

# Advent

RESOURCES FOR  
THOUGHTFULLY  
OBSERVING THE SEASON





# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Introduction .....	1
A Primer .....	2
Planning Calendar .....	6
Scripture Challenge .....	7
Praying Through the Season .....	8
Loving Acts of Kindness .....	9
37 Ideas for Family Time .....	12
Care Packages for the NICU .....	14
Resources from Around the Internet .....	15



All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Copyright ©2019, 2023 by Deborah Haddix

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Requests for information should be sent to:  
Deborah Haddix  
deborah@deborahhaddix.com  
www.deborahhaddix.com

# Advent

## INTRODUCTION

---



I grew up in the church, but until a few years ago I knew nothing about the Christian Calendar.

My background did not include observances such as Advent. To me Advent was nothing more than a “word” that appeared on the signs of other churches. I knew what time of year I would see it as I drove by — Nothing more. This word, this observance belonged to their church culture, not mine.

Then a few years ago my husband and I heard a radio interview with Bobby Gross, author of *Living the Christian Year: Time to Inhabit the Story of God*. We sat riveted. This was new to us!!

Since the time of that interview, we have in some way celebrated each new Christian Year which means annually observing Advent. Never in the same way. Always different.

To observe Advent, or the Christian Calendar for that matter, in exactly the same way each year would run the risk of either becoming mechanical and meaningless. On the other hand, giving ourselves permission to celebrate differently each year allows us to adjust our observances to our “season of life” and keeps things fresh.

This booklet is a resource for observing the season of Advent whether you are celebrating it for the first time or the fiftieth. The ideas contained within are plentiful and varied to help meet the constraints of life seasons and to provide “freshness.” As the season approaches, take some time and contemplate how you and your family might make this a meaningful Advent by selecting options that speak to your soul.

# Advent

## A PRIMER

---



The seven seasons of the Christian Calendar are Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, The Paschal Triduum, Easter, and Ordinary Time. Additionally, the seven seasons occur in three cycles: The Cycle of Light, The Cycle of Life, and The Cycle of Love.

The Christian year begins with Advent which occurs over the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day. Advent is part of the Cycle of Light which is the celebration of the Incarnation – God with us. The Cycle of Light also includes the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany.

**Advent is the season of waiting.** The beginning of the church year, it derives from the Latin *adventus* which means “coming.”

Advent is the season of thoughtful reflection and repentance. To observe Advent means to spend the weeks before Christmas rethinking our priorities, realigning our lives with God’s desires for us, and seeking forgiveness. It also means beginning anew. Radically against our current culture, the traditions of Advent serve to remind us that we are waiting for Christ.

Each of the four Sundays of Advent has a watchword for the day as well as a biblical figure with whom it is associated.



This Advent season, step into the Story. Acquaint yourself with the season. Learn more about it. Think through meaningful ways of inhabiting the season.

# The Four Sundays of Advent



## First Sunday – WAIT – Isaiah – Isaiah 7:1

On the first Sunday of Advent we wait for Christmas and the celebration of Christ's birth. We also wait for the risen Christ to come again. In Hebrew, the word for wait is also the word for hope.

*WAIT— "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning" (Psalm 130:5-6).*

### Ideas for Observance:

- Make or purchase an Advent Wreath.
- Light the first candle of the advent wreath on this evening. (Purple)
- Say a short prayer when lighting the candle.
- Read and meditate on Psalm 130:5-6.
- Follow a schedule of daily Advent Readings.
- Incorporate a purchased or handmade Advent Calendar into your celebration.
- For younger children, use the Countdown to Jesus' Birthday Advent Calendar.
- Make an Advent Paper Chain of Acts of Kindness or Names of Jesus.
- Participate in an Advent service project individually, as a family, or with friends.
- Decide on the recipient of a family gift. Provide "shepherd's pouches" for each family member so each can "save" money to be given toward the gift.



