Advent House

By: Tara Davis

Merry Christmas, sweet friends! Are you looking for a Christ-centered Advent activity to do with your children? Look no further! This Christmas Advent House will add a dose of truth and beauty to your children's lives all during Advent!

You can make this as simple or involved as you would like. Just seek the Lord for what He wants you to do this Christmas season! Each day will feature a Scripture passage for you to read as well as a little picture for your child to color in their house. However, we know you are busy moms, so there are two open (free) days each week with just a blank window or door for your child to color. Take these days whenever you need them! There is also an optional activity to take the daily Scripture a little bit further, but feel free to do as much or as little as you would like! Now, on to the fun preparation!

Prepare: We recommend doing the following things to prepare for this fun activity. Again, make this activity your own by doing as much or as little as you have time for!

1. **Print off** a copy of the Advent House for each of your children.
2. **Gather markers** or crayons for your child to daily color the house.
3. **Purchase a bag of candy** so you can give your child a little sweet treat each day as you read the daily verse. God's Word is like honey on our lips. Give your child a sweet taste for Scripture this Christmas! (Psalm 119:103)
4. **Look ahead at the daily activities** and decide if you would like to do any of them, and consider if you will need to gather any supplies.
5. **Now you are ready to begin!**

Read: On December 1st (or even the day before if you would prefer), read the following introductory paragraphs to your child:

> *Today is the day! The first day of Advent! Can you believe Christmas is almost here? This is such a special time of year! Have you ever seen a Christmas gingerbread house decorated with all sorts of delicious candy, sparkling with sugar, and almost glowing with all of the excitement of Christmas? Our souls are just like a house, too, a spectacular mansion with lots of rooms. But each of these rooms in our house is empty, just waiting to be filled, and it is up to you to decide how you will fill them!*
>
> *Now, I must tell you about your most amazing Heavenly Father, who loves you so much! He loves you enough to send His Son to rescue you from your sins and invites you to follow Jesus and live with Him forever! This loving Father desires that you fill the rooms in your house with His beautiful treasures. Proverbs 24:3-4 tells us that "By wisdom a house is built, through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures." In order to fill the rooms of your house with the treasures of the Lord, you must seek wisdom! And guess where wisdom is found? The Bible! As you read God's Word, His love letter to you, you fill each room in the house of your soul with the most lovely treasures imaginable! Treasures that shine with faith, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness!*

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This Christmas, as much as you are drawn to all of the decorations and presents, I want to encourage your heart to seek Jesus and learn to love His Word, too! Jesus loves you so very much; you are His precious child, and He wants you to seek Him this Christmas and every day throughout the year! So, each day for the next twenty-five days, we will read a few words from the Bible, and you can color in a room from your Christmas house. All of these rooms are filled with the true treasures of Christmas! As you color each picture, I want you to think of the love God has for you and how He has many amazing treasures in store for you to find in Him!

Activity Instructions:

- **Day 1: Read Revelation 5:11-13**

  This may seem like a strange place to begin the Christmas story, but it is indeed the best place to start! From the time of the Garden of Eden, when sin entered the world, until now, there has been no one who could save us from our sins and from death. We needed a Rescuer! We needed God to bring us back into a right relationship with Him. And God loves us so much that He always had a plan to save us! He came to earth as a baby, like a precious, perfect little Lamb. He grew into a man, a man who never committed a single wrong and gave His life for us so that our soul, that which makes us who we are, would be able to live with Him forever, even after our body dies. In these verses we just read, angels and other creatures are praising Jesus, singing that He is God and is the only one worthy to receive honor, glory, power, and strength forever and ever. Now that's what Christmas is all about! We, like the angels, are given an opportunity to live our lives with the purpose of loving and serving Jesus! What a priceless treasure we have been given! As we learn about the Christmas story over the next few weeks, keep in mind that this isn't just a story but a gift that will change your whole life!

  Activity: Think about a gift that you would like to give to Jesus this Christmas. It could be desiring to talk to Him more, committing to reading the Bible and learning more about Him, treating your brothers or sisters with kindness, telling others about Jesus, having a heart of thankfulness, or anything else! Find an old box or bag to decorate as your Jesus gift box. Over the next few days, when you decide what you want your gift to Jesus to be, write it on paper, place it in the box, and talk to Him about it. Let the Lord know how you would like to follow Him more closely this Christmas!

