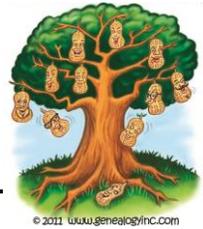




# Who's Up Your Family Tree?

## Outline Plan



### **Introduction for leaders**

The original version of this was written because there were teenagers in the youth group who were adopted. It is posted under '[Jesus' Family Tree - Plan](#)'. When we thought of repeating this session a few years later, our youth worker suggested that we focus more on some of the people within Jesus' family tree who themselves had to overcome the problem of having difficult parents or grandparents. This demonstrates that it is possible to break away from a difficult family history and be very different from your parents. Those who have been damaged by difficult family situations must ultimately choose between being a victim or being a survivor. However healing can sometimes be a long process. Leaders need to deal with such people in a calm, sensitive, patient and prayerful manner.

This is a session that requires thorough preparation but it is worth it. It could be extended into a short series. It was used with 14-18 year olds and may need to be adjusted slightly for a younger group.

### **Aim/s select from**

- To look at some of the people in the Bible who had difficult parents/relatives but who succeeded in being very different from them.
- To encourage them to accept themselves regardless of their family background.
- To show that our family background need not control our lives.

### **Resources – possible options - select as required**

For starters and games see the resource – [Activity Ideas for Family Issues](#)

BBC web site <http://www.bbcwhodoyouthinkyouare.com/>

Jesus family tree on flip chart

Romans 8:37 written on a poster or projector

DVD clip from a film in which there is a relative whom everyone dislikes e.g. 'Ella Enchanted' or 'Sleeping Beauty'

### **Key Bible verse**

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Romans 8:37 NIV

### **Bible references**

Matthew 1:1-16

Romans 8:28-39

Genesis 19:30-38; Deuteronomy 2:9; Deuteronomy 23:3: Moab ancestor of Ruth

Joshua 3 & 6:25: Rahab grandmother of Boaz

2 Samuel 11 & 12:24-25; 1 Kings 1:28-30: Solomon & his parents David & Bathsheba

2 Chronicles 28-32: Hezekiah & his father Ahaz

2 Chronicles 33-35: Josiah, his father Amon & his grandfather Manasseh

### **Games and other starters**

[Activity Ideas for Family Issues](#)



### **Introduction**

One option is to chat about the recent trend for people to research their family histories. One helpful example for this theme is Actress Patsy Kensit . Her father had a criminal record and was mixed up with the most notorious London criminals of the 1960's. Her grandfather also had a criminal record. Discovering the respectable side of her family history was a tremendous encouragement to Patsy. More details below

We are going to take a look at some of the people in Jesus' family tree as they were quite a mixed bunch. He had some very disreputable ancestors as well as people who with God's help, managed to deal with some very challenging family situations.

### **Short introductory talk**

Have a shortened version of Jesus' family tree written on a flip chart or overhead. Pick out a few people such as those in the list below and give a few key facts. You could alternate between 2 leaders for this perhaps. A change of presenter helps concentration spans. You could include people like:

- Leah was not loved by her husband Jacob as much as his other wife, her sister Rachel. This must have been really difficult for her, but she was a godly woman and God honoured her by giving her 6 sons, one of whom was Judah from whom both David and Jesus were descended.
- Judah and **Tamar** – Genesis 38.
- **Boaz** and **Ruth** are famous for being the grandparents of David. Boaz' grandmother was **Rahab** the Canaanite who came from Jericho. Rahab was a pagan and may also have been a prostitute until the Israelites arrived and she decided that she had enough faith in their God to make it worthwhile betraying her own people. Joshua 3 and 6:25.
- **Ruth** was a foreigner. She was descended from **Moab**, who was the son of Lot and Lot's daughter. Genesis 19:30-38 (Deuteronomy 2:9 & 19; Deut. 23:3)
- **Solomon** should never have been born when you consider how his parents, David and Bathsheba got together. The fact that he was an ancestor of Jesus shows how completely God forgives. (He was Bathsheba's second son as her first son died) 2 Samuel 12:24-25; 1 Kings 1:15-17
- **Josiah**, his father Amon & his grandfather Manasseh. **Manasseh** was so evil he would make some modern dictators look tame in comparison. He even sacrificed his own son to the pagan god Molech. 2 Chronicles 33.

### **Main part**

We are going to take a closer look at some of the people in Jesus' family tree. There were some really nasty and disreputable characters amongst them. He did not have only lovely people as his ancestors. This also means that some of his other ancestors had to deal with some very challenging family situations. With help from God they were able to become very different sort of people from others in their family. We inherit much from our families but we can choose to be different.

**Interactive section**

In either groups or 'stations', take a closer look at people like Solomon, Josiah, Hezekiah, Moab, Ruth. Each group or 'station' to take one character with a leader who has read up on him/her.

Short profiles on Josiah and Manasseh in leaders notes below

**Discussion suggestions**

- How might this person have felt about the way their parents/grandparents had behaved?
- What choices might they have had to make?
- What sort of person did they turn out to be themselves?
- Where might they have got the strength from to make positive choices?
- Can they be an inspiration to us in any way?

**Groups report back & sum up**

All of us will have inherited both positive and negative things from our parents and all of us will pass both positive and negative things on to our children. It is possible to escape those negative 'hand-me-down' issues. It is our choices that make us what we become and God is very willing to help us when we ask for his help with our positive choices.

