

The Promise

2013 ADVENT DEVOTIONS



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CELEBRATING ADVENT

Advent is the beginning of the Christian year. Just as God had given Israel certain festivals and holy days that served as remembrances of their deliverance from slavery by God's mighty hand, so also, within many denominations, the Church has identified particular seasons and days to remember the life and ministry of Christ.

Advent means "coming." We look back to Christ's first coming, when God became flesh and dwelt among us; but we also look forward, with great hope and expectancy of Christ's second coming in glory.

Advent is a time of expectation, prayer, joy and activities that prepare our hearts for celebrating the birth of Christ. Most importantly, Advent is an invitation to slow down and refocus our energy away from the typical hype and busyness of the season, and toward the profound significance of Christ's coming. The many rituals and expectations of this season can drain us emotionally, physically and even financially. Advent provides opportunities for spiritual renewal and refreshment.

Advent is also the perfect time for followers of Christ, the Church, to be a "light on the hill" reflecting His love and peace, revealing to those around us the true meaning of Christmas.

This year the focus of Advent is on Promise — the promise of a Savior, a King that would reign forever and bring peace and healing to His people. It is a Promise that Israel forgot, time and time again. And yet God in His great love remembered and fulfilled it. The scriptures, reflections, prayers, songs and activities are designed to focus our hearts, attitudes and actions on God's love, faithfulness and fulfillment of His Promise through His Son, Jesus Christ.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS DEVOTIONAL

This devotional is designed to be used once a week, preferably on Sunday. If not Sunday, find a time of day that works best with your schedule and try to meet at the same time each week. It is recommended that continued reflection on questions and/or Scripture readings and prayer around Advent be included in your daily activities to keep the truths fresh in your heart and mind.

The devotion is written for use with families and/or small groups; however, it is also suitable for individual use.

If meeting as a family, invite each member to play a role; take turns reading Scripture and praying. Involve each member in deciding which activities to participate in, and/or in gathering items in preparation for meeting together. Advent is a wonderful time to teach and engage children about the great significance of Christ's birth.

NEEDED ITEMS:

An Advent wreath with candles

The wreath serves as a visual reminder of the story of Christmas. Traditionally, an evergreen wreath (real or artificial) is used, along with three purple or blue candles and one pink candle.

Traditionally, purple is used as representative of repentance and fasting, as well as the color for royalty. However, some churches use blue candles to represent hope. Pink represents joy. Many will add a white candle in the center, referred to as the Christ candle, which is lit Christmas morning. Others choose to use candles of more traditional Christmas colors, such as red.

The specifics of the wreath are not as important as the story it represents and invites us to listen to and participate in.

Christian Resource Institute provides this explanation of the Advent wreath: *The circle of the wreath reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and endless mercy, which has no*

beginning or end. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that we have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. Candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son. The four outer candles represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent, which themselves symbolize the four centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi and the birth of Christ. (<http://www.cresourcei.org/cyadvent.html#Wreath> – NOTE: This is a useful website for additional information on Advent.)

A Bible

The Scripture passages are very familiar. For Advent, consider using a different translation, perhaps even a paraphrase such as *The Message*. Using a different translation helps to present the story in a new and fresh context. If children are participating with you, a translation such as the New Living Translation or Contemporary English Bible provide the texts in easy-to-understand language. *You Bible* or *Bible Gateway* are two online resources for multiple translations. Scripture passages can be printed out ahead of time if preferred.

Music

Each week has a suggested song, including a YouTube link. Feel free to use the suggested music or other songs you prefer. Feel free to use the video in whatever manner you would like, whether to watch or to sing along. Songs can be sung with or without music.

Materials to make a paper chain

If you have children, you may want to consider making a paper chain, adding new chains each week. Instructions for making the paper chain are located in Appendix A at the end of this devotion.

