

Advent Calendar Ideas

Prepare by reading the Scriptures.

- ✓ Read about the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, in the Sunday Lectionary readings.

	Cycle A	Cycle B	Cycle C
Week One of Advent	Isaiah 2:1-5 Matthew 24:37-44	Isaiah 63:16-17,19; & 64:2-7 Mark 13:33-37	Jeremiah 33:14-16 Luke 21:25-28, 34-36
Week Two of Advent	Isaiah 11:1-10 Matthew 3:1-12	Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 Mark 1:1-8	Baruch 5:1-9 Luke 3:1-6
Week Three of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-6, 10 Matthew 11:2-11	Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11 John 1:6-8, 19-28	Zephaniah 3:14-18 Luke 3:10-18
Week Four of Advent	Isaiah 7:10-14 Matthew 1:18-24	2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-11, 16 Luke 1:26-38	Micah 5:1-4 Luke 1:39-45

- ✓ Read about the people of faith in Jesus' family tree.

Adam & Eve: Genesis 3:1-24

Noah: Genesis 6:11 – 9:17

Abraham and Sarah:

Genesis 12:1-7, 15:1-6

Isaac: Genesis 22:1-19

Rebecca: Genesis 25:19-34; and 27

Jacob: Genesis 28:10-22; 32:25-31

Rachel and Leah: Genesis 29:15-30

Joseph: Genesis 37:3-4, 17-36; and
50:15-21 or Genesis 37:1 – 45:28

Moses: Exodus 3:1-15; 20:1-21

Rahab: Joshua 2:1-21

Joshua: Joshua 6:1-20

Deborah: Judges 4:1-16

Gideon: Judges 7:1-8, 15-20

Samson: Judges 13:1-5; 15:14-17

Ruth: Ruth chapters 1 – 4

Hannah: Samuel 1:1-20, 24-28; 2:18-20

Samuel: 1 Samuel 3:1-19; 16:1-13

David: 1 Samuel 16:1-16

Solomon: 1 Kings 3:4-15

Elijah: 1 Kings 19:3-13; 2 Kings 2:1-5, 9-13

Jonah: Jonah 1:1-17; 2:10; 3:1-3

Isaiah: Isaiah 9:1-6 and 11:1-9

Ezekiel: Ezekiel 37:1-14 and 24-28

Esther: Esther 2:17-18; 3:8-15; 4:7-16; 7:10

Daniel: Daniel 1:1-4; 6:1-28; 7:13-14

Malachi: Malachi 4:1-6

Elizabeth: Luke 1:5-25

John the Baptist: Luke 1:57-80

Joseph: Matthew 1:18-25

Mary: Luke 1:26-38, 39-56 and 2:1-14

- ✓ Read the Gospel of Luke 1:39-52. Spend time thinking today: What has God done for me that I am especially thankful for?
- ✓ Read Mary's Song of Praise (The Magnificat) in Luke 1:44-57. Pray that Mary will give you the courage to approach God with humility and an openness to God's will and spirit in your life during this Advent season.
- ✓ Read the Christmas story in Luke 2:1-20.

Prepare by participating in church activities.

- ✓ Make Advent a time of reconciliation by participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- ✓ Join the community in Christmas caroling.
- ✓ Find time to participate in church-sponsored service projects during Advent.
- ✓ Volunteer time to help with children Christmas programs, such as a Christmas pageant.

Prepare by doing things with your family.

- ✓ Create a Christmas decoration for a room or table in your house that is a reminder of what Christmas is really about.
- ✓ Make an ornament for your family Christmas tree.
- ✓ Decorate the Christmas tree.
- ✓ Create Christmas gifts of your own creating (which don't cost a lot of money): food (cookies, bread), artwork, pottery, sewing, candles, carvings, needlepoint, etc.
- ✓ Give the gift of time—service to others (hours helping others); helping a family member, relative or friend do their Christmas shopping or wrapping; reading stories to children, etc.
- ✓ Read a book about Christmas traditions around the world. Add an idea you like to your family Christmas celebration.
- ✓ Read stories of Christmas. For example, read about St. Nicholas and think of two ways you could be like St. Nick during Advent.
- ✓ Watch Christmas videos with your family, such as *A Christmas Carol* or *It's a Wonderful Life*.
- ✓ Play a game with your family, instead of watching television tonight.
- ✓ Spend time with a younger brother, sister or neighbor, reading, playing a game, or making a Christmas ornament.
- ✓ Give up television for today and spend the time thinking about the kind of person that Jesus wants you to be.
- ✓ Write a note to another family member telling them what you appreciate about them.
- ✓ Ask a parent to share a story about Christmas when they were growing up.
- ✓ Write a letter to a grandparent, an aunt or an uncle—share with them a wish you have for their new year.

