

# Liturgical Year Supplemental Lesson

## Advent and Christmas

### Correlated Materials

Student Text: Advent and Christmas Supplement, pp. 145–47

#### LESSON FOCUS

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Messiah. The prophet Isaiah foretold that “there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse” (Isaiah 11:1). The Messiah came from the family line of Jesse, the father of David. The Jesse tree traces the lineage of Jesus.

#### AIMS

- Students will learn that the coming of the Messiah was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah.
- Students will learn that God’s covenant, as prophesied by Isaiah, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- Students will trace the lineage of Jesus from Jesse in the Jesse tree.

#### MATERIALS

- Bible
- White board and markers

Optional:

- Jesse tree ornaments, crayons, scissors (see Appendix B-17 to B-20)

### Begin the Lesson

## Preparation (5–10 minutes)

Use one or more of the following resources for prayer and student preparation for the lesson.

**SCRIPTURE:** Student Text, p. 145

**“Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming”** (Matthew 24:42).

We watch for Jesus’ coming in the Eucharist. During Advent we watch for the coming of the Lord on Christmas Day. We should remain vigilant and watch for Jesus to come again at the end of time. He will come at an hour we do not expect.

**“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him”** (Isaiah 11:1–2).

Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would come from Jesse’s family tree. Jesse was the father of King David, the line through whom Jesus came.

**SACRED ART:** Student Text, p. 146

*Adoration of the Magi, Rubens*

The Magi are giving great honor to the Christ Child. We too must adore and honor Jesus Christ above all else in our lives.

**PRAYER WITH CHILDREN:** Glory Be, Student Text, p. 161

## Proclamation (1 minute)

*(Proclaim slowly, then repeat.)*

The prophet Isaiah foretold that “there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse.” The Messiah came from the family line of Jesse, the father of David.

## Lesson Explanation (35–50 minutes)

*Explain focus points in your own words or use the discussion points and questions.*

## WORD TO KNOW

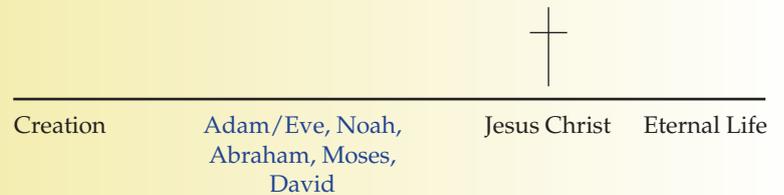
**Advent:** the time of preparation before Christmas. We prepare for Jesus' birth and also for his coming at the end of the world. Advent means "coming."

### FOCUS 1 OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- Jesse tree ornaments (see Appendix B-17 to B-20)
  - Assign each student one ornament to depict a person or event in salvation history.
  - Have students decorate that ornament and look up the history about that person or event in their texts. Have them decorate the front of the ornament and on the back write a short description of the person or event. (While students are decorating ornaments, you may want to read the reflections below; see Application.)
  - During the weeks of Advent, have the students present the story of salvation history using the Jesse tree ornaments. You may want to have a tree for the ornaments.
  - Students could also take Jesse tree instructions home so that they can do this there.
- Use the timeline on page A-45, also available online at [www.faithandlifeseries.com](http://www.faithandlifeseries.com) to teach this lesson.

## Focus 1: The Jesse tree traces the lineage of Jesus.

- *Has anyone in your family traced your family tree?* (Answers will vary.)
- Today we are going to trace the family tree of Jesus. Let's take a look at a timeline from Adam and Eve to Jesus Christ.
  - **Using** the salvation history timeline below, review the story of salvation history, highlighting that God promised to send a Savior after the Fall of Adam and Eve.



- *After the Fall of Adam and Eve, what did God promise?* (A Savior.)
- *God sends a savior through his chosen people. Do you know who the patriarch (father) of the chosen people is?* (Abraham.)
- *How many years passed between Abraham and Jesus?* (Two thousand years.)
- *With whom did God make these promises or "covenants"?* (Adam/Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David.)
- The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would come from the line of David.
  - **Read** Isaiah 11:1–2: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him."
  - *Why do you think it was important for those who were living during the time of Jesus to trace his lineage?* (Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would come from the line of David, or root of Jesse, David's father. Therefore, in order to prove that Jesus was really the Messiah, they needed to trace his lineage from David.)
- The Gospel of Matthew (see Matthew 1:1–16) traces the lineage of Jesus from Abraham.
  - Many Catholic families celebrate **Advent** and the ancestry of Jesus by making a Jesse tree. Have students trace the lineage of Jesus, using the *Jesse Tree*. Use the directions in the Focus 1 *Jesse Tree* optional activity.
  - Each day an ornament is decorated and hung on a tree. Each of the ornaments is part of the lineage of Jesus (you may compare this to a family tree tracing their parents, grandparents, etc.).

**Conclusion:** The Jesse tree traces the lineage of Jesus to show that Jesus was in the line of David.

## Review Supplemental Lesson—Liturgical Year: Advent and Christmas (3 minutes)

- The coming of the Messiah was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah.
- God’s covenant, as prophesied by Isaiah, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- Jesus came from the line of David; Jesse was David’s father.

## Application (15–20 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following for discussion.

- (You may want to read reflections while students are decorating ornaments.)
- We spend a lot of time preparing for and celebrating Advent and Christmas. Now we will spend time reading about what was really happening. Pretend like you were there. **Read** to students “Advent,” Student Text, page 145, second column, beginning with “We should also think.”
  - *What is the real meaning of Christmas? (The birth of Christ.)*
  - *What struck you about what was really happening before the birth of Christ? (Answers will vary.)*
- **Read** to students “Christmas,” Student Text, pages 146–47.
  - *What struck you about what was really happening on Christmas Day and afterward? (Answers will vary.)*
  - *What can we do to help Jesus be born in the hearts of our families and friends? (Answers will vary.)*
  - *How do these readings give us faith and hope? (We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born, and we have hope that Jesus will come again at the end of time.)*

## Celebration (5–10 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following.

- Pray the Christmas Hymn, Student Text, p. 147.
- Quiet students and listen to refrain of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.” Go to [www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm](http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm) for downloadable MP3s.
- Remind students that December 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (celebrating that the Blessed Mother was free from Original Sin), a Holy Day of Obligation.