## Second Sunday – PREPARE – John the Baptist – Luke 3:4

The second week of Advent we prepare. Preparation involves paying attention and staying awake. Advent reminds us to be on guard, to keep watch that we might be ready for Christ when he comes again.

*PREPARE – "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:76-79).*

### Ideas for Observance:

- Light an additional candle this evening. (Purple)
- Read and meditate this week on Luke 1:76-79.



## Third Sunday – REJOICE – Mary – Luke 1:46

While the other three weeks of Advent are symbolized by purple, this Sunday has a different color. The color for the third week of Advent is pink, the color of joy. It's a reminder that this time of waiting and preparation is a joyful time.

*REJOICE – "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Luke 1:46-49).*

### Ideas for Observance:

- Light an additional candle on the Advent wreath. (Pink)
- Read and mediate on Luke 1:46-49.
- Send an annual Christmas letter as a way of reflecting on the past year. Joyfully notice the ways God has been present and faithful in your life and the way you have been able to be part of God's work in your corner of the world.

## Fourth Sunday – Love – Joseph – John 3:16

The fourth Sunday of Advent is a time to see one another as the God-bearers (or image-bearers) we are. We do this by supporting and loving one another.

*LOVE – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).*

### Ideas for Observance:

- Light an additional candle on the Advent wreath. (Purple)
- Read and meditate on John 3:16.

### More Ideas for Observing Advent:

- Fast from certain foods, saving your enjoyment of them for Christmas. (Optional: Break the fast on Sundays.)
- Decorate a mantle or table. (Optional: Wait until December 24th to decorate for Christmas or decorate slowly throughout the month.)
- Give yourself permission to sing (Isaiah 65:17-25).
- Allow yourself to groan (Romans 8:18-25).
- Practice restraint:
  - Skip mailing Christmas cards and send Easter greetings instead.
  - Rather than purchasing gifts, make a charitable donation in the name of your loved one(s).
  - Decline a holiday party or two.
  - Cut back on baking goods and/or eat fewer Christmas goodies.
- Practice retreat (rather than continually being on the “Go”):
  - Spend some time alone.
  - Schedule times of quiet and reflection.
  - Sit for a time at the feet of Jesus.
- Assume an alert and open posture:
  - Ask God to heighten your awareness of His presence.
  - Plead with Him to open your eyes to what He is doing—in you and in the world.
  - Meditate on the example of Mary’s open posture in Luke 1:38.



# Advent PLANNING CALENDAR



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

NOTES:





# Advent

## SCRIPTURE CHALLENGE



### HOPE

Isaiah 40:3-5

Isaiah 9:2

Jeremiah 33:14

Isaiah 7:14

Luke 2:12

Matthew 1:21

Acts 5:31

### LOVE

Luke 1:28

Luke 1:30

Luke 1:31

Luke 1:32

Matthew 1:22-23

John 1:14

John 3:16

### JOY

Luke 1:46-47

Luke 2:1-3

Luke 2:4-5

Luke 2:6-7

Luke 2:8-10

Luke 2:11

Romans 15:13

2 Corinthians 9:15

### PEACE

Luke 2:15-16

Luke 2:17-18, 20

Luke 2:19

Isaiah 9:6-7

Psalms 29:11

## CHRISTMAS EVE

John 1:1-5



This Scripture Challenge is extremely versatile. Use this list of Scripture in whatever way works for your personal schedule and unique wiring. You might choose to read or write the Scriptures daily. Other options for using the Scriptures in the Challenge include journaling, Verse Mapping, Praying in Color, meditating, or memorizing.

