

St John's Advent Challenge 2021

A challenge a day to
spread love and
kindness through
advent!



1 Dec. Put up a nativity scene, or draw a picture of the nativity.	2 Dec. Smile at someone.	3 Dec. Make a donation to the Hedge End Food Bank. https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/coronavirus-information/food-banks	4 Dec. Give a loved one a hug and tell them you love them.	5 Dec. Nativity story part 1: see next page. Think about a part of the world affected by war. Pray for peace.	6 Dec. Help with a chore or job without needing to be asked.
7 Dec. Make someone a card or picture to brighten their day.	8 Dec. Pick up some litter (with the help of a grown-up, if you're little).	9 Dec. Hold the door open for someone.	10 Dec. Share a book with someone.	11 Dec. Go for a walk or stand/sit outside for 5 minutes and look at the world. Thank God for it's beauty.	12 Dec. Nativity story part 2: see next page. Mary and Joseph didn't have anywhere to stay when they reached Bethlehem. Pray for those who are homeless or refugees this Christmastime.
13 Dec. Listen to a Christmas Carol and think about the words.	14 Dec. Donate something to charity that you no longer play with/use, so that it can be appreciated by someone else.	15 Dec. Call a far away friend or loved one to say Hello.	16 Dec. Cheer up a class mate/work colleague.	17 Dec. Tidy up your room.	18 Dec. Put some music on and dance – take a moment to appreciate your amazing body!
19 Dec. Nativity story part 3: see next page. Do something kind for a sibling or friend.	20 Dec. Go and see some Christmas lights. Think about the meaning of Jesus as the 'light of the world'.	21 Dec. Put someone else's things in the dishwasher.	22 Dec. Take a family picture by the Christmas tree and thank God for your loved ones.	23 Dec. Be polite and helpful all day.	24 Dec. Make a list of 5 things you are grateful for and give thanks to God.

<h2>Nativity Reading 1</h2> <p>God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a young woman engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the young woman’s name was Mary. Gabriel said to Mary: “Good morning! You’re beautiful with God’s beauty, Beautiful inside and out! God be with you!”</p> <p>She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, “Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. He will be great and be called ‘Son of the Highest.’</p> <p>Mary said, “I’m ready to serve. Let it be with me, just as you say.”</p> <p>Then the angel left her.</p>	<h2>Nativity Reading 2</h2> <p>Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.</p> <p>While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.</p>
<h2>Nativity Reading 3</h2> <p>There were shepherds camping in the neighbourhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God’s angel stood among them and God’s glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David’s town, a Saviour who is Messiah and Master. This is what you’re to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.”</p> <p>At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God’s praises: “Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.”</p> <p>As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. “Let’s get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.” They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.</p> <p>Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It had turned out exactly the way they’d been told!</p> <p>Nativity story taken from the Bible, the book of Luke, chapters 1 and 2.</p>	<h2>Prayers</h2> <p>Praying just means talking to God. We can say thank you to God for our blessings, or we can talk about things that worry us and ask him to help. Here are some prayers that you might like to use on the relevant Advent Challenge days.</p> <p>God, Thank You for my friend [insert name]. You tell us that it is not good to be alone, God, and bless us with family and friends all around us. Thank You for giving us people to talk to and laugh with. I pray for my friend [insert name] today, that they have a good day and a blessed life. They are a blessing to me, God, when I need them the most. Help me to be kind like Jesus and to be a good friend to others. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.</p> <p>God of compassion, your love for us all was revealed in Jesus, whose earthly life began in the poverty of a stable: we hold before you those who are homeless and cold especially in this cold weather. Draw near and comfort them in spirit and bless those who work to provide them with shelter, food and friendship. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.</p> <p>Merciful God, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger, and who are homeless and hungry. Bless those who work to bring them relief; inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts; and guide the nations of the world to justice and peace. Amen.</p>