Other Advent Activities

Appendix B lists over 100 different activities for families to do. There are numerous internet sites with Advent activities as well (such as Pinterest). **Please note:** *There are many online Advent ideas which include scriptures from both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Simply disregard the scriptures from the Book of Mormon and use additional scriptures from the Bible.*

Preparing for Advent

- Together in prayer ask God what your family can do to make Advent meaningful:
 - Ask Him to protect your hearts and minds from the busyness of the season.
 - Ask Him to help you review your calendar and commit not to fill it completely with activities.
 - Ask how you can make a difference in someone's life this Christmas.
 - Ask what He may be asking each of you to give up this Christmas in order to bless someone else.
- Schedule now a weekly time for Advent.
- Consider practical ways to reflect Christ's light and love during Advent and to keep Christ central this season.
- Consider a special dinner, invite friends, families, neighbors, and coworkers to kick off Advent.
- Consider a special day of service with your family. Plan and schedule now. (Ideas include: baking cookies and sharing with neighbors or someone in need; planning a visit to a nursing home to sing Christmas carols; shopping for or helping with yard work for a neighbor or friend who could use help; babysitting small children of a neighbor or friend so they can go out; checking with local shelters about serving a meal; contacting a local ministry and asking about items needed that you can donate.)

The Promise Is Made

December 1

We pray.

Light the first candle (one of three candles of the same color) and pray, inviting God to lead your time together.

Gracious God of Promise, we come before You to receive Your truth. Open our ears and hearts to hear afresh the story of Your great love for us and the promised Savior. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

We read.

Today's readings are Genesis 1:26-30, 2:16-17, 3:1-15. Ask one person to read all three passages, or invite different family members to read one passage each.

We reflect.

God in His love created the heavens and earth, and He created us in His image to be a representation of Him in our lives, our actions, our words. God gave Adam and Eve everything they would ever need, including a beautiful, peaceful place to live and foods of every kind to eat. He gave them each other to enjoy life together. And most importantly, He gave them Himself. They were with God, they could talk to God, He was with them always.

But they were made aware of something they couldn't have. They were told "no," and even though they had everything, they wanted the one thing they were told they couldn't have. Have you ever wanted something but you were told "no," and then

you wanted it even more? Did you even go ahead and have it, even though you already had more than you could ever want? Adam and Eve gave up **everything** to have **one** thing—and it cost them everything! No longer did they have a beautiful place to live, no longer did they get along with each other, and, most importantly, God was no longer with them. They were now separated from Him. The good life they had would now become a life of hard work. Everything changed because they decided they wanted something more than God.

God loves us so much that even when we disobey He continues to love us and care for us. And God loved Adam and Eve even after they disobeyed Him. So great is God's love that even when they disobeyed Him and messed up everything, He had a plan to fix everything. So He promised a Redeemer—He promised Someone who would restore everything that was lost. One day, a man would be born and would defeat the serpent (Satan) who had tempted Eve. This man, Jesus, would restore all of God's creation to its original purpose and beauty.

We discuss.

- What do these passages teach us about God? About ourselves?
- How do we see God's love for us demonstrated in these passages?
- This Advent season, what is one thing each of us can do to show God how grateful we are for all that He has given us?

We sing.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

<http://tinyurl.com/khqcauh>

We pray.

Close your time in prayer with each person asking God to help them love Him more than anything, and to give them strength to

say no when they want something they don't need or want to do something that they shouldn't.

If time and weather permits, continue your time together with the following activity. If unable to complete at this time, schedule a time during the week when everyone can participate in the activity together.

We act.

- Take a walk together and consider how God's creation reflects His love for us.
- Point out specific parts of God's creation and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the beauty around us.
- Ask each person to pick up one piece of creation (e.g., a rock, a leaf, an acorn) and bring them back to the house and put them by the Advent wreath. Let these tokens be a reminder of God's perfect creation and His desire to live in restored relationship with each of us.
- If making an Advent paper chain, take one sheet of colorful paper and cut it into 8 strips. Hand out strips to family members and write on each strip one aspect of God's creation that you are thankful for. Connect each strip into a chain.

The Promise Forgotten

December 8

We pray.

Light the candle lit last week and also a second candle of the same color and pray, inviting God to lead your time together.

Holy Father, thank you for an opportunity to gather together and remember Your great promise. Help us to listen and learn more about You and Your promise so that we can live in obedience to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We read.

Today's reading is Isaiah 1:2-4.

We reflect.

Throughout the Old Testament we read over and over again how Israel, God's chosen people, rebelled against Him and turned their backs on Him. Isaiah tells us that "the children I raised and cared for have rebelled against Me" (1:2, New Living Translation).