*NOTE: Advent spans 22-28 days depending on the calendar year. In years when the season is shorter than 28 days, you may choose to combine days or begin early.*

# Advent

## PRAYING THROUGH THE SEASON



1. Pray for your friends.
2. Pray for your school.
3. Thank God for Jesus.
4. Pray for your community's police officers and fire fighters.
5. Pray for your mom and dad.
6. Thank God for the earth.
7. Pray for your schoolteachers.
8. Pray for people around the world.
9. Thank God for your family.
10. Pray for your pastors.
11. Pray for the people who work in your church.
12. Pray for your neighbors.
13. Thank God for the Holy Spirit.
14. Pray for the less fortunate.
15. Thank God for Advent.
16. Pray for your grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other relatives.
17. Pray for our country's leaders.
18. Pray for the workers in your local hospital.
19. Thank God for your health.
20. Pray for those you know who are lonely.
21. Pray for missionary families.
22. Pray for your sisters and brothers.
23. Thank God for His amazing grace.
24. Pray for those you know who are sick.
25. Pray for those who are overseas and cannot be home for Christmas. Also pray for their families who will be missing them.
26. Pray for the people in your neighborhood who do not know Jesus.
27. Praise God for His never-ending love.
28. Praise God for the gift of Jesus.

*Use this guide to help you pray specifically each day of the Advent Season. If desired, use the blank Advent Calendar to pray these prayers in color.*



*For calendar years when Advent is not 28 days in length, you may double up on some of the prayers.*

# Advent


## LOVING ACTS OF KINDNESS

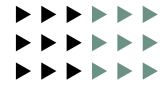


### Baking, Making, & Taking (or Mailing)

- Surprise your mail carrier with some goodies.
- Deliver treats to a local fire station.(Home baked or prepackaged.)
- Make some bookmarks. Leave one in a library book as you return it, give one to your librarian, donate some to your local hospital.
- Make get-well cards for someone who is ill.
- Make Christmas decorations or cards for your neighbors or mail them to far away relatives.
- Take poinsettias or handmade Christmas decorations to your nearest nursing home.
- Make a tree decoration for your baby-sitter.
- Treat everyone in your class to a candy cane or cookie.
- Make Christmas cards for the workers at your school or church.

### Providing Needs and Wishes

- 
- Put money in the Salvation Army bucket.
  - Grant a wish for a foster child.
  - Donate to your local foodbank.
  - Donate new toys to Toys for Tots or your local children's hospital.
  - Donate to a local homeless shelter. (Most shelters provide a wish list on their website.)
  - Provide a gift for Angel Tree.
  - Buy a gift for someone in need.
  - Donate meals to No Kid Hungry.
  - Donate your outgrown toys and clothes.
  - Donate books you no longer read.
  - Donate a coat to charity (leave an encouraging note in the pocket).



## Providing Needs and Wishes

- Reverse Advent – Grab an empty box or basket. Each day of Advent put one non-perishable food item into your container. On Christmas Eve, deliver the filled container to a foodbank or local shelter.
- Make a monetary donation to a charity.
- Contribute to worldwide relief and evangelism by providing a gift from Samaritan Purse's catalog.

## Encouraging Through Word and Deed

- Let someone go ahead of you in line.
- Carol in your neighborhood.
- Draw a picture for someone.
- Pay for someone else in the drive thru.
- Take coffee and donuts to your teacher.
- Write a note to someone telling them 10 things you love about them.
- Do something nice for someone.
- Rake leaves or shovel snow for a neighbor or relative.
- Offer to help an elderly relative or neighbor with their Christmas decorations.
- Mail letters or cards to soldiers.
- Write a letter to your sibling telling them why you love them.
- Put money and a happy note in an envelope. Tape the envelope to the front of a vending machine.
- Write thank you cards to people who have influenced you positively: teachers, coaches, club leaders, babysitters, mentors.
- Pick up litter in a neighborhood park. (Be sure to wear gloves.)
- Offer to bag the groceries of the person in front of or behind you at the checkout.
- Help around the house without being asked to: set the table, cook dinner, wash the dishes, take out the trash, pick up all your toys, make your bed, clean your room.





## Encouraging Through Word and Deed

- Write notes and mail them to the houses with beautiful Christmas light displays. Thank them for putting up the lights for you to enjoy.
- Help someone do a chore or other job.
- Help your mom and dad with a job.
- Designate a special day: “Smile at Others Day,” “Hold the Door for Others Day,” “Give Sincere Compliments Day”
- Feed the birds.

