

ADVENT TREE AND ORNAMENTS



As I was growing up, the Advent calendar was a tradition that seemed to be more centered on getting a piece of candy or a gumball machine toy every day in December than on awaiting the celebration of the birth of Christ. It just never seemed right to me. So, when I had little kids of my own, I started brainstorming ideas for a daily, candy-free (mostly!) celebration of Advent that focused on the “big God story” of Christ’s birth, not just the Sunday School characters and events. I wanted to create opportunities for conversations around questions like *“Why did Jesus need to come to earth?”* and *“How does Christmas impact our entire life each and every day?”*.

The result is this Advent tree project. It has evolved over the course of many years, and even though my kids have experienced it so many times now that they can pretty much recite all the scriptures it contains, they both say “it just wouldn’t be Christmas” if we didn’t get it out.

For the sake of simplicity, these instructions outline the way we use it at our house. But it can certainly be modified in a variety of ways to suit the ages and personalities of your children. Feel free to take the basic elements and use them in whatever way suits your family.

Supplies:

- **Tree** – Ours is a small artificial tree that is used solely for this purpose, but you can use any Christmas tree in your home.
- **24 Advent Ornament Items** (Specifics found below)
- **Wrapping Paper or Tiny Gift Bags and Tissue Paper** - Enough to wrap the 24 small ornaments.
- **Gift Wrapping Cord or Ornament Hooks**
- **Scotch Tape, Scissors, Pen**
- **24 Gift Tag “Clue Cards” for each ornament** (Found below)
- **Large basket** in which to store the wrapped, unopened ornaments throughout the month of December. Alternatively, you can just place them under the tree until the day they are unwrapped.
- **Bible**
- **Advent Tree Ornament Answer Key** (Found below)

(OVER)

Process:

1. Cut out the individual gift tag “clue cards” that are numbered 1-24 for the first 24 days in December. Fold each in half so it can’t be seen, and write the number of the clue on what is now the front of the clue card.
2. Cut gift wrapping cord into pieces big enough to create a loop hanger by taping each end of the cord to the back of the ornament item. Some items may be easier to hang using an ornament hook.
3. Once all items have been converted into ornaments, wrap each one individually and tape the corresponding clue card to the outside of the gift.
4. Starting on December 1, have a child find the gift for that date and read (or have you read) the clue and scripture listed on the card. **DO THIS BEFORE OPENING THE GIFT.** Once the clue and scripture have been read, ask your kids to guess what kind of ornament might represent the things talked about in the clue and the scripture. Once all guesses have been made, have a child open the gift, and talk a little more about what it represents before having a child hang it wherever they want on the tree.
5. Repeat this process every day through Christmas Eve.

ADVENT TREE ORNAMENT ANSWER KEY

1	Heart (Love)	13	Bells (Bells Announce Good News)
2	Apple or Snake (Sin)	14	Timer (Waiting / Time)
3	Candle (Light)	15	House Key (Home in Heaven)
4	Lamb (Sacrificial Lamb)	16	Crown (King of Kings)
5	Candy Cane (Shepherd’s Crook)	17	Gift Box (Best Gift of All)
6	St. Nicholas (Loving Others)	18	Stamper (Stamped as His People)
7	Compass (Show us the way)	19	Family Photo (Part of God’s Family)
8	Book or Apple (Teacher)	20	Almond Joy (Joy)
9	Dove (Peace)	21	Ring (Eternity)
10	Fork (Eating / Being Fed)	22	Bible (Instructions on How to Live)
11	Star (Wise Men Followed the Star)	23	Spiced Tea Bag (Sweet Fragrance)
12	Angel (Announced the Savior’s Birth)	24	Gold Coin(s) (Great Reward)

