

Gather around and read about God's gift of joy, one day at a time, as you count down to Christmas Day. Then do the suggested activities so your family and others can experience more joy this Christmas season.

# advent calendar



sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				1 <b>A young couple, Mary and Joseph, get engaged.</b> • Send encouraging snail mail to a friend. (Imagine the joy on their faces when they open their mailbox!)	2 <b>One day, God sends the angel Gabriel to Mary. He has some very special news!</b> • Jump in the car and deliver Christmas flowers to a friend. (Be spontaneous! Create some joy on the spot!)	3 <b>Mary is greatly troubled when she hears the angel's greeting.</b> • Watch the sunrise or sunset together. (God's beauty makes the heart smile.)
4 <b>Gabriel responds to Mary: "Don't be afraid; God is very happy with you!"</b> • Give back by volunteering, cleaning the neighbor's yard, or making cookies for others. (There's joy in serving others.)	5 <b>Gabriel tells Mary the special news: she will have a baby boy, and He will be named Jesus.</b> • Go for a walk together. (Endorphins make everyone feel better!)	6 <b>Gabriel shares more details of God's plan with Mary: "Jesus will be great and will be called God's very own Son!"</b> • Power down for the evening. (Real people bring real joy!)	7 <b>Mary doesn't understand how she can have a baby without being married, but the angel Gabriel assures her of a great truth: nothing is impossible with God.</b> • Plan a party. (Music + food + friends = a room full of joy!)	8 <b>"I serve God with my life and want all that you have said to happen," Mary tells the angel, and he leaves.</b> • Create a masterpiece. (Okay, maybe not a masterpiece. But painting, sculpting, and songwriting will create a joyful feeling.)	9 <b>Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth and is so overwhelmed with God's goodness that she sings a song of praise.</b> • Say three things you're thankful for to start the day. (A thankful heart is a happy heart.)	10 <b>Caesar Augustus wants to know how many people are in his empire, so he tells all the people to go back to their hometown to be registered and counted.</b> • Get some rest! Tell the family to grab a blanket and pick a napping spot. (More sleep = more joy.)
11 <b>Joseph takes Mary, who is pregnant, to his hometown of Bethlehem to be counted.</b> • Light a winter-scented candle and share favorite Christmas memories. (The flickering fire, seasonal scent, and sweet memories will calm your mind and fill your heart.)	12 <b>While Joseph and Mary are in Bethlehem, the time comes for the baby to be born.</b> • Laugh a little—or a lot! (Turn your frowns upside down with anything from a joke book to YouTube Videos.)	13 <b>Mary gives birth to Jesus, wraps Him in swaddling cloths and lays Him in a manger because there is no room for them anywhere else.</b> • Search your favorite artists singing their version of popular Christmas carols and sing along. (Singing away a "not so great day" is one way to choose joy.)	14 <b>At night in a nearby field, shepherds are watching their flocks.</b> • Organize a room—or a drawer. (Getting rid of clutter makes the brain sigh in relief—ahhh.)	15 <b>The sky lights up – God has sent an angel to the shepherds to tell them the good news.</b> • Go outside at dusk and see who can spot the first star as you breathe in the night air. (Pressing pause is a good thing.)	16 <b>When the shepherds see the angel, they're afraid!</b> • Look in a mirror and try your funniest, jolliest, holiday laugh. (It will make a bad day feel better and a great day even greater!)	17 <b>The angel tries to calm the shepherds: "Don't be afraid – I bring wonderful news that will bring joy to all of the world!"</b> • Make a snowman—out of anything! (Snow, sand, pancakes, play dough. It feels great to get those creative juices flowing.)
18 <b>"A Savior – the Rescuer you have been waiting for is born today!" the angel proclaims to the shepherds.</b> • Stretch it out—your muscles, that is. (A happy body makes for a happier person.)	19 <b>The angel explains that the shepherds will find the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.</b> • Hug someone. (Hugging is great for all occasions. Hurt, happy, frustrated, excited? Hug!)	20 <b>More angels come to celebrate the good news – they arrive at the shepherd's field and begin praising God!</b> • Say something positive. (If a family member says something negative, be the first to think of a way to turn it into a positive statement.)	21 <b>The shepherds leave their flocks and hurry to find Mary, Joseph, and the baby who is lying in a manger.</b> • Give a gift without getting caught. (Secret gifts are fun to give and receive. Joy for everyone!)	22 <b>After they see the baby, the shepherds excitedly go and tell everyone they run into the good news!</b> • Make your bed. (No, Mom and Dad didn't make this up. Tidy lives truly are happier lives.)	23 <b>The shepherds return to their flocks, praising God for all they had seen and heard.</b> • Compliment someone—or everyone! (It just feels good to make others feel good.)	24 <b>Mary names the baby Jesus just as the angel had told her to do.</b> • Drink a cup of hot tea while listening to Christmas music. (Peppermint, vanilla, green, or cinnamon – hot tea and jolly music can be good for you!)
25 <b>God has sent His Son to rescue us because He loves us so very much! Luke 1:26–2:21</b> • Go back to Day 1 and read about God's gift of true joy, from beginning to end. We can choose joy each day because God gave us joy in Jesus!						

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