



**Addendum 1:  
Advent Activities for All Ages**

## Angel Bell

Create an angel bell to remember the special messenger that spoke to Mary.

You will need: Styrofoam Cup, Magic Markers, Jingle Bell, Ribbon, Paper.

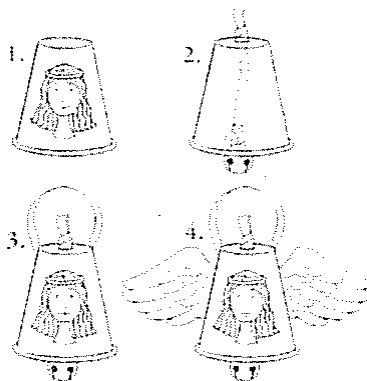
Instructions: Turn the cup upside down.

Carefully draw a face on one side of the cup. Thread a piece of ribbon on the jingle bell.

Punch a small hole in the bottom of the cup. Poke the ribbon through the hole and tie a large knot.

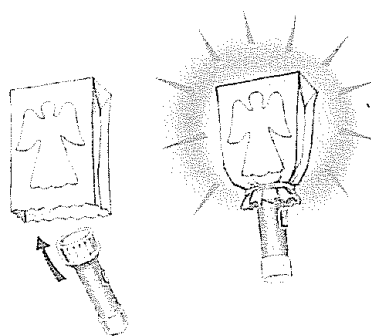
Loop another piece of ribbon and glue it to the back side of the cup.

Cut out angel wings and glue them over the attached part of the ribbon. Hang the bell from the loop. Ring the bell and tell the world that Jesus is coming!



## Angel Puppet

Make a glowing puppet to act on the good news that the angels told the shepherds. Draw the outline of an angel on a small white paper bag. If you want, draw the body and glue wings on the bag. Place the bag over a flashlight and fasten the bottom with a rubber band. Turn on the light and tell the angel's message.

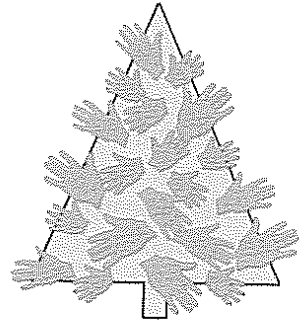


## Birthday Cake

Make a cake to celebrate the birthday of our Savior. Children always associate a birthday party with a cake. Making a cake together will help them associate that today we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Your family will love the tradition of turning off all the lights, lighting the candles (one for each 1000 years) and seeing the glow as you sing "Happy Birthday dear Jesus."

## Helping Hands Tree

Trace each family member's hand on green paper and cut them out. On each paper hand, write something your family can do to help someone else, either individually or as a family. On a poster board, pencil a sketch of a large triangle pointing upward like a tree, and cut out. Glue the hands so they point outward and form tree branches. Fill in the middle with more hand "branches." Hang the poster where you can see it each day.



As your family does the things they wrote on their hands, place a colored circle on the hand. When you are finished you will have a decorated Christmas tree and the satisfaction of knowing you helped others.

## Orange Pomander Balls

Material: 1 medium orange, whole cloves, powdered nutmeg and cinnamon, nutmeg, and round toothpicks. Instructions: Use a toothpick to poke shallow holes into the peel of the orange. Poke the pointed end of a clove into each hole. Cover it with as many cloves as you want. Leave space between the holes for the orange to shrink while drying. Once the orange is covered cloves, roll it in a mixture of nutmeg and cinnamon. Place the oranges in a bowl or tie with a ribbon and hang. The room will fill with wonderful scent of Christmas.

## Set up a Nativity Scene



Nativity scenes are as much a part of Christmas as a tree or decorations. Place it in a central location in your home so that your family can focus on it each day. Place the crèche or stable in a central location in your home so that your family can focus on it each day. Place Mary, Joseph and some animals in the scene. Add the remaining pieces throughout the month.

## Sugar Cookie Shapes

Make Christmas cookies to celebrate the joy of the season. Allow children to pick out the shapes and colors they want to make their cookies. Don't worry about all the flour and mess, that's part of fun! As you cut out cookie shapes tell you children the story of the birth of Christ. Here are a few examples of how to tell this wonderful story while making cookies:



*Angels:* Brought the good news of Christ's birth

*Star:* Wise men follow Jesus

*Candy Cane:* Shepherds watched over their sheep

*Gingerbread Men:* Decorate as Mary and Joseph, shepherds or wise men.

