



# The Jesse Tree

TWENTY-FOUR ORNAMENTS FROM GREAT PAINTINGS

DECEMBER 1 TO DECEMBER 24

<https://jesuschrist.pictures>

# The Jesse Tree

*"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."*

*Isaiah 11:1*

Jesse was the father of King David, and the Church has always read this verse as a promise of Christ, born of David's family. A Jesse Tree tells that promise one story at a time, from the Creation to the night in Bethlehem.

From December 1 to December 24, each evening, read one passage of Scripture together and hang one ornament on a small tree or a bare branch in a vase: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, and at last Mary, Joseph and the Child.

Print the four ornament pages on white card stock. Cut out each circle along the dotted line, punch a hole just above the number and thread a ribbon. Keep them in an envelope and take out one each evening. The reading guide on the next two pages gives the passage for each day and a question for the children.

Every ornament is a detail of a great painting, from Michelangelo and Rembrandt to Fra Angelico, and the guide names each one. If Advent begins before December 1, start with the Creation on the first Sunday and read two stories on some evenings: what matters is to reach the manger together.

# Reading Guide

1

## **December 1: The Creation** · GENESIS 1:1 TO 2:3

*Michelangelo, The Creation of Adam, Sistine Chapel, Vatican*

What did God make on the first day?

2

## **December 2: Adam and Eve** · GENESIS 3:1-24

*Jan Brueghel the Elder and Rubens, The Garden of Eden with the Fall of Man, Mauritshuis, The Hague*

Why did Adam and Eve hide from God?

3

## **December 3: Noah** · GENESIS 6:13 TO 9:17

*Edward Hicks, Noah's Ark, Philadelphia Museum of Art*

What sign did God set in the sky after the flood?

4

## **December 4: Abraham** · GENESIS 18:1-15

*Andrei Rublev, The Trinity (the Hospitality of Abraham), Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow*

How did Abraham welcome his three visitors?

5

## **December 5: Isaac** · GENESIS 22:1-18

*Caravaggio, The Sacrifice of Isaac, Uffizi, Florence*

What did God provide in Isaac's place?

6

## **December 6: Jacob** · GENESIS 28:10-22

*Jusepe de Ribera, Jacob's Dream (detail), Prado, Madrid*

What did Jacob see in his dream?

7

## **December 7: Joseph** · GENESIS 37:1-36

*Diego Velázquez, Joseph's Bloody Coat Brought to Jacob, El Escorial*

Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of him?

8

## **December 8: Moses** · EXODUS 3:1-15

*Domenico Fetti, Moses before the Burning Bush, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*

Why did Moses take off his sandals?

9

## **December 9: The Red Sea** · EXODUS 14:10-31

*Nicolas Poussin, The Crossing of the Red Sea, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne*

How did the people cross the sea?

10

## **December 10: The Law** · EXODUS 20:1-17

*Rembrandt, Moses with the Ten Commandments, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin*

Can you name three of the Ten Commandments?

11

## **December 11: Joshua** · JOSHUA 6:1-20

*Jean Fouquet, The Taking of Jericho, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris*

How many days did the people march around Jericho?

12

## **December 12: Ruth** · RUTH 1:16-17 AND 2:1-12

*Nicolas Poussin, Summer, or Ruth and Boaz, Louvre, Paris*

What did Ruth promise Naomi?

## Reading Guide, continued

13

**December 13: Jesse** · ISAIAH 11:1-10

*Circle of Geertgen tot Sint Jans, The Tree of Jesse, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*

Who was the youngest son of Jesse?

14

**December 14: David** · 1 SAMUEL 17:32-51

*Nicolas Poussin, The Triumph of David, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London*

What did David take with him to face Goliath?

15

**December 15: Solomon** · 1 KINGS 3:5-28

*Nicolas Poussin, The Judgment of Solomon, Louvre, Paris*

What did Solomon ask God to give him?

16

**December 16: Elijah** · 1 KINGS 19:1-13

*Dieric Bouts, Elijah in the Desert, Saint Peter's Church, Leuven*

How did God speak to Elijah on the mountain?

17

**December 17: Isaiah** · ISAIAH 9:2-7

*Michelangelo, The Prophet Isaiah, Sistine Chapel, Vatican*

What names does Isaiah give the child to come?

18

**December 18: Jonah** · JONAH 1:1 TO 2:10

*Pieter Lastman, Jonah and the Whale, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf*

How long was Jonah inside the great fish?

