

Family Tree

By Heath Howe



Have fun sharing about your family while learning about members of Jesus' family, and come away with a homemade craft that will serve as a decorative reminder. A perfect indoor, cold winter day activity, and can be done in two parts over several days.

For
Young Family

Season
Winter

Needed

Small branch with smaller extending branches or large stick (a pole with attached wire or pipe cleaners may also be used), container to hold branch upright (i.e. coffee can), sand and shovel, felt or construction paper for making ornaments, markers or paint and brushes, scissors, hole punch, ribbon, brown paint (optional), Your favorite children's Bible (I recommend *The Beginner's Bible: Timeless Children's Stories* by Zondervan), post-it notes, pencil

Prepare in Advance

- Read through the entire activity before you begin
- Secure a table large enough for all involved around which to gather
- Place scissors, markers/paint and brushes, felt or construction paper, hole punch, and ribbon in the center of the table
- With a pencil mark a post-it note for each of the following bible stories from the children's bible:
 - Abraham and Sarah
 - Joseph
 - Moses
 - Joshua
 - David
 - Mary and Joseph
 - Zachariah and Elizabeth
 - John the Baptist

Activity Plan

Part A

1. Gather as a family around your craft area and have the oldest child in the family read or say the following prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for making us a family, and thank you for giving us Jesus who also had a family. As we share stories today, may we learn more and more about your love for us and our love for one another. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

2. Explain that today the family will make a family tree to help us learn about members of Jesus' family and recall stories of our own family.
3. Walk in your back yard or favorite park/wooded area and hunt for your tree. Have the two youngest members fill a container with sand and "plant" the tree. If finding a stick is not possible make your own

using a wooden pole and attaching wire or pipe cleaners to serve as branches. Paint it brown to look like a tree. Return to craft table.

4. Begin by sharing stories about the following family members and explain how all are related (if desired add other categories that meet your family needs). With each story invite members to make an ornament out of felt or construction paper that will remind your family member of that person (For example, if grandma loves to make cookies with her grandchildren then an ornament of a cookie with her name on it would be just right.)
 - Great grandparents
 - Grandparents
 - Aunts and uncles
 - Cousins
 - Siblings/step siblings
 - Birth stories of each child
5. Place a hole at the top of each ornament and pull a ribbon through. Invite members to decorate the tree, leaving room for other ornaments to be added. (NOTE: Depending on your family, this may be enough for one day. If so, feel free to do the rest of the activity the following day or later.)

Part B

6. Once family stories have been told and ornaments have been made, explain that you will now hear stories from Jesus's family. As Christian's we know these are our family stories as well.
7. Read the bible passages marked for Abraham and Sarah, Jesus' ancestors. Decide together on a symbol needs to represent Abraham and Sarah. Make the ornament and place their name on it just as you did with your own family ornaments.
8. Do the same with other members of Jesus' family in the following order (feel free to take turns reading the passages with older readers in the family):
 - Joseph
 - Moses
 - Joshua
 - David
 - Mary and Joseph
 - Zachariah and Elizabeth
 - Jesus' birth story
 - John the Baptist
9. Allow conversation and storytelling to flow naturally. Jesus family tree was shared largely via stories and was not written down the way our family history might be today. Note both differences and similarities between your family and Jesus' family. Enjoy the exploration and conversation.
10. Place your tree in a prominent place as a reminder of all you have learned
11. Closing Prayer (have another family member say the following)

Dear God, we thank you for this time of learning about ourselves and about you. May we continue to feel your love in our family and may we share that love with others we meet and bring into our home. Amen.

