



Advent Family time sheets



What are these sheets?

A sheet with a story and activities for the whole family to do together. They are linked with each week during Advent:

Advent 1	29 November – 5 December 2020
Advent 2	6-12 December 2020
Advent 3	13-19 December 2020
Advent 4	20-24 December 2020

How does my family use them?

We suggest that you get together at the same time each week to look at the sheets, perhaps on a Sunday or Monday.

- Each week begins with a brief activity to get you started and thinking about the theme.
- Next, read the simple story together. You could get different family members to read this each week, and do come back to it again through the week as you think about each different theme.
- Then take part in several activities: Play, Create, Praise and Pray.
- There is a final activity to join in with through the rest of the week to continue to think about the theme/story.

You don't have to do everything all in one go, you can leave out any activities which don't work for your family and do feel free to adapt what has been suggested. If you don't have any of the items needed, consider swapping them with something simple that you do have.

What is Advent?

Advent is the beginning of the Church year. It is the time when we get ready for Christmas and so it is a season of waiting and preparing.

We don't have the traditional stories we associate with Christmas during Advent, e.g. shepherds and Jesus' birth. Instead, we hear lots about people who helped get the world ready to welcome Jesus. The Bible stories help us to think about what we are waiting for. In our everyday lives there is lots about preparing for Christmas and waiting for that special time, e.g. shopping and putting up decorations, but these stories remind us to think carefully about what we are waiting for. If Christmas is ultimately about Jesus coming to be in the world, then Advent is about getting our own lives ready to welcome him. We are also reminded of the hope we can have in Jesus, that he is 'Good news' for the world.

We hope these sheets help you to think and reflect, as a family, about what Advent and Christmas means, and how you can ready for it together this year.



29 November – 5 December 2020

Play and think about how we can watch for signs of God in difficult times.

Sit together in the dark and start a timer on your watch/phone. See if anyone can guess when a minute has passed. If they are wrong by more than five seconds, begin again. Do this until someone gets it right, or until you can make the point that time seems to stretch on and on when we are waiting. Talk together about examples of some difficult times people have to wait through, you can also talk about the current situation.

Now read the story together then explore it using these activities.

Play

Print off or draw some pictures of the signs of God's coming from Mark's Gospel, e.g. a sun and moon crossed out, the stars falling, and hide these around the room. Ask everyone to see how many signs of God's coming they can find.

Create

Draw some glasses onto thick card and then decorate them in Advent purple. Use the glasses as a reminder to help us keep watch for signs of God coming.

Praise

Light the first candle on your Advent wreath (or just light one candle, with three unlit), as you sing (to the tune of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'):

Light the Advent candle one,
shining brightly as the sun.
We are watching for the Lord.
We believe and trust his word.
Light the Advent candle one,
shining brightly as the sun.

Pray

Make the room dark and gather together around a candle. Spend some time in quiet, watching the flame of the candle.

Bible story Mark 13.24-37



Sit in a circle and practise actions for: 'watch' (*make glasses with fingers round eyes*), 'listen' (*cup hands round ears*) and 'ready' (*stand to attention*). Use these actions as you tell the story together.

Watch! Listen! Be ready!
Jesus told us that he is coming back, but we don't know when that is going to happen. Jesus wants us to watch for the signs that he is coming, to listen, and to get ourselves ready for his return.
Watch! Listen! Be ready!

Through the week

Work together to write a letter to yourselves about something that is bothering you as a family. It could be anything from a problem in school to a global issue.

Seal the letters in envelopes and put them somewhere safe. Challenge each other to pray about what you have written down. Plan to open them at Christmas, reread what you have written and think about how God has been at work in that situation.



6-12 December 2020

Play and wonder about the good news of Jesus.

Read aloud famous opening lines from some children's books. Talk about the importance of an opening line. Imagine you are writing your life story so far and think of something funny as the opening line. Read your opening lines to each other.

Now read the story together then explore it using these activities.

Play

Roll up a piece of paper to make scrolls and write, 'Good news' on them. Have some races – in teams if possible – passing the scroll(s) back and forth across the room.

Create

Use teabags or coffee to stain white paper and 'age' it. Use this to make your own scroll. Decorate and copy or colour in the words 'Good news'. Roll up the scroll and secure it using a ribbon or string.

Praise

Light the second candle on your Advent wreath (or just light two candles, with two unlit), as you sing (to the tune of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'):

Light the Advent candle two,
John the Baptist brought good news.
Told us all 'He's on his way',
helped the world to change and pray.
Light the Advent candle two,
John the Baptist brought good news.

Pray

Pass round something which has a rough surface, e.g. sandpaper, a Lego brick and each run your fingers over it, as you think about how we can get ready for Jesus.

Bible story

 Mark 1.1-8



Lay out a cloth and place objects/pictures (in brackets) on it, as you tell the story.