19

**December 19: Daniel** · DANIEL 6:10-23

*Peter Paul Rubens, Daniel in the Lions' Den, National Gallery of Art, Washington*

Why was Daniel thrown to the lions?

20

**December 20: Zechariah** · LUKE 1:5-25

*Domenico Ghirlandaio, The Angel Appearing to Zechariah, Santa Maria Novella, Florence*

Why could Zechariah not speak?

21

**December 21: John the Baptist** · LUKE 3:1-6

*Geertgen tot Sint Jans, Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin*

What did John ask the people to prepare?

22

**December 22: Mary** · LUKE 1:26-38

*Fra Angelico, The Annunciation, Convent of San Marco, Florence*

What did Mary answer the angel?

23

**December 23: Joseph** · MATTHEW 1:18-25

*Philippe de Champaigne, The Dream of Saint Joseph, National Gallery, London*

What did the angel tell Joseph in his dream?

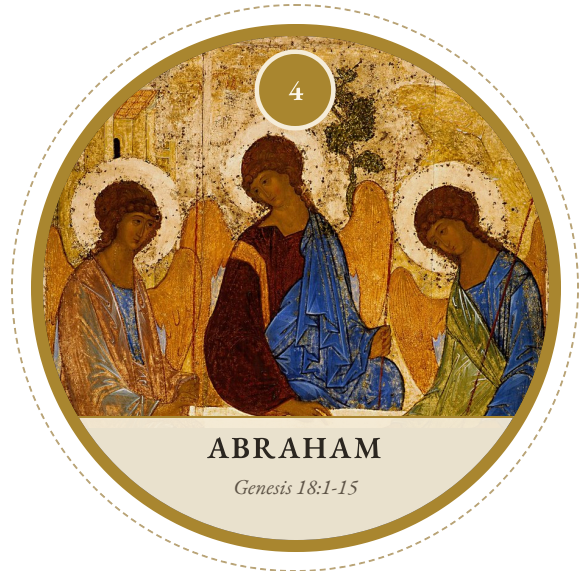
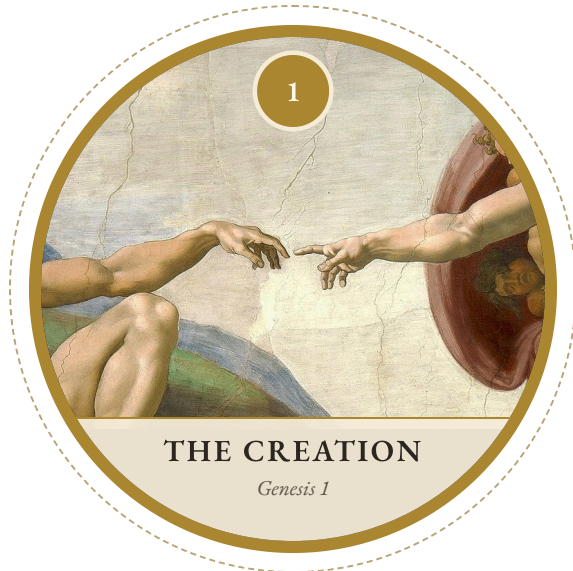
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**December 24: Jesus** · LUKE 2:1-20

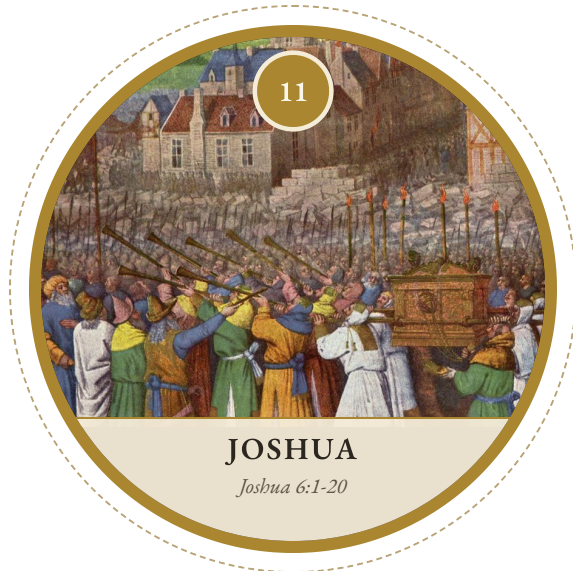
*Geertgen tot Sint Jans, The Nativity at Night, National Gallery, London*

Who came first to see the newborn Jesus?

JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS · DECEMBER 1 TO 6



JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS · DECEMBER 7 TO 12



JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS · DECEMBER 13 TO 18



JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS · DECEMBER 19 TO 24

