



Why Advent?

Sometimes the Christmas season comes upon us and brings an almost impossible list of things that have to be accomplished. We can feel a tiredness in our souls that even the most familiar and bouncy Holiday tunes can't fix as we run and try extra hard to give a jolly Christmas to our friends and family.

May we suggest an idea that might change your holiday weariness this year?

As simple as it sounds, carving out time for the Holy Spirit to cleanse and recharge your spirit may just do the trick you need to enjoy Christmas more, worry less, and find meaning in what might sound like a familiar story. We suggest you try embracing Advent.

Advent is from the Latin word meaning “arrival” because this season marks the beginning of our church calendar and calls out to all, “Jesus is Here!”. It is typically a four week long season leading up to Christmas. Advent teaches us to wait for what is beyond the obvious. It makes us look for God in all those places

we have previously or currently ignore. We learn to wait, to hope, to anticipate, to long for more. The practice of Advent is a tool that can help you re-tune your focus and find a place of wonder again.

Join us this season, not just celebrating Jesus' birth, but join us in stirring up our hearts to long for, hope in and anticipate His arrival.

We have four resources available to you. You are not limited to these, but we have found them helpful. The most important thing is to not waste what Advent can do for you as you rise above the busy. Let's use this season to grow our desire for our King who is coming. Who knows, perhaps you will create a new tradition that yearly cultivates in you and another generation a deep longing for the arrival of the King.

1. Talk to God and determine that you are going to be intentional about this Advent season.
2. Conspire with some friends or family.
3. Pick a resource that works for you. Some are daily, some are weekly, some are for kids and some are geared for adults.
4. Make a schedule that gives you the best chance to make your advent adventure manageable.



The poster features a purple and white color scheme with a snowflake pattern at the bottom. The title '2023 LIVING FAITH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE' is prominently displayed at the top. The events are listed in a vertical column, each with a date in a dark purple box and the event details in white text.

Date	Event
NOV 20	OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD - LOADING THE TRUCKS <i>LOADING IS ALL DAY @ CHESTNUT ASSEMBLY OF GOD</i>
NOV 24	TURKEY BOWL <i>Thanksgiving Day Flag Football @ Living Faith 10am - Noon, All Ages</i>
Dec 9	ESL HOLIDAY PARTY <i>4PM @ Living Faith Come ready to serve and come ready to show biblical hospitality and make a stranger a friend</i>
Dec 17	YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY <i>5-9pm @ Living Faith Bring a white Elephant Gift Wrapped with a value of \$1-\$10</i>
Dec 24	SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP <i>**A UNITED SERVICE 10-11:30am Bring your friends and family! **Birthday Party for Jesus, 2-5 yr olds **Treasure Seekers Christmas Event, 1st-5th graders</i>
Dec 24	CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION <i>Let's reflect and let's worship the coming king. 5-6pm @ Living Faith</i>
Dec 31	SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP <i>**A UNITED SERVICE 10-11:30am</i>

4 Advent Resources

1. **Extend HOPE** - a weekly small group Advent guide
2. **The Names of Jesus** - a daily Advent resource designed with teenagers in mind
3. **Christmas Ring Chain** - Daily Advent activity that's great for kids
4. **Jesse Tree** - Daily Advent activity for households

Descriptions of 4 Advent Resources

1 **Extend HOPE** - *a weekly small group Advent guide*

There are 4 weekly devotionals written by the Christian and Missionary Alliance which include a Scripture Reading, a Psalm and a prayer prompt for reflection and prayer. Each week they follow the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. It is designed to lead you every week of Advent, ending on Christmas Eve. It is written for individuals or a small group to collectively experience all the Spirit of God has for us as we actively hope in the Prince of Peace.

[Download Advent Guide](#) or go to

<https://apas.app.box.com/s/bcxu32rfhsle9htdh470j4xo7g9ydb1b>

2 The Names of Jesus

a daily Advent resource designed with teenagers in mind

This advent resource is created specifically with middle school and high school students in mind but is also appropriate for families of mixed age groups (i.e. elementary and teen). It's a daily (15 min a day) Advent series themed "The Names of Jesus."

