The Jesse Tree: An Advent Script

*Introduction (Week I):*

King David was a King over God’s people way, way, way back in the olden days. He was the best King they ever had, and the Bible says, “He was a man after God’s own heart.” Like: he wanted to follow God in everything he did.

So: Who has ever heard of a family tree before? Who can tell me what a family tree is?

Right: a family tree is a list of all the people in your family—like your grandpa, and your great grandpa, and your great-great-great-great-great grandpa, as far back as you can go. And it’s called a family tree, because when you write out the list and show how everyone was connected to everyone else, it sort of branches out like a tree.

Well: King David’s Daddy was a man named Jesse, and sometimes, King David’s family tree is called “the Jesse Tree.” And there’s a place in the Bible, where it’s talking about a time when King David wasn’t king any more, and no one from his family was king, and it was sort of like, if King David’s family tree was a \*real tree\* it’s sort of like, the tree had been cut down so there was just a stump left. Like: there was no one from King David’s family sitting on the throne. And that was bad, because it meant that the people didn’t have a good king anymore.

But this place in the Bible, it says, “Don’t worry, because a new branch will grow out from the stump of the Jesse Tree, and this Branch will become the Saviour of the whole world.” But it didn’t mean a real branch growing from a real tree, it meant a person, someone who was part of King David’s family tree, would be born and would grow up to become God’s special King over all of God’s people.

Does anyone know who that was—the King and Saviour of God’s people?

Yeah, it’s Jesus. And because Jesus, on his human side, he was part of King David’s family tree, when we tell the story of Jesus—I mean, all the stuff that happened between God and his people leading up to the birth of Jesus—when we tell that story, it’s sort of like we’re making a Jesse Tree.

Make sense? Well: we don’t have a Jesse Tree here, today, but we do have a Christmas Tree. And... well.. what do you notice about this tree?

Yeah, it has no decorations on it. But you know what, I brought some decorations today that we can use to tell the story of Jesus, and as we put them on our tree, it will be like we’re turning this Christmas tree into a Jesse Tree.

*Week I: A Dove, An Apple, A Star, A Ribbon*

**A Dove:**

So our first ornament is a dove. And the dove reminds us of how God Created the world in the very beginning. Because the Bible says that when God made the world, his Spirit was hovering over the water (just like a bird hovers in the air), and because a dove is such a peaceful, pretty, pure-white bird, it reminds us that when God made the world, he wanted there to be peace and love and harmony for everyone.

**Apple**:

Our next ornament is an apple. It reminds us of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were the very first people God created, and they had to leave Eden because they ate a fruit that God told them not to, called “The fruit of the knowledge of Good and Evil.” And because they disobeyed God, sin came into the world and wrecked all that peace and love and harmony that God wanted for us. But even then, God promised them a saviour – a Messiah—who would make things right again.

**A Star:**

Our next ornament is a field of stars. Because a number of generations after Adam and Eve there was a man named Abraham. God chose him to be the special father of God’s people, and God promised that Abraham’s family—God’s People—would be *so big*, that it would be like all of the stars in the sky. The Messiah, God said, would come from Abraham’s family.

**A Colorful Ribbon:**

Next comes a colorful ribbon. Can you imagine how colorful it would be if you had a whole coat made out of ribbon like that? You see: Abraham had a son named Isaac, and Isaac had a son named Jacob, and Jacob had a son named Joseph. And Jacob loved Joseph more than all his brothers, and he gave him a special colorful coat. This made Joseph’s brothers jealous, so they sold him as a slave into Egypt. Eventually, because of that coat of many colors, all of God’s people would end up being slaves in Egypt.

*Week II: A Lamb, Stone Tablets, A Trumpet, A Crown*

**A Little Lamb**

Our next ornament is a little lamb. When God’s people were in Egypt, they started crying out for freedom. So God sent them a man named Moses to deliver them from the wicked King of Egypt. On the night before they escaped Egypt, God told them to have a lamb for diner, and they were supposed to take some of the blood of the lamb and put it on their door posts, and then death would pass them by. This was the start of something called “The Passover feast”; the Messiah would fulfill the meaning of the Passover.

**Two Stone Tablets**

The sixth ornament is a set of stone tablets with the Ten Commandments on them. After they escaped Egypt, God met with his people on a Mountain called Sinai, where he gave them a set of ten commandments written on some stone tablets. These showed everyone God’s way of living in peace and harmony with each other, like he wanted when he created the world. The Messiah would show them how to keep these ten commandments God’s way.

