Thanksgiving and Advent readiness

The world in mid-November is gray and dull, sometimes smattered with snow and sometimes with piles of leaves. There's a nip in the air, both inside and out, and the days are short enough that it's sometimes a struggle to get out of bed.

So maybe that's why we have so much going on, to get the gray and dark out of our minds, to focus us outward.

I usually face this time of year with a certain rebellious denial. It happens, every single year, and there's never a surprise. Thanksgiving comes, just as it always does, and Advent leads to Christmas, all the same.

This year, I'd like to focus on the gratitude of the family feast and on the silence of the December journey through Advent.

And, while the turkey is cooking and the parades are parading on Thanksgiving morn, I may pull out some paper and try a modified version of this craft with the kids. I like the idea of giving them something to do that's focused on gratitude, and this looks easy enough.

I might also get some white paper and have each kid decorate a place mat or a name tag, sharing what they're grateful for this year.

Then again, I may just let them play while I'm immersed in dinner preparations.

And let's not forget that "Eucharist" is Greek for "thanksgiving" while we do our preparations and celebrations of this holiday!

Advent readiness

This year, we have a week between Thanksgiving and Advent, and it's a week that I plan to use to get myself ready for Advent.

One year, I got all my Christmas shopping before Advent. It was a blissful Advent year, I tell you. I've never accomplished that since (and we have more kids now, so it's feeling a bit overwhelming). However, after reading Martina's plan for a "Christmas shopping challenge," I can't help but feel hopeful…and inspired!

Advent is all too easily made into an overwhelming impossibility in my mind (and home). We have plenty of other things pulling us away from home.

> *My encouragement to you – and me – is to remember that Christ came down at Christmas time to save the weary ones. So, it is important to carve out a little safe haven where we can find rest, refreshment, and renewal, before we serve those we love, through our Christmas preparations.*

I'm taking Sarah Damm's words above to heart. Here are some great ideas for Advent sourced from other Catholic families!