*Bells:* Ring out the message.

## Prayer Chain

Make a prayer chain for those far away from you this holiday season. String a long colorful ribbon across a mantel or door. Hang pictures on the ribbon of loved ones who cannot be with you this Christmas. You can also hang Christmas cards that you receive from friends and relatives. Family members can take turns choosing a card or a picture to pray for loved ones. The pictures or cards can be put on posters after Christmas and hung in your children's rooms to remind them to continue to pray.

## Treasure Box

Make a treasure box of memories to celebrate what God has done for your family. Decorate a shoe box to make a treasure chest. Have your family go through picture albums of Christmases past or special times that your family has experienced. Include pictures of friends and family dear to your hearts. Place these inside the treasure chest. Cut out heart shaped pieces of paper. Ask family members to write one or two things they treasure most about your family. As Christmas approaches, reach inside and share your treasures with one another.



## **A Birthday Gift for Jesus**

Pass out small pieces of paper to every family member. Have each person write or draw a picture of something that they can give Jesus. Perhaps Dad needs to help his elderly parents more around their home. Maybe big brother wants to promise Jesus that he will stop teasing his little sister so much. Or sister wants to remember to feed her dog more consistently. Perhaps Mom would like to give Jesus a gift by being more patient during homework time. Put the slips of paper in a small box and wrap it up with pretty paper. Put a tag on it that reads: TO JESUS and place it under your tree or by your nativity scene.



## **Toothpick Star Ornament**

You will need: 5 toothpicks, gold glitter, thin ribbon, white glue, ruler  
Glue five toothpick together in the shape of a star. Make the star just as you would if you were drawing it on paper without lifting the pencil. Let the star dry undisturbed. Cover the star with glue, then gold glitter. Cut a 6" piece of ribbon. Thread one end of the ribbon through a point of the star and tie the ends together to make a hanger for the ornament. Can you shine for Jesus, too?

## Meaning of Christmas Decorations

Garland/Greenery: God's everlasting love shown through the birth of Christ. Holly: The pointy edges symbolize the thorns that Christ wore as a crown, and its berries the drops of blood he shed. Lights: remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World Tree: Points heavenward and reminds us of the cross that Jesus died on.



### Show Jesus' love to Our Neighbors

Make or buy gifts for your neighbors. Teach the children that Jesus came to the earth for everyone. Discuss showing Jesus' love to our neighbors.



**Addendum 2:  
A Brief History Of Advent**

## **A Brief History of Advent**

The idea of setting aside several weeks prior to Christmas, now referred to as Advent (meaning "arrival" or "coming"), began in northern and western Europe around 400 A.D. Another focus sprouted in Rome itself. Originally, Advent focused on repentance and preparation. That is, Advent wedded the two themes together because of two separate events. First, the early church focused on the baptismal festival (January 6th, Epiphany) that called for a 40 day fast (less Saturdays and Sundays). This fast (tied to Jesus' 40 day fast) pushed the starting date back to November 11th for penitential preparation. It was a time of spiritual discipline for the entire church and the new believers were taught the essentials of the faith. Secondly, there was a concern for preparation for the Nativity celebration. Interestingly, the focus was more on the return of Christ than on His coming in flesh at Bethlehem. There is no trace of Advent in Rome until the 6th century. However, in Rome the emphasis was on joyful preparation for the historical incarnation. Therefore, Advent became a mix of a fast (including repentance) and a festival (preparation), without diminishing either. That is not to say that the pendulum did not swing to either fast or festival through the centuries across Europe.

The Advent season in many ways is similar to the preparations Israel was making for the coming of the Messiah. Thus, terms such as hope, anticipation, and longing express the inner feeling of Israel as she waited for the Messiah. This readiness was more than an inner feeling, but included moral and spiritual preparation. It was a call for believers to reform their lives and repent of sin.

The origin of the Advent Wreath is associated with the Yule tradition, which began centuries ago in eastern Germany. Yule was a pagan festival held in December, for worshiping the sun. Celebrations during this festival include the burning of lights to assist the revival of the sun during the winter season.

The early church, at times, adopted pagan practices and used them for her own purposes. The practice of burning lights became part of our Christmas celebration. Around 1500, the burning of lights symbolized the Advent season. This tradition later developed into the custom of lighting different colored candles each of the four weeks of Advent.