ailing tree by Christmas! Remember, to ensure the base is heavy enough to support this growing wonder. Lights or candles must be used with care and never left unattended in the interest of safety.

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