

Jesus' Genealogy

This is an activity-based session written to make sense of the genealogy of Jesus read during the Christmas Vigil mass and to have some fun getting to know a few Biblical characters.

Series: Advent 2021	
Title: Jesus' Genealogy	
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make sense of the genealogy of Jesus read during the Christmas Vigil mass. To have some fun getting to know characters in the Bible.
Resources Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bibles Internet connection (for research) Props which can be used in sketches (if using)
Session Plan	
Prayer	
Gospel	<i>Read through Matthew 1: 1-17</i>
Activity (30 mins)	<p><i>Explain the activity to the young people. The list of people mentioned in the genealogy and their corresponding references can be found below.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide participants into groups of 3-5. Ask each group to pick a name from the genealogy which they'll have to research and learn about. Ask each group to prepare a way in which to share the story/information to the rest of the groups. This can be done as creatively as they wish - they can prepare a sketch/song/explanation about the character chosen. (Allow at least 15 mins for preparation). Ask each small group to present their character to the rest of the young people.¹
Content (15 mins)	<p><i>The content of this session can be presented in two ways: either as questions come up while the different characters are being presented, or after the presentations are over.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The genealogy gives us the ancestral past of Jesus but also his identity and mission. He's the one who will bring the blessing of Abraham to the whole world. He's the royal son of David that all of Israel has been waiting for. He's the one that the prophets wrote about, and the psalmists sang about.

¹ If this activity is being done virtually, it can take the form of a PowerPoint Party.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He will be the king of Israel who blesses all of the nations of the world, especially the outsiders (women in the genealogy).
Questions/ Discussion (10 mins)	<i>Leave some time for whatever questions the young people may have. If they ask something you don't know about, feel free to research during the session.</i>
Prayer	

Content: Making sense of Jesus' Genealogy

Full text: <https://bibleproject.com/blog/jesus-genealogies/>

Matthew's way of showing how Jesus fulfils the Old Testament storyline is to begin with a genealogy. In the opening sentence of the book, Matthew tells us the two key people who are most important in this genealogy: "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham." From this opening statement, we expect this family tree to help us understand not only the ancestral past of Jesus but also his identity and mission.

Son of Abraham

By calling Jesus the "son of Abraham," the author is connecting Jesus to the father of the people of Israel. Abraham represents the moment when God selected and separated his family from the rest of the nations all the way back in the book of Genesis. It was through these Israelite people that God promised to bring blessing to all of humanity (Gen 12:1-3). By linking Jesus to Abraham, Matthew is bringing the reader's attention back to the promise of God's rescue plan for the world. He wants us to see that Jesus is the long-awaited son of Abraham who will bring God's blessing to all humanity.

A King from the line of David

Jesus' identity as a descendant of David is a major focus of Matthew's gospel. "Son of David," is a term that the author of Matthew is very fond of. Abraham's name pointed to a belonging amongst the people of Israel. David's name tells us that Jesus was royalty.

That this was the author's goal can be seen by the fact that Jesus' ancestry is traced through David's son King Solomon. In Luke's gospel, the family line is traced through David's son Nathan. Matthew's author is not primarily concerned with genetic lineage, however. He is also attempting to establish Jesus as a royal successor and rightful heir to the throne of David's kingdom. The author traces the family line from Solomon to Jeconiah, who was the surviving king of David's line and alive at the time of the exile.

14 Generations

The genealogy of Matthew is broken up into three parts that cover 14 generations each. Within the written language of Hebrew, the letters are also used as their numbers, and so each letter is assigned a numerical value. The name of David in Hebrew is "דוד."

- "ד" (dalet) = 4
- "ו" (waw) = 6
- $4+6+4=14$, the numerical value of the name of "David."

Matthew has created the genealogy so that it links Jesus to David both explicitly and in the very literary design of the list. In fact, Matthew wants to highlight this "14=David" idea so much that he intentionally left out multiple generations of the line of David to make the numbers work.

