

Journeying through Advent



Revd Dr Anna Creedon introduces activities to use in each week of the season.



Advent begins this year on 1 December, and the four weeks of Advent conclude on Christmas Eve. In the weekly materials for the Advent season this year, we are suggesting a couple of activities suitable for all ages that you could do, with variations, each week:

- Add decorations to a Jesse Tree (see image top right).
- Learn a new Advent song, to the tune of 'Sing Hosanna'. This can be sung each week during Advent, adding a verse each time; churches may like to use it when they light advent candles, or place symbols on the Jesse Tree.

However, both activities can also 'stand alone' each week – people don't need to be present each week for the activities to work.

A Jesse Tree with a twist

What is a Jesse Tree?

A Jesse Tree is a tree that you decorate throughout Advent, with decorations that represent the different people in Jesus' family tree. It is called a Jesse Tree, because Jesse was the father of King David, from whom Jesus is descended. The idea of the Jesse Tree came from a passage in Isaiah: 'A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots' (Isaiah 11:1).

This year, we are suggesting you might like to be inspired by the idea of the Jesse Tree, but with a slight twist! Instead of hanging decorations representing the people in Jesus' family tree, we'd like to suggest that you hang decorations to represent the four Advent themes that we are focusing on this year: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Then add a final decoration on Christmas Day to represent Jesus.

As part of the resources for each of the Sundays in Advent, there will be a suggestion about how you can incorporate the Jesse Tree into your act of worship, as well as a template for a decoration to represent the Advent theme of that week. (There is also the option to add your own label to the tree – see each week's material.)

There are lots of ways to create the Jesse Tree itself, but here are some suggestions:

- Get a large branch with plenty of smaller branches for hanging decorations on and secure it in a pot or vase.
- Use a Christmas tree or other small tree.
- Buy an artificial tree (Hobbycraft sells some plain white trees that would work).
- Create a large MDF free-standing tree and add metal hooks to it.

For more information about Jesse Trees and practical suggestions: <https://www.faithward.org/jesse-tree/>

Introduce a new Advent song

Introduce a verse of the song each week of Advent (full version downloadable from [WEB](#)). Each verse links to that week's Advent theme (Hope, Love, Joy, Peace). You might ask people (in small groups) to devise actions to go alongside the song and to share these with the wider group. You might also learn the BSL signs for some of the words [WEB](#). Sing the verse you have learnt that week and the chorus and build up each week by adding a verse. You might want to sing the whole song on Christmas Day.

To the tune: 'Sing Hosanna', *New words by Jane Chevous*

1. Give me hope in my heart, keep me growing,
Give me hope in my heart, I pray;
Give me hope in my heart, keep me growing,
keep me growing till the break of day.

*Grow for Jesus, grow for Jesus,
Grow for Jesus, come to be our King!
Grow for Jesus, grow for Jesus,
Grow for Jesus, King of kings!*



2. Give me love in my heart, keep me waiting,
Give me love in my heart, I pray;
Give me love in my heart, keep me waiting,
Keep me waiting till the break of day.

*Wait for Jesus, wait for Jesus,
Wait for Jesus, come to be our King.
Wait for Jesus, wait for Jesus,
Wait for Jesus, King of kings!*



3. Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
Give me joy in my heart, I pray;
Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
Keep me praising till the break of day.

*Praise to Jesus, praise to Jesus,
Praise to Jesus come to be our King!
Praise to Jesus, praise to Jesus,
Praise to Jesus, King of kings!*



4. Give me peace in my heart, keep me giving,
Give me peace in my heart, I pray;
Give me peace in my heart, keep me giving,
Keep me giving till the break of day.

*Give for Jesus, give for Jesus,
Give for Jesus come to be our King.
Give for Jesus, give for Jesus,
Give for Jesus King of kings.*



5. Let us welcome our Lord, he is with us,
Let us welcome our Lord today;
Let us welcome our Lord, he is with us,
Let us welcome Jesus here today.

*Welcome Jesus, welcome Jesus,
Welcome Jesus come to be our King.
Welcome Jesus, welcome Jesus,
Welcome Jesus, King of kings.*

