

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Suggested December Ritual

(The proposed ritual takes place during the celebration of Sunday Mass.)

Background

What is a Jesse Tree?



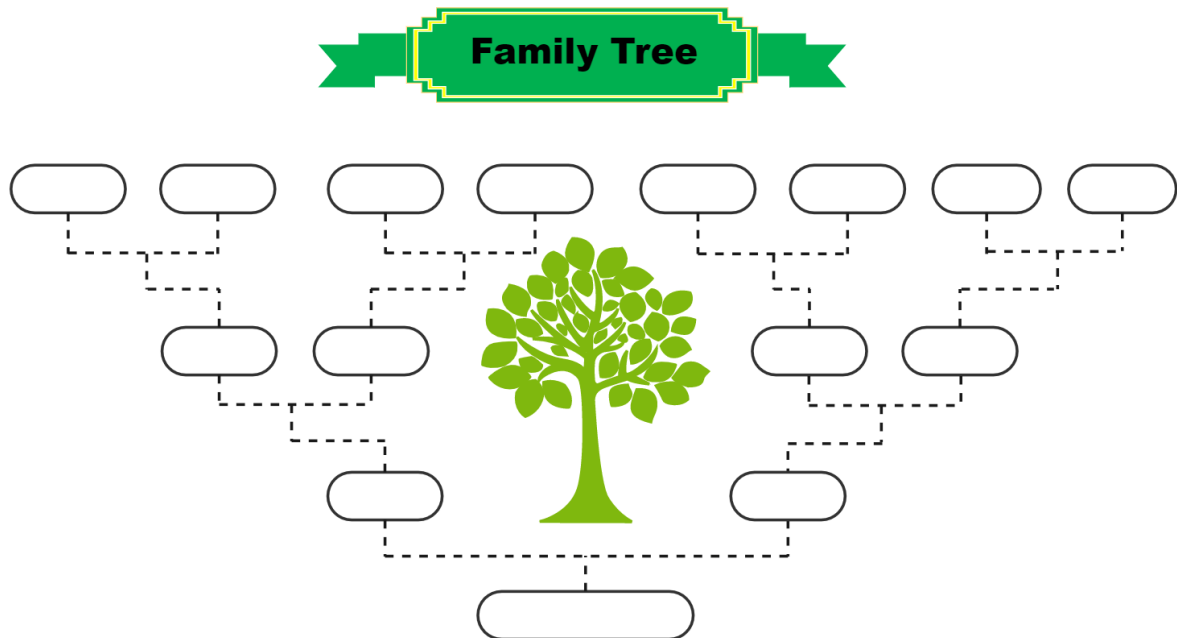
A Jesse Tree represents the family tree of Jesus Christ. Each ornament represents a story from the Bible that tells about God's people before Jesus was born. Each Story shows God's salvation plan and tells how He guided humanity to prepare for the coming of the Messiah.

The tradition of the Jesse Tree dates back to the middle ages. The name "Jesse Tree" comes from Isaiah 11:1, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit." Jesse is the father of King David. The saviour

was to come from David's family line.

The Jesse Tree, [Family Tree/Genealogy] of Jesus not only reminds us of who Jesus is, but who we are. We begin to see our story in the story of salvation. We recognise that like the many generations who went before Christ, He came to save us too. He died for us. Through Baptism, Christ is in us. As St. Paul reminds us, 'We are the Body; he is the head' (Col. 1:18). Like our ancestors in faith, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc., we are His people, we too belong to His family. In Confirmation we reinforce that familial bond between us and God the Father, between us and Jesus, our Messiah and Saviour, between us and our brothers and sisters.

Invite the children to reflect on their own 'Family Tree' (sample template below). They could focus specifically on their biological family, or they could prepare a family tree reflecting their family in faith. When complete, it could be displayed in the church or the sacred space in school.



The children may be invited to prepare a Jesse Tree (See symbols and templates in resource section on www.dioceseofmeath.ie). In preparation for the designated Ritual Mass, invite the children to prepare a disc with their own image on it (photo/drawing). These can be presented at the Ritual Mass and hung on the Jesse Tree reinforcing their place in the story of salvation, their place as members of God's family. Highlighting the connection with Baptism and Confirmation, the children may write their Baptismal names and chosen Confirmation Name on the reverse of the disc.

Preparation

Materials:

- Printer
- Paper/card (8.5" x 11")
- Colouring utensils (markers, crayons, coloured pencils, etc.)
- Scissors
- Twine or ribbon

- A Jesse Tree - a tree branch, a felt tree, or a mobile (or a regular Christmas tree!)
- Single hole punch
- (Optional) 25 three-inch blank wood circle ornaments
- (Optional) Glue
- The Jesse Tree Story

1. Print the ornament patterns

2. Colour and decorate your ornaments

3. Prepare your ornaments for your tree. Cut out your decorated ornament design. Then punch a hole in the ornament design for hanging. Complete your ornament by tying ribbon or twine through the hole and hang it on your Jesse Tree.

(Depending on resources, it may be possible to mount the decorated images onto wood log slices, available in most art & craft stores.)



Prayers of the Faithful

(Some of the Prayers of the Faithful may be included in the Intercessions of the Mass.)

1. We pray for all members of God's family: may they be moved to share the light of God's love with those around them. **Lord, hear us**
2. For families for whom Christmas will be difficult. Renew their strength, rekindle their hope, and motivate us to reach out in love and kindness. **Lord, hear us.**
3. As we prepare for Christmas and rejoice at the birth of Jesus, we pray for all who are welcoming a new child into their family. Bless them with joy, renewed hope, and gratitude. **Lord, hear us.**
4. For children preparing for Confirmation, their parents who support them, their Sponsors who witness to them, their teachers who instruct them, and our community who prays for them. **Lord, hear us.**
5. May the Holy Spirit inspire and guide us to live as faithful members of God's family. **Lord, hear us.**