It is easy for us to read about Israel and think they were crazy. They had everything; God protected them, provided for them. He gave them great victories against their enemies and they became a strong nation. We look back at Israel and wonder how they became so lost; how could they turn their backs on God and worship other gods?

But 1 Corinthians 10:11-13 reminds us: *These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no*

different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. (New Living Translation)

We are no different from Adam and Eve; we are no different from the nation of Israel. Just as they were tempted, so also are we tempted every day with offerings that will only lead us away from God, especially during the Christmas season with all of the new gadgets and must-haves, endless parties and events, and expectations to make this Christmas the best Christmas ever. All of the worry, spending and doing will not draw us closer to God. In fact, these are the temptations that draw us away from God.

We each have a choice: will we be like Israel, a rebellious child that turned their back on God; or be a loving child of God, experiencing fullness of life in Christ with hearts filled with His joy, His peace and His love?

We discuss.

- In what ways do we turn our backs on God?
- What are we to do when we turn our backs on God?
- What does God promise us when we confess our sins to Him?
- What can each of us do during Advent to make sure we don't forget God?

We sing.

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

<http://tinyurl.com/nlbgqxx>

We pray.

As appropriate, ask each member to confess a time when they have turned their back on God; invite them to share openly or silently. This is not a time for condemnation but rather an opportunity for each person to experience God's forgiveness. End the prayer time by reading 1 John 1:9, our assurance of forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We act.

One way to walk in obedience to God is to serve others and share with those in need.

Consider acts of kindness that each family member can do this week for one another and/or for a neighbor or someone else in need.

Advent paper chain: Following instructions for making the chain, hand out strips to each family member. On each strip write a name of God (e.g., Holy, Forgiver of Sins, Love). Connect these strips to the chain started last week.

The Promise Remembered

December 15

We pray.

Light the first and second candles. Light the candle of the single color. If using the traditional Advent colors, this would be the pink candle. This week of Advent traditionally celebrates Joy. Pray and ask God to lead your time together.

Faithful God, we come before You seeking Your wisdom. Lead us in Your word, and incline our hearts towards You and Your truth as we remember Your promise. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We read.

Today's reading is Isaiah 9:6-7a.

We reflect.

How great is our God. Even when Israel sinned over and over again, when they chose to follow other gods and idols, when they deserved God's anger and wrath, God in His great love for them, and for us, did not leave them in their rebellion but remembered His Promise to them.

This passage speaks of the Promise not just for Israel — the coming Savior — but also for us today. As you will recall from the introduction, Advent is about waiting. For Israel, they were waiting for the Messiah, which was fulfilled when Jesus Christ was born. But for us today, Advent is also about waiting for Christ's second coming when Jesus will return and reign over all nations, all people everywhere and for all eternity. These verses in Isaiah remind us of Christ's second coming when *His power will never end; peace will last forever. He will rule*

David's kingdom and make it grow strong. He will always rule with honesty and justice (Isaiah 9:7a, CEV). And just as God kept His Promise of Christ's first coming, so also will He keep His Promise of Christ's second coming. As Isaiah states: *The Lord All-Powerful will make certain that all of this is done* (Isaiah 9:7b).

This is good news! May our response be to worship and celebrate our awesome God!

We discuss.

- What do we learn about God in this passage?
- Consider the names of Christ: *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. Which name is most meaningful to you this Advent season?
- How does this passage give hope to you, to those who are struggling?

We sing.

For Unto Us a Child Is Born

<http://tinyurl.com/obhdtv7>

Veggies Tales version:

<http://tinyurl.com/lkpdxun>

We pray.

- As a family, worship and praise God for His attributes: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- Sing, pray, and read Scriptures of praise (1 Chronicles 29:12-14; Psalm 56:10; Psalm 113; Psalm 150)
- Pray for God's strength and ability to rejoice in His faithfulness, even in difficult times.

We act.

- God expresses his faithfulness to us each day. Ask each member to write down one way they experienced God's faithfulness that day. Share daily with each other during dinner or a time together.
- Ask each member to think of tangible ways to be an expression of hope and encouragement to someone this week and make a commitment to care for at least one person.
- Advent paper chain: Following instructions for making the chain, hand out strips to each family member. On each strip write a name of someone you can pray for this week who needs encouragement. Add these strips to last week's chain. Pray for each name as they are being added to the chain and remember to pray for them through the week. Consider writing each person a card of encouragement letting them know you are praying for them.

