

# Here comes Advent (with more resources)

Advent.

It's that time of year when I find myself saying *REALLY?* a lot.

"Really? One more thing?"

"Really? Flames with a toddler?"

"Really? Christmas parties and music and school things and the kids are sick and and and?"

In the Advent of 2011, [my thoughts on Advent were put into print](#). As we dive into Advent, I've dusted off my copy.

The first thing I noticed was the simple, straightforward approach I encouraged other people to take.

How have I forgotten that in my own family?

It's all too easy to make Advent difficult and complicated.

And this time of year, things are difficult and complicated enough.

I have a way of coming back to the same few Advent resources. And sometimes, I scrap them all and just try to find a moment of silence every morning.

One of my favorite "oldie but goodie" Advent resources is [Karen Edmisten's No-Panic Advent series](#). It reminds me, every year, that I can choose to be calm. I can plan ahead. And if I don't...it's OK. My main takeaway, though, is that the family portion of Advent is about building our traditions.

When it comes to the Jesse Tree (confession: for me, it

usually doesn't), I love [Christine Johnson's series](#). I've bought a ton of books over the years, but what I come back to is this online series.

Why not make reading part of your Advent? Years ago, I heard the idea of wrapping up all your Christmas and Advent books and unwrapping one each day, sort of like a book countdown to Christmas. (If you're organized, you could put them in a certain order. I know better than to suggest that to myself...I would just get overwhelmed by it.) If you're looking for books to include, [here are five great suggestions](#).

Over the years, I've realized that one of the mainstays of my home decor is my Nativity scene. Oh, it takes center stage during Advent, in a way it doesn't the rest of the year. For a few years, we've added a piece of straw to the barn for every nice thing we do that day. This year, I'll be incorporating some of the ideas from [this family guide to the Nativity](#).

*If you aren't already on our email list, [be sure to sign up!](#) We send out free downloads and great family activities that are only available there. (Thank me later!)*

*Do you have a link or resource to share? Send it to us at [takeout@osv.com](mailto:takeout@osv.com) so we can share it in a future issue!*