# Countdown to Christmas Activity Garland

In the Hebrew Scriptures Jesus' birth was foretold. Read Isaiah 9:6 and reflect on what titles you would give Jesus if you had Isaiah's job

Read and notice the similarities between: Matthew 1:22-23 and Isaiah 7:14

Think of someone who you consider to be annoying or unimportant. How can you show God's love and kindness to them today or tomorrow? How can you help them feel worthy of love?

Read Luke 1:26-28, 31: Reflect: When have you known that God was with you?

Make a Grateful List or a Giving List instead of a wish-list!

Read Micah 5:2 Reflect: Do you think that small people can do big things? What about the marginalized?

Research the history of the real Old St. Nick (Saint Nicholas). Use those devices for good! Reflect: How you can be inspired by Saint Nicholas this year?

Read Luke 1:46-55: Reflect - This is Mary's song of praise and amazement. What is a favorite song that inspires amazement or joy?

Make a menu for a meal that you can take or share with someone who is feeling lost or lonely this Advent. Next, set a date and/or send an invite to make this happen.

Make cookies to take to a neighbor, a nursing home, or a single parent family.

Spend some time wrapping gifts and say a prayer for each person you are gifting as you wrap.

Read Luke 2:12: Reflect- How can you practice "peace on earth?" in your home, your workplace/school, your neighborhood? On social media?

Read: Psalm 95:6: Reflect - What does it mean to be under God's care?

What is something that your homeless neighbors need? How can you help get these things to them? Make an action plan with family or friends to meet one of these needs. Set a date and a time to complete this.

Read: Luke 2:19-20, 33-35: Reflect- What special moments do you treasure in your heart?

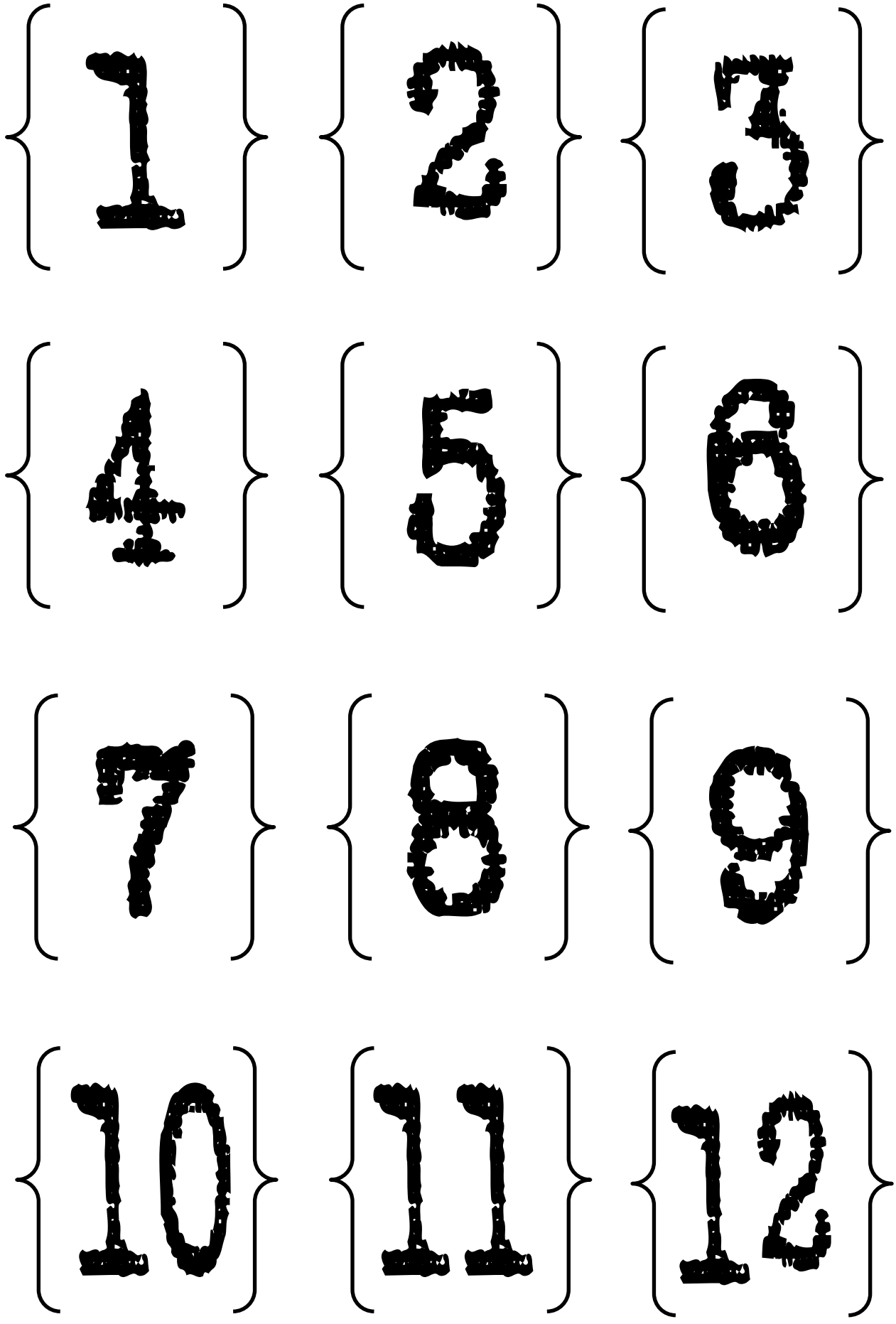
Make paper crowns that you can wear Christmas morning when you celebrate the birth of Christ!