****** These items can be found in the following locations:

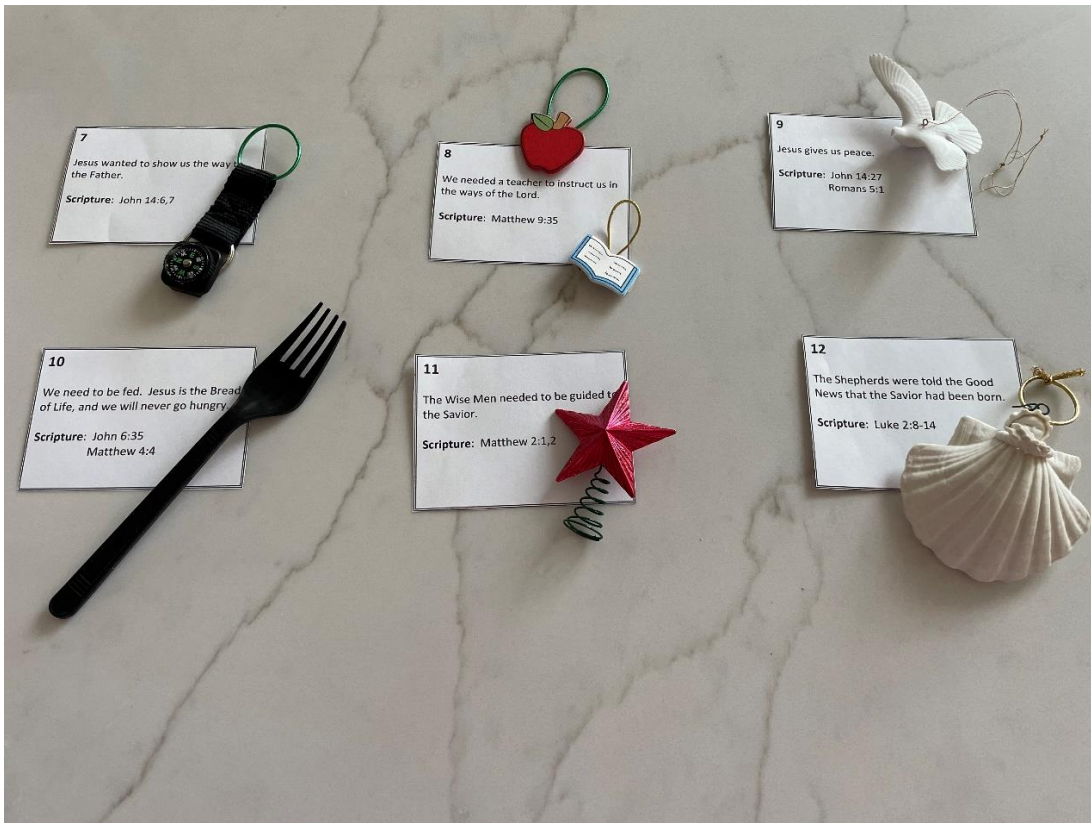
Kitchen Junk Drawer and Pantry

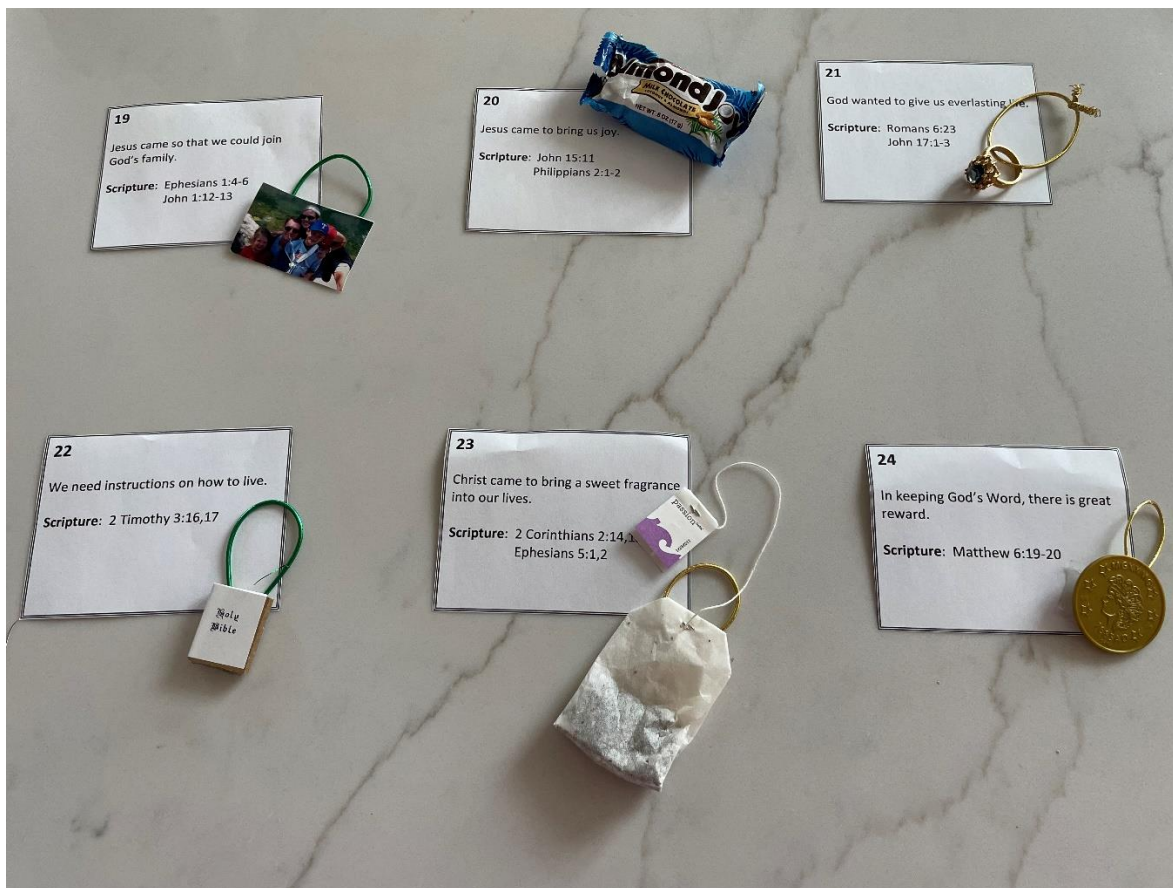
Kids’ Toybox

Hobby Lobby and/or Michael’s

(Christmas ornament section, wood craft section, dollhouse section)

Dollar Store







1

God loves us!

Scripture: John 3:16

2

Why did Jesus need to come?

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-6

3

The world was in darkness and needed God's light.

Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-3

4

We needed a special Lamb to be sacrificed for our sins.

Scripture: John 1:29, 35-37

5

Jesus came because we needed a shepherd.

Scripture: Psalm 23:1
John 10:11-14

6

Jesus wants us to love others unselfishly.

Scripture: 1 John 3:17
Matthew 6:3,4
Tell the story of St. Nicholas

7

Jesus wanted to show us the way to the Father.

Scripture: John 14:6,7

8

We needed a teacher to instruct us in the ways of the Lord.

Scripture: Matthew 9:35

9

Jesus gives us peace.

Scripture: John 14:27
Romans 5:1

10

We need to be fed. Jesus is the Bread of Life, and we will never go hungry.

Scripture: John 6:35
Matthew 4:4

11

The Wise Men needed to be guided to the Savior.

Scripture: Matthew 2:1,2

12

The Shepherds were told the Good News that the Savior had been born.

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14

13

Throughout history, bells have been rung to express joy and praise and to announce good news. How did the shepherds respond to the Good News?

Scripture: Luke 2:20

14

Advent was established to provide a time for us to remember the years of waiting for the Savior's arrival.

Scripture: Psalm 27:14
Philippians 3:20

15

Jesus has made a permanent home for us in Heaven.

Scripture: John 14:1-3

16

Jesus is the King of Kings. Just as He came in the past, He is coming again to reign in power and glory.

Scripture: Revelation 17:14
Revelation 19:16

17

We give gifts to others, remembering that God gave us the best gift of all.

Scripture: James 1:17

18

Jesus came to change our lives – to stamp us as His people.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:13

19

Jesus came so that we could join
God's family.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:4-6
John 1:12-13

20

Jesus came to bring us joy.

Scripture: John 15:11
Philippians 2:1-2

21

God wanted to give us everlasting life.

Scripture: Romans 6:23
John 17:1-3

22

We need instructions on how to live.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16,17

23

Christ came to bring a sweet fragrance
into our lives.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14,15
Ephesians 5:1,2

24

In keeping God's Word, there is great
reward.

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-20

