

Advent Stuff!

Make Your Own Advent Calendar

By Elisabeth Deffner

In Germany in the early 1900s, Gerhard Lang produced the first Advent calendar with little cardboard doors that hid surprise pictures. Now you can make your own Advent calendar, to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Construct one for your younger brothers and sisters and one for your grandparents!

Here's What You Need:

- Two large pieces of thick paper (like construction paper)
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Crayons, colored pencils, or pens
- Scissors
- Glue
- Old religious magazines or Christmas cards
- Glitter glue (optional)



Here's What You Do:

- 1) Draw an Advent or Christmas picture on one of the pieces of paper. Make it colorful and be sure to fill the entire paper.
- 2) On the back of your picture, draw 28 "doors." They should look like boxy Cs. (See the sample. Don't make them too small.) Cut the paper on the lines you just drew.
- 3) Place the Christmas picture face-up on top of the blank piece of paper and paperclip them together. Open all the "doors." Draw the outlines of the doorways on the paper below.
- 4) Set aside your top sheet (the Christmas drawing), and fill in all the blank boxes on the second paper. Draw pictures that remind you of the meaning of Jesus' coming, or cut out pictures from old magazines or Christmas cards and glue them into the squares.
- 5) Once all the squares are filled, spread glue around them. (Do not put glue on top of the pictures!) Carefully set your holiday picture on top of the second piece of paper, making sure the edges line up exactly. Paperclip the two papers together. Let the glue dry.
- 6) Close all the "doors," and put a date on each one. The first Sunday of Advent is November 27, so start with that and go to December 24.
- 7) Optional: Use glitter glue for highlights on the top picture, but be careful not to glue the edges of the doors. Let dry. Now your Advent Calendar is ready to use!

Advent Wreath Directions and Prayers

How do I make an Advent Wreath?

If your family doesn't already follow this tradition, why not start? You can buy Advent wreaths, but all you really need are three purple candles and a pink one. Place them in a circle and arrange some pine branches and pinecones around them. Or, you can make safe "candles" with toilet paper rolls and tissue paper – don't light these! All you need to do is paint three of the toilet paper rolls purple and one of them pink. If you want to make the candles look more real, you can drip some white glue down the sides after the paint has dried. It will look like melted wax. Then put a tuft of yellow or orange tissue paper in the top and pull it up to "light" the candle. Glue the candles on a paper plate and put some evergreens around the bottom for a decoration.

How do I pray with my Advent Wreath?

The Advent Wreath is a symbol of our time of waiting and hoping. It helps us mark our days until Christmas. To pray with your Advent Wreath, one person reads the Scripture passage, another person reads the prayer, another lights the candle, and then everyone joins in with the response. Make sure an adult is with you when you light the candle, and make sure to blow it out when you're finished. You can say the following prayers on the Sundays during Advent. (Repeat during the week if you like, or just light the candles at family meals.)

First Sunday of Advent – November 27, 2005

Scripture reading : "It is time to wake up. You know that the day when we will be saved is nearer now than when we first put our faith in the Lord" Romans 13:11.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, on this the first Sunday of Advent, we begin to mark the days until the birthday of your Son. As we light this first purple candle, we think of Jesus, our Hope for the world. May we, as followers of Jesus, bring hope to a waiting world. Amen.

(Light the first purple candle)

Response: Come, Jesus, Hope for the world. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Second Sunday of Advent – December 4, 2005

Scripture reading: "The time is coming when one of David's descendants will be the signal for the people of all nations to come together. They will follow his advice, and his own nation will become famous." Isaiah 11:10

Prayer: Dear Lord, as we light this second candle, we wait anxiously for Christmas to come. We pray that one day soon all nations will stand united, all people will live in peace, and that all people will come to know you and claim you as Prince of Peace. Amen.

(Light two purple candles)

Response: Come, Jesus, Prince of Peace. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Third Sunday of Advent – December 11, 2005

Scripture reading: God sent a man named John, who came to tell about the light and to lead all people to have faith. John wasn't that light. He came only to tell about the light. The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. John 1:6-9

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we're half way through Advent. Two weeks have already passed. As we light this pink Advent candle, we think of Jesus, the Light of the World. May we, as followers of Jesus, carry the light of your love into the world. Amen.

(Light the pink candle and two purple candles)

Response: Come, Jesus, Light of the World. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 18, 2005

Scripture reading: Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the Lord will choose one of your people to rule the nation – someone whose family goes back to ancient times. Micah 5:2

Prayer: As we light our final candle, we know that Advent is coming to an end. Soon we will celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior and our friend!

(Light all four candles)

Response: Come, Jesus, Savior of the world. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Jesse Tree

What's a Jesse Tree?

The Jesse Tree is a way to celebrate Advent and prepare for the celebration of Christmas. We remember how God prepared for the birth of Jesus through the centuries. When we look at how God prepared to send his Son, we are looking at "salvation history."

When God created human beings, he planned for us to be happy with him forever in heaven. But our first parents disobeyed God and messed up his plan. But God loved us so much that he made a new and better plan. He would send his Son into the world to be our Savior. God prepared the world for Jesus through the centuries. The Jesse Tree traces the people in God's plan from Adam and Eve to Mary and Joseph.

The name "Jesse Tree" comes from Jesse, the father of King David, an ancestor of Jesus. The Jesse Tree dates back to at least the twelfth century. In France, there was a stained glass window at the Abbey of St. Denis with a Jesse Tree on it. Later, many cathedrals had a Jesse Tree showing pictures of Jesus' royal ancestors, with Jesse at the bottom.

How do I make one?

To make a Jesse Tree, fill up a flowerpot with sand and put an ordinary branch in it so it stands up like a tree. Look at the symbols that stand for each of Jesus' ancestors (and other important people in the Old Testament) below and make an ornament for each. Then hang each ornament from the tree. (The symbol of Jesus is placed at the top with that of Mary just beneath. The symbol of Adam and Eve goes near the bottom of the tree, with the other symbols moving up the tree in the order they are shown below.)

You can also make the ornaments and hang them on your Christmas tree.

Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:7-9, 18-24)

Symbols: tree, apple

Noah (Gen. 6:5-8, 13-22; 7:17, 23, 24; 8:1, 6-22)

Symbols: ark, dove, rainbow

Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 12:1-3)

Symbols: tent, torch

Isaac (Gen. 22:1-14)

Symbols: ram

Jacob (Gen. 25:1-34; 28:10-15)

Symbols: ladder

Judah (Gen 49:8-12)

Symbol: lion

Moses (Exude. 2:1-10)

Symbols: baby in basket

Ruth (Ruth 2:1-23)

Symbol: grain

Jesse (1 Sam. 16:1-13)

Symbols: crimson robe, shepherd's staff

David (1 Sam. 17:12-51)

Symbols: slingshot, 6-pointed star

Solomon (1 Kings 3:5-14, 16-28)

Symbols: scales of justice, temple

Joseph (Matt. 1:18-25)

Symbols: hammer, saw, chisel

Mary (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38)

Symbols: lily, crown of stars

Jesus is Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14; 33:22)

Symbols: chalice and host