There was once a man called John the Baptist, who went to live in the desert. (*sandpaper*)
John wore very strange clothes that were made from camel's hair, with a belt around his waist. (*brown cloth and leather belt*)
He ate grasshoppers and honey. (*jar of honey*)
He told people to say sorry to God, then John baptized them in the river. (*strip of blue felt/paper*)
He told everyone to get ready, because Jesus was coming. (*paper scroll with 'Good news' written on it*)

Through the week

Plan a time each day to turn off your phones and place them in a box, turn off the TV, etc. and then find a bit of space in the room to read the Bible, draw, write or simply sit. Play some quiet music and try to establish an atmosphere of prayer and reflection.



13-19 December 2020

Play and explore the idea of Jesus being with us.

Use the image. What is your favourite part of the picture? What Bible stories can you find in the picture? Try to find Jesus in the picture – you will have to look very closely! If you did find Jesus, the Messiah, what would you ask him?

Now read the story together then explore it using these activities.

Play

Print off or draw simple black and white pictures of Jesus and hide them round the room. Then all search to try and find them.

Create

Colour in the pictures of Jesus from *Play*. Decorate paper cups and then hide the images of Jesus inside.

Praise

Light the third candle on your Advent wreath (or just light three candles, with one unlit), as you sing (to the tune of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'):

Light the Advent candle three,
we are searching, help us to see.
Help us know that you are near,
very soon you will be here.
Light the Advent candle three,
we are searching, help us to see.

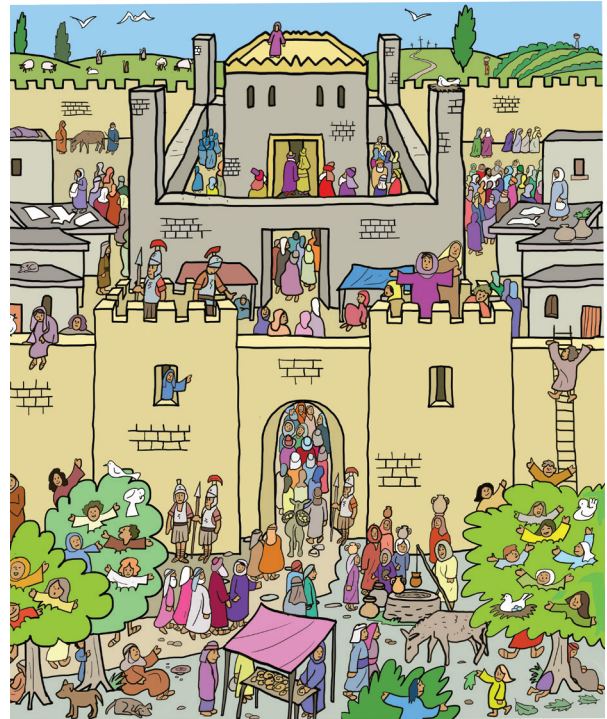
Pray

Thank you, God, for messengers like John the Baptist. Help us to pass on the message that Jesus is coming.
Amen.

Bible story



John 1.6-8,19-28



Using a large sheet of paper, each time someone asks a question in the story draw a large question mark on the paper, making them bigger each time.

Lots of people came to John asking, 'Who are you?' He told them he was not the Messiah, so they tried to guess. 'Are you Elijah?' John said, 'No.' 'Are you the prophet?' John said, 'No.' The people began to be annoyed. Why wouldn't John tell them who he was? 'We need to know,' they said. 'Who are you?' John said: 'I am just the person helping the world to get ready for the Lord. Someone else more important than me is on his way. He is already here but you don't know him.'

Through the week

Every time you leave your house this week, pause and thank God that he is with you.



20-24 December 2020

Play and wonder about Mary saying yes to God.

All try writing your names upside down on a piece of paper. Next, try writing a whole sentence upside down – how easy is it?

Now read the story together then explore it using these activities.

Play

Spend some more time in the 'story scene' you have created and retell the story together, acting it out using mime and trying to remember some of the words and phrases.

Create

Draw speech bubbles onto card, to colour and decorate. Then add them to the 'story scene'.

Praise

Light the third candle on your Advent wreath (or just light four candles), as you sing (to the tune of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'):

Light the Advent candle four,
help us to love you more and more.
Mary, mother of your Son,
changed the world for everyone.
Light the Advent candle four,
help us to love you more and more.

Pray

Dear God,
thank you for Mary, who listened to what
the angel was saying, and said yes.
Amen.

Bible story

 Luke 1.26-38



Use some objects to create the scene of Mary's house. Sit in the space and talk about what you can see. If possible, have different people pretending to be Mary and the angel and to read their lines, and someone else to read the rest of the text. Or you can just read the story aloud.

Mary was alone in her house when suddenly, an angel appeared. The angel said, 'God has chosen you and is very near!' Mary was worried and didn't understand why he said this to her. The angel said, 'Don't be scared. God is pleased with you. God wants you to be the mother of his Son. You must call him Jesus.' Mary said to the angel, 'How will this happen?' The angel said, 'The power of God in the Holy Spirit.' Then Mary said, 'I will be God's servant. I will do what he wants me to do.' Then the angel left her.

Through the week

Imagine a world where children, instead of adults, are in charge. Decide together what changes the children would make to the world, including what new rules there would be. You could write a 'manifesto', or just discuss together what this might look like. You could even try living under these new rules for a week in your household! Discuss the way that God turned things upside down when Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus.