



Jesus' Family Tree

Goal: To learn about Jesus' family as well as our own.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Matthew 1:1–17

Jesus Christ is the son of Abraham and the son of David. Thus the genealogy sets Jesus squarely in the history of the people and promises of Israel. That is the primary purpose of Matthew 1:1–17; however, students of Scripture have detected other emphases. The mention of four women is out of character for an ancient genealogy. Each of them clearly have a story of courage and risk-taking that defied their roles, advancing God's purposes and preserving Jesus' lineage. Tamar and Ruth are left childless, which meant abandonment in the ancient world, yet both act with honor and loyalty to have a child. Rahab, relegated to being known only as a prostitute, chooses Yahweh and the Israelites, thus preserving her family. The wife of Uriah, Bathsheba, often labeled "seductress," is named by the prophet Nathan as a "lamb" exposing King David's abuse of power. Some suggest that these women are a legacy for Mary, another courageous risk-taker.

Another feature of the genealogy is the number of generations. Matthew names three generations of fourteen persons, or six sevens. The number seven marked perfection, while six symbolized imperfection or incompleteness. Therefore, it is surmised, the coming of Jesus initiates the seventh, hence complete and perfect, generation of generations. Jesus' Advent marks the end of waiting for God's long-promised Messiah and the beginning of God's kingdom on earth.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

As children grow and gain a sense of belonging in their families, they can express curiosity about their ancestors: What was it like for Mom and Dad when they were children? What were Grandma and Grandpa like in the old days? Where do I come from? Whom do I belong to? Knowing that Jesus was born and was part of a multi-generational family suggests that comparable questions could have been asked in Mary's and Joseph's household. What did it mean for Jesus to claim his earthly family? How can your children be encouraged to give thanks for all members of their family, even the ones unknown and unnamed?

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Help the children see the different relationships within a family tree. *Descendants* is a big word, so maybe talk about fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, and so on. Emphasize that our families are gifts from God to each of us. For older children, mention that the genealogy includes people who made mistakes and were unfaithful to God and to each other. Or talk about the missteps of the "heroes" in Jesus' family, such as Jacob, who stole his brother's birthright, and David, who committed adultery and had Bathsheba's husband killed. What does it mean that such people are in Jesus' family?

*Gracious and loving God, may we celebrate
all the ways we find ourselves in family.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 3, 14, 20

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

Advent calendar poster
from previous sessions

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: magazine
pages with pictures of
people

choice 2: children's
Bibles and Bible story
books

choice 3: doll house with
furniture, toy people

Exploring

choice 2: copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1

choice 4: copies of **GN 2**

Suggested children's
Bible: *Growing in God's
Love: A Story Bible*,
edited by Elizabeth F.
Caldwell and Carol A.
Wehrheim (Louisville, KY:
Flyaway Books, 2018),
www.pcusastore.com.

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner, and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

For “Guided Play” choice 1, gather pages from magazines with pictures of people. Be sure to have diversity in age, color, and ability.

Continue the Advent calendar that you started in Winter 1. You will use this Advent calendar poster for the rest of Advent.

Welcoming and Guided Play

F **LG** **FM** **C**

Greet children as they arrive, and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers that you do not know personally. Tell the parents, today's story is about Jesus' family.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity:

- 1. Making a Collage**—Provide pictures of people of all ages from magazines. Have children cut out pictures and glue them on paper to make a collage of people of all different ages. Encourage the children to talk about people from their family: cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and siblings.
- 2. Book Corner**—Set up a comfortable area for children to look through a collection of children's Bibles and Bible story books. Engage children in naming people from the Bible in the pictures.
- 3. Families**—Provide a doll house with furniture and different family members for the children to play with and explore. Talk to them about the different family members and ask questions about who is in their family.

T *If transition times have been difficult, consider introducing an object such as a baby Jesus doll or a stuffed lamb. Show the children where the object will be next and allow them to follow. Assure them that the object will follow them throughout the session and that they will see it when they return again.*



Transitioning to Story Time

When the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner.

God Made Me

M L

Sing or say the words to the song “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” and do the corresponding actions while pointing to each body part. For the first part of the line “God made me,” hug yourself. For the end of that line, “and I’m a child of God,” raise your hands in the air.

Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes.
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes.
God made me, and I’m a child of God.
Head and shoulders, knees and toes.

Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,
Mouth and nose.
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,
Mouth and nose.
God made me, and I’m a child of God.
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose.

Jesus Has a Family

L MS

Invite the children to follow the motions as you sing to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

Jesus has a family, (move arms in a wide circle)
Abraham to you and me. (point out, then at self)
All belong to God above. (point up)
All are joined by family love. (hug self)
Just like you and just like me, (point out, then at self)
Jesus has a family. (move arms in a wide circle)

M *Children requiring more movement than others can benefit from dynamic activities. Set clear expectations about boundaries for appropriate movement to position these children for success.*



Hearing the Story

L M T

Play and sing “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”—**SCM 14**—as an opening to story time.

Open the Bible to Matthew 1, so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that the story is about Jesus’ family.