Prepare by praying for people.

- ✓ Pray for someone in the newspaper who is in need.
- ✓ Write down a list of three people you want to pray for. Keep the list with you and pray for each person today.
- ✓ Find a special quiet place and pray for those in need in your family, your neighborhood and our world.
- ✓ Lead the meal prayer tonight—share something you are thankful for and ask others to do the same.
- ✓ Take ten minutes in a quiet place or on a walk and talk to God about something that is bothering you—ask God for help.
- ✓ Write down a list of things you are thankful for. Spend time saying “Thank You” to God in prayer.

- ✓ Give the gift of prayer – write a special prayer for people, develop a prayer list of people you will pray for each day.
- ✓ Locate Israel and Bethlehem on a globe or world map. Pray for peace in the land and continent of Jesus' birth.
- ✓ Take time today to sit and pray. Think about what you are thankful for and what your hopes are for the coming year.

Prepare by serving and caring for others.

- ✓ Shovel someone's walk or rake up leaves on someone's yard without being paid.
- ✓ With your allowance or personal money, purchase a gift for a child – donate it to your parish or school gift drive.
- ✓ Visit a friend or relative in a nursing home, or write a Christmas greeting letter to a resident at a nearby retirement home.
- ✓ Collect and drop-off non-perishable food items at a local food pantry.
- ✓ Create a card for a child in the hospital, or someone in your parish who is homebound or sick.
- ✓ Ask a parent or older sibling how you can be of help to them today.
- ✓ Clean a part of the house without being asked or paid, just to surprise your parent.
- ✓ Help make dinner, and create a special atmosphere in which to share the meal as a family.
- ✓ Collect or save money to donate to a worthy organization, working to alleviate poverty, such as the local Salvation Army's Adopt-a-Family Program during the holiday season or Habitat for Humanity (912-924-6935) or the Heifer Project International (800-422-0755). Consider giving a gift that supports the organization through the coming year.
- ✓ Donate from your "wealth": look through your clothes for things in good shape that you will never wear again. Bundle them for delivery to a church-run thrift shop or shelter.
- ✓ Buy a gift you would personally like to have. Wrap it for distribution to someone your age at a local family shelter.
- ✓ As you watch or read today's news reports, think about where Jesus is being born in poverty today and what you can do to help.
- ✓ Look for someone who is left out or alone at school today and spend time with them during recess or lunch break.
- ✓ Forgive a friend who hurt you, and let them know they are forgiven.
- ✓ Be especially nice to someone who bothers you today.
- ✓ Give gifts that support the poor: consider SERRV, self help crafts. All of the profits go directly to the poor make the crafts (800-451-4407). Also consider candles made by Sheep Ranch Catholic Worker Farm (Box 53, Sheep Ranch, CA 95250, 209-728-2193). Send for a catalog. All monies go toward their ministry to people with AIDS and people with developmental disabilities.

MY ADVENT CALENDAR

1	9	17
2	10	18
3	11	19
4	12	20
5	13	21
6	14	22
7	15	23
8	16	24 CHRISTMAS EVE <i>Read the story of Jesus' birth in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2:1-20.</i>
		25 CHRISTMAS DAY! <i>Spend the day with loved ones celebrating God's gift of Jesus. Take some time to thank God for this special day.</i>

MY ADVENT CALENDAR

Advent Week 1

Advent Week 2

Advent Week 3

Advent Week 4

24 CHRISTMAS EVE

Read the story of Jesus' birth in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2:1-20.