## YOUR OWN IDEAS

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>



# Advent

## 37 IDEAS FOR FAMILY TIME



- Read the Luke 2 Christmas account together.
- Go ice skating.
- Bake and decorate cookies.
- Visit a tree farm and pick out your Christmas tree.
- Decorate the Christmas tree.
- Hold a family game night.
- Make Christmas ornaments for your Christmas tree. Make a few extras to mail to far away family or to give to neighbors.
- Put on your coats and go for a family walk.
- Read Christmas books and stories together.
- Go for cupcakes or ice cream.
- Make Christmas cards.
- Hold a family movie night.
- Cut out paper snowflakes and decorate your windows.
- Dance to your favorite Christmas music.
- Drive around and look at Christmas lights.
- Have a Christmas themed meal.
- Go Christmas shopping.
- Build gingerbread houses.
- Make a Christmas Pinterest craft.
- Read [The Night Before Christmas](#) by Clement C. Moore.
- Set up a hot chocolate bar as a treat after dinner.
- Blast Christmas songs and sing along.



## IDEAS FOR FAMILY TIME



- Bake a holiday treat to share with your neighbors.
- Make gifts for your teachers.
- Color Christmas themed printables.
- Make a handprint Christmas wreath.
- Bake a birthday cake for Jesus.
- As a family, do one or more of the Advent Loving Acts of Kindness.
- Have a slumber party by the light of your Christmas tree.
- Unplug from electronics for an entire day.
- Bundle up, sit by the fire pit, and enjoy some s'mores.
- Make a snowman, real or handcrafted.
- Make a popcorn or paper chain garland.
- Order pizza, spread an old sheet, and have a picnic in front of the Christmas tree.
- Write a letter to Jesus thanking Him for the gifts He's given, especially the gift of Himself.
- Make a photo journal. Take a photo each hour of the day.
- Look at old family photos and movies together.



## MORE IDEAS FOR FAMILY TIME

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Advent

## CARE PACKAGES FOR THE NICU



*Be sure to check with your local NICU before putting together and delivering your care packages. Ask for their help in making sure the items in your care packages adhere to their hospital policy.*

### List of Suggested Items

- Granola bars
- Fruit bars
- Snacks: chips, crackers, etc.
- Gum, mints, candy
- Room temperature, microwaveable meals
- Instant oatmeal
- Hot chocolate
- Hand lotion
- Lip balm, chap stick
- Tissues
- Dry shampoo, hairbrush, hair ties
- Deodorant
- Nail files
- Smell good sprays (Be sure to check on the rules/guidelines for this one!)
- Magazines
- Books to read to the baby
- Small notebooks
- Journals
- Pens
- Thank-you notecards
- Postage stamps
- Gift cards: restaurant, gas, grocery





# Advent



## A SELECTION OF RESOURCES FROM AROUND THE INTERNET



Jesus Storybook Bible Advent [reading plan](#) [FREE printable](#) from Home with the Boys



[FREE printable ornaments](#) to go along the Jesus Storybook Advent readings from All These Things



[The Ballad of Matthew's Begats: An Unlikely Royal Family Tree](#) by Andrew Peterson



[The Genealogy of The Lord Jesus Christ \(Abraham-Jesus\)](#) from Jessica Lynette - 25 Christmas Advent Readings based upon Andrew Peterson's *The Ballad of Matthew's Begats*. Two FREE PDF versions are available for download on this site: one with images, one without.



Kids' [Advent wreath](#) [FREE printable](#) from Look to Him and Be Radiant



[An Advent Pinterest Board](#) compiled by Deborah Haddix - Includes links to patterns, printables, and "How-to" posts on everything from advent wreaths to calendars to paper chains. A wide variety of styles and complexity is represented.

### CONNECT WITH US:



[www.deborahhaddix.com](http://www.deborahhaddix.com)



<https://www.facebook.com/deborahhaddixlifecoach/>



[deborah@deborahhaddix.com](mailto:deborah@deborahhaddix.com)