

'Tubular' Calendar Marks

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Anticipation underlies Christmas. Whether through Biblical prophecies foretelling the coming of the Savior, the joy of the Visitation or the wonder and awe of the shepherds on the first Christmas night, Christmas is anticipation.

(In addition, please recognize the existence of a certain jolly old elf with a red suit, beard and sleigh, reindeer and their global mission of good cheer.)

Many were called, but few stayed awake long enough to finish the project, which took about three hours.

We decided to undertake a calendar because letting the kids open one of the cups each day until Christmas not only lets them share the Nativity story while building anticipation, it also offers a subtle arithmetic lesson.

Our volunteer crew was made up of Lillian and Samuel Sikora, their parents Hannah and Joseph, their uncle Dominic Carton and



At 1-year-old, Samuel finds it more fun to eat the crayons than to color with them, but with Grandma Cindy's supervision, he multitasks very well and accomplishes both.



(Observer photos by Tony Carton)

Once finished, the project should hold a center place in your holiday décor allowing for the daily opening of a cup, the sharing of a sweet, and discussion of the day's verse.

their grandparents Cindy Carton and me (aka Grandma and Bunka). We combined our crafting skills to build a 3-D Advent calendar.

You can use the earliest days of Advent (Nov. 29 and 30) to build the project and then begin opening the cups Dec. 1.

You should first decide to arrange the days on your calendar as a countdown (from 24 to 1) or a "countup" (from 1 to 24).

We decided to go from 1 to 24 because it encourages the kids to count the days that are remaining until Christmas, and it let uncle Dominic help our 3-year-old Lillian and 1-year-old Samuel recognize the importance of numbers.

In addition, we chose this project because it requires some adult handiwork while leaving plenty of

room for the children to stay busy and exercise their creativity.

We visited the Christmas Story Advent Coloring Book at the DLTK's Growing Together Web site — <http://www.dltk-bible.com/advent/index.htm> — to find a nativity scene to color, cut out, and glue to the background sheet



Dominic lends his drafting skills to the project by outlining the tubes on the base sheet of construction paper in the silhouette of a stable.

the Days Until Christmas



Lillian cuts the colored strips for decorating the tubes. She was quick to point out that she started the project with 10 fingers and fully expected to finish with the same.

of construction paper. (See bottom left photo on preceding page)

Adult prep: We got 1½-inch cardboard tubes from rolls of wrapping paper, toilet paper and paper towels and cut them into 25, 1½ -inch segments to hold our candies and verses.

Using one of the tube segments, lightly pencil a circle marking a spot for each of the 25 segments in an outline of a manger on the construction paper. (See bottom right photo on preceding page)

Little hands: To cover the tubes with construction paper we cut 25, 1½ x 4½ strips of construction paper (See photo, top left) and, using a glue stick, attached one strip to each tube.

Adult: Hot glue the covered tubes to the background sheet of construction paper.

Everybody: Choose and then write or print (using your PC) 25 Bible verses that build the story of the Nativity, or simply copy and cut the ones we used (see page 10).

Supply List

Cardboard tubes from paper towels, wrapping paper or toilet tissue
Scissors
Hot glue and glue sticks
Construction paper
A couple sheets of lined or typing paper for printing or otherwise recording the Bible verses (or copy page 10 and cut the verses apart)
Small wrapped candy (Hershey Kisses work well)
Stiff cardboard for backing (a panel from an old box will do)
Nativity coloring page
Optional: Black marker for dating the tubes (we used printed circles)

This step offers a great opportunity for parents to sit with the children and pore over every aspect of the Nativity. Discuss together the Annunciation, the Visitation, the reasons for the Roman census, the Holy Family's decision to stay in the stable, the birth of Jesus (Do your children



After choosing our verses, Dominic cuts them out and arranges them numerically.



Lillian uses a glue stick to attach the numbered lids to the tubes. Note: Chewing and sticking out the tongue while gluing is crucial to the success of the project.

know what swaddling means? How about a manger?) and discuss the fear and then the wonder felt by the shepherds when visited by angels proclaiming the glorious news.

Little hands: Fold a Bible verse in half and wrap a piece of candy with it. Drop the verse-wrapped candy into a tube taking care to match the verse number with the tube number so that the story unfolds as Christmas approaches. Have extra candy on hand as some will mysteriously disappear during construction.

You can use this colored and numbered circle template for the lids on the tubes: <http://www.dltk-holidays.com/xmas/madvent-tree.htm> or make your own.

Using a glue stick, attach the numbered lids onto the tubes. (See photo, top right)

Adult prep: Attach the project to the cardboard stand and begin the countdown.



Bible Verses for Advent Calendar Project

Dec. 1 Mi 5:2 — But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

Dec. 2 Is 7:14 — Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Dec. 3 Mt 1 — An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

Dec. 4 Mt 1 — She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Dec. 5 Mt 1 — When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Dec. 6 Mt 1 — The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”

Dec. 7 Lk 1 — And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God.”

Dec. 8 Lk 1 — He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

Dec. 9 Mt 1 — Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us).

Dec. 10 Lk 1 — And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”

Dec. 11 Lk 1 — And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.

Dec. 12 Lk 1 — And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Dec. 13 Lk 1 — In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.

Dec. 14 Lk 1 — And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”

Dec. 15 Lk 1 — (Elizabeth exclaimed) “And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

Dec. 16 Lk 1 — And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Dec. 17 Lk 2 — In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

Dec. 18 Lk 2 — And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Dec. 19 Lk 2 — And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Dec. 20 Lk 2 — And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

Dec. 21 Lk 2 — And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people.”

Dec. 22 Lk 2 — For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

Dec. 23 Lk 2 — And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”

Dec. 24 Is 9 — For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Dec. 25 Lk 2 — When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.



Make a Church Year Bookmark

Every year as we near Thanksgiving Day, Catholics also celebrate the beginning of the new church — or liturgical — year.

Just like any year, the church year has its seasons. Our first season is Advent, a word that means something is coming. During Advent, we know that Jesus is coming. We wait for his birth.

Christmas is its own, though very short, season. That's when we celebrate Jesus, his family and the promise his birth means to us.

After these holy days, we have a few weeks of Ordinary Time, followed by another season of waiting — Lent. During Lent we know the promise of Jesus' birth is about to come true. But first we try to free our souls of sin by praying, fasting and doing penance.

It's during the Easter season, after we remember our Lord's suffering and death, that we rejoice in his resurrection. That's because we know he has kept his promise to save us.

After Easter, we enter another period of Ordinary Time that lasts till the end of the church year.

For this new church year, why don't you make a resolution? Perhaps you will try to pray more, or be kinder to a brother or sister. Write your resolution on the bookmark on this page.

Color the pictures and, with an adult, cut the strips out of this page and fold them together. You may use glue or tape, if you wish.

Make as many copies as you need for everyone in your family. Use them in the books you are reading to remind you of your church year resolution.

IT'S A NEW CHURCH YEAR

ADVENT

We wait for Jesus' birth.



CHRISTMAS
Jesus is born.

After Christmas it's

ORDINARY TIME

We learn about Jesus' life.



LENT

We wait for Jesus' death and resurrection.



EASTER

We celebrate our salvation through Jesus.



After Easter it's
ORDINARY TIME
We learn about Jesus' plans for us.



This church year,
I resolve to