The Promise Anticipated

December 22

We pray.

Light all three previous candles. Light the fourth candle and pray, inviting God to lead your time together.

Glorious Lord; Faithful, Loving, Shepherd, we come with great anticipation as the day draws closer, the day of our Savior's birth. Lead us in Your truth and love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We read.

Today's reading is Matthew 1:22-23.

We reflect.

All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet (Matthew 1:22). What God had promised thousands of years earlier was now set in motion to be fulfilled. Israel had endured 400 years of silence from God. To put that in perspective, the United States is only 237 years old. That is a long time of silence. The people waited, and waited, and waited, perhaps even wondering if God had forgotten them, if He had forgotten His Promise.

But the silence is about to end. God was about to break into our world.

"They will call the baby Emmanuel — God with us." No one could ever have imagined or conceived that God's Promise to redeem mankind and all of His creation was Himself. In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson translates John 1:14 as follows: *The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood.* Once again God would be with His people, living with them, working with them, worshipping with them. And the world would never be the same.

His arrival is near, the waiting is almost over. Are you ready for His coming?

We discuss.

- What do you learn about God in these passages?
- What do you think it was like for Israel to wait so long for the fulfillment of the Promise?
- Today we are waiting for Christ to come again. How is our waiting similar to Israel's? How is it different?
- What can you do to prepare for Christ's coming?

We sing.

O Come All Ye Faithful

<http://tinyurl.com/m4jeklw>

We pray.

- Thank God for His wisdom and perfect timing in all things, especially in the coming of Christ.
- Ask God to prepare your heart for celebrating His first coming.
- Ask God to prepare your heart for His second coming.

We act.

- Consider one way that you can help someone else in their preparations for Christmas. Is there an errand you can run for them, something you can bake or cook for them, or a way you can help them clean their home?
- With Christmas just days away, and, for many, a lot still to do, decide how you can daily create God space (30 minutes or an hour) to devote to Him in prayer, reading His word, worship through music. Determine now not to let all of the details of Christmas crowd out time with God.
- Advent paper chain: Following instructions for making the chain, hand out strips to each family member. On each strip write the name of someone who you can help this week. As the strips are being added to the chain, discuss how you will help this person.

The Promise Fulfilled

December 24

NOTE: This day may be completed either Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, preferably before Christmas presents are exchanged.

We pray.

Light all four candles. Light the Christ candle in the center and pray, inviting God to lead your time together.

Christ our Savior, we celebrate Your arrival! We worship You, our newborn King. Thank You, Lord, for fulfilling Your promise to the world.

We read.

Today's reading is Luke 2:1-20.

We reflect.

The Promise is here! A baby born in a manger. No one expected that! Consider watching this YouTube video that tells the story of God's plan through the eyes of children, titled An Unexpected Christmas (by stpaulsartsandmedia)

<http://tinyurl.com/ordbuj8>

We discuss.

Read the story again, paying attention to the people in the story.

- Is there a person or group you can relate to?
- What is it about them that stands out to you?
- What do you take away from the story of Christ's birth that you want to incorporate into your own life after Christmas is over?

We sing.

Joy to the World

<http://tinyurl.com/13ezyfs>

We pray.

- Worship the newborn King. Offer Him your praises, your songs.

We act.

- Celebrate Jesus today.
- When Christmas day is almost over, light all of the Advent candles one more time and spend time thanking God for the gift of His Son and for the many blessings that are yours because of God's great love for you.

Appendix A

Making an Advent Chain

You will need:

- 4 sheets of colored paper, one for each week. You can also use white paper and invite children to color the strips after they are cut out.
- A stapler with staples
- Scissors
- Markers or pens to write with

To cut the paper: Each week you will need to fold your sheet of colored paper in half, the narrow top of paper folded in half to the narrow bottom of paper. Fold in half again, then fold in half one more time. When you open the paper, you will have fold lines for 8 equal strips of paper. Cut along each fold line to guide you as you cut. This will give you 8 equal-sized strips of paper to write on.