Prophets & Psalmists

Matthew didn't make numerical adjustments only. He also adjusted a few letters in some names for the same purpose. For example, he changed the names of Asa and Amon to Asaph (the poet featured in the book of Psalms) and Amos (the famous prophet). Matthew is winking at us here, knowing that his readers would spot these out of place names. The

point, of course, is that Jesus doesn't just fulfill Israel's royal hopes, but also the hope of the Psalms (Asaph) and the Prophets (Amos).

Women in the Genealogy

Look at the unique appearance of four women in the genealogy of Matthew: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. All four are either non-Israelites or connected to non-Israelite families. Not only is it unconventional for Matthew to list these female names in an all-male genealogy, but these particular women are all associated with potential sex scandals. Matthew wants his readers to see that God has been using all types of people to move his plan forward.

So we read the genealogy of Matthew and see the royal lineage of Jesus. He's the one who will bring the blessing of Abraham to the whole world. He's the royal son of David that all of Israel has been waiting for. He's the one that the prophets wrote about, and the psalmists sang about. He will be the king of Israel who blesses all of the nations of the world, especially the outsiders. We know all of this because Matthew tells us in a genealogy that carefully reveals the hope that has arrived in Jesus.

Names mentioned in Matthew 1 & their respective Biblical references	
Abraham	Genesis 11 to 25
Isaac	Genesis 21 to 35
Jacob	Genesis 25 to 49
Judah	Genesis 29 to 50
Serah & Perez by Tamar (<i>refer to Women in the Genealogy above</i>)	Genesis 38
Hezron	Genesis 46; Ruth 4:18-19; 1 Chronicles 2:5 (no story, just a mention)
Aram	1 Chronicles 2:9 Ruth 4:19 (no story, just a mention)
Aminadab	Exodus 6:23 (no story, just a mention)
Nahshon	Exodus 6:23 Numbers 1:7, 2:3, 7:12-17, 10:14 Ruth 4:20 1 Chronicles 2:4-10 (no story, just a mention)
Salmon	Ruth 4:20-21 1 Chronicles 2:10-11 (no story, just a mention)
Rahab (<i>refer to Women in the Genealogy above</i>)	Joshua 2
Boaz	Ruth 2-4 1 Chronicles 2:11-12
Ruth (<i>refer to Women in the Genealogy above</i>)	Ruth 1 to 4
Obed	Ruth 4:21-22 1 Chronicles 2:12
Jesse	1 Samuel 16 to 17 1 Chronicles 2 Isaiah 11:1-3
King David	1 Samuel 16 to 31 2 Samuel 1 Kings 1-2
Bathsheba the wife of Uriah (<i>refer to</i>	2 Samuel 11

Women in the Genealogy above)	
Solomon	2 Solomon 12 to 1 Kings 11
Rehoboam	1 Kings 12 - 15 2 Chronicles 10 - 12
Abijah	1 Kings 14 - 15 1 Chronicles 3 2 Chronicles 12 - 14
Asaph (refer to Prophets & Psalmists above)	1 Chronicles 15 - 16 Psalm 77 & 78
Jehoshaphat	1 Kings 22 2 Chronicles 17 to 21
Joram	2 Kings 8 - 9 2 Chronicles 21
Uzziah	2 Kings 15 2 Chronicles 26
Jotham	2 Kings 15 2 Chronicles 27
Ahaz	2 Kings 16 Isaiah 7
Hezekiah	2 Kings 18 - 20 2 Chronicles 29 - 30
Manasseh	2 Kings 21 2 Chronicles 33
Amos (refer to Prophets & Psalmists above)	The Book of Amos
Josiah	2 Kings 22 2 Chronicles 34 - 35
Jechoniah	2 Kings 23 2 Chronicles 36 Jeremiah 27
Salathiel	1 Chronicles 2:17 (no story, just a mention)
Zerubbabel	Ezra 2 - 5 Haggai
Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Zadok, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob	Although Biblical names, these names may come from oral tradition and have no other biblical reference. ²

² The New Jerome Biblical Commentary

Nominating “No”

This session leans more into the reason for the Advent season.
The aim of this session is to recognise the importance
of saying “no” more in order to make time and
space for Jesus’ coming.

