



READ: Isaiah 11:1-5, 10 (NirV)

Jesse's family is like a tree that has been cut down. A new little tree will grow from its stump. From its roots a Branch will grow and produce fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on that Branch. The Spirit will help him to be wise and understanding. The Spirit will help him make wise plans and carry them out. The Spirit will help him know the Lord and have respect for him. The Branch will take delight in respecting the Lord. He will not judge things only by the way they look. He won't make decisions based simply on what people say. He will always do what is right when he judges those who are in need. He'll be completely fair when he makes decisions about poor people. When he commands that people be punished, it will happen. When he orders that evil people be put to death, it will take place. He will put on godliness as if it were his belt. He'll wear faithfulness around his waist. At that time, here is what the man who is called the Root of Jesse will do. He will be like a banner that brings nations together. They will come to him. And the place where he rules will be glorious.

ENTER THE STORY:

Imagine a tree with roots that go deep into the ground, and twist and turn throughout your whole yard. *Can you see it?* Now imagine it has really big branches that are so high you have to squint at the sky to see them. That is what our Jesse Tree is like, but it's not a real tree, silly! It's just a picture that represents a family with lots of people in it.

You see, Jesse was the father of David, the boy who threw a stone and took down a giant. *Do you remember David?* He was the young shepherd boy who became a mighty king. God made a really BIG promise to David. God told him that his sons, and grandsons, and great-grandsons would ALWAYS be king and sit on the throne. Forever and ever and ever. But David's sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons did not obey God or follow after him. They loved the things of the world more...and their kingdoms fell...and it seemed like the whole family of Jesse and David had been chopped off right down to the roots. Nothing was left but a dead stump.

But God is faithful to his word, so he promised to send someone NEW from David's line to rescue his people. This person would sit on David's throne and be the best king and a banner of salvation to ALL of the world.

Who do you think this NEW person is? It's Jesus!

When Jesus comes – ALL kinds of different people will race to see him because they will know that he is the special someone God promised to send.

When all hope seems lost, and nothing but a dead stump remains, God reminds us that he and he alone brings dead things to life. Praise the LORD!

This is just the beginning of our season of Advent, and already our hearts are FULL of hope and joy! We're going to hear more stories about the people in Jesus' family history and about how they helped God bring new life to his people.

PRAY: Heavenly Father, you truly are our only hope, and we praise you that you bring life from dead stumps. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to save us from ourselves and be our banner of salvation! Would you help us pay close attention to him this Advent? Amen.