

# ARCHIBALD & JUDE



## BENEATH THE TREE

SERIES CHILDREN'S HANDBOOK

Leaders and Parents Guidance Notes

# LEADERS AND PARENTS' GUIDANCE NOTES

# NOTES TO GROUP LEADERS AND PARENTS

This handbook is designed to be used alongside the video resource. It has been designed to be an easy to run short series, either in the run up to Christmas or to run over the Christmas school holidays whilst regular children's ministry takes a break. Given that is a busy season, it is slightly different to our other Jude's Sunday Gang series.

For a Christmas series, you might feel it isn't particularly Christmassy. We do meet some of the nativity characters and hear some carols. However, rather than focussing on the narrative of the nativity, we look at the big story of the Bible by using three trees from Eden, Calvary and the New Creation. So, this series has children in mind who are already familiar with the Christmas story and would benefit from something a bit different at Christmas, seeing how it fits into the whole gospel.

If you are using this as part of a group, then the Children's Handbook is designed to have all you need in one place. Before they watch the video, or if you need a 'time filler' at any point in the session, the children can use the **Activity Pages**. They're at the back so that children are not distracted by them when looking at the Bible questions.

After watching the video, give each child a booklet and look first at the **Series Overview** page. Each week, encourage the children to complete one column of the

page to add the details of the tree they learnt about that week.

Then turn to the **Question Sheet** page for that session. Ideally you would discuss and work through these in small groups by age but it could be done altogether or individually.

Each video contains a **Christmas Carol with Michael** and we've included the the lyrics of several verses to remind children of the meaning, or in case you want to use the words to sing it together in your session.

There is a **Take Home Extra Section** which builds upon that week's teaching to look at back at home, with a study for each of the six days between Sundays. However, you may be concerned that if you send the books home, they will not come back again next week, so the **Take Home Extra Section** for each session is also available digitally to send home or printed separately.

**Parents** – If you already have regular Bible reading material in place, please do not feel obligated to change or supplement it with these studies. They are not essential to understanding or preparing for the sessions, but are designed to build upon and enrich what they have already learnt. These are passages that, in some cases, you won't find in a story Bible and we recommend the New International Version (NIV). Older children (8-11s) may be able to manage at least some of these studies on their own but younger children (4-7s) will need help understanding and answering the questions. The questions are fairly challenging and benefit from being discussed so we've

included some answers for parents in this booklet. However both you and your child(ren) may have other equally valid ideas. Your involvement will encourage your child(ren) and give you insight into what they've learnt.

**All the materials are designed to be printed on A4 paper to create an A5 booklet when folded. When printing, use the "Print on both sides" option, selecting "Flip pages on the short edge" (or similar depending on your printer driver). If you don't have the "Print on both sides" option, use "Manually print on both sides" (or similar) and feed the paper back into the printer when prompted. In all cases use the A4 paper size.**

# TAKE HOME EXTRA SECTION ANSWERS

## Week 1

### Day 1 - Curse Crusher

Read Genesis 3:11-22

God gives the curse for disobeying him, but did you spot he also promises that one of Eve's children will crush the serpent (Satan)? (v15)

Who do you think the serpent crusher is? **Jesus**

What do you think it means that he will crush the serpent?  
**It means that one day Satan (the serpent) will be defeated. He will be gone forever.**

What does this show us that God is like when he promises someone who will break the curse, right from the start?  
**This didn't take God by surprise. God always had good plan to rescue us.**

### Day 2 – Family Tree

Look at Luke 3:23-38

Luke traces Jesus's family tree right back to Adam.

Why is it important that Jesus is connected to Adam? Jesus needed to be fully human and descended from Adam so that he could pay the price for human sin.

What is the same for everyone from Adam through to Joseph? They all inherited the curse of sin.

Did you notice it says in verse 23 'Jesus was the son of Joseph, or so it was thought'. Why is Jesus different from Joseph and all those who came before him and why is that so important? Jesus wasn't related to Joseph, but was a miracle baby sent from God. That cut the line of inherited sin and death so that Jesus had no sin and so was different to every person who had ever gone before him since Adam. It's like Jesus was another Adam. A fresh start. Made by God.

## Day 3 – Stump of Jesse

Read Isaiah 10:33-11:5

We compared being cut off from God to a tree that is cut off from its roots. In 10:33 Isaiah uses this picture to show God's judgement.

What image gives us hope in 11:1? A new shoot symbolises the hope of a fresh start, a new beginning – life out of something that looks dead (humanity).

Do you know who Jesse is? (See 1 Samuel 16:1) Jesse is King David's dad, an ancestor of Jesus.

Who is the person this passage is speaking about who will be one of Jesse's descendants? **Jesus.**

What will he be like? (v2-5) **He will be filled with the Spirit of God making him wise, understanding, a counsellor, powerful, knowledgeable, and fearing the Lord. He will delight in God.**

## Day 4 – Cut off

Read John 15:1-8

Jesus himself used an image of being like a branch that is cut off from the plant.

What do you think Jesus means when he says that we cannot bear fruit if we are not connected to him? (v4-5) **It means we cannot do anything that pleases God on our own.**

What happens to the branches that do not stay connected to the vine? (v6) **They are thrown away and destroyed.**

What does it mean to remain in Jesus? **To be connected to Jesus means to trust him as the boss of your life and the only way you can be saved.**

## Day 5 – Call him ‘Jesus’

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Look at verse 21 – why is Joseph told to call the baby ‘Jesus’? **It means he will save people from their sins.**

Where had Jesus come from? (v20) **Heaven**

How can we see that God had planned to send Jesus all along? (v22) **It had been prophesied many times going back to the Fall.**

## Day 6 – He’s arrived

Read Matthew 3:1-17

How can we see from what John the Baptist says that the problem Jesus has come to deal with is sin? (v2, v6, v11) **John preaches the need for repentance, confession and baptism. This is all in the context of Jesus coming to forgive those who repent of their sin.**

John also uses the image of a tree being cut down (v10). What is John using this picture language to teach the people? **He is teaching about God’s judgement on those who do not repent.**

How does this passage show us that Jesus is the one John had been expecting, the promised one from God who brought God’s kingdom? (v11, v14, v16-17) **John recognises that Jesus is much greater than him eg his baptism is by the Holy Spirit, John’s is by water; Jesus will gather**

believers to himself and will judge unbelievers; the Spirit of God and God's authentication comes upon Jesus at his baptism.