

CELEBRATING ADVENT

CREATING TRADITIONS FOR YOUR
FAMILY



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WHY CELEBRATE ADVENT?

- In the midst of our busy, commercialized world, practicing Advent keeps your family focused on the true meaning of Christmas.
- Practicing Advent builds anticipation - not just for Christmas morning and gifts under the tree, but for the coming of Christ & celebrating His birth.
- It's a great way to build faith practices into your family's routine. By the end of Advent, taking time to focus on Jesus will be an established habit that you can carry into the New Year.

ADVENT (N.)

Comes from the Latin word for "coming." Advent describes the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day. This season is intended to look back to the first coming of Christ in Bethlehem, and look forward to His Second Coming.

WHERE DO WE START?

Celebrating Advent is about establishing a tradition or routine that your family can commit to practicing during each day of the season. The first Sunday of Advent is December 3rd, but many families start celebrating on December 1st.

Your tradition can be as simple or elaborate as you want it to be. The important thing is that whatever you decide to do,, you remain consistent during this season. Only you know your family, your schedules & your personalities. There are options to celebrate this season for every type of family, in every life stage.



FREE RESOURCES AND IDEAS

ADVENT PAPER CHAIN

Age Recommendation:
Toddler-Lower Elementary

Create a paper chain with 24 links. This can be done in two ways - you can start with 24 links, and remove one each day OR start with 1 link and add one each day. Either way, the links can have an activity to complete each day, a Scripture to read or a different name of Jesus. You can create your own, or find lots online!

You can check out some of my favourites on my Ministry Mom Pinterest board for Advent.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY ADVENT

Age Recommendation:
Preschool - Upper Elementary

Focus on the Family provides a free Family Advent Calendar every year, and I love this year's! It's titled "O Holy Night" and each day, your family does an activity, reads a Bible verse & adds a character to a cute, cut-out nativity.

You can download it all for free at <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/holidays/advent-calendars/advent-a-countdown-to-christmas>.

THE CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE BOX

Age Recommendation:
Toddler-Elementary

I love the idea of the Christmas Adventure Box. It takes an hour or two to put together, but provides your kids with the excitement of an Advent Calendar while remaining focused on Christ. Visit christmasadventurebox.blogspot.ca to get started!

KINDNESS CALENDAR

Age Recommendation:
All ages

Focusing on others during the Christmas season can help keep your children and teenagers focused on giving, and the Greatest Gift Jesus has given us! As a family, decide to do one act of kindness each day during the season, or to donate one item per day to your local food bank or another charity!

RESOURCES YOU CAN BUY!

SHEPHERD ON THE SEARCH

Age Recommendation: ALL CHILDREN

www.shepherdonthesearch.com

From Dayspring, this shepherd is a Christ-centered alternative to "Elf on the Shelf." The shepherd will send your child(ren) on daily ADVENTures on a search for Jesus.

THE GIVING MANGER

Age Recommendation: ALL AGES

www.thegivingmanger.com

Place the manger in a prominent place in your home, and then place a piece of straw inside for each act of kindness. Baby Jesus is placed in the manger on Christmas Day.

UNWRAPPING THE GREATEST GIFT

Age Recommendation: ALL AGES

www.thegreatestchristmas.com

Ann Voskamp's Advent Resources are based on the Jesse Tree, and filled with Scripture, discussion and focused on Christ.

BAKE THROUGH THE BIBLE AT CHRISTMAS

Age Recommendation: ALL AGES

www.thegoodbook.com

We all love sweets at Christmas, so why not make your baking Christ-focused? This book can be purchased at any bookstore.

WHAT GOD WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS

Age Recommendation: YOUNG CHILDREN

www.familylife.com

Open the gift boxes as a family for the week leading up to Christmas! Discover what God wants for Christmas in this fun, interactive countdown.

THE STAR FROM AFAR

Age Recommendation: ALL CHILDREN

www.starfromafar.com

This "game" incorporates Scripture, fun & family time! Children discover the Star, and move the wisemen towards it each day.

FREE ADVENT ACTIVITY FOR YOU: 24 DAYS OF CAROLS

One of the greatest highlights of the Christmas season is the music. It brings feelings of festivity and cheer to so many of us. So often though, the words of the songs are taken for granted. Take a journey through the songs of the season over Advent with your family to focus on Jesus.

INSTRUCTIONS

Listen to the Christmas song listed for each day, and read the accompanying Scripture passage. Make time to pray together.

Then, use the suggestions depending on the age group of your family.

For babies and toddlers, just listen to the song and sing and dance to it during the day!

Exclaim the truth, "Jesus is coming!" to them.

For preschoolers and younger elementary students, have them illustrate a truth from the song in a drawing, or create a dance to go with the song. Ask them "What does this song tell us about Jesus?" Have a discussion and hear their answers.

For older elementary students and preteens, read the Scripture listed with the song. Let them create a picture, dance, skit, or just a written response to the song. Ask them what the song and Bible verse tell them about Jesus.

For preteens and teenagers, get them to use the Internet to research the song! Find different versions, why it was written, and how it has been used over the years. Discuss what in the song is significant in regards to the season of Advent, and what it tells us about Jesus.

SONGS

Day 1: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" by Bethel Kids
(Isaiah 7:14)

Day 2: "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" by Chris Tomlin
(Luke 1:68-69)

Day 3: "Joy to the World" by Paul Baloche
(Psalm 98)

Day 4: "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" by MercyMe
(Luke 2:13-14)

Day 5: "O Come All Ye Faithful" by Casting Crowns
(Psalm 95:6)

Day 6: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" by Kari Jobe
(Micah 5:2)

Day 7: "Angels from the Realms of Glory" by Paul Baloche
(Matthew 2:2)

Day 8: "While Shepherds Watched" by God's Kids Worship
(Luke 2:8-9)

Day 9: "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" by Meredith Andrews
(Titus 3:4-7)

Day 10: "Go Tell it On The Mountain" by Seabird
(Matthew 28:19)

Day 11: "The First Noel" by Lauren Daigle
(Matthew 2:11)

Day 12: "Angels We Have Heard on High" by For King & Country
(Psalm 103:20-22)

Day 13: "Away in A Manger" by Yancy
(Luke 2:6-7)

Day 14: "We Three Kings" by Tenth Avenue North
(Psalm 72:10)

Day 15: "What Child is This?" by Mandisa
(Luke 1:66)

Day 16: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" by Paul Baloche
(Philippians 2:5-7)

Day 17: "Love Came Down at Christmas" by High Street Hymns
(Hosea 14:4)

Day 18: "Ding Dong Merrily on High" by Rend Collective
(Luke 2:13-14)

Day 19: "The Little Drummer Boy" by For King & Country
(Luke 21:3-4)

Day 20: "The Friendly Beasts" by Rebecca St. James
(Matthew 1:23)

Day 21: "O Holy Night" by Hillsong
(Luke 1:35)

Day 22: "Silent Night" by Tori Kelly
(2 Corinthians 4:6)

Day 23: "Mary, Did You Know?" by Mark Lowry
(Revelation 5:9)

Day 24: "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" by Casting Crowns
(Luke 2:13-14)