

ADVENT

THEMED PROGRAMME



AIM

Get ready for the birth of the Baby Jesus, by celebrating Advent. This Advent themed programme will help to explore what is behind those Advent windows and the true meaning for the season – the arrival of the ultimate ‘VIP’.

ACTIVITIES

-  **Advent Window Games**
-  **Christmas is Coming!**
-  **The Nativity Advent Calendar**
-  **Advent Charades**
-  **A VIP Arrival**

ADVENT

» INTRODUCTION

Advent is an important part of the Christian calendar. It means 'coming' and it is the period before Christmas, which celebrates the birth of Jesus. For children around the world who are waiting for Christmas Day to arrive, Advent must be the longest month of the year!

It's common for Churches to have an Advent wreath with 4 candles (mostly red), every Advent Sunday one more candle will be lit so that on the 4th Sunday of Advent, all 4 candles are burning and it's bright, a sign that Jesus, light of the world, is coming.

? DID YOU KNOW?

- Advent starts on the Sunday closest to 30th November, giving 4 Sundays before Christmas Day.
- Advent calendars originated in Germany in the early 1900s.
- Chocolate Advent calendars didn't appear until the 1950s.
- You're never too old for an Advent calendar. Whilst designed for children, nearly half of adults admit to having one for themselves.



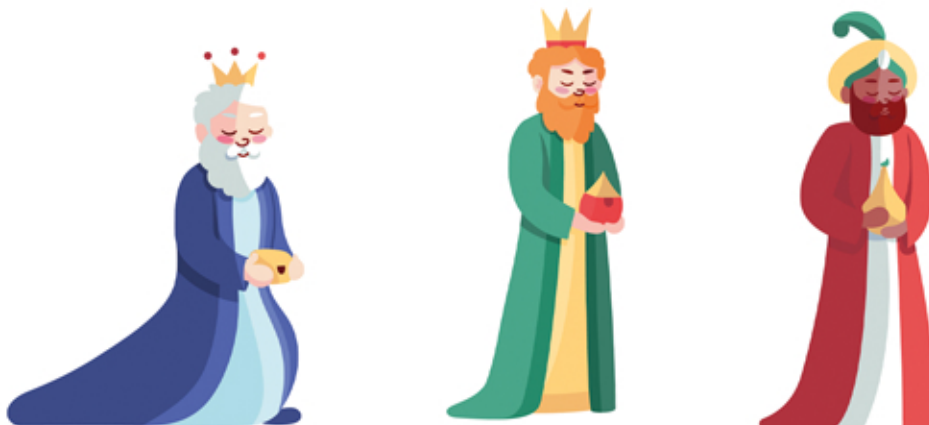
GET ACTIVE: PLAYING GAMES ADVENT WINDOW GAMES



Download and print the 'Advent Windows' sheets. There is a large version (1 number per page) or a small version (4 numbers per page), to suit your group's needs. Alternatively, create your own numbers.

Windows 1-25: Lay the windows upside down in a random order on the floor or a table. Split into two or more teams. Team 1 should start by trying to find window 1. If successful they should remove it from the game and look for window 2. However, every time an incorrect number is found that card should be turned back over and play moves to the next team. As the group start to memorise where the numbers are the game should begin to get easier. Continue playing in number order, switching teams each incorrect number, until all 25 windows have been found. The team with the most windows at the end of the game is the winner.

Find The Window: Lay the windows scattered around your playing area, upside down. The larger the playing area the better. Split into two or more teams and sit them at opposite ends of the room. For each round, one person from each team should be nominated to play. Call out one of the window numbers. The nominated players must hunt around the playing area, turning over the windows in a head-to-head race to find the chosen number first. The person who finds the window first gains a point for their team. Continue playing, with new nominated players each round. Periodically throughout the game shuffle the numbers around, so children can't start remembering where windows can be found.





GET INTO THE BIBLE: CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

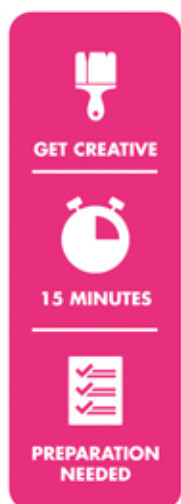
For this activity you'll need 10-12 cardboard boxes of various shapes and sizes wrapped up to look like Christmas presents.

- 1 Split into two or more teams. Each team will need 5 or 6 boxes each. Sit the teams at one end of the room.
- 2 On go, the first team member in each team should carry one box to the end of the room and back and then pass it to the second team member.
- 3 The second team member should then add a box on top (to start creating a stack) and carry both boxes to the end of the room and back. When the stack gets taller, team members can help add the next box to the pile.
- 4 Continue this process, creating larger and larger stacks until all the boxes are being carried. Should the boxes fall then the person carrying them should stop, re-stack the boxes where they are and then carry on.
- 5 The first team to have all their boxes stacked and successfully transported is the winner. Remember it's a race, so encourage the groups to be as quick as they can! You can make the game more difficult by adding more / larger boxes into the mix or by adding obstacles.

Afterwards sit the group down and share the below:

The build up to Christmas can sometimes look a little bit like our game. People running around trying to get things done, going over the top with shopping, buying so much they can struggle to carry it and trying to do everything at 100mph, that they don't stop to remember what Christmas is all about. Advent is about getting ready to welcome Jesus. Our challenge as Christians is to try and block out the distractions and instead focus on the reason for the celebration.

