



# Lantern Advent Calendar Guide

## How to use this Advent calendar

This Advent calendar is designed to be colored progressively throughout the season of Advent, then folded, cut, and taped into a paper lantern. We've listed 24 coloring prompts for December 1–24, but the lantern can also be colored and assembled as a one-time project. Here are some ideas for how you might use this calendar:

- Set aside time each evening for a daily check-in. As you color your lanterns as a family, let each person share about their day: one thing that was scary, one thing that gave them hope, and one way they will spread hope tomorrow.
- If your worship space has tables, take your lantern to church each Sunday to color during worship. If only coloring once per week, follow coloring prompts 1-6 on the First Sunday of Advent, prompts 7-12 on the Second Sunday, prompts 13-18 on the Third Sunday, and prompts 19-24 on the Fourth Sunday.
- Use the blank side of your lantern as a prayer journal during Advent. Add names of people, places, and situations you would like to hold in prayer using pencil. You might even write a short prayer for each person. When the lantern is assembled, the light inside will shine on their names.
- Bring your completed lanterns to your Christmas Eve service to illuminate the worship space. (We recommend using an LED tea light to be safe.)

## How to speak with children about fear & hope

As you color, you might use some of the following questions to talk with your child(ren) about fear and hope. To encourage your child(ren) to speak openly and honestly about their fears, validate their feelings and don't be too quick to dismiss or reassure them that "it's nothing to be scared of." Share your own feelings, too, so they know that even grown-ups are scared sometimes.

- When do you feel afraid?
- What does your body feel like when you're afraid?
- What helps you be brave?
- Do you think you can be afraid and brave at the same time?
- Was there a time today when you felt afraid? What did you do?
- What does it mean to have hope? (For young children, you might need to share a simple definition of hope, such as: *Having hope means believing something good can happen, even if it means waiting.*)
- When do you feel hopeful?
- Was there something that happened today that gave you hope?
- How can you spread hope tomorrow?

You might also ask your child(ren) what they see in the images on the lantern. From left to right, the drawings are inspired by the angel visiting Mary (Luke 1:26-39), the angel coming to Joseph in a dream (Matthew 1:18-25), and the angels delivering good news to the shepherds in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-20).

You might ask such questions as:

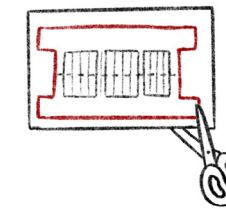
- What do you think is happening in this picture?
- Do you think Mary/Joseph/the shepherds were afraid? What did they do when they were afraid?
- The angel says, "Do not be afraid." Has anyone ever told you not to be afraid of something? Did that help?
- What in this story is good news? What part of the story is hopeful?

If your child is bringing forward some big fears, especially if there has been a significant event taking place in your family or community, here are some resources for helping children through fears from child psychologists:

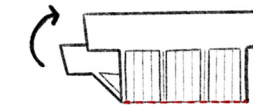
- "How to Help Children Manage Fears" by Rae Jacobson. Published by the Child Mind Institute. February 6, 2025. <https://childmind.org/article/help-children-manage-fears/>
- "Scared, but Strong: Understanding Fear." *Young & Healthy*. Published by Cincinnati Children's. Podcast hosted by Bo McMillian. March 14, 2025. <https://blog.cincinnatichildrens.org/the-young-healthy-podcast/podcast-scared-but-strong-understanding-fear/>
- "Helping Your Child Face Their Fears and Worries" Published by the Anxiety & Depression Association of America. Webinar hosted by Rachel Busman and Lynne Siqueland. February 29, 2024. <https://adaa.org/webinar/consumer/helping-your-child-face-their-fears-and-worries-qa>

## How to construct the lantern

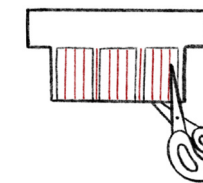
To construct the lantern, you will need scissors, tape or a stapler, and an LED tealight. Young children will need adult help with construction.



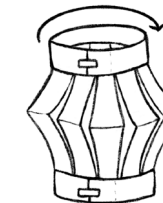
1. After you finish coloring, cut out the lantern following the bold red line along the outside of the imagery. As you cut out the lantern, save a thin rectangle of paper to use as the handle.



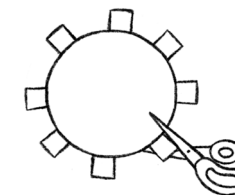
2. Fold the lantern in half lengthwise, along the dotted line. Make sure the drawings are facing out.



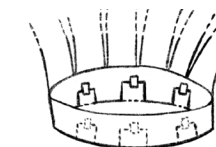
3. Starting from the folded edge, cut along the red vertical lines. Be sure to stop at the border of the top and bottom of the image where the red lines end.



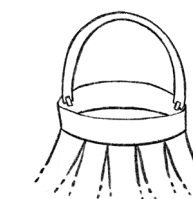
4. Unfold the paper and wrap the lantern into a cylinder, image side out. Overlap the tabs so there is no gap between the slats of the lantern. Tape or staple the tabs together.



5. Trace the base of the lantern onto blank paper. (Any scrap paper will work!) Draw some rectangular tabs coming off of the circle, then cut out this shape. (Tip: The more tabs, the more securely it will hold your tealight.)



6. Fold the tabs of the circle, then set the base inside the lantern so the tabs are on the inside and the circle creates a base to the lantern. (Tip: If the tabs are sticking up into the space between the slats, trim them so they don't show through.) Tape or staple the tabs to the inside of the lantern.



7. Tape or staple the ends of the handle to opposite sides of the top ring of the lantern.

8. Turn on an LED tealight, then set it inside the lantern. Your lantern is complete!

## Coloring Prompts

Dec. 1	The stars	Dec. 6	The halos around each person	Dec. 10	The shepherd's clothes ( <i>pointing</i> )	Dec. 14	The shepherd's hands and face	Dec. 17	The sky in Mary & Joseph's image	Dec. 20	The word "NOT"
Dec. 2	Joseph's lantern	Dec. 7	Joseph's clothes ( <i>holding the lantern</i> )	Dec. 11	Joseph's head, arm, and legs	Dec. 15	The hillside ( <i>where the sheep are</i> )	Dec. 18	The background in pregnant Mary's image	Dec. 21	The word "FEAR"
Dec. 3	The path	Dec. 8	Mary's clothes ( <i>kneeling</i> )	Dec. 12	Mary's hands, face, and hair	Dec. 16	The sky in the shepherd & sheep image	Dec. 19	The word "DO"	Dec. 22	The word "GET"
Dec. 4	The stable	Dec. 9	Pregnant Mary's clothes and belly	Dec. 13	Pregnant Mary's hands and face					Dec. 23	The word "UP"
Dec. 5	The sheep									Dec. 24	The words "& Go"