25 CHRISTMAS DAY!

Spend the day with loved ones celebrating God's gift of Jesus. Take some time to thank God for this special day.

Calendar-Making Options

Preparing in advance for the calendar-making will help this activity run smoothly and meaningfully for the participants and the leaders. Choose one of the following options for creating the Advent Calendars.

Option 1: Construction Paper Windows

This option requires the most advance preparation.

Objective

Create a construction paper Calendar with 25 “windows” in which can be placed personal Advent preparation ideas.

Supplies Needed

- Construction paper: 12 x 18 inches
(Use Advent colors of dark blue, purple and pink.)
- Exacto knife or scissors
- Glue

Decoration Supplies (for use during the activity)

- Markers
- Magazines
- Used Christmas cards
- Stickers
- Glue
- Glitter

Instructions for Creating the Calendar

1. You will use two sheets of 12 x 18 construction paper per calendar, one for a cover and one for a back.
2. Using scissors or an exacto knife, cut 25 “Windows” spaced throughout the cover. The windows can be approximately 1” high and 2” wide. The size of the window opening should match the size of the blank squares on the Handout: *My Advent Calendar*. Cut the window on three sides, creating a flap at the top and a window which opens at the bottom.
3. Number the windows 1 to 25.
4. Place glue on the outside edges of the back sheet of construction paper and adhere the front “window” cover to the back sheet.

Instructions for Participants during the Calendar Activity

1. Select a construction paper Calendar.
2. Cut your calendar ideas into squares 1-25.
3. Glue the calendar idea squares inside the corresponding “window.”
4. Decorate your calendar using the available supplies; be careful not to cover or glue down the window flaps.

Option 2: Poster with Post-Its

This option requires no advance preparation.

Objective

Create a poster with 25 post-it notes covering the personal Advent ideas.

Materials Needed

- Poster boards: approximately 24" x 36" (one for each participant)
- Post-it notes: 2 ½" square, multicolored – blue, purple and pink if possible (25 notes per participant)

Decoration Supplies (for use during activity)

- Markers
- Magazines
- Used Christmas cards
- Stickers
- Glue
- Glitter

Instructions for Participants during Calendar Activity

1. Select a poster and a pad of post-it notes (you will need 25 notes).
2. Cut your calendar ideas into squares 1- 25.
3. Glue the calendar notes onto the poster leaving 2" as a border between each Advent preparation idea.
4. Cover each preparation idea with a post-it note.
5. Number the outside of the post-it note to match the corresponding number for the idea.
6. Decorate the notes and the poster – be sure not to cover or glue down the post-it notes.

Option 3: Calendar with Stickers

This option requires no advance preparation.

Objective

Create a calendar which uses Christmas stickers to count off the days during Advent. Provide each participant with an envelope containing Christmas stickers to use throughout the Advent season. At the end of each day during Advent, participants will place a sticker over the corresponding idea which they have done for that day. The calendar becomes filled with holiday stickers as Christmas approaches.

Supplies Needed

- Packets of Christmas stickers (each participant will need 25 stickers)
- Dark blue, purple and pink construction paper, 12" x 18" (one sheet for each participant)

Decoration Supplies (for use during activity)

- Markers
- Magazines

- Used Christmas cards
- Stickers
- Glue
- Glitter

Instructions for Participants during Calendar Activity

1. Select a piece of colored construction paper.
2. Cut your calendar ideas into squares 1-25.
3. Glue the calendar idea squares onto the construction paper, allowing space between each idea.
4. Decorate your calendar using the available supplies; be careful not to cover up the idea squares.
5. Select a set of Christmas stickers, and staple the envelope to the calendar keeping the flap open to allow access to the stickers.

To use Calendar and Count-off Days

At the end of each day, place a Christmas sticker over the Advent preparation idea that you have done which corresponds to that day.