- **Day 2: Read Malachi 4:5**

  Let's go back in time, several hundred years before Jesus was born. God gave prophets like Elijah to prepare people's hearts for the coming of Jesus! He wanted people to have every opportunity to believe in the coming Messiah, the Savior who would wash away the sins of all who chose Him. Even now, He lovingly holds His children, washes away our sins, and offers us the opportunity to have a relationship, a friendship with Him that is closer than any other we could ever imagine. And guess what? He will be coming again soon to make all things right and bring us to heaven with Him. Are you ready?

  Activity: Make a megaphone out of a paper towel or toilet paper tube. Jesus' first coming, His plan to rescue us and give us the opportunity to be saved from our sins, is the reason we celebrate Christmas! What a wonderful thing to be celebrating! And He will be coming again soon! Use your megaphone to announce the good news of Jesus to all who will listen! Celebrate today!

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- **Day 3: Read Luke 1:11-20**

  Zechariah and his wife were very old when God sent an angel to tell him that his wife would have a baby—a very special baby who would prepare the way for Jesus! With God, all things are possible! However, Zechariah didn't believe that God could do such a miracle in his life. What happened to Zechariah because of his unbelief?

  Activity: Write several words on slips of paper (animals, sports, or stories your children love work well). Have your child choose a slip of paper and act out what is written for others to guess. Is it more difficult to communicate when you cannot speak? How do you think Zechariah felt?

- **Day 4: Read Isaiah 7:14**

  Immanuel means "God with us." Can you believe that more than 700 years before Jesus was born, God sent a prophet to tell people that He would be sending a Rescuer, literally God, in the form of a human to save all those who love Him? God has been planning your rescue from the time sin entered the world! He loves you so much!

  Activity: On a piece of paper, with permanent marker, write Immanuel in Hebrew (עִמָּנוּאֵל) and its meaning, "God with us." He is eternal! Decorate the page with watercolor paints or any art supplies you have on hand!

- **Day 5: Read Luke 1:26-38**

  Mary was visited by an angel with some amazing news! What was it? Close your eyes and imagine being visited by an angel and receiving news such as what Mary received. How do you think Mary felt? Did you notice how she responded, "I am the Lord's servant"? God is calling you to serve Him today, too! He loves you so much! How can you serve the Lord as Mary did?

  Activity: Set out craft supplies for your child to make and decorate an angel. Let them be creative and design their own idea of how an angel may look. Keep it simple by providing just paper and crayons, or add more supplies like feathers, glitter, sequins, yarn, cotton balls or scraps of construction paper or fabric.

- **Day 6: Free Day!**

- **Day 7: Free Day!**

- **Day 8: Read Luke 1:39-45**

  Even before John was born, he was able to recognize his Savior, Jesus! Babies are amazing and are so precious to God from the very day they begin growing in their mother's belly!

  Activity: Look at ultrasound or newborn pictures of your child with him or her. Discuss how God made each baby special and valuable. Refer to Psalm 139:13-18 for a beautiful passage about how God forms each baby in his mother's womb. Talk to your children about how important it is to value babies as God's special creation!

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- **Day 9: Read Luke 1:46-49**

  In these verses, Mary is praising God for the amazing gift He had given not only to her, but to the whole world as well! She had many reasons to be afraid of what this miraculous pregnancy would mean for her, but she chose to trust God and praise Him! Can you think of any situations in which you can trust God in a deeper way? How can you choose to live a life of praise before God, too?

  Activity: Tape a piece of paper to the refrigerator or a wall and make a list throughout the day of things you can praise God for! Building a heart of praise from a young age is such a beautiful thing!

- **Day 10: Read Luke 1:57-64**

  Elizabeth and Zechariah's baby was born! What did they name him? When John was grown, he had a very special job of spreading the glorious news that Jesus had come, God in the flesh, the Savior of all mankind! How can you spread the good news of our Savior Jesus this Christmas?

