

## 2011 Advent Activities for Moms and Families

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- 1 Get ready for Christmas part 1: Spend some time thinking about what you like about Christmas. Write down your thoughts.
- 2 Read Matthew 1-2 to your family or enjoy some quiet reading with yourself and God.
- 3 Host an informal friends and/or family Christmas movie tonight (or put it on your calendar for a different night and follow through). Pop popcorn and enjoy it together.
- 4 Get ready for Christmas part 2: Look back over your notes on what you like about Christmas. What plans can you make so that those things you like happen this year? What other goals/ thoughts/ prayers do you have for this Advent season? Write them down and pray about them.
- 5 Play Christmas carols and light candles while preparing dinner. Keep the music and candles going during dinner and have each person share one a favorite carol or a favorite thing about Christmas.
- 6 Sing "Joy to the World" at the top of your lungs. After you have done it once, invite your family to join you. See who can do it the loudest. (Bonus points for doing it outside.)
- 7 Look over your schedule for the rest of the month. Stop and be sure that you are being intentional with your time and not just being pulled in a million directions. Ask the Lord to show you what plans to keep and which ones to amend, if any.
- 8 Spend some time with your spouse discussing your expectations for the rest of the month. Pray together that you would have your hearts focused where the Lord wants them to be.
- 9 Read John 1:1-18 to your family or enjoy some quiet reading with yourself and God.
- 10 After the kids are all ready for bed and in their pajamas, load them in the car for a surprise drive to look at Christmas lights. Bring hot chocolate or spiced cider and cookies in the car or consider going out for ice cream (in PJ's!!) after you enjoy the lights.
- 11 Look through old Christmas pictures with your family today. What sweet memories do they bring to mind? What not-so-sweet ones? What can you do to reconcile (or let go of) the icky ones and share the sweet ones? Ask your kids what they remember about Christmases past and what they enjoyed.
- 12 Take a bubble bath tonight and listen to instrumental Christmas carols ... or put it on your calendar for another date this week and **do not cancel**.

13 Get ready for Christmas part 3: Make some spiced cider, enjoy it with your kids and ask them what they would like to do over the school break. Make a point to do at least one realistic request. If you don't have kids, think about yourself— What is something different you might like to do with your time off this year?

14 Pray for some of your friends by name that they may have a peaceful, joy-filled, Christ-centered Christmas. Consider sending those for whom you prayed a note letting them that you prayed for them.

15 Be a secret Santa and get your kids in on the act. Give someone a simple gift and don't take credit. You could leave baked goods, candy or a sweet anonymous note on a neighbor's doorstep.

16 Go tele-caroling: Call a relative or two and sing a Christmas carol. (Or enlist your children to do it for you/ with you.)

17 Have a hot chocolate and game night tonight... heat up a few cups, add marshmallows and stir with a candy cane. Give your games a Christmas twist: Christmas Pictionary, Scrabble with only Christmas words, charades, or yelling "Happy Birthday Jesus" instead of Uno.

18 Pray for your immediate family... as a group and as individuals.

19 Pray for your children's teachers and school administration. If you don't have children, think of a teacher who really impacted you and pray for him or her. Then pray for one you didn't like very much.

20 Write a note to someone you won't see this Christmas and mail it to her or him. Emails and mass Christmas cards do not count.

21 Pray for your husband. Think about what prayers he would want you to pray and add those to your own. Pray for yourself in the role of his wife and teammate. After praying for him, consider writing down your prayer and sharing it with him.

22 Do a Christmas craft or bake with the kids, remembering that the object is to have fun, not end up with something that looks beautiful. Let the kids lead rather than follow.

23 Pray for yourself, asking for God's direction. Then clear your mind of distractions and really listen to Him as best you can.

24 Read Luke 1-2:40 to your family or enjoy some quiet reading with yourself and God. Also read *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* just for fun.

25 At the end of the day, sit back and reflect on your Advent season. What new blessings did you enjoy this year? Write about them and thank the Lord for each of them, one by one.