

Create an Advent Calendar



9780807524336 // US \$16.99

In *Finding Christmas* by Lezlie Evans and illustrated by Yee Von Chan, Squirrel, Mouse, and Hare are getting ready for Christmas. While Mouse is out looking for the perfect gift for Hare, she finds Swallow sick in the snow. The three friends bring Swallow home and try to nurse the bird back to health. Squirrel and Mouse realize their Christmas gifts will help Swallow get well. As they give up their presents to help Swallow, they find the Christmas spirit.

Celebrate the Christmas spirit with an advent calendar of “gift of kindness” tasks for the entire month leading up to Christmas.



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Instructions

Gifts of Kindness

There are so many ways to make an advent calendar: gift or shoe boxes, over-the-door jewelry or shoe holders, a felt and Velcro wall hanging. Here we share one of our favorite ways:

What you'll need:

- 25 lunch-sized brown paper bags
 - Decorating supplies such as crayons, markers, stickers, ribbon, and glitter
 - Stapler
1. Fold over the top third of the bag.
 2. On the folded-over section, number the bags 1-25.
 3. Decorate the whole bag however you'd like.
 4. Open the bag and place your advent calendar item inside. This can be a small toy, piece of candy, and/or a "gift of kindness" task.
 5. Seal each bag closed by folding along the same line as in step #1. Staple each bag closed toward the top of the fold.
 6. Display the bags in numerical order on a table or mantle. Alternatively, you can hang a string and use clothespins to attach the bags.

In the spirit of the holiday and *Finding Christmas*, fill the advent calendar with "gifts of kindness" tasks to be completed daily leading up to Christmas. You can write these tasks on a small piece of paper. Here are some ideas:

- Say thank you
- Return shopping carts inside
- Leave a note/treat for the mail delivery person
- Shovel snow from a neighbor's driveway
- Pick up litter in a local park
- Read a book to a sibling or friend
- Call a long-distance relative to say hello
- Draw a picture for someone and take it to them
- Donate toys or books to a charity
- Smile at someone who looks down
- Take in your neighbor's trashcans
- Say a prayer for someone
- Hold the door for somebody
- Sing or dance for a friend

