

# Baby Steps to Celebrating Advent: 9 Brilliant Ideas for the wee ones!

Compiled by Susan Cunningham

## 1. **Sing *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* before dinner**

If an Advent wreath is too much, light some candles. Turn out the lights...Print out 4 verses of the song. Sing one verse for a whole week, the next verse the next week, etc. Ring bells for the refrain! My mom had little jingle bells that we held really quietly until the refrain — then we belted out “REJOICE! REJOICE!” and rang our bells for all we were worth. Of all the things my parents did to celebrate Advent, this is the one that sticks the most.

## 2. **Journeying Nativity Set**

We have a Nativity set that we set out on one side of the room. On the other side we set out the Holy Family. Each Sunday of Advent we move them a little closer to the creche (they circle the room) and talk about the journey Mary and Joseph took. - *Natalie*

## 3. **Preparing Jesus' manger with Kindness in your house!**

We have a simple wooden manger my father-in-law made for us years ago. It goes with an inexpensive baby doll. We cut up strips of yellow construction paper and the kids put a piece into the manger when they do something kind. Baby Jesus arrives on Christmas Eve to a nice cushy manger. - [Love2learn Mom](#)

## 4. **Personal mangers**

Each child gets his/her own manger. The kids can fill up their own mangers with straw, and they can help fill up each other's as well. With an “I caught you pleasing Jesus!” to a sibling, they can add straw (or yarn – whatever you have!) to the other's manger.

## 5. **Jesus' Stocking**

Each year we put out a stocking for Jesus at the beginning of Advent. Throughout the season, whenever anyone makes a small sacrifice or does a good deed (complimenting a sibling, making a bed without being asked, etc.) we write down what they did on a scrap of paper, and put it in the stocking. Here's the best part: we then save the stocking until the beginning of the next Advent, then open it and read all the great things everyone did last year. It inspires us to think of what we did the year before, and encourages us to have another great Advent!

## 6. **Advent paper chain**

One other thing we did was to make an Advent paper chain. Each day we chose three things to pray for, and wrote one name on each link: someone we didn't know (a four-year old girl in India), someone we did know (a friend or relative), and some way we'd like to grow (patience, etc). We kept adding to the chain, and by Christmas could 'wrap our tree in prayer'. Really simple, and okay if you miss a few days here and there. – Julia of Lotsa Laundry

## 7. **Keeping it real simple with a well-chosen book**

I bought a GORGEOUS, hardcover, keepsake book- [The Advent Book](#) by the Stockmans. Hardcover book & heavy pages. A different door to open each day with scripture and illustration behind it. Really, really beautiful artwork. Short, simple, EASY! This is just our speed with four little ones in the house.

## 8. **Family/friend/country cards**

A really simple tradition I've managed for the last couple of years is to get 24 small cards on the first Sunday of advent and write the name of a family/friend/country on each one. We fold them and add them to our advent calendar and pray for them each evening during bedtime prayers. It takes 15 minutes to prepare and you're sorted for the whole season!- Lizzie

## 9. **Advent dinners**

When my boys were little...I didn't try to do anything each DAY of Advent, except maybe a special dinner time prayer; but each Sunday we had a special “Advent Dinner.” I would fix a simple dinner and we would eat by candlelight. I had some story/short activity and we lit the Sunday's candle... They still talk fondly about those dinners.