  Activity: Make a Christmas card for someone to tell them about Jesus. You can even incorporate the following verse into your card to share the amazing news of Jesus. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

- **Day 11: Read John 1:14**

  What a beautiful verse! This passage talks about Jesus and how He came to earth as a baby to save us from our sins and give us eternal life if we choose to trust in Him. Have you chosen to trust in Him?

  Activity: Pray for people you know or those around the world who do not follow Jesus. God desires that all people will come to a saving knowledge of Him!

- **Day 12: Read Matthew 1:20-21**

  What did the angel tell Joseph to name the baby? Jesus! The name Jesus means "Savior." It was given to our Lord because "He saves His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). What a beautiful name, one that will stir love in your heart and praise on your lips!

  Activity: Make a Jesus decoration for your tree! Make this as simple or complex as you would like! Here are a couple of ideas: Grab an unembellished bulb from your Christmas tree and some permanent markers. Let your child write Jesus' name on the bulb and decorate the bulb as they would like. Alternately, cut a circle out of construction paper, glue popsicle sticks in the shape of an "X" to make a manger for baby Jesus. In the upper portion of the "X," glue some dried grass cut from outdoors. Make a baby Jesus by cutting off about 1" from the end of a third popsicle stick, drawing a face on the upper portion and wrapping the lower portion in fabric or a kleenex for a blanket. Glue baby Jesus in the manger and add yarn or string to the top as a hanger before placing on your tree.

- **Day 13: Free Day!**
- **Day 14: Free Day!**

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- **Day 15: Read Matthew 1:24-25** (Disclaimer: The first part of verse 25 mentions the timing of Mary and Joseph consummating their marriage. If you don't want to discuss the meaning of this term, feel free to just read the ending of the verse). Joseph obeyed the Lord by doing exactly as the angel had commanded him! Do you ever struggle with obeying the Lord?

  Activity: God has an amazing plan for your life! Pray and ask the Lord to help you obey Him! Talk with your parents about an area in which you struggle to obey. Did you know that even parents have to obey God, and they understand how challenging obedience can be? Your mom and dad can help and encourage you as you grow to follow Jesus! With their help, write out or illustrate a plan for obeying God in the area in which you struggle.

- **Day 16: Read Micah 5:2**

  Where did this verse say Jesus would be born? This prophecy was written several hundred years before Jesus was born. God orchestrated all the events surrounding Jesus' birth (the census, Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem, etc.) to make everything happen just as He had said it would! Our God is an awesome, all-knowing Father! He always does what He says He will!!

  Activity: Sing the song "O Little Town of Bethlehem" together. You can even make musical instruments out of pots or pans and spoons to accompany your song.

- **Day 17: Read Luke 2:1-5**

  Jesus is about to be born! But Mary and Joseph must travel to Bethlehem for the census (counting the people from each town). Can you imagine traveling such a long distance riding on the back of a donkey? Or even walking alongside, as Joseph did, leading the donkey where he needed to go? They had to walk for several days to reach Bethlehem. They must have been tired!

  Activity: Let's pretend to be Mary and Joseph and take the journey ourselves! Go pack your bags, grab a donkey (an empty wrapping paper tube works well as a stick donkey), and let's pretend to take the long walk to Bethlehem together!

- **Day 18: Read Luke 2:8-15**

  Imagine waking up in the middle of the night and looking up to see the sky full of angels praising God! Can you imagine what it must have been like? What a beautiful picture of how we should praise God forevermore!

  Activity: Have a Shepherd's Meal and pretend you are a shepherd on the night of Jesus' birth! Instructions can be found in the "Holidays with the Help Club" book. Just check out the table of contents!

- **Day 19: Read Luke 2:6-7**

  Our Savior is born! Praise the Lord for His great love for us! Let's say a prayer of thanksgiving for God's love and the way He takes care of us! He has provided a way for us to return to Him and have a relationship with Him! What an amazing Father and what a wonderful Savior!

  Activity: Plan a birthday party for Jesus for sometime this week! Instructions can be found in the "Holidays with the Help Club" book (check out the table of contents). Let your child

make some decorations for the party today. Just provide paper and markers, and let them go at it! They can make a paper banner or even snowflakes to hang up for the party.