Draw the children’s attention to the Advent calendar poster with the four envelopes. Tell them that today is the Third Sunday of Advent, a time when we look forward to the coming of the baby, Jesus. Remind the children that there are four weeks in Advent, and each week we will open an envelope and hear a story about Jesus.

Open envelope 3, and take out the story. Read **SCM 3**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

After the children have heard the story, tell the children that we learned that Jesus had many people who raised him, and relatives that came long before him who loved and worshiped God. He came from a family of many generations. Comment that we, too, all come from families. Tell the children about your family—parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so forth. Explain that even though you never met some relatives, you have been told stories about them. Jesus would have heard stories about his relatives who lived long before him. These are called *ancestors*. Invite the children to say, *ancestors*. We can find Jesus’ ancestors in the Bible, and we know many stories about Jesus’ ancestors.

EXPLORING GOD’S GRACE

1. I Love My Family

M MS D L

Talk with the children about who is in their family. Ask them who lives in their house. Remind the children that family is not **ONLY** who lives with you. It includes grandparents; a mom, dad, or siblings who may live in a different house; and so forth. Play a game to learn a little more about one another’s families.

Tell the children to listen to what you are saying and stand up if what you say is true about them. Allow the children time to talk about the people in their families if they wish. Have them sit after each statement. Be sure to help children who aren’t sure of the answers. (*Shonna, you have a big brother! You can stand up! What is your brother’s name?*)

- ✎ Stand up if you have a mother.
- ✎ Stand up if you have a father.
- ✎ Stand up if you have more than one family.
- ✎ Stand up if you have a big brother.
- ✎ Stand up if you have a little sister.
- ✎ Stand up if you have a pet.



- ✎ Stand up if you have a grandmother (*Nana, Gammy, Abuelita, and so forth*).
- ✎ Stand up if you have a grandfather (*Gramps, Opa, Abuelito, and so forth*).
- ✎ Stand up if you have a little brother.
- ✎ Stand up if you have a big sister.
- ✎ Stand up if you are a child of God.

Tell the children that we are all part of God's family.

2. Jesus' Family Cards



Give each child a copy of **GN 1**, Jesus' family cards. Provide crayons or markers for the children to color the pictures. Have the children cut the cards apart so they have four cards. Describe the picture of Abraham, and have the children find their Abraham card and hold it up. Read the Scripture verse and tell a little about the person in Jesus' family, using the suggestions below or what you know about the person:

Abraham and Sarah:

- ✎ They left their home and followed God.
- ✎ They made mistakes along the way.
- ✎ God promised them a big family with many generations.
- ✎ God changed their names from Abram to Abraham and from Sarai to Sarah.
- ✎ God kept this promise and many, many people call Abraham their ancestor.

Ruth:

- ✎ She left her home and followed her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Naomi's home.
- ✎ She promised she would stay with Naomi and become her family.
- ✎ She promised she would love God.
- ✎ She became the great-grandmother of King David.

King David:

- ✎ He was a shepherd boy.
- ✎ He was chosen by God to become king.
- ✎ He made many mistakes along the way.
- ✎ He was sorry for his mistakes.
- ✎ He was a good king who loved God.

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus:

- ✎ Mary was visited by an angel who told her she would have a baby.
- ✎ Joseph was visited by an angel who told him that Mary's baby was from God.
- ✎ Mary and Joseph took care of Jesus.



Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

Keep the Advent calendar poster for the next session.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

3. I Have a Family Too!

C FM

Give children a large piece of light-colored construction paper and crayons or markers. Talk with the children about who is in their family. Have them name parents/caregivers and siblings. Encourage them to think of cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Guide children to draw a circle for each of the people they name. Have them add facial features and hair. Write the names of family members as the children show you their picture. Encourage the children to take their pictures home and add to them with the help of their family members.

4. Coloring Page

C

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color by using the following wondering questions.

- ✎ I wonder, “How did Joseph remember all the family names?”
- ✎ I wonder, “What does Jesus think about these people?”
- ✎ I wonder, “Who is on my family tree?”

T *The best way to cope with transitions is to be prepared and know what is coming. Help the children know the plan for the session and identify times of transition in advance.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA LG

Call the children together, singing “Thank You, God, for Loving Me”—**SCM 20**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

If you would like to share a snack, now would be a good time. Pray:

God, we give our thanks:
for food that fills our tummies,
for time with friends and family,
for homes where we find love.
We give our thanks for these. Amen.

Remind the children that Jesus’ family had many different people in it, some more surprising than others. Even when they made mistakes, they loved God. Invite the children to learn more about their family this week. If you did choice 3 in “Exploring God’s Grace,” suggest that this will help their conversation.

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), God loves you and your family.”



“Then the LORD took Abram outside and said, ‘Look at the sky and see if you can count the stars. That’s how many descendants you will have.’”—Genesis 15:5



“I will go where you go, I will live where you live; your people will be my people, your God will be my God.”—Ruth 1:16



“David ruled all Israel with fairness and justice.”—1 Chronicles 18:14



“Name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”—Matthew 1:21

Jesus' Family Tree



Jesus hears about his family.

