

Journeys to Christmas: Preparing for the Season

A Community of Practice Conversation



Facilitated by Melinda Wenner Bradley for Faith & Play Stories

Thursday, November 4, 2021

Advent Story for Friends

(adapted from Godly Play[®])

- ❖ Background on the adaptation for Friends and script for story
- ❖ Story told on F&P YouTube channel
(you need the link to share)
- ❖ More ideas will be shared on the **Facebook page** as we journey toward Christmas — We hope you will share there, too!





**Community
Worship**



A Children's Liturgy for Christmas Eve*

- ❖ A good story to use for a Christmas pageant!
- ❖ Our middle school and high school age Friends read the words of the story from the facing benches while our younger children, dressed in homemade costumes, simply walk to the front of the meeting house when it is their part of the story.
- ❖ Perhaps the most joyous part of this story in using it in the larger community is the way music and Christmas hymns are woven throughout. (One meeting swapped some of the traditional songs of the season for folk music choices.)
- ❖ When the readings are completed and all the children are gathered in the front of the meeting room in the traditional Nativity scene, we light candles and turn off the lights to sing a final song, "Silent Night," before entering into a period of worship.



*found in *The Complete Guide to
Godly Play Volume 3*

“Reverse Advent” For Families and Meetings

- ❖ An opportunity to connect the story of the season with service to a local food cupboard or shelter.
- ❖ The story told in this way over the weeks leading to Christmas helps to focus on different parts of the nativity story each week and connect needs during the journeys to Bethlehem with the needs in our communities today.
- ❖ This is a guide to share with families (and everyone!) in the meeting community for how to participate in the service component, while also having discussions at home about food insecurity and poverty.
- ❖ The hope is to focus on giving this time of year, and connecting this service learning to the nativity story being told in many places around us, whether we focus on it in our children’s program or not.

[Link to the handout](#) →

Adapted for Friends from an [article by Krista Lovell](#) (a Christian Educator) on the “Building Faith” website of Virginia Theological Seminary

Reverse Advent: A Spiritual Discipline of Reaching Out

In December, young people and their families have an opportunity to connect a story of the season with service to a local food cupboard or shelter. While Friends do not always “celebrate Advent,” the story told in this way over the weeks leading to Christmas is a useful tool. You can focus on different parts of the nativity story each week and connect people’s needs during their journeys to Bethlehem to the needs in our communities today.

How to participate at home:

1. Gather 4 plain brown paper bags (one for each week of Advent)
2. Create four signs with pictures or words that illustrate the focus each week, and attach one to each bag.



Week One: Mary and Joseph on the road to Bethlehem

Week Two: The shepherds in the fields at night watching their sheep

Week Three: The Magi on the way during the long journey to Bethlehem

Week Four: The baby named Jesus is born

3. Collect items at home throughout the week, and bring them to meeting (or your local food cupboard) on Sunday. Suggested contributions listed below, and ways to connect the materials goods you gather to larger conversations about supporting people in our local communities who experience food insecurity and poverty.

Week 1 - What food would Mary and Joseph need for their journey to Bethlehem?

Place non-perishable FOOD ITEMS in bag #1 for those living with food insecurity. **As a family:** Talk about the role of food in your own life. Hold in the Light the families in our community who are living with food insecurity.

Week 2 - What do people need for warmth, like the shepherds watching their sheep?

Place WARM CLOTHES (hats, gloves, scarves, socks) in bag #2. **As a family:** Talk about the clothes you wear to stay warm in the winter. Hold in the Light people who do not have shelter in our community.

Week 3 - What kinds of things do you pack for a very long trip?

Place BASIC TOILETRIES (toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, soap, shampoo, comb, nail clippers/file) in bag #3. **As a family:** Talk about the things you need each day to care for yourself. Hold in the Light those who often have to choose between food and basic care items for survival.

Week 4 - What is needed to care for a baby?

Place BABY ITEMS (bottles, diapers, wipes, children’s board or picture books, etc.) in bag #4 for infants and toddlers. **As a family:** Talk about the many ways babies depend on their caregivers for basic needs. Hold in the Light parents and children who live in poverty.

There are slides
and a script
with sound effects!

A Quaker Christmas Story: Candles in the Window

By Chuck Fager

Radio Play Adaptation by Johanna Halsmith-Weisser



Silent Squares: Intergenerational Celebration

Light

I wonder where you find and experience Light (and lights!) in this time of winter when the days are shorter and colder (in our hemisphere)? How do you and your family seek the Light and share it with others?

Waiting

The time before Christmas is called Advent, a time of “expectant waiting.” I wonder if you have even had to wait a long time for something? What was that like for you? Sometimes silent worship in the manner of Friends is called, “waiting worship.” How do you wait, and listen in the silence?

Peace

At this time of year, there is more attention given to “Peace on Earth.” What do you do to promote peace in the world? Are you able to find inner peace in the midst of everyday life? Do you walk gently and peacefully on the Earth, seeking that of God in others and in nature?