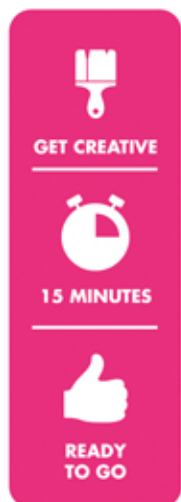
Advent isn't about shopping or running around frantically. Advent is about expecting, waiting, hoping and praying.



GET CREATIVE: ARTY & CRAFTY THE NATIVITY ADVENT CALENDAR

Download and print the 'Nativity Advent Calendar' template sheets. These template sheets consist of three pages. Ideally these should be printed on three different coloured pieces of paper (i.e green, red and white), to help create a Christmas coloured paper chain.

- 1 Give each child all three pages. Cut along the lines to create 24 strips of paper.
- 2 Children should create paper chains, by looping the paper and fixing with Sellotape. Make sure to feed each strip through the previous loop, to create a chain, with the text facing outwards.
- 3 Each slip of paper has a day on it and tells part of the Nativity story. Ask children to ensure their paper chains are built in day order. (i.e. Day 1, Day 2, Day 3 etc).
- 4 Once assembled children can take their Nativity Advent calendars home. For each day of Advent, encourage the group to find that day on their chain and read the snippet from the Nativity. By the time Christmas Day comes, they will have journeyed all the way through the Nativity story and have been reminded of the important reason we celebrate Christmas.



GET CREATIVE: SINGING, ACTING AND DANCING ADVENT CHARADES

For this activity you'll need the Advent windows from the 'Advent Windows' game. Alternatively, you can write numbers 1-25 on pieces of paper. Place the nativity windows in a bowl (small version) or laid upside down on the floor (large version). These will become our points for the activity. A leader will also need to think of some Christmas charades. These might be items associated with Christmas, films, carols, actions etc. The more challenging the charade, the better the game works.

Split into teams. One person from each team should be nominated each round to be given a Christmas charade. This charade must be the same for each team playing. The nominated players then go back to their teams and on 'GO' should start acting. This is a race, with the first team to correctly guess the charade shouting '**It's Christmas!!**', to stop the round. A leader should be with each team to help referee this.

The winning team can then randomly pick one of the Advent windows to reveal how many points they have won that round. This will create a very changeable game, as some rounds will be worth 1 point and other rounds worth 25 points. Continue playing for a set time or until you have run out of charades / windows. The team with the most points at the end wins.



GET INTO THE BIBLE: CELEBRATING A VIP ARRIVAL

Ask the group who they think the most famous / important person on the planet right now is. Answers may include The Queen, world leaders, footballers, singers, celebrities etc. Now ask, if that person were going to visit us at BB next week what would they all do to prepare? (Put up decorations, create signs, buy a gift, tidy up, dress smartly, roll out the red carpet.)

When really important people visit, people tend to 'roll out the red carpet'. This is something that goes back thousands of years and was thought to only be worthy of 'Gods'. None of the celebrities or world leaders we talked about earlier are Gods, but they all get the red carpet treatment wherever they go. In fact, there has only ever been one human in the whole of history that has deserved the true red carpet treatment, and that's Jesus!

Advent is kind of like getting ready for a VIP to visit us, however this VIP is Jesus – the ultimate VIP. But do we spend Advent giving Jesus the love and attention that he deserves? Probably not. Thankfully we don't need to roll out a red carpet and put on our best clothes, because Jesus loves us just as we are, but we still need to give him our time and attention. We can start this by opening our hearts and minds and letting Jesus know that we want him in our lives. That's the perfect way of getting ready for a very important arrival this Christmas! Finish with a prayer.































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Day 1: "God sent the angel Gabriel to a girl named Mary."

Luke 1 v 26

Day 4: "He will be great. People will call him the son of the most high God." Luke 1 v 32

Day 7: "Everyone travelled to their hometowns to have their name put on the list." Luke 2 v 3

Day 10: "There were no rooms left in the Inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed." Luke 2 v 7

Day 13: "The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news!" Luke 2 v 10

Day 16: "All the angels were praising God, saying, "give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God" Luke 2 v 13-14

Day 19: "After Jesus was born, some wise men came from the East." Matthew 2 v 1

Day 22: "They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh." Matthew 2 v 11

Day 2: "The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, because God is very pleased with you." Luke 1 v 30

Day 5: "Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let this thing you have said happen to me!." Luke 1 v 38

Day 8: "So Joseph went to the town of David because he was from the family of David. Joseph registered with Mary."
Luke 2 v 4-5

Day 11: "That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep." Luke 2 v 8

Day 14: "Today your savior was born in David's town, He is Christ, the Lord" Luke 2 v 11

Day 17: "So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary, Joseph and the baby." Luke 2 v 16-17

Day 20: "When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy." Matthew 2 v 10

Day 23: "A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us. His name will be ... Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9 v 6

Day 3: "Listen! You will become pregnant and have a baby boy.
You will name him Jesus" Luke 1 v 31

Day 6: "Caesar sent out an order ... that everyone's name must
be put on a list." Luke 2 v 1

Day 9: "While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time
came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son."
Luke 2 v 6-7

Day 12: "An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of
the Lord was shining around them." Luke 2 v 9

Day 15: "This is how you will know him: you will find a baby
wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box" Luke 2 v 12

Day 18: "Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising
God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and
heard." Luke 2 v 20

Day 21: "They went to the house ... and they bowed down
and worshiped the child." Matthew 2 v 11

Day 24: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him would not be lost but
have eternal life." John 3 v 16