

Christmas Tree

This is a session looking at Christmas through the 'lens' of a Christmas tree.

Bible - Psalm 1

Message version –

How well God must like you—
you don't hang out at Sin Saloon,
you don't slink along Dead-End Road,
you don't go to Smart-Mouth College.

Instead you thrill to God's Word,
you chew on Scripture day and night.
You're a tree replanted in Eden,
bearing fresh fruit every month,
Never dropping a leaf,
always in blossom.

God charts the road you take.
The road they take is Skid Row.

NIV Version -

Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,

but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither –
whatever they do prospers.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

The Talk

Here's what God is saying. It's the same thing he said to the people of Israel back in the Old Testament part of the Bible. He said to them "This day... I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live." (Deuteronomy 30.19).

God always wants the best for us. Jesus came into the world to give us life and hope and a future. The devil wants to rob people, steal from them and kill them. That is why the world is so messed up. He pretends that things are good for us but God knows best and he wants us to have a great life that we can only find in him.

So in Psalm 1, God says, "Don't hang out with people who do wrong things, who abuse people. Don't walk about in gangs looking to do bad stuff. Don't have anything to do with this kind of behaviour."

Instead, be different. Romans 12.1-2 talks about this and basically calls it having a mind-transplant! The Bible says let God change your way of thinking so that you think and do God-things. The way to do this is to know what God says and God thinks - this comes from knowing the Bible and hearing God's voice. God is always speaking to us but we have to tune our ears in to the Bible and to how God speaks to us. We all hear God in different ways. But what God says will always be in line with the principles and truth of the Bible.

So we have to say to God, 'thank you that when I became a Christian that you changed my heart and put your Holy Spirit in me. Help me to live the life that you meant for me to live'. And then we have to make good choices - in fact if we're really living for God we won't want to do bad things!

As we do this, Psalm 1 says that the reward is amazing! God says that we become like a tree - that means we're solid, stable, we're uniquely shaped, we have unique callings and God will 'plant' us (put us) in different places. Trees are full of life, of light, different kinds of branches and leaves (skills and abilities and passions).

As we stay 'planted' - this means that we stay close to God, connected to God's people, following God and his ways - we will see results. We will see fruit grow (our life and other people's lives changed). We won't get blown down or blown away by what goes on in society. Whatever you do will prosper.

And this goes right back to what Jesus said in Matthew 6.33 which is that as we put God first, seek his kingdom and his right ways of living and doing things, everything else will be added to us. God is a rewarder of those who put him first.

So be like a tree, planted in God's truth and see God's life burst up out of you to the world around you. You were born to live. You were born to make a difference!

Response - in Twelve Words

If you have a testimony (how you became a Christian), are you able to summarise this into just twelve words.

Think of how you could summarise what God has done for you / how he's changed your life (a 'God story') in just twelve words.

Go around the group and ask people who are comfortable doing this, to tell their 'God story' or their testimony in twelve words.

Create Your Own 12 Days Of Christmas Song

If you're feeling creative (and brave e.g. check their lyrics first!!) then you get the young people to write and then perform their own '12 Days of Christmas' using this instrumental found on youtube.

You may want to give people a week or two notice, to prepare and write their own lyrics!

Here's a '12 Days of Christmas Kids Song' - This is a kids' song so you can have a chuckle as you watch! It's high quality but I can't imagine every teenager queuing up to sing it, so you'll need to make it a laugh!



Direct link - https://youtu.be/QYyhDvuq8_Y (checked April 2019)

Downloads

There are 7 downloads for this session (use what you need / want). Underneath each download is an explanation of how you could use this. Each of the 3 sections also includes a Bible verse for people to lookup in the session and for someone to read out.

(Original Christmas Tree download taken from <http://all-free-download.com>)

Decorated Christmas Tree



[Download 1 - Fully decorated Christmas Tree](#)

This could be used to illustrate how God has good gifts for us as his children. These aren't always the kinds of shiny and exciting gifts that people around us may like (but they sometimes are!) God always does good for us and to us. He always wants the best for us. He knows just what we're like, what we need and who we are. The Bible tells us that if we ask God for anything (that's right and good for us!) then he hears us and loves to give us good gifts. As we put God first, these things often just 'seem to happen' (not coincidences but God-incidences!).

Maybe encourage people to ask God for good things and think about what God has done for us.

Remind everyone that when God looks at us (through Jesus) he sees a shiny Christmas tree. He is for us, not against us, loves us and wants the best for us. God's best is always best!

[Bible ref - Matthew 6.33](#)

Blank Christmas Tree and Decorations



[Download 2 - Blank Christmas Tree](#)



[Download 3 - Large Blank Christmas Tree \(top half\)](#)



[Download 4 - Large Blank Christmas Tree \(lower half\)](#)



[Download 5 - Christmas Tree Decorations](#)

These are the same thing. Download 2 is a blank tree on one A4 page and Downloads 3 and 4 are the same tree over two A4 pages to put together for a slightly larger (nearer A3 version).

Download 5 works with this - it's a page with 3 stars on it; 3 Christmas decorations on it; and 3 ribbons on it. You'll have to print off as many of these as needed for at least one each for every one in your group etc.

Everyone will need a pen (and you'll need sticky tape / blue tack etc).

Encourage everyone to:

1. Write the name or initials of someone they are praying for on the star. Or a family etc. So for example, you could just write "LA, LA and family"
2. Write a prayer request on the ribbon. You can make it as clear or 'coded' as you like so as not to identify anyone or anything. You could even write, 'that thing I've been praying for' as God knows!
3. On the Christmas ball decoration, write something that you are thanking God for or something that he has done or something that he is worthy of thanking him for. So for example, 'thank you for healing my mum' or 'thank you that you love me' etc.

Now go and attach this to the tree.

[Bible verse - Ephesians 6.18](#)

Blank Personalised Christmas Trees



[Download 6 - Christmas Tree Blank \(2 on a page\)](#)



[Download 7 - Christmas Tree With Psalm 1 \(2 on a page\)](#)

In this part, you have a couple of options. You can use the Christmas tree with part of Psalm 1 written on it already. There are two on an A4 page (so A5 size each).

This will need preparation before where you print off one tree for each young person. Name each one and put an encouraging God-message on the front or back for each one. Ask God for something encouraging and life-giving for each individual young person, asking the most appropriate youth leader to write them (e.g. if a young person has a good connection with a leader then ask that leader to write the card).

Alternatively, print off a tree for each young person. If they are able, get the young person to write the first three verses of Psalm 1 onto their tree. You can even see if anyone can learn the verses off by heart.

Or maybe just write key words from Psalm 1 that speak to them. Or simply just draw something meaningful - trying to be aware of the different needs / capabilities of each young person etc.

The tree is then theirs to take away. Be as creative as you like in presenting this - e.g. add in little goodie bags, gifts, presents and more!!

[Bible Ref - Matthew 7.11](#)

Response

If you feel like having a response time or praying for people etc, especially if young people are struggling or will find Christmas tough, then now is a good time to do this!