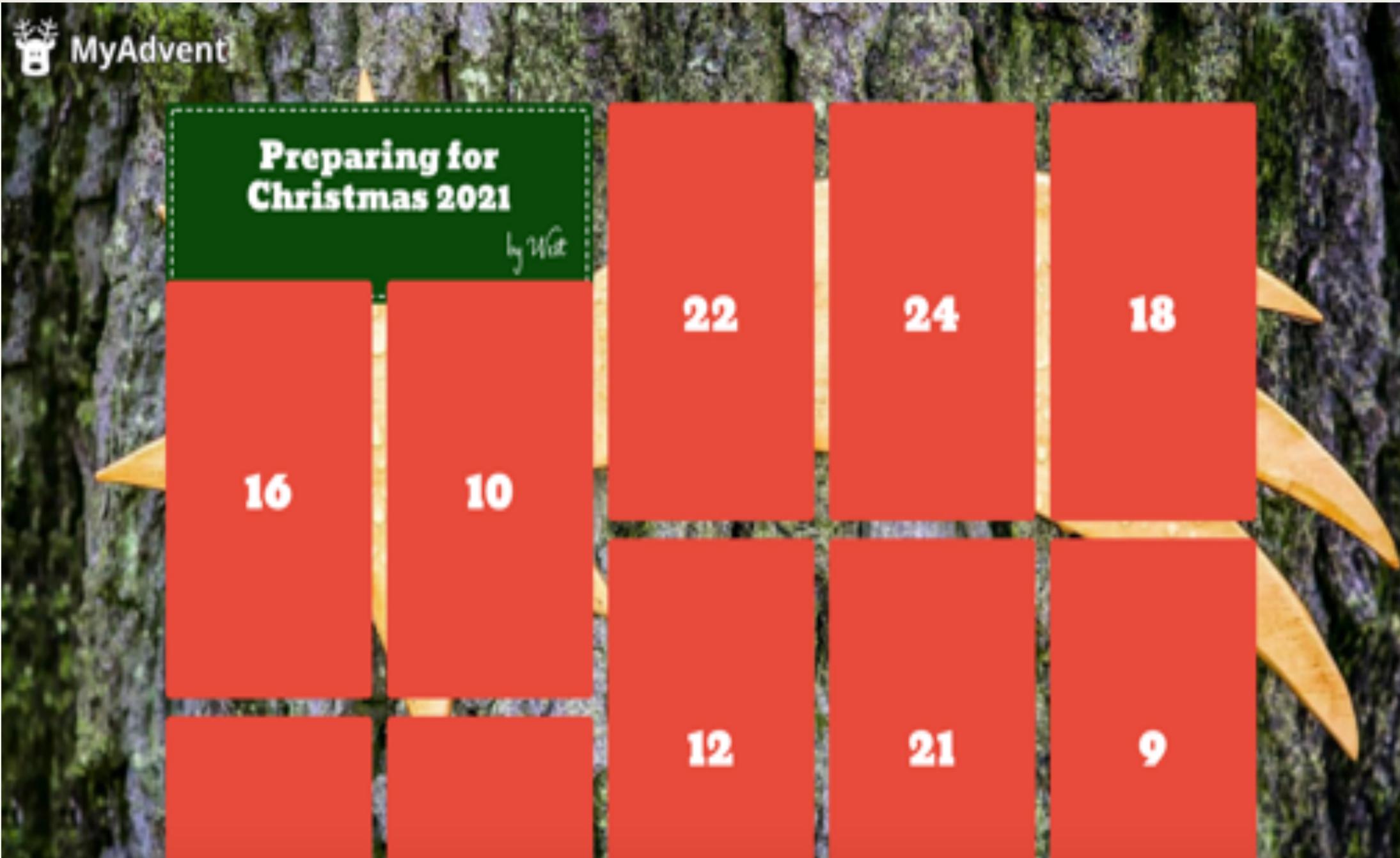


Celebrating

Does your Meeting do anything special for Christmas? Do any of you hold to a Quaker-inspired practice of not honoring any holidays in any special way, including Christmas? If you do celebrate Christmas, what about the way that you celebrate it is most special to you? Or, if you could celebrate Christmas any way you wanted, how would you?

Joy

I wonder, what is your favorite thing to do or play in the winter? What is your favorite food or treat during the holiday season?



www.myadvent.net

Additional Resource Collections

- ❖ **On the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative (QREC) website:**
Seeking Wonder and Light in the Christmas Season
(this is a treasure trove of ideas!)
 - Presence in the Midst: Preparing for Christmas — from Wichita Friends School
 - Plays for the Christmas Holidays by Nancy Pickering, Middletown Friends Meeting (PhYM)
 - “Nativity for the Modern Age” play shared by Kennett Meeting (PhYM)
- ❖ **Baltimore Yearly Meeting:** Teaching the Bible Activities has several Christmas focused lessons and activities
- ❖ *Building Faith* from Virginia Theological Seminary — Christmas (tons of resources)

