


The Jesse Tree



Jesse Trees are very old Christmas tradition dating back to medieval times. They are used to help tell the story of the Bible from creation through to the Christmas Story. They are named after Jesse, the father of King David, and according to Chapter One of Matthew, Jesus' Great x 14 Grandfather. This is because there is a prophecy in the book of Isaiah (Chapter 11:1-4) which is believed to describe Jesus.

The first Jesse trees were large carvings, tapestries or even stained glass windows that helped people that could not read or write learn about the God's story. Many people now use them as a kind of Advent calendar, as they help understanding of how the Christmas story fits into the whole Bible.

Using this resource at school

The Diocese of York Jesse Tree resource provides schools with starting points and ideas to explore the themes of the Jesse Tree through collective worship. You can choose to do a Jesse Tree theme every day of the week through whole school or class worship, or use the summary resource for a single act of collective worship that summarises the five stories.

The daily templates provide starting points for planning collective worship in the usual pattern of Gather, Engage, Respond and Send. For each theme the Engage section unpacks the story for the collective worship leader. Alongside this we have provided some suggestions for creating a focal point in the school hall and in classrooms, this includes a focus on the advent wreath.