



Jesus' Family Tree

(based on Matthew 1:1-17)

One day when Jesus was a boy, he might have asked his mother, “Ima [EE-ma], who are my people? At synagogue today, Rabbi said he was from the tribe of Asher. Who am I from?”

Mary probably said, “Let’s go talk with your father. He loves to tell this story.”

Joseph said, “My son, who you come from and who your people are is a great question. You will recognize some names, and they all have a story to tell—some exciting and some ordinary—but all tried to walk faithfully with our God.” Joseph continued, “Jesus, you are the son of Abraham and the son of David.”

Jesus nodded. He knew that all the Jewish people were from Abba Abraham. “Wait! I am from King David?” he gasped.

Joseph began again, “Yes, Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah . . .”

Jesus couldn’t help himself. “Judah? I am from the tribe of Judah the Lion? Wow!”

Joseph continued, “And Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron. . . .” The names kept rolling on, “. . . and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed . . .”

“Wait a minute,” Jesus interrupted. “Ruth. That’s the third woman you’ve mentioned. Why do you say their names?”

Mary said, “Jesus, there are women and men of faith in our story, but often it is the men who get recognized. These women were brave and took great risks. Ruth wasn’t Jewish, but she pledged her loyalty to her mother-in-law Naomi and to our God. She became the great-grandmother of King David. You must always respect women and tell their stories too, my son.”

Jesus nodded. “Tell me more about David,” he begged.

Joseph said, “You know he was a great king, yet . . .” he paused and then continued, “even David, as well as others, made mistakes or bad choices, but that doesn’t mean that they aren’t important members of our family story. We are like everyone else. We try to be faithful and follow God, but sometimes we fail. Now, we’re only halfway through!”

Joseph continued, “Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David . . .” He continued for fourteen more generations until he said, “and Jacob, your grandfather, was my father, and I, Joseph, am the husband of your mother, Mary.”

Jesus probably thanked his parents and ran off to play, thinking of all he had heard. Then a funny thought popped into his head. “Hmm,” he thought, “Abba didn’t say he was my father. I wonder what that means? I think there’s more to this story!”



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Advent wreath—When your family is together for a meal this week, read the Bible story and light three purple candles of the wreath. Since the Bible passage is long and has a lot of names, you may want to read or listen to the e-book or story audio available at www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads.
- Nativity scene—In your child-friendly nativity set, add Mary and Joseph—Jesus' family—to the stable scene. We'll add more figures each week.
- Christmas symbols guessing game: Can you guess which common Christmas decoration material reminds us of the gathering of family, as well as never-ending love? Answer: The wreath.



Responding to God's Grace

- Watch the YouTube video “Matthew 1:1-16: The genealogy of Jesus Christ” (bit.ly/2GNLYci) to see who were the ancestors of Jesus. It's pretty fast, so you may want to watch it again or pause it along the way. Then invite everyone to choose a name from Jesus' family tree (found in Matthew 1:1–17) and research who that person was. Some may have lots of information about them, while others may have very little.
- Use your family name to make an acrostic. Take a large sheet of paper and write your last name down the left-hand side of the paper, one letter at a time. Then use each letter to start a word, phrase, or sentence about your family.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Do some research on your family tree. Talk with relatives about your ancestors. Listen to stories that are told about them. If you don't have a big family tree, don't forget that you are part of God's big family, the church. Find out who are some of the ancestors of your church. What people were a part of your congregation from the very beginning and through the years? How can you find out these stories?
- This is the third week of Advent, often celebrating joy! What can you do to celebrate joy this week in your family? Have a special dinner? Make a present for someone in your family? Sing songs? Write a story? Celebrate your family this week!
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Loving God, thank you for our family and all the people who have come before us. Thank you for calling us to be part of your big family, the church. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.