Stories of Advent—Making Your Jesse Tree

Person	Scripture	Symbol
Adam and Eve	Genesis 3:1-24	an apple
Noah	Genesis 6:11 – 9:17 (or 8:21 – 9:17) (or Genesis 6:5-9, 7:7-16, 8:13-17, 9:12-16)	ark or rainbow
Abraham and Sarah	Genesis 12:1-7, 15:1-6	camel, tent or star
Isaac	Genesis 22:1-19	ram
Rebecca	Genesis 25:19-34; and 27	a well
Jacob	Genesis 28:10-22 or 32: 25-31	a ladder
Rachel and Leah	Genesis 29:15-30	a veil
Joseph	Genesis 37:3-4 and 17-36; 50:15-21 (or Genesis 37:1 – 45:28)	coat of many colors
Moses	Exodus 3:1-15 Exodus 20:1-21	bush 10 Commandments (tablets)
Rahab	Joshua 2:1-21	rope
Joshua	Joshua 6:1-20	trumpet
Deborah	Judges 4:1-16	palm tree/tent peg & mallet
Gideon	Judges 7:1-8, 15-20	torch
Samson	Judges 13:1-5; 15:14-17	jawbone
Ruth	Ruth chapters 1 – 4	anchor (for faithfulness) or grains of wheat
Hannah	1 Samuel 1:1-20, 24-28; 2:18-20	small robe
Samuel	1 Samuel 3:1-19; 16:1-13	oil
David	1 Samuel 16:1-16	stringed instrument or slingshot or crown (for king)
Solomon	1 Kings 3:4-15	crown or scepter
Elijah	1 Kings 19:3-13; 2 Kings 2:1-5, 9-13	chariot
Jonah	Jonah 1:1-17; 2:10; 3:1-3	whale
Isaiah	Isaiah 9:1-6 and 11:1-9	branch or lion and lamb
Ezekiel	Ezekiel 37:1-14 and 24-28	bones
Esther	Esther 2:17-18; 3:8-15; 4:7-16; 7:10	crown
Daniel	Daniel 1:1-4; 6:1-28; 7:13-14	lion
Malachi	Malachi 4:1-6	sun
Elizabeth	Luke 1:5-25	a home, angel, temple/ altar
John the Baptist	Luke 1:57-80	shell and water or a reed
Joseph	Matthew 1:18-25	hammer or saw
Mary	Luke 1:26-38, 39-56 Luke 2:1-14	lily manger

Advent Calendar Ideas

Shovel someone's walk or rake up leaves on someone's yard without being paid.	With your allowance or personal money, purchase a gift for a child - donate it to your parish or school gift drive.	Visit a friend or relative in a nursing home, or write a Christmas greeting letter to a resident at a nearby retirement home.
Share a cheerful "Merry Christmas" with three adults you pass by today.	Collect and drop-off non-perishable food items at a local food pantry.	Create a card for a child in the hospital, or someone in your parish who is homebound or sick.
Write down a list of three people you want to pray for. Keep the list with you and pray for each person today.	Play a game with your family, instead of watching television tonight.	Find a special quiet place and pray for those in need in your family, your neighborhood and our world.
Spend time with a younger brother, sister or neighbor, reading, playing a game, or making a Christmas ornament.	Lead the meal prayer tonight - share something you are thankful for and ask others to do the same.	Ask a parent or older sibling how you can be of help to them today.
Give up television for today and spend the time thinking about the kind of person that Jesus wants you to be.	In the Bible, read Luke 1:39-52. Spend time thinking today: What has God done for me that I am especially thankful for?	Write a note to another family member telling them what you appreciate about them.
Look for someone who is left out or alone at school today and spend time with them during recess or lunch break.	Ask a parent to share a story about Christmas when they were growing up.	Help a child create a list for Santa, talk to them about gifts they might ask for that don't cost money.
Write a letter to a grandparent, an aunt or an uncle - share with them a wish you have for their new year.	Take ten minutes in a quiet place or on a walk and talk to God about something that is bothering you - ask God for help.	Write down a list of things you are thankful for. Spend time saying "Thank You" to God in prayer.
Create a Christmas decoration for a room or table in your house that is a reminder of what Christmas is really about.	At the library or church, read about St. Nicholas. Think of two ways you could be like St. Nick during Advent.	Clean a part of the house without being asked or paid, just to surprise your parent.
Help make dinner, and create a special atmosphere in which to share the meal as a family.	Forgive a friend who hurt you, and let them know they are forgiven.	Be especially nice to someone who bothers you today.

