

10 Ways to Engage a Child's Faith during the Season of Advent

Through Family Devotions

The Jesse Tree is an old Advent practice that uses symbols to tell God's story from creation to the birth of Jesus. Faith Formation Ministries has created a simple, child-friendly Jesse Tree Advent devotional and colorful printable symbols to go with it. Check out [this blog](#) to see how you can create a Jesse Tree at home with your family.

Faith Five is a simple family faith formation practice in which families do five faith-forming things together: Share, Read, Talk, Pray, and Bless each other. Families can gather either around a table or before bed, lighting a candle and engaging in this 5-minute daily check-in. [This blog post](#) includes Advent-related Scripture verses to read, as well as daily questions to ask.

Through Prayer

[Praying in Color](#) provides free, downloadable calendar templates to provide spaces for daily prayers, words, and doodles. They're great for both children and adults. If you have young children, you can create prayer bags that explain the main themes of Advent. Check out how you can make your own [here](#).

Through Advent Calendars

Advent calendars are a joyful way to mark the days up to the birth of Christ and help children learn about the waiting, expectation, and preparation of the Advent season. Some Advent calendars have doors with special symbols for each day. Some even have chocolates or hidden treasures behind each door. You can find calendars at local stores throughout the area, or check out [this easy DIY Advent calendar](#) idea from Faith Formation Ministries.

Through Advent Wreaths

Advent wreaths celebrate the four weeks of Advent. Traditionally they consist of an evergreen wreath with four candles in it. Beginning on the first Sunday of Advent, the family lights a candle and reads a special devotional for the week. You can add a fifth candle to light on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. It is easy to create your own wreath, but if you are looking for ideas, BuildFaith.org created a blog post highlighting [The 99¢ Advent Wreath](#), which includes instructions to make the wreath and simple prayers to pray each week.

Through The Nativity Creche

As you decorate for Christmas, many homes display a nativity scene with figures of Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, and others. To help make this creche interactive and engaging in the season of Advent, check out [Go On, PLAY with your Nativity Creche](#) from BuildFaith.org.

Through Service

Building Faith's blog post [Advent at Home in Community](#) encourages random acts of kindness as a part of engaging Advent as a family. Ideas include donating non-perishable food to a food pantry or leaving a kind note on a neighbor's car.

Through Books

Told in simple language, [The Advent Book](#) has 25 beautifully illustrated doors that open to reveal a picture and a part of the Christmas story. Starting on December 1st, children can open a door each day through Christmas to anticipate and learn the Biblical story.

Storybooks often have tales in which a character who is lost or in a difficult circumstance is rescued. This is also the message of Advent! [This blog post](#) highlights children's stories to use as discussion starters for talking about the message of Advent. Also, here is a list of [A Christmas Collection of Children's StoryBooks](#) that families can read together.

Through Music

Families with young children might enjoy viewing and singing along to the [Hey, Mary!](#) video. [An Easy Advent Song for Children](#) is a simple, interactive spiritual that can help children be in the moment during Advent and to have some fun waiting and getting ready for Christ's birth.

Through Photographs

[#Picture Advent](#) presents an idea that will resonate with families whose kids enjoy taking photographs.

Through Video

Looking for ways to explain Advent to your children? The wordless video [Advent in 2 Minutes](#) explains Advent in a fun and informal way.

To encourage the connections between Advent and Christmas with Lent and Easter, the [Cradle to Cross Wreath](#) is a tangible family tradition that helps prepare hearts for the days of Advent as well as the days of Lent. For the 24 days of Advent, the wooden figure of Mary pregnant on a donkey travels with the candle through the spiral wreath that can be expanded with a wooden figure of Jesus carrying the cross for 40 days of Lent. This is a wonderful visible connection between the joy of Christ's birth and his redemption at Easter.