Series: Advent 2021	
Title: Nominating “No”	
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To revise the reason for the Advent season. • To recognise the importance of saying “no” more in order to make time & space for Jesus’ coming.
Resources Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A4 sheet of paper for each participant • Writing utensils • Video: <i>Advent: More Than a Chocolate Calendar</i> (if using) • Bibles/Gospel passage (if using)
Session Plan	
Prayer	
Activity (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide participants into groups of 2-4. • Give each person a sheet of paper. • Ask the small groups to talk about their weekly schedule & have the young people write their daily chores and activities on the schedule. (The way they present it can be as creative as they wish, as long as what they write/draw is true.) • Encourage them to think of things like school, sports, homework, chores, time spent online, family time, getting ready, etc.
Content (15 mins)	<p>Watch the video <i>Advent: More Than a Chocolate Calendar</i> by Ascension Presents https://youtu.be/SA-gx-PWBOA or present the content found below.</p> <p><i>If you’ll be using the video, allow time after for the young people to share with each other what struck them from the video.</i></p> <p><i>If you’ll be presenting the content yourself, leave time for any questions the young people may have. You can even ask 1 or 2 young people to give a summary of what you would have just shared with them.</i></p>
Discussion (15 mins)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If Jesus showed up in your life today, would there be any room for him? <p><i>Refer back to the activity done at the start of the session.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Considering the goals of Advent: what can you say “no” to this season to prepare for Christ’s coming? <p><i>Give the young people some time to reflect on the second question. They can first discuss the question with the person next to them before bringing it to the entire group.</i></p>

Lectio Divina	<p><i>If you have the time, you can run this lectio divina as part of the session. If not, skip to the action point. You can find a guide to running a lectio divina below.</i></p> <p>Luke 19:1-10</p> <p><i>While reading through the passage, draw back the thematic question: If Jesus showed up in your life today, would there be any room for him?</i></p>
Action Point (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite each young person to decide whether they want to say "no" to something specific this Advent.* • Once they've decided, invite them to write it down and tell a friend about their choice. Encourage accountability between members of the group. <p><i>*Encourage the young people to make their choices based on making space for God, and not choosing something vague for the sake of answering the question. Help the young people set their own parameters. For example, if they say they'll spend less time on TikTok, suggest they give themselves a time limit which will help them stick to their decision.</i></p>
Prayer	

Main points from Advent: More Than a Chocolate Calendar by Ascension Presents

<https://youtu.be/SA-gx-PWB0A>

Advent is the devout and joyful preparation for the coming of Jesus.

- Advent is not a penitential season. (Lent is a penitential season.)
- Devout means firm, resolute, wholehearted.
- Joy is more profound than happiness. Joy is the ability to have a certain happiness independent of your circumstances. It is an abiding sense of well-being because you know the Father loves you. Joy is a choice.
- Preparing for Christ's coming is two-fold:
 - Celebrating Jesus being born into this world 2000 years ago.
 - Celebrating and preparing for Christ's second coming.
- Therefore, the goal of Advent is to
 - Celebrate & worship him well at Christmas
 - Prepare ourselves for his second coming.

The great saints have spoken about the intermediary arrival of Christ.

- This is when Christ comes into our present lives: when we pray, when we read his word, when we gather in his name or are in the presence of the Eucharist.

If Jesus showed up in your life *today*, would there be any room for him?

- Advent needs to be a time of preparation, and that requires that we use the word "no" in order to make space in your day for Jesus.
- It's saying no that gives Christ room to enter into our lives. We need to say no more in order to be able to say yes more to Jesus.

This Advent, even though it's not a penitential season, we are all invited to say "no" more.

