

When I was a Guide I started investigating my family tree. I bought this file to record everything in and I wrote to my grandparents asking them lots of questions. It was a really interesting thing to do. I found a picture of my grandmother, my dad's mum, when she was the same age as I was then – and I was so surprised because I looked so like her. Now I know I look really like my Dad too.

My other grandmother was called Doris Victoria, Victoria because she was born on Queen Victoria's birthday just a year after the Queen had died. She never liked the name, I don't know why, but I carried on the name and called my daughter Louise Victoria.

The story I liked best though was of Doris Victoria's grandmother's father. His family had moved to London from the Kent countryside to work on the railways which were quite a new fangled thing at the time. He was known as Mad Jesus and when my great great grandmother, his daughter, got married and went off on honeymoon by train he put firecrackers on the line to give her a noisy send off!

We find a lot of family trees recorded in the Bible including two for Jesus. He had some incredible ancestors, some of whose stories are also in the Bible. You may have heard of David the shepherd boy who killed the giant Goliath with a stone thrown from his sling and then some years later became King.

And we mustn't forget his remarkable mother Mary. We don't know what plans she had of her own for when she grew up but when God asked her to be the mother of Jesus she said yes and threw herself whole heartedly into the job, bringing up not only Jesus but also his brothers and sisters, some of whom were quite possibly step brothers and sisters.

The words of Jesus which we heard a moment ago began with a vine and its branches, a bit like a tree.

If you go to Whitchurch Junior or Infant Academy, I hope you recognised the first verse because it's the verse attached to your vision statement: *Learning as we grow, growing as we learn, rooted in Jesus.*

It's the wrong time of year to have been able to bring you in a vine to show you. The vine the people listening to Jesus would have imagined is a grape vine. I have a hop vine in my garden from which we can make beer rather than wine. But they're similar in that the branches grow long and winding and they get tangled up with each other and with any other plants growing near them, a bit like our family trees and some of the complicated relationships recorded in them.

The other verses were about love and joy. They're both things we hear a lot about in the bible. Jesus wants us to know that we are loved by him and by God and that we are part of their family and he wants us to make ourselves at home in their love. Jesus says if we do that we will find that our lives are filled with joy.

And just as importantly, Jesus wants us to show love to our families, our friends and all those we meet. We must care for them and show them kindness. Because it is as we practice being loving ourselves that we understand God's love for us.

So it's really good that today we can celebrate and say thank you to those who love and care for us, especially our mums, and say thank you to God that these people are in our lives because not only does it help us but they are helping to spread Jesus' most important message - that the world is more like the home God wants it to be when people treat each other with love.