

Weekly Faith Formation Update

September 14, 2020- September 18, 2020

[Advent in a Box | Traci Smith](#)

Throughout this global pandemic, many churches have done similar activities during the summer to engage families in faith formation. Now is the time to start to think about Advent activities. Children love receiving the activity bags/baskets and are very engaged in the activities. Try it!

For this box, I selected 5 activities:

1. Create an Advent Paper Chain
2. Make an Advent Wreath
3. Tell the Story of the Candy Cane
4. Have a Hot Chocolate Gratitude Party
5. Say a Prayer on Christmas Morning



For each box you'll need:

- Copy of [*Faithful Families for Advent and Christmas*](#)
- Index cards with written instructions for each activity
- Hot chocolate packets
- Candy canes
- Paper strips in red and green (or for liturgical purists, blue and white or purple and white)
- Muffin mix (or pancake mix, waffle mix, or other breakfast mix)
- Ribbon
- Ziplock bags
- 4 tea light candles and one votive candle

Here's what each of the activities looks like:

Activity 1 – Paper Chain

I cut 24 strips of red and green paper and attached instructions to see page 8. The book has a variety of different ways to use the paper chain and variations on it. If you're a liturgical purist (you know who you are!) you'll want to use purple and white or blue and white. Maybe add a note about why you chose those colors! This activity is easy and satisfying.



Activity 2 — Make an Advent Wreath

For the wreath I put four battery operated tea light candles in a bag with a votive candle. The directions say "Make an Advent Wreath (see page 10) Also use the big candle for Christmas Eve (see page 78). The Advent Wreath gives simple directions for using the wreath for each of the four weeks of Advent, as well as on Christmas Eve. The prayer on page 78 is a special candle prayer for Christmas Eve. Depending on the



ages of children, you may choose to use all battery operated candles. I chose to go with a combination.

Activity 3 — Tell the Story of the Candy Cane

For this, I put five candy canes in a bag with instructions to “Tell the story of the candy cane, see page 19.” (Note: This is *not* the version that talks about stripes and sin, it’s the version that talks about a shepherd’s crook.) My goal in adding one of the stories is that families would see some of the other stories as they flip through and use more than one! Bonus with this one = a candy cane to enjoy!



Activity 4 — Have a Hot Chocolate Gratitude Party



I tied five packets of hot chocolate together with ribbon and added directions saying “Have a hot chocolate gratitude party, see page 31.” For those *Faithful Families* fans, you’ll know that the gratitude party is a fan favorite! If you want to be really fancy, you could add marshmallows, mugs, sprinkles or other hot chocolate swag.

Activity 5 — Say a Prayer on Christmas Morning

I tied a ribbon around some muffin mix and added the direction “Say a prayer for the gift of being together on Christmas morning! See page 84.” There are lots of potential variations for this one including pancake or waffle mix, small bottles of syrup, or even a special recipe for Christmas morning. There are a lot of prayers in this book, and this activity is designed to get people thinking about all of the different prayers that can be said for different occasions.



[Starry, Starry Night | The Artful Parent](#)

This is an art activity around the Genesis story of the creation of night and day. Read the passage from a children's storybook bible.

1. **Print out a picture of Starry Night for inspiration.**

Start by printing a picture of [Starry Night](#) and setting it in the middle of the table for inspiration.

2. **Break off small pieces of Air Dry clay.**

Make small pieces with the Air Dry Clay (about a quarter size) and set them on a tray. Be sure you have many of these in different colors.

**The Air Dry Clay we used dries up fast so you want to make sure that it is covered with plastic or in ziplock bags until it is ready to be used.*

3. **Choose colors of clay.**

Now choose the colors you want to use to make your very own version of Starry Night. You can mix colors and make your own too.

4. **Try painting with clay!**

Use your fingers to spread the clay over the board. Make sure to work on covering the board completely. Kids can pound and squish the clay as well for different effects.

Try rolling out "snakes" or small balls and add them to the board for layering or texture. Explore the possibilities!

5. **Add texