

On your marks

The start of Advent is a good time to hold a fun day in church as it avoids the Christmas throng of home, school and church activities and you can use it to advertise all the forthcoming Christmas activities you're holding locally. Here are some suggestions for 'Advent Adventure!' They're 'ingredients' which you could slot into the 'Possible plan for a two-hour event' in the 'A special event or holiday club with children' outline mentioned below.

It's based on the idea that Advent is all about looking forward to God's promises being kept: first of all in Jesus' birth (and this might be enough for some groups to deal with) and then to the time when Jesus will come again.

Get set

You'll need to look at the [A special event or holiday club with children](#) to help plan the event plus other material depending on activities chosen (see below).

Go!

Decorations

- Different sorts of lights - torches, candles, lighthouses, laser beams, headlights, lanterns.
- Different sorts of signposts - motorway, rustic, highway.
- Maps, compasses, explorers' packs.
- Symbols of time - clocks, watches, hourglasses.
- People pointing the way. Badges could echo the theme of your decorations and be, for example, shaped like a torch or a signpost.

Suggested craft activities

(You can find details in books as mentioned or by searching on the internet)

- Clay lamp
- Tree decorations
- Advent calendar
- Glass painting to hold a nightlight
- Figures for Christmas Crib
- Advent Crown and objects to represent the four sets of people we remember by the candles (Patriarchs: star for Abraham, Old Testament Prophets: scroll, John the Baptist: signpost pointing to Jesus, Mary: cut-out of the word YES). Jesus' symbol as the Light of the World is already there as a candle.
- Decorate a scrapbook cover to go round the parish with your Posada figures
- Decorate biscuits with writing icing and silver balls as signposts pointing to Jesus or as



candles.

- Manger of good deeds - Paint a box to look like a manger. Write a good deed on a strip of yellow paper for each day of Advent. Once the deed is done, it can be placed in the manger each day. The aim is to fill up the manger by Christmas.
- Make/decorate a collection box for a charity and give up something for Advent in order to donate the money to the good cause
- Make boxes from old Christmas cards and put a small gift inside to give to someone who needs some love - 'from an Advent Angel'

Games

Games on 'readiness' and 'John the Baptist' in *Theme Games 1* by Lesley Pinchbeck (Scripture Union, 1993)

Full Pelt, Beat the clock *Theme Games 2* by Lesley Pinchbeck (Scripture Union, 2002)

Storytime

Tell stories about when you've been looking forward to a special event, or when you've been setting out on an expedition and how much you relied on the map, compass, other people to tell you how to get where you were going.

Link this to looking forward to seeing God's promises come true.

Show a picture of Abraham and say how much he looked forward to God's promise being kept - that God's people would be all over the world and would be a blessing to it.

Read / show some Old Testament prophecies (eg Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 11:1-10) foretelling Jesus' birth and say how much prophets like Isaiah were looking forward to God's Messiah being born.

Show a picture of John the Baptist and say how excited he was to see Jesus get started on his work. All these people pointed towards Jesus and looked forward to him.

We know the wonderful way God kept his promise through Jesus, and now we look forward to the time when Jesus will come again. We don't know when it will be, but we want to be ready and waiting and doing the things God loves us to do - loving God and loving other people. Advent is a time to remember we're looking forward to all God's promises coming true.

You might want to weave in some dramatised versions of the ten foolish girls (Matthew 25), the faithful and unfaithful servants (Matthew 24) or the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25), which are all about being ready.