# Battling the bah-humbug in Advent

Do you battle bah-humbug?

Do you find yourself looking at the festive decorations and rolling your eyes? Do you slam the car door to punctuate your disapproval of all things ugly sweater-ish? Do you cover your ears and start singing “London Bridge Is Falling Down” whenever the strains of Mariah Carey reach your ears?

I. Am. So. With. You.

As a recovering Scrooge, I’m here to offer a few tips and some links to help you traverse this Advent season without losing the joy of Christmas. Of course, the choice is yours. (That’s the hardest part for me, remembering that my attitude is a choice I make.)

## Tip 1: Listen to Advent music

One way I’ve found to battle my inner bah-humbug is to **listen to Advent music**. Ten years ago, that was a lot harder than it is now. If you use Spotify, you can search Advent playlists. Pro tip: use quotes around “Advent” or you’ll get Adventure music thrown in (which may not be *such* a bad thing…).

## Tip 2: Pick one Advent devotion

Do not make this a “one more thing for this busy time of year” Advent. Instead, why not pick one Advent devotion? Just. One.

Maybe it’s an Advent wreath. Maybe it’s the Jesse Tree. Maybe it’s an Advent calendar with devotions. Maybe it’s reading the Nativity story together and reflecting on it. Maybe it’s a prayer before or after meals.

Maybe it’s not something you do with the whole family.

(Yes, I really said that.)

Because sometimes, you just have to pick one thing. And sometimes, that one thing has to take care of *you* before you can take care of the others.

## Tip 3: Be intentional with your decorating

There's no way around it, not really. (At least, there's not for me.) And really, isn't decorating part of preparing? And Advent is a time of preparation. So decorating makes sense.

*How* you decorate can vary widely, but if you're battling bah-humbug, then I suggest that you approach it very intentionally. Make it tie in with Advent, with your family, with your Catholic heritage.

(Don't have a Catholic heritage? You're making it right now!)

There are a few different approaches I've tried: the "a little at a time every week" approach, the "wait as long as possible" approach, and the "integrate Advent with the other stuff" approach. What's worked the best, over the years, is a mash-up of all of these.

## Tip 4: Celebrate the saints of Advent

Advent has some great saints! St. Nicholas comes right to mind, but how about St. Lucy, St. Juan Diego, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and St. John of the Cross? December 8 is a Holy Day of Obligation celebrating the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

Celebrating, by the way, may just mean that you pause to pray for their intercession, that you read and reflect on their lives, or that you color a picture together.

## Tip 5: Smile

Because, really, we're getting ready for a baby! And babies bring joy and happiness! This Baby, in particular, brings

something special. Snuggle up with a hot drink and a comfy companion and enjoy the twinkle.