The Liturgical Year

Seasons of Our Church

The Liturgical Year is a twelve month cycle which celebrates and retells the life and ministry of Jesus. It highlights significant people and events in the story of salvation. Celebrating the feasts and seasons of the liturgical year enables Christians to deepen their faith, discover ways to live as disciples, and celebrate Jesus' presence in the life of the Church today. The Liturgical Year includes five major seasons, and begins the first Sunday of Advent.

- ✦ **ADVENT: Begins the Sunday nearest November 30th and ends December 24th.** Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of Christ, when we reflect on how we might get ready to welcome Jesus into all aspects of our lives.
- ✦ **CHRISTMAS: Begins at the vigil December 24th and lasts until the Sunday after Epiphany (January 6th).** We continue the celebration of Christ's birth through the twelve days of Christmas. We remember the coming of the magi on Epiphany, and then the Baptism of the Lord the following Sunday. We then spend several weeks in "ordinary time" when we reflect on Jesus' life and teaching.
- ✦ **LENT: Begins Ash Wednesday and lasts until Holy Thursday evening.** Lent is a special time when we look at the meaning of Jesus' life for us today. It is a time for us to consider how we might more closely follow Jesus in our life by making choices to *give up* the things that keep us from being better disciples, and *give* of ourselves in caring for others as Jesus would. **The Paschal Triduum begins on Holy Thursday and lasts until evening prayer on Easter Sunday.** The *Triduum* focuses on the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the three-day high point of the liturgical year when we "walk" with Jesus through his passion and resurrection.
- ✦ **EASTER: Begins Easter Sunday and lasts until Pentecost.** The celebration of the resurrection continues for fifty days until Pentecost.
- ✦ **ORDINARY TIME: Begins on the Monday after the first Sunday following January 6th, and lasts until the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.** The Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is also known as Mardi Gras. **Ordinary Time begins again on the Monday after Pentecost and lasts until the day before the First Sunday of Advent.** During Ordinary Time we hear stories of Jesus' life and mission, and explore how we can live this mission in our ordinary days.

During each liturgical season the Presider wears a different color vestment: Advent – purple or dark blue, Christmas – white or gold; Lent – purple; Easter – white, Ordinary Time – green; Christ the King Sunday – white or gold; Pentecost – Red. For certain feast days a special color may be worn.

Advent—Did You Know?

- * The Church's liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of Advent.
- * Advent begins on the Sunday nearest November 30th, which is the feast of St. Andrew, and lasts until December 24th.
- * The word Advent comes from the word *adventus* which means "coming."
- * Advent is a season in the Church year when we remember how the Word of God became human in the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, which we celebrate on Christmas. During Advent we also reflect on and celebrate how Jesus comes into our lives and is present with us every day.
- * Advent is a time of hoping and working for a change of heart. We focus on being more open to the love of God in our lives, and the salvation offered through Jesus.
- * The Advent wreath is a tradition of the season. It is a symbol of our hope in Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the world. The design of the wreath symbolizes the following:
 - ⦿ The circle and evergreens remind us of God's everlasting love which has no beginning and no end.
 - 🕯 The four unlit candles remind us of the four thousand years before Christ's birth, a time of spiritual "cold and darkness" as humanity awaited the birth of the Messiah. They also represent the four weeks of Advent.
 - 🕯 It is customary to use three purple and one pink or white candle. The purple reminds us of the need for sorrow for our sins. The pink or white candle reminds us of the joy and hope we share in Jesus, the Light of the World, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas.
 - 🕯 Advent begins with the lighting of one purple candle on the first Sunday of Advent. The pink candle is lit the third week when the Advent focus shifts to the special joy of the Christmas event. The increasing light of each week reminds us that Christmas is nearer, and Christ's presence continues to grow and brighten our lives. It also reminds us that by being Christ's light today, we can brighten the "darkness" we find in our lives and in the world around us.