**Application, Reflection & prayer**

- Create a "small family prayer tree". Think about how to pray for key members of your family
- Ask God to help you accept people as they are. This can be harder with your own family.
- Ask God to help you to separate how you feel about someone's behaviour from how you feel about them as people.
- If you have a big problem with someone, ask God to show you at least one good thing about them. Each day, pray "God please bless X", even if this is through gritted teeth! It's a good start!
- If someone is trapped in a pattern of bad behaviour or negative thinking, ask God to show them a way out. Anyone can change, so pray!
- Ask God to help you to react differently when a family member winds you up etc.
- Ask God to help you not to do things that cause problems for others and to have the courage to apologise when you do.
- Let them design a poster with the verse from Romans 8:37 – "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." NIV



Image of t shirt from <http://kaosrohani.com/home> - this one sadly is no longer available



## Leaders' notes

### ***Patsy Kensit***

Actress Patsy Kensit who stars in Emmerdale has been part of a BBC series that traces people's family history. Her father had a criminal record and was mixed up with the most notorious London criminals of the 1960's. Her grandfather also had a criminal record. She felt that she didn't have much to be proud of as far as her family were concerned.

However research further back into her family history revealed .....

...another direct ancestor – Reverend James Mayne, for 40 years curate of St Matthew's Church in Bethnal Green. "It's really weird to think that my Dad, who grew up on the wrong side of the tracks in Bethnal Green, has this ancestor – nearly 200 years ago – who was a clergyman in the same area," she says.

Records at Lambeth Palace Library show that James Mayne dedicated his life to helping the poor and was granted a prestigious honorary degree by the Archbishop of Canterbury. "I'm bursting with pride," says a delighted Patsy. "At the beginning I knew nothing, it stopped with my dad. Now I know about five generations of the Kensit line; and it's respectable! It's wonderful to carry this with me."

Discovering the respectable side of her family history was a tremendous encouragement to Patsy.

<http://www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/episode/patsy-kensit>

### ***Interactive section***

In either groups or 'stations', take a closer look at people like Solomon, Josiah, Hezekiah, Moab, Ruth. Each group or 'station' to take one character with a leader who has read up on him/her.

The difference is that with 'stations', the young people can wander round at their own pace and choose a story that particularly appeals to them. The leader can chat about their Bible character individually with the teenagers. This may appeal to some unchurched people who are wary of anything too much like 'Bible study'. They can take a quick look at several people.

With groups, everyone will discuss the same character at the same time. This can be very stimulating and help quieter members of the group. Issues can be covered in more depth.

Either display information about the characters (for the stations) or read & chat about them (with the groups). Have a large sheet of paper where the young people can write down thoughts relating to how these people may have been affected by their family background.

### ***Josiah***

Josiah became King of Judah at the age of 8 because his father King Amon was murdered! We are not told much about Amon except that he was little better than his father before him – King Manasseh. So let's start by looking at Manasseh. They really don't come much worse than him. (Leaders might like to draw a simple comparison with a recent dictator.)

### ***Manasseh's profile***

2 Chronicles 33 – verses 1-9 for the evil part of the reign; 10-13 for his conversion & 15-20 for the good part of the reign.

- King of Judah aged 12, reigned 55 years



- Worshipped idols & built altars to pagan gods within God's Temple
- Sacrificed his sons to pagan gods (compare 2 Kings 3:26-27)
- Heavily involved in the occult, making contact with evil spirits
- Led the people astray, encouraging them to do evil
- God spoke to him but he didn't listen
- Assyrian army captured him & put him in chains with a hook in his nose
- He prayed to God, said sorry & asked for help
- God restored him as King of Judah
- He commanded everyone to worship only God

So things were just starting to improve when Manasseh died and his son King **Amon** put them right back to where they had been during the first part of Manasseh's reign. Of course he had been through some pretty bad stuff when he was young but instead of letting God heal him he hardened himself and maybe somehow got hooked on it. Well if he didn't hate that kind of life his army officers certainly weren't prepared to go back to it so they decided that assassinating him was the best option. Then other people killed those officers so there was a quite a blood bath and young Josiah was caught up in the middle of it. 2 Chronicles 33:21-25

### ***Discussion suggestions:***

- So after such a difficult & eventful start to life, what kind of person did Josiah turn out to be?
- How might Josiah have felt about his father & grandfather?
- How might they have influenced him?
- What choices did he have to make?
- Why do you think he was able to recover from his past?
- Is there anything here that helps you or a friend?

### ***Josiah's profile***

Full story - 2 Chronicles 34-35 & 2 Kings 22-23.

- King of Judah aged 8, reigned 31 years
- He followed God & did right. 2 Chronicles 34:2
- Age 16 he began to follow God more seriously & had the pagan altars destroyed. Verses 3-4
- He got rid of the living quarters of the male prostitutes from within the Temple. 2 Kings 23:7
- He destroyed the site used for child sacrifices. 2 Kings 23:10
- He arranged for the Temple to be repaired. 2 Chronicles 34:8
- They found the books of Moses that had been lost & Josiah realised how badly they had gone wrong as a nation. 2 Chronicles 34 verses 14-15 and 19-21
- He renewed the nation's commitment to God & led a religious revival with a huge Passover celebration. 2 Chronicles 34:29-33 and 35 verses 1 and 18

So in fact Josiah was much more like his Great Grandfather, Hezekiah who also had an evil father but who himself led a religious revival. See 2 Chronicles 28-29

Writer: © Brenda Lord with Ian Mullens; posted 29 May 2015, may need another edit

Image: <http://www.genealogyinc.com/humor/genealogy-crazy-tree/>