<https://youthministry.com/wp-content/upload/ymprod/Advent-Family-Devotional.pdf>

3 Christmas Ring Chain – Daily Advent activity – great for kids

Let the Countdown BEGIN!

Here's the countdown to Jesus' Birthday! Children as young as 2 years old have memorized all or part of Luke 2 over the course of this fun family Advent tool that takes only a few minutes each day.

Here's how it goes:

- Print out the day papers.
<https://lfachurch.org/s/2023-Christmas-Rings.pdf>
- They are organized as odd/even days so if you want alternating colors (ie green and red), you can print odds on one color and even on another :).
- Cut the days out in strips and fold them with the words on the inside, looping them into the previous ring.
- Staple or tape the end.
- Then slip the next strip into the ring and fold it the same way until you have a chain.
- Hang the ring chain in the house in an area where it can be seen (ex: dining room, living room, etc).

- Optional- place the attached Happy Birthday Jesus banner at the top. You can also color or make your own family version of a birthday sign to put at the top of the rings (above Dec 24th). This gives a visual for what the countdown is for :).
- Set up a time each day, around a mealtime or maybe bedtime, to take off that day's loop and follow the instructions.
- Questions each day start easier for younger kids and become more thorough for older kids.

We pray this brings much joy and anticipation for the true meaning of the Christmas season - Jesus is coming!

We'd LOVE to see your family rings! Please consider snapping a family picture and sending it to Sarah Bates (sbates@lfachurch.org).

Come celebrate with our *Birthday Party for Jesus* at Living Faith Alliance!

December 24th at 10am!

1987 S. Lincoln Ave. Vineland, NJ 08361

All children and friends are welcome to this celebration event!

4 Jesse Tree - *Daily Advent activity for households*

"A shoot will spring from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud will blossom," said the prophet Isaiah in the Bible, foretelling the birth of Jesus. It is this verse which gives rise to the tradition of Jesse trees. We will be doing the Jesse Tree with Treasure Seekers in the classroom. I encourage any family or household to participate with us throughout the week. While we will do our best to cover the stories in class, it will be a richer experience to do this as a family or as a household every day.

Materials Needed: Bible - Candles - Advent Wreath or Ornaments

Here's the Plan: .

- Create the environment that you want to be in, get comfortable around a wreath or ornaments with Advent candles.
- Each day of the Advent season has a symbol which represents a story from the Old Testament.
- Each day, you light the candle for that week, and read the verse that corresponds to the symbol on the Advent wreath. If you are using ornaments, which is not necessary, you'd hang the ornament of the story on your Christmas tree, or string that you hang.
- After you read the story, talk about how each story keeps pointing forward to the coming of Jesus.
- Before you blow out the candles, sing together. In our family, as in Treasure Seekers this year, we will sing "Oh Come, Emmanuel!"

We set time apart to remember that God is faithful to his word, and that in Jesus, the flowering of a tree planted long before, is the fulfillment of God's promise. The repetitive use of the symbols associated with the stories will anchor in the children's memory. Eventually, you could point to the figures and tell the stories of the Old Testament kings, prophets, heroines, warriors, and most importantly, how these stories point to the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Here are some resources you may be interested in checking out:

Wreaths:

This is the one I have for the classroom because they have the symbols for each story, but there are certainly many others which can meet your needs.

<https://a.co/d/cx5HaC9>

<https://a.co/d/3kzmkeQ>

Ornaments: I am gifting the parents of Treasure Seeker students with a sticker ornament activity.

<https://www.katiepawlak.com/classes>

I highly recommend this site for orientation, or if you choose to purchase another set for a friend this is where you could get it. Because I have little kids, I have been using a story book which retells the same biblical stories. These are examples of these books.

<https://a.co/d/b7fPyLc>

<https://a.co/d/bmBjooK>

<https://a.co/d/3zBY4FZ>