Activity Advent Calendar

24 simple things to do together before Christmas • no shopping list needed

How to use it

1. Cut out the 24 activity cards on pages 2-4. Swap any that don't fit your family for a blank card on page 5.
2. Put one card in each day: numbered envelopes, paper bags, a jar, or pegs on a string all work. Number tags are on page 7.
3. Plan the big ones first. Write the date of each card on the December plan (page 6) so baking and outings land on your free days.
4. Busy day? Swap in any card marked with a star. They take five minutes or less to set up.

Reading the cards

- Prep: how long the grown-up needs to set it up.
- Ages: the youngest age it usually works for, with a grown-up helping.
- Star in the corner: a busy-day pick with little or no setup, good for school nights and travel days.

Safety notes

A grown-up does the cutting for young children, handles the oven and hot drinks, and stays close during crafts. If you add small treats or toys, keep anything small enough to fit in a toilet-paper tube away from children under 3, and skip balloons: pediatricians warn they are a choking risk up to age 8.

Want a small extra in the envelope? (optional)

- Under 3: a sticker sheet, a board book, a new washcloth for bath time, a sock-puppet sock.
- Ages 3 and up: crayons, a mini coloring book, stickers, a hair clip, a card with a joke on it.
- Free: a coupon for an extra story, choosing dinner, or ten more minutes at the park.

What's inside

- Pages 2-4: 24 activity cards
- Page 5: 8 blank cards (fillable)
- Page 6: December plan (fillable)
- Page 7: number tags 1-24

Activity Cards 1-8

Cut along the dashed lines • cards with a star are busy-day picks

Letter to Santa ★

Draw or write a letter to Santa. Little ones can scribble and dictate.

Prep: 5 min · Ages 2+

Paper snowflakes

Fold and snip paper snowflakes. A grown-up cuts for under-4s; kids unfold.

Prep: 5 min · Ages 3+

Pajama movie night ★

Christmas pajamas, a blanket pile and one holiday movie.

Prep: 0 min · Ages 2+

Bake cookies

Bake and decorate cookies. Kids stir, pour sprinkles and taste-test.

Prep: 30+ min · Ages 2+

Christmas lights ★

Drive or walk around after dark and count the lit-up houses.

Prep: 0 min · Ages 1+

Book under the tree ★

Read a Christmas story together on a blanket under the tree.

Prep: 0 min · Ages 1+

Paper chain

Make a paper chain and tear off one link each night until Christmas.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 3+

Cocoa picnic ★

Hot cocoa (cooled for kids) on a picnic blanket in the living room.

Prep: 5 min · Ages 2+

Activity Cards 9-16

Cut along the dashed lines • cards with a star are busy-day picks

Dance party ★

Put on Christmas songs and dance. Freeze when the music stops.

Prep: 0 min · Ages 1+

Decorate the tree

Each person hangs one special ornament and tells why they picked it.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 2+

Coloring pages ★

Print Christmas coloring pages and color together with cocoa.

Prep: 5 min · Ages 2+

Make a gift

Make a handprint card or drawing for a grandparent.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 1+

Kindness day

Pick a toy or food to donate, or bake treats for a neighbor.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 3+

Blanket fort

Build a blanket fort and read stories inside by flashlight.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 2+

☆ Christmas sensory bin

Fill a bin with gift bows, ribbon and paper for scooping and finding.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 2+

Ornament craft

Make a simple ornament: a painted pinecone or a paper star.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 3+

Activity Cards 17-24

Cut along the dashed lines • cards with a star are busy-day picks

Call family ★

Sing a carol to grandparents or friends on a video call.

Prep: 5 min · Ages 1+

I spy Christmas ★

Play I spy with decorations: something red, something shiny.

Prep: 0 min · Ages 3+

Feed the birds

Hang a bird feeder treat outside and watch who visits.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 3+

Wrap a present

Kids help wrap a gift: holding paper, sticking tape, adding a bow.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 2+

Teddy bear story ★

Act out a Christmas story with stuffed animals or puppets.

Prep: 5 min · Ages 2+

Indoor snowball fight ★

Crumple paper into snowballs and have a gentle indoor snowball fight.

Prep: 5 min · Ages 2+

Thank-you cards

Draw cards for helpers: the mail carrier, a teacher, a neighbor.

Prep: 15 min · Ages 3+

Christmas Eve story ★

A new or favorite book, cozy pajamas and a quiet night before Christmas.

Prep: 0 min · Ages 1+

Our Own Ideas

Type into the cards or write by hand, then cut them out

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Prep: _____ · Ages ____

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Prep: _____ · Ages ____

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Prep: _____ · Ages ____

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Prep: _____ · Ages ____

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Prep: _____ · Ages ____

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Prep: _____ · Ages ____

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Prep: _____ · Ages ____

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Prep: _____ · Ages ____

Our December Plan

Write which card goes on each day. Put outings and baking on your free days.

Dec 1	Dec 2	Dec 3	Dec 4	Dec 5	Dec 6
Dec 7	Dec 8	Dec 9	Dec 10	Dec 11	Dec 12
Dec 13	Dec 14	Dec 15	Dec 16	Dec 17	Dec 18
Dec 19	Dec 20	Dec 21	Dec 22	Dec 23	Dec 24

Tip: count the busy days first, then give them the cards marked with a star.

Number Tags 1-24

Cut out and stick or clip one to each envelope, bag or box