- **Day 20: Free Day!**
- **Day 21: Free Day!**
- **Day 22: Read Matthew 1:24-25**
  Jesus says that He is the light of the world. As we walk with Him, we do not have to live in darkness any longer! Each area of our lives can be flooded with His beautiful, glorious light! How can you choose to walk in that light today? How can you shine the light of Jesus to others around you?

  Activity: Light some candles and see how the room is bathed in a peaceful glow. How much more powerful and beautiful is the light of Jesus? Sing some Christmas carols together by candlelight and worship Jesus! Some ideas for carols include "Joy to the World," "O Holy Night," "Angels We Have Heard on High," and "Silent Night."

- **Day 23: Read Philippians 2:6-11**
  What a beautiful gift God has given us by coming to earth, taking the form of a man, suffering on the cross, and dying so that we can live with Him forever! He loves you so very much! Have you chosen to follow Him? "Salvation is to be found through him alone; in all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us" (Acts 4:12 GNT).

  Activity: We have so much to thank Jesus for! Pray together and thank Him for rescuing us! We want to remember the true meaning of Christmas today and every day! To help your children really solidify the story of Jesus' birth, bring it into their playtime by acting out the nativity story. In the "Holidays with the Help Club" book, we have provided more ideas on how to help your children act out the story, just check out the table of contents!

- **Day 24: Read 2 Peter 3:18**
  God has called us not just to believe that Jesus is real, but to grow in Him as well! We are called to follow Jesus and grow in Him every day we are alive on this earth. Jesus loves you so much that taking the journey of growing in Him is sure to be a fantastic adventure! What an exciting purpose God has given to you!

  Activity: On a piece of paper, draw a square flower pot with a green stem coming from the pot. Next, trace a few of your child's handprints in green on either side of the stem. This is their growing vine! Read John 15:5 and help your child come up with ways they can grow in their relationship with Jesus and stay connected to Him. Write those ideas on each traced handprint. Let your child color their vine and be reminded of how they can grow in their relationship with Jesus!

- **Day 25: Read Matthew 2:1-12**
  The Wisemen searched for Jesus because they wanted so badly to worship Him! Do you want to live life as the Wisemen did: giving everything and going any distance just to worship our Savior Jesus? I know I sure do!

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Activity: Take some time between the busy activities of Christmas Day to worship Jesus as a family. Talk about Him, pray together, sing songs of praise, read His Word...just do whatever God puts on your heart! Merry Christmas! What a perfect day to celebrate the Love of Jesus!

- **Optional activities for older children:**

  Some of the daily activities listed work best for younger children. If you would like to include activities this month for your older children, below are some ideas they may find enjoyable!

  1. Make a newspaper to document some of the events happening in the daily Scripture readings. Let them give their newspaper a fun name like "The Bethlehem Times" and add news stories, advertisements, and illustrations as they see fit. They can add to it a little bit at a time as something from a Scripture passage strikes their fancy.
  2. Write a poem or song of praise to the Lord. This is something they could work on through the month as God lays words of praise on their hearts. When they are finished, type their creation out and place it in a frame to add as a precious memory to your Christmas decor. You can even have a family Christmas performance night in which everyone shares their creations if you are so inclined.
  3. Create a salt dough model or diorama in a shoebox or box lid (there are many great salt dough recipes online). Your child can make it in the form of the Nativity scene or perhaps a map of the journey that Mary and Joseph took even including their flight to Egypt after the birth of Jesus to escape Herod. Let them be creative; the sky's the limit!
  4. Have your child write a script to act out the story surrounding Jesus' birth. Write it in a screen-play style with different parts and exciting lines. Costumes and props can even be made by your child too!
  5. Staple several sheets of paper together to make a Christmas book detailing the events of the story of Jesus' birth. Each page can be written and illustrated by your child and can be read year after year to remember why we celebrate Christmas!

BY WISDOM A HOUSE IS BUILT, THROUGH KNOWLEDGE ITS ROOMS
ARE FILLED WITH RARE AND BEAUTIFUL TREASURES. PROV 24:3-4
1
2 ELIJAH
3
4 IMMANUEL
5
6
7
8
PRAISE 9
10 JOHN
11 SALVATION
12 JESUS
13
14
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