**A Trumpet**

Seventh comes a Trumpet. After Moses had led them through the desert, the people came to the special land that God had promised to give Abraham. A man named Joshua brought the people into the Promised land. Following God’s instructions, he marched the people around a city called Jericho, and when they blew their trumpets, the walls came tumbling down. And here’s something: The name Joshua is a Hebrew name, and the Greek version of Joshua is “Jesus.” Joshua had the same name as the Messiah.

**A Crown**

The eight ornament for our Jesse Tree is a crown. Because there were a whole bunch of children, and grand-children, and great-great grandchildren after Joshua’s time, but eventually the people were settled in the land and they asked for a King. So God told a prophet named Samuel to anoint a little shepherd boy, the son of a man named Jesse- to make him the king, even though he was younger than all his brothers. Anyone know what that little shepherd boy was? Yeah, it was David, and he was the great-great-great-great grandfather of the Messiah.

*Week III: A Shepherd’s Crook, An Angel, A tear-drop, a trowel*

**A Shepherd’s Crook**

So our next ornament is a staff, sort of like what a shepherd might use to take care of his sheep. Because King David, before he became a king, was a shepherd, and after David, often they would say that the King was like a shepherd to the people. But the problem was, the kings after King David weren’t very good shepherds. They didn’t serve God, and they didn’t take care of the people, and even, some of them, made the people sin. So God’s people were waiting for a Good Shepherd to be their king. The Messiah is sometimes called the Good Shepherd.

**An Angel**

The tenth ornament for our Jesse Tree is an angel. Because without a good King on the throne, things were getting really bad for the people. So God called a prophet named Isaiah to tell the people to stop sinning and follow God’s Way. Isaiah had a vision of angels all around God’s throne, and one of the angels took an ember from the fire and touched Isaiah’s lips, so that he could speak for God. One of the things that Isaiah told the people about was what it would be like when the Messiah finally came.

**A tear-drop:**

Next comes a tear-drop. That may seem like a strange thing to put on a Christmas Tree, but it’s important. You see: because of their sins, the people of God were taken away into captivity in a place called Babylon. While they were in Babylon, God spoke through another Prophet called Jeremiah, telling them how sad he was that his people wouldn’t follow his way and worshipped false gods instead. Jeremiah said his grief for his people was like a fountain of tears. But Jeremiah also said that there would be a saviour who would come and bring the people back from exile and wipe away their tears.

**A trowel:**

Who knows what this is? It’s a tool called a trowel, and you use it for building things out of brick. You see: after a long time, God finally brought his people home form Babylon. And he chose a man named Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, King David’s City, that had been torn down when the people went into exile. Things were getting close, now for the Messiah.

*Week IV: A Lilly, A Hammer, A Scallop Shell, A Star*

Okay, our story is getting really close to the most exciting part now—because some time after the people came back from Babylon and Nehemiah had helped them rebuild their city, God finally said, it’s time for the promised Messiah to come. And these ornaments remind us of that part of the story:

**A Lily**

God chose a virgin woman named Mary to be the mother of the Messiah. An angel came to Mary and said, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most High will overshadow you. And the holy one born to you will be called the Son of God.”

So Jesus had a human family tree, but he was born of the Holy Spirit and was actually the Son of God. And because a lily is such a pure, white, lovely flower, it’s a special symbol for Mary who was the Lord’s Handmaiden.

**A Hammer**

The next ornament for our tree is a carpenter’s hammer. It reminds us of Joseph the carpenter, who was the husband of Mary and the earthly guardian of Jesus. When God told him in a dream that Mary was expecting a child by the Holy Spirit, he trusted God and married her, believing that this child would be the Messiah who would bring salvation to the world.

**A Scallop Shell**

So this is a scallop shell. See: There was a man named John the Baptist who was born right around the same time as Jesus, and his job was to get everyone ready for the Messiah. And the way he did it was by having them go in water, as a way of showing how they wanted all their sins to be washed away and they wanted to live a new life for God. That’s called Baptism, *and*, because they grow in water and can be used like a cup, a scallop sea-shell is a traditional symbol for baptism.

**A Top Star**

The last ornament for our Jesse Tree is a star to go right on top. This reminds us of a special star shone in the sky around the time of Jesus birth. Some Wisemen from the East followed this star and it led them to the town of Bethlehem and the place where the Messiah was to be born.

And now we’ve told the whole story—right from the beginning when God created the world, and made us to have a relationship with him—and then how sin came in and wrecked that relationship, but God promised a saviour who would restore it—we told the story of all the things God did to get his people ready for the Saviour—and then we told the story of everything that God did right at the time when Jesus was about to be born.