

Prepare for Christmas with a works of mercy Advent calendar

As we approach the season of Christmas, we often find ourselves inundated with bright lights, sweet treats, social gatherings and endless gift giving. To keep us focused on the birth of our Savior, the Church has given us the wonderful time of Advent.

As this season looms upon us, we parents are called to bring our children closer to knowing and loving Jesus. What better way to do that than to teach our children how to live the [corporal works of mercy](#)?

A corporal works of mercy Advent calendar

Advent is an opportunity to prepare your children for the celebration of Christ's birth. To help keep your children engaged, consider purchasing an Advent calendar or make your own. (For a simple homemade calendar, try using disposable coffee cups with slips of paper tucked inside.)

With the wooden calendar, each day your child can add a new piece to the Nativity. But there's more to it than that! In the box for the day (or the coffee cup), include a piece of paper with a small project for your child to complete. Projects should vary based on the age and skill set of your children and, of course, focus on the corporal works of mercy. Here are some examples:

- Bring flowers and visit a homebound parishioner
- Have older children read the Christmas Story to younger siblings
- Give a new toy/clothes to a child in need
- Bring food to your local food bank

- Donate a used toy or book
- Make greeting cards for hospitalized children
- Clean up your neighborhood
- Visit an animal shelter
- Collect old rosaries and donate to a Catholic prison chaplain
- Bake treats for or simply thank your public servants
- Smile and say hello to someone that you do not know
- Say a prayer for baby Jesus
- Visit a cemetery and say a prayer for all of the deceased
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food pantry

There are many activities that you can do with your kids this season to prepare them for Jesus' birth. We all have many obligations and perhaps a daily activity for your family is not always possible. This Advent, develop a suitable plan and challenge your children to come to know and love Jesus a bit more than they did last year.