To connect your chain: Start with the first strip and fold into a circle; secure with a staple (tape or glue works also). Link each slip to the one in front of it, making a joined circle each time. You will have 8 links in your purple Advent Chain.

Remember to let the children help with the writing if they can. If they are too young, let them color the slips with crayons or markers.

You can hang your Advent chain on your Christmas tree or the fireplace mantel, or you can display it somewhere else in your home.

Appendix B

Advent Activities

Living our faith

- Visit a “live” nativity scene.
- Go to a candlelight church service.
- Read the Christmas story in the Bible.
- Make and decorate a birthday cake for Jesus.
- Spend time on your bellies playing with the family nativity scene and acting out the story.
- Cut your lunch sandwiches into the shape of stars and talk about the original Christmas star.
- Write a letter to Jesus, thanking him for the gifts you received throughout the year.
- Attend Christmas Eve Mass at a beautiful cathedral.
- Make a manger with twigs you collect from outside and talk about Baby Jesus and the type of place He was born into.
- Make paper crowns and talk about the Wise Men and the gifts they brought Jesus.
- Visit a local farm and talk about what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph to have a baby in a stable.

Living out our faith by serving others

- Shop for a gift to put under a Christmas tree meant for helping others.
- Fill a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child.
- Decide to use money spent on each other to purchase animals, education or healthcare for a child in another country through the World Vision Gift Catalog.
<http://tinyurl.com/5dspa2> Visit an elderly home and hand out homemade cookies.

- Take a few small gifts to a shelter for women and children.
- Write a letter to a family friend or some troops stationed overseas.
- Drive to a store that has a Salvation Army bell ringer just to donate (without going into the store to buy anything!).
- Buy a small gift for a child in the long-term care wing of a hospital children's ward, and bring a bouquet of flowers for his/her mother.
- Serve a meal together as a family at a local homeless shelter.
- Clean out your toy boxes and donate good quality items to an opportunity store.
- Raid the pantry for canned goods to donate to a charity.
- Take a plate of cookies and a homemade Christmas card to your doctor's office, library, church office, and/or dentist office.
- Anonymously pay for the Santa photos of the person behind you in line at the mall.
- Wear a Christmas hat (Santa, elf, etc.) and take some doggie treats to your local shelter.
- If you go to the woods to chop a Christmas tree, buy an extra license and bring one home for a neighbor who may not have the resources to get their own.
- Wear a Christmas hat (Santa, elf, etc.) and take a garbage bag to clean up garbage from your neighborhood.

Living out our faith in Community: *Below are activities to do together as a family or to invite other family members, friends and neighbors to join.*

In the kitchen:

- Make Christmas cookies.

- Serve a red- and green-themed meal.
- Make homemade caramel corn.
- Make chocolate-dipped pretzels with red and green sprinkles.
- Eat “reindeer droppings” for breakfast (donut holes!).
- Make gingerbread cookies.
- Make edible Christmas trees out of upside-down ice cream cones, green frosting and sprinkles.
- Make snickerdoodles.
- Decorate a gingerbread (or graham cracker) house.
- Invite a few friends over for a cookie decorating party.
- Melt chocolate into Christmas molds.

Decorating:

- Decorate the tree.
- Deck the halls with boughs of holly.
- String a popcorn garland for the tree.
- Make origami ornaments for the tree.
- Decorate a wreath together.
- Hang some mistletoe and give out kisses.
- Make a paper garland to hang on the tree, over a door, or in the kids’ bedrooms.
- Decorate the windows with spray snow.

Outings:

- Cut or pick a Christmas tree.
- Visit a few friends’ houses to sing Christmas carols and hand out candy canes.
- Hop in the car in your jammies and drive around to look at the Christmas lights.
- Attend a Christmas parade (or watch on TV/YouTube).
- Watch *The Nutcracker* ballet on stage (or on DVD).
- Go to a tree-lighting ceremony.
- Attend a Christmas concert.

- Check out books from the library about how people celebrate Christmas in other nations.
- Attend a holiday craft bazaar with Grandma.