Lectio Divina Guide: <https://dowym.com/resources/lectio-divina/>

Journeying with Joseph

The idea behind this session is to go out for a walk with young people, spend some time in the countryside if possible and talk about St Joseph.

Series: Advent 2021	
Title: Journeying with Joseph	
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To go out with young people, spend some time in the countryside (if possible), talk about St Joseph and walk.
Resources Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route for the walk
Session Plan	
<p>Before Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary journeyed together for about 145km (from Nazareth to Bethlehem). The idea behind this session is to go out with young people, spend some time in the countryside (if possible), talk about St Joseph and walk.</p> <p>The Walk</p> <p>145km is just a little less than the perimeter of Malta, so walking the same amount as St Joseph and Mary is a little difficult. Find a route that works best for your group. At the end of the walk, compare how much you've walked with the 145km to help young people visualise the distance Mary and Joseph travelled.</p> <p>Here are some route ideas:</p> <p>https://greatwalksmalta.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/malta-coastal-sample1.pdf https://heritagemalta.org/hm-smile-with-miles-initiative/ https://lovinmalta.com/lifestyle/things-to-do/6-breathtaking-hike-trails-in-malta</p> <p>St Joseph</p> <p>In preparation for this session,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> leaders can familiarise themselves with background information about St Joseph in order to be able to answer any questions the young people may have. OR ask the young people to look up one fun fact/story about St Joseph which they will then share with the rest of the group as they walk. <p>You can also encourage discussion about St Joseph's life by asking the young people what it must have been like in St Joseph's shoes (not only before Jesus was born, but also as Jesus' earthly father.)</p> <p>Here are some websites you can look at about St Joseph:</p> <p>https://aleteia.org/2021/03/01/10-things-you-should-know-about-st-joseph/ https://aleteia.org/2021/03/19/st-joseph-his-life-his-miracles-and-his-legacy/ https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-joseph-husband-of-mary https://youtu.be/6--SXOXQbDc https://media.ascensionpress.com/podcast/st-joseph-the-silent-hero/ https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-12/pope-francis-proclaims-year-of-st-joseph.html</p> <p>Try to have an intentional moment or 2 of prayer during the walk. The Litany of St Joseph and the Pope's prayer to St Joseph may be used.</p>	

Prayer to St Joseph

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.

Pope Francis

Litany of St Joseph

Lord, have mercy	R/. Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy	R/. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy	R/. Lord, have mercy.
God our Father in heaven	R/. Have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world	R/. Have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit	R/. Have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God	R/. Have mercy on us.
Holy Mary	R/. Pray for us.
Saint Joseph	R/. Pray for us.
Noble son of the House of David	R/. Pray for us.
Light of patriarchs	R/. Pray for us.
Husband of the Mother of God	R/. Pray for us.
Guardian of the Virgin	R/. Pray for us.
Foster father of the Son of God	R/. Pray for us.
Faithful guardian of Christ	R/. Pray for us.
Head of the holy family	R/. Pray for us.
Joseph, chaste and just	R/. Pray for us.
Joseph, prudent and brave	R/. Pray for us.
Joseph, obedient and loyal	R/. Pray for us.
Pattern of patience	R/. Pray for us.
Lover of poverty	R/. Pray for us.
Model of workers	R/. Pray for us.
Example to parents	R/. Pray for us.
Guardian of virgins	R/. Pray for us.
Pillar of family life	R/. Pray for us.
Comfort of the troubled	R/. Pray for us.
Hope of the sick	R/. Pray for us.
Patron of the dying	R/. Pray for us.
Terror of evil spirits	R/. Pray for us.
Protector of the Church	R/. Pray for us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	R/. Spare us O Lord.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	R/. Hear us O Lord.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	R/. Have mercy on us.

Let us pray. God, in your infinite wisdom and love you chose Joseph to be the husband of Mary, the mother of your Son. May we have the help of his prayers in heaven and enjoy his protection on earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.