

## Advent: Counting Down to Christmas

By Thomas Gette

Most of us enjoy the convenience and speed of takeout food. But we all know there is no substitute for a well-prepared meal. For example, a proper Thanksgiving dinner takes time and energy to prepare. The entire day is filled with the care and attention given to the setting of the table and the preparation of the meal. Microwaved frozen turkey dinners served in their containers just don't provide the same experience. Things take on a different, deeper quality when we wait and prepare for them.



This is why the Church stresses the value of fully embracing the Advent season as one of preparation for the celebration of Christmas. Instead of just allowing Christmas Day to arrive and pass in the blink of an eye, our careful and intentional celebration of Advent can make the entire Christmas season more meaningful.

Here are some ways your family can celebrate together the days of Advent.

### The Advent Wreath

Light those candles—at dinnertime, at prayer time, or at some point each day. Say a prayer as simple as, “Come, Lord Jesus” and spend a moment or two in shared silence.

# NOVEMBER | PREPARING FOR ADVENT

## **An Advent Calendar**

Whether store-bought or handmade, you may choose to mark some or all of the days with ideas for special activities (such as card-writing or cookie baking), prayers, and outings (such as concerts or church services).

## **An Advent Chain**

Include a link in the chain for each day of Advent. If you wish, include prayer intentions or Christmas preparation ideas on the links. Remove one link each day of Advent, as a visual countdown to Christmas.

## **The Jesse Tree**

Fill Advent days with the stories and symbols of Jesus' ancestors and other women and men whose stories are told in the Bible. (For family-friendly instructions and patterns, go to [RCLBenziger.com](http://RCLBenziger.com) > Catholic Resources > Advent 2019.)