Craft and create:

- Write (or color on) Christmas cards.
- Decorate a Christmas card for your teacher, Sunday school teacher or favorite babysitter.
- Make a handmade Christmas ornament for someone else in the family.
- Color a Christmas picture or make a Christmas craft.
- Make paper snowflakes to hang from the kids' bedroom ceilings.
- Make and mail a Christmas card to a family member or friend who lives in another state or country.
- Make a silly Christmas video to email to friends (or post on Facebook) on Christmas day.
- Make (or draw inside) thank-you cards that are ready to be filled out after Christmas.
- Make thumbprint snowmen.
- Make homemade play dough in red and green.
- Make play dough snowmen.
- Make a video of each family member singing their favorite Christmas song.
- Make glitter snow globes out of baby food jars. (Secure the lids with a hot glue gun!)
- Paint pinecones to make a centerpiece for the table or to display in a clear vase or with string on a bunting.
- Make a bouquet of poinsettias out of felt or construction paper and pipe cleaners.
- Make a pinecone bird feeder and attach a little note that says, "Merry Christmas, birdies!"

Fun at home:

- Have a living room dance party to a fun Christmas album.
- Let everyone in the family choose a country and then search online to see how they celebrate Christmas there.
- Unwrap and read a new Christmas book.
- Wrap Grandma's and Grandpa's gifts.
- Pull out mattresses and have a family slumber party under the tree.
- Have a family story night and read all your Christmas storybooks while enjoying a plate of cookies and milk.
- Snuggle up in mom and dad's bed and read *The Night Before Christmas*.
- Have a funny Christmas photo shoot (80s Christmas sweaters?!).
- Make popcorn and watch home movies from the year.
- Choose your favorite photos for a family yearbook.
- Make some personal and family New Year's goals.
- Wrap Daddy's gift with Mommy (or Mommy's gift with Daddy).
- Wrap up your holiday books for the kids to open and read together as a family (include one new book for the year).
- Make a "pillow bed" on the living room floor and watch some classic Christmas cartoons (*Rudolf*, *Frosty*, etc.) together.
- Send a small Christmas care package to a missionary or foreign exchange student.
- Give each family member a shoebox and tell them to collect and fill it with red and green things from around the house or yard.
- Search YouTube together for funny Christmas caroling videos.

- Use only Christmas mugs for all of your drinks for an entire day.
- Draw the kids a bubble bath by candlelight with Christmas tunes playing on the stereo.
- Interview each family member on video, asking a short list of questions (favorite memory from the year, etc.).
- Celebrate Saint Nicholas Day (December 6) by doing a secret act of kindness.
- Let each child choose a friend to invite over for a Christmas-themed morning tea.
- Draw names and write a love note for a family member. Leave them out on Christmas Eve for Santa to distribute into their stocking.
- Have a “fancy dress” code for dinner one night.
- Check your shoes on Saint Nicholas Day (December 6). [Leave the kids a few pieces of candy.]
- “Help” dad put up the outdoor Christmas lights.
- Write a “new” Christmas carol, personalizing (rewriting) the words to one of your favorites.
- Invite another family to come over in their jammies to watch a favorite Christmas movie and share a favorite Christmas treat.
- Get out a Christmas songbook and sing a few carols before nap time and bedtime.

Watch your favorite Christmas movies:

- *Miracle on 34th Street* (Definitely the original ... but in color for the kiddos.)
- *White Christmas*
- *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (I prefer the original cartoon version!)
- *A Charlie Brown Christmas*
- *It's a Wonderful Life*
- *The Nativity Story*

- *Elf*
- *Home Alone*
- *The Muppet Christmas Carol*
- *The Nutcracker Ballet*
- *The Polar Express*
- *Mickey's Christmas Carol*
- *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*
- *A Christmas Story*
- *A Christmas Carol* (the Jim Carrey version)
- *The Snowman*
- *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* and the other cartoon classics

NOTE: A few of these movies may not be appropriate for young children.

Winter-specific activities:

- Make snow angels.
- Go sledding.
- Build a snowman together.
- Get bundled up and go ice skating.
- Have hot chocolate and candy canes.
- Make hot apple cider.
- Bundle up and go on a sleigh ride.
- Make eggnog.
- Have a snowball fight.
- Roast marshmallows inside over the fireplace.
- Make snow cones out of real snow.

Adapted from: <http://adrielbooker.com/family-advent-activities-christmas-countdown-fun/>

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