

## Text for Mason Jar Paper Slips

Print these out (maybe in different colors of ink or on different colors of paper) and cut each one out into a different strip of paper. Put the paper strips in a jar or vase or bowl and pick one out each day of Advent. Build a decorative paper chain with your strips of paper!

1. Repurpose a small box as a manger. Each day, place a “straw” -- a tiny, dried flower, stick, paper scrap, or piece of grass in the manger when you or a family member does a Christ-like deed (a small sacrifice, a brave or kind act, an encouraging word, etc.)
2. Consider celebrating the spirit of St. Nicholas by giving a secret or anonymous gift. It could be given to someone you know well or to someone you do not know at all.
3. “In this season, it is well to reassert that the hope of humanity rests in faith....Nothing much happens unless you believe it and believing there is hope for the world is a way to move toward it.” Gladys Talsler
4. Stop for a moment. Breathe deeply and write a gratitude list for the blessings of the day.
5. Identify a morning, afternoon or evening this month to volunteer with a meal delivery service, shelter or nursing home, literacy program, or other community outreach.
6. Read Philippians 2:1-18. What speaks to you anew or again in this passage?
7. “The opposite of grimdark is hopepunk. Pass it on!” (Alexandra Rowland on Tumblr). Grimdark is a “might is right” view of the world - think dystopian fiction. Hopepunk resists despair and abuse of power. Who are the Grimdark and Hopepunk characters in the Christmas story?
8. Give someone a Christmas card who could use a little cheer, even maybe someone in your house.
9. Identify some places you are seeing God and that Christmas magic this Advent season.
10. Try your hand at “prayer doodling.” Put the word “Christmas” in the middle of a page, draw a shape around that word. As you pray, doodle and see where your mind and your prayers go!
11. Psalm 89:1-2: “I will sing of the Lord’s great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.”

12. Choose your favorite Christmas carols to sing, read or listen to on your favorite device today!
13. Give a gift to the natural world: Make special treats for birds, consider a donation to an earth-friendly cause, or cook that new meatless meal you've been meaning to try. Better yet, make two and freeze one or share one with an unsuspecting friend or neighbor!
14. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....in him was life and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:1,4-5). Be the light today!
15. Pray today for those for whom this season is a challenge - those who are lonely, addicted, sick, grieving, or struggling with relationships. You can always reach out with a tangible expression of caring, too.
16. Try listening more closely to those around you today, as you engage in daily life, whether they are family members or people you encounter only briefly. What did you hear?
17. An Advent prayer: "We who are anxious about so much look forward to your coming. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the joy of your presence. We whose hearts and lives are broken seek to be made whole. Come, thou long expected Jesus."
18. 'What can I give Him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;  
Yet what can I give him; give my heart.'" - Christina Rossetti
19. While there are plenty of Nativity or creche sets to purchase, consider making one - or beginning one this year and adding to it in the years to come. A manger scene can be made entirely from paper, or from painted rocks and pebbles, or from small toys.
20. The true gifts of Christmas are hope, peace, joy and love. In the midst of the seasonal swirl, reflect for a moment on how you will embrace these gifts - and on how you can share each of them with another.
21. Bake or buy Christmas treats today - and eat one of them!

22. "Joseph also went... to the city of David called Bethlehem....with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there...she gave birth to her firstborn son... and laid him a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:4-7).
23. Celebrate the season and "pay it forward" today. Buy someone's coffee, leave an extra-large tip for no reason, send chocolate to your pastor, tape quarters to a vending machine, etc.
24. Make it a "just Christmas." Become informed about an important issue in your community so that you can become involved with and contribute to its resolution.
25. Try visiting another house of worship during the month for a special service or Sunday morning (FBC Advent worship is in the afternoon).
26. Slow down and enjoy some quality time with your family members! Play a board game, card game or even a video game if it'll help you connect with kids or grandkids.
27. Have you ever considered giving baby Jesus a birthday present? Since it is his birth we're celebrating, consider what Jesus would want this Christmas.
28. Phone a friend, neighbor, or family member you haven't spoken to in a while to offer a holiday greeting and blessing.