

Countdown to Christmas
Activity Garland

In the Hebrew Scriptures Jesus' birth was foretold. Read Isaiah 9:6 and reflect on what titles you would give Jesus if you had Isaiah's job

Read and notice the similarities between: Matthew 1:22-23 and Isaiah 7:14

Think of someone who you consider to be annoying or unimportant. How can you show God's love and kindness to them today or tomorrow? How can you help them feel worthy of love?

Read Luke 1:26-28, 31: Reflect: When have you known that God was with you?

Make a Grateful List or a Giving List instead of a wish-list!

Read Micah 5:2 Reflect: Do you think that small people can do big things? What about the marginalized?

Research the history of the real Old St. Nick (Saint Nicholas). Use those devices for good! Reflect: How you can be inspired by Saint Nicholas this year?

Read Luke 1:46-55: Reflect - This is Mary's song of praise and amazement. What is a favorite song that inspires amazement or joy?

Make a menu for a meal that you can take or share with someone who is feeling lost or lonely this Advent. Next, set a date and/or send an invite to make this happen.

Make cookies to take to a neighbor, a nursing home, or a single parent family.

Spend some time wrapping gifts and say a prayer for each person you are gifting as you wrap.

Read Luke 2:12: Reflect- How can you practice "peace on earth?" in your home, your workplace/school, your neighborhood? On social media?

Read: Psalm 95:6:
Reflect - What does
it mean to be under
God's care?

What is something
that your homeless
neighbors need? How
can you help get
these things to
them? Make an ac-
tion plan with family
or friends to meet
one of these needs.
Set a date and a time
to complete this.

Read: Luke 2:19-
20, 33-35: Reflect-
What special mo-
ments do you
treasure in your
heart?

Make paper crowns
that you can wear
Christmas morning
when you celebrate
the birth of Christ!

Turn off all the lights in
your house except your
Christmas lights. Light
your (Advent) candles
and sing softly Joy to
the World and say a
simple prayer of thanks
for new beginnings be-
fore bedtime.

Read Matthew
2:11: Reflect -
What gifts can
you give God?

Watch or read A
Christmas Carol. Re-
flect on how the Holy
Spirit uses all sorts of
ways to get our atten-
tion and how because
of Jesus' birth, we al-
ways have the chance
to allow our hearts to
be changed.

Give away good
parking spots,
stand in the
longest lines, let
others go first
at every turn.

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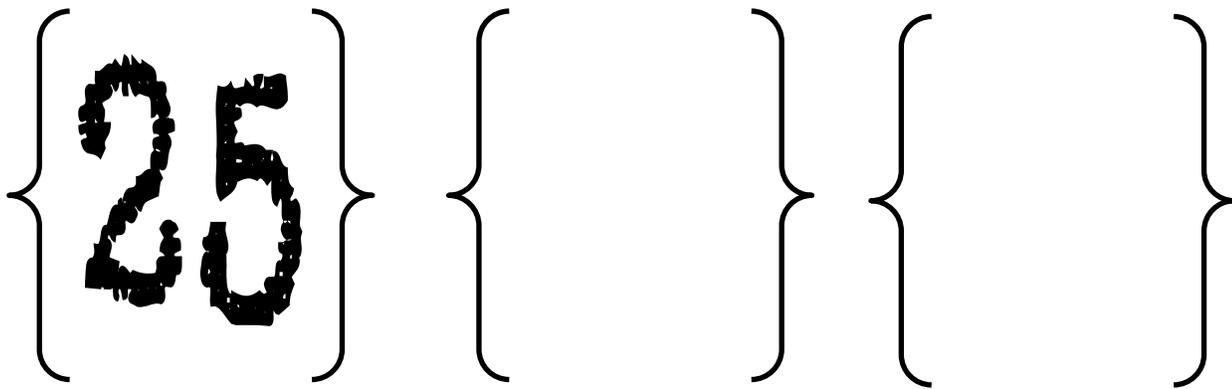
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Directions

1. Glance over the activity squares. Think of five additional activities that you would like to do this Advent. They can be as simple as saying a daily morning prayer, or as involved as throwing a hot chocolate party at a local shelter. Add these activities to the blank squares.
2. Trim the numbers and activity squares into about $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch squares. Set aside.
3. Cut out 50 2-inch squares from your selection of scrapbook paper (use craft scissors for more texture!).
4. Using a glue stick, adhere the scrapbook paper squares to the center of the shipping tags, front and back.
5. Next, glue the numbers and the activity challenges into the center of the scrapbook paper squares on each side, creating a layering effect. (Here you add extra embellishments if you want—
6. Cut your ribbon, twine, or pompom fringe into three even strands of 12 inches each, or leave in one 3 yard length.
7. Hang your ribbon on the wall, over your mantle, etc.
8. Next, tie each of the tags to the three strands in numerical order, with the numbers facing out.

Bonus Idea:

Punch a hole in the bottom of each tag about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch up from the edge.

After your tags have been tied to the strands of ribbon, attach (either with string or an ornament hook) a small ornament to each shipping tag. Make sure all the tags are turned so that the numbers are facing out and can be seen.

Starting on December 1, turn one number per day, reading the daily challenge on the back. Leave each challenge facing outward as you move toward December 25. If you did the bonus, remember to remove the small ornament that is attached to the shipping tag. and hang the ornament on either a small tree, perhaps near the Advent garland, or on a larger family tree.

From the Advent chapter in ***A Homemade Year: The Blessings of Cooking, Crafting, and Coming Together by Jerusalem Jackson Greer***

More info at jerusalemgreer.com