# Advent and Christmas Supplement

“Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”

Matthew 24:42

Even many people who do not believe in Jesus celebrate his birthday by buying Christmas trees and exchanging presents. And we, who do believe in Jesus, often look forward to Christmas for months. We are filled with the excitement of presents, carols, parties, and cookies. But sometimes we can become so busy with these things that we forget what an incredible and wonderful thing happened—God became a man and nothing has been the same since or will ever be the same again!

## Advent

Because Jesus' birth means so much for us, we count the days before it. It is a time of waiting and wishing that he were with us even more. The Church calls this time **Advent**, which means “coming.” During Advent we, like the people of Israel, can long for the coming of the one who will change the world, the Redeemer. We can also look forward to Jesus' coming at the end of the world.

Jesus is really with us so we should be joyful during Advent but we should also spend these four weeks preparing our hearts to make sure that Jesus has a home there. It is good to prepare our hearts in a special way for his birthday. Spending some extra time with Jesus in prayer, receiving

the Sacrament of Penance, and going to Mass on a weekday are all ways of doing this.

We should also think of how we can help Jesus be born in the hearts of our families and friends. We can do this by trying to be helpful to them.

Here is what was happening before the first Christmas:

One day, a Jewish man and his wife were walking along the dusty road to Bethlehem. They had received an order from Caesar Augustus (who, as you will remember, was the Roman ruler of the Jews) to go to the city of their ancestors to be counted. This way, Caesar would know how many people of Israel were in his empire. Since the man and woman were descendants of David, they were going to the city of David's birth, Bethlehem.

If you had seen them walking along on the road to Bethlehem, you might have noticed some things about them; they were very special! For one thing, they were very good, and that must have shown in their peaceful faces and in the kind and considerate way in which they treated each other. In fact, God had kept the woman's soul free from sin from the first moment of her life in the womb of her mother. The effects of Original Sin had never even touched her soul. You also might have noticed that the

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woman was going to have a baby. This baby was very special. He was the one the Jews had been waiting for. By now, you have guessed the names of this woman and man: Mary and Joseph.

## Christmas

Finally, they arrived in Bethlehem. The city was crowded with other descendants of David who came to enroll their families. Because of this, all the inns were filled. They had no choice but to spend the night in a stable. Mary gave birth to her baby there. She wrapped him up tightly in the strips of cloth that the Jews used to wrap newborn babies. And then she placed him in a manger. (A manger is a box from which animals eat.)

Soon, from the fields near Bethlehem, arrived a group of Jewish shepherds, such as King David

had been. “We've come to see the child,” one probably said.

Then the shepherds told their story. It must have gone something like this: “We were watching our sheep tonight when we saw a glorious light shine and an angel appear. We were very much afraid but then the angel said, ‘Be not afraid for I bring you good news of great joy! To you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.’”

“And then the whole sky was filled with angels,” the shepherds continued excitedly. “They were all praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!’ So we hurried to see him and here he is!”

Mary and Joseph were full of wonder at the story of the shepherds. And the shepherds went

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back to their fields praising and glorifying God for these wonderful events.

Soon after Jesus was born, his parents took him to the Temple in Jerusalem to offer him to God, his Father, and also to offer a sacrifice of two young pigeons. This was the Jewish custom.

There was a very holy man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. It was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he saw the Christ, the one promised to the people of Israel. Simeon was in the Temple when Mary, Joseph, and Jesus came in. He took the child up in his arms and inspired by the Holy Spirit he said, “Now, Lord, you can let me die in peace, because I have seen the salvation which you have prepared; a light for the gentiles and the glory of your people, Israel!”

Once again, Mary and Joseph marveled at these words of a man who had never seen Jesus before that moment! Simeon blessed them and then spoke his last words to Mary. “This child is destined for the fall and the rising of many in Israel. The secret thoughts of many will be known. And a sword will pierce your own soul.”

And as Simeon had said, this child was not only for the Jews. There were some others to arrive: the gentiles. One day three gentiles from the East came to Jerusalem. These men were wise and had been studying the prophecies about the Messiah. They went to King Herod and asked, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

Like Saul, Herod was worried that a new king would take his place. But he did not say anything to the wise men about this. He went to the Jewish priests, who had studied the prophecies. “Where is this king supposed to be born?” he asked.

“In Bethlehem of Judea,” they answered. So Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem.

“Search hard for the child,” he said, “and when you have found him, let me know, so that I, too, can go and worship him.”

The wise men followed the star to Bethlehem. They were filled with great joy when they saw it stop above where the child was. They entered the house and saw Jesus with his Mother, Mary. At once, they fell to their knees and worshipped the new King. And then they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then the wise men were warned in a dream not to return to Herod. So they departed for their own country using a different route.

Just as Jesus was born for the wise men and other gentiles of that time, he was also born for you. He is the Messiah, the Savior that all generations waited for. That is why you celebrate his birthday every year. Christmas should be a time for you to grow closer to Jesus.

## Word to Know:

Advent

*Behold a rose of Judah  
From tender branch has sprung  
From Jesse's lineage coming  
As men of old have sung  
It came a flower bright  
Amid the cold of winter  
When half-spent was the night.*

*Christmas Hymn*

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