



Oh
Holy
Night!

Family
Devotions
and Activities
for Advent

Creative
Communications
Sample

**Sarah A.
Reinhard**

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Introduction

Ah, Advent, that time of year that hides in the midst of what the world calls the Christmas season. Every year, I feel like I struggle more with it. And every year, I still get the same great gift on Christmas Day.

That gift is Jesus himself!

Advent is a season of preparation, so it's naturally busy, even without the cultural stress of more, more, more. This year, I invite you and your family to embrace Advent as a journey, one that may involve stumbles and tears. Let Advent be your gift to the baby Jesus, a way to get your heart and soul ready to receive him on Christmas Day.

The gift that you give Jesus doesn't have to be perfect. Your intentions and efforts count as much to him as any failure or success you may feel. May this booklet serve you and your family well, helping you to prepare for the arrival of our Savior with prayer and action.

May your Advent be blessed with Jesus, and may your family be better for it.

—Sarah A. Reinhard

First Sunday of Advent

Alert **and** Awake

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Think

In early December, the days are getting shorter, the weather is growing colder, and there is a great anticipation in the air. Unless you're living in a cave, you've heard some Christmas carols by now and you've seen plenty of decorations...maybe for weeks already!

At the beginning of Advent, we're reminded to stay alert. John the Baptist ushers this holy season in with a warning to each of us.

It's all too easy for us to get comfortable, to ride the wave of what's easy and popular.

At this point of Advent, Christmas can seem a contradiction—there's so much to do and seemingly not enough time to get ready! And yet, there are weeks until it comes! To adults, December seems to fly by, but to young people, it seems to drag.

Let John the Baptist's warning sit with you today: be alert and stay awake. That may mean spending your time differently. It just might be a call to love those around you in a deeper way.

Pray

Jesus, help us to get ready for your coming.

Ponder

Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.

Mark 13:33

Do

How can you get ready for Jesus' coming at Christmas? One way is to offer him something as a special gift. Perhaps you can provide a service or just your company to someone who's lonely. What can your family do for someone else today?

Monday, First Week of Advent

Making Room Under Our Roof

Pray

Jesus, help us to get ready for your coming.

Ponder

The centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed.”

Matthew 8:8

Think

A centurion was an officer in the Roman military, someone who was a professional soldier and probably pretty hardened by life. Not only would he have been in command of at least 100 men, he would also have seen his share of blood and gore before rising to that position. He would have served in battles and during wartime.

Romans also had the reputation of being rather worldly. Think of a bustling city and how the downtown area isn't very religious. Think of how most popular shows focus on fame and fashion and fun.

Where is there room for God?

And yet this Roman centurion, a battle-hardened man who was probably doing pretty well for himself financially, sought out a prophet whose God he didn't believe in, all because of a servant whose life could probably be replaced twice over without much thought by his peers and leaders.

It's no wonder Jesus did a double take. We should too. The Lord of the universe is coming to us as a baby. The God who created everything is taking human form. Do we have room for him? Will we seek him out? Have we made his will a priority in our lives?

Do

Today, take five minutes and sit in silence—no talking, no music. Let your mind and heart expand in that silence. Listen for the still, small voice of God entering under the roof of your heart.

Tuesday, First Week of Advent

Childlike Wisdom

Think

No one wants to be childlike. In our society today, it's an insult of sorts to be compared to a child: "Quit acting like a baby!" "Why are you such a big baby?" "I'm not going to baby you anymore!"

But Jesus tells his disciples (and us) that important things are revealed to infants. That should make all of us stop and think.

Let's remember that God came into our world as an infant. Our all-powerful, all-knowing God revealed himself to us by way of Jesus, a child. Jesus scraped his knees, got dirt under his fingernails, played and tumbled and even got lost in the Temple!

When God chose to send his son as a human, they both embraced the fullness of what that meant. Jesus gives us a glimpse of that over and over when he points to children as the examples we should follow.

Be trusting. Be open. Be generous.

As families, we can remember the strengths we all bring, no matter what our age. We each have an important role as we strive to live as Jesus did. Let's not forget, as we get ready for him this Advent, that Jesus had his own earthly family. Let's keep in mind that whatever we go through, he has been in a similar situation. He knows us even better than we know ourselves.

Pray

Jesus, help us to get ready for your coming.

Ponder

...because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

Luke 10:21

Do

Express your gratitude to someone today. Write a note or perform an act of service or even just hug a loved one. Let them know that you appreciate them for who they are and how God made them.

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Invite the whole family to embrace Advent as a purposeful and prayerful journey, preparing for the arrival of the newborn Savior. *O Holy Night* offers a prayer, reflection and suggested activity for each day of the season, helping the entire family to prepare together. "Let Advent be your gift to the baby Jesus," says author Sarah A. Reinhard, "a way to get your heart and soul ready to receive him on Christmas Day."

This book, along with many other Creative Communications for the Parish products, is available on [amazonkindle](#) and [nook](#).

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