Turn off all the lights in your house except your Christmas lights. Light your (Advent) candles and sing softly Joy to the World and say a simple prayer of thanks for new beginnings before bedtime.

Read Matthew 2:11: Reflect - What gifts can you give God?

Watch or read A Christmas Carol. Reflect on how the Holy Spirit uses all sorts of ways to get our attention and how because of Jesus' birth, we always have the chance to allow our hearts to be changed.

Give away good parking spots, stand in the longest lines, let others go first at every turn.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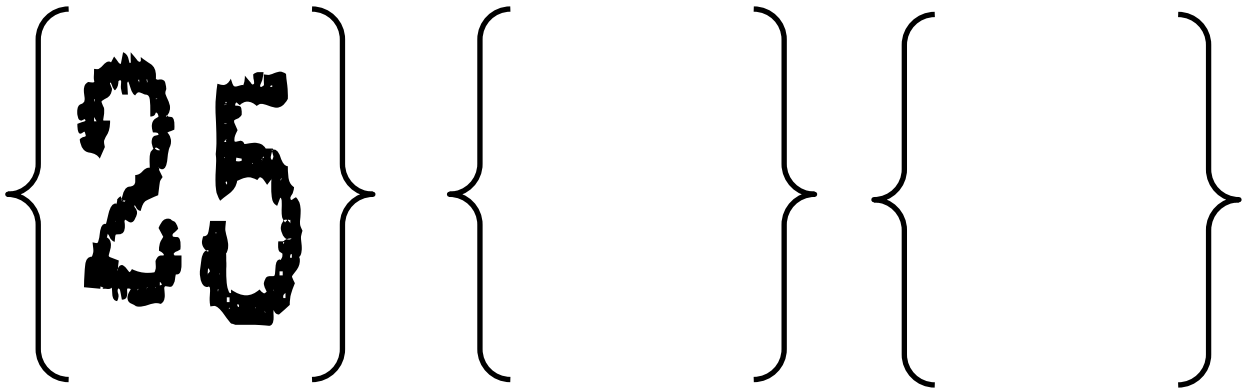


Directions

1. Glance over the activity squares. Think of five additional activities that you would like to do this Advent. They can be as simple as saying a daily morning prayer, or as involved as throwing a hot chocolate party at a local shelter. Add these activities to the blank squares.
2. Trim the numbers and activity squares into about 1¾-inch squares. Set aside.
3. Cut out 50 2-inch squares from your selection of scrapbook paper (use craft scissors for more texture!) .
4. Using a glue stick, adhere the scrapbook paper squares to the center of the shipping tags, front and back.
5. Next, glue the numbers and the activity challenges into the center of the scrapbook paper squares on each side, creating a layering effect. (Here you add extra embellishments if you want—
6.Cut your ribbon, twine, or pompom fringe into three even strands of 12 inches each, or leave in one 3 yard length.
7. Hang your ribbon on the wall, over your mantle, etc.
8. Next, tie each of the tags to the three strands in numerical order, with the numbers facing out.

Bonus Idea:
Punch a hole in the bottom of each tag about ½-inch up from the edge.
After your tags have been tied to the strands of ribbon, attach (either with string or an ornament hook) a small ornament to each shipping tag. Make sure all the tags are turned so that the numbers are facing out and can be seen.

Starting on December 1, turn one number per day, reading the daily challenge on the back. Leave each challenge facing outward as you move toward December 25. If you did the bonus, remember to remove the small ornament that is attached to the shipping tag. and hang the ornament on either a small tree, perhaps near the Advent garland, or on a larger family tree.

From the Advent chapter in ***A Homemade Year: The Blessings of Cooking, Crafting, and Coming Together by Jerusalem Jackson Greer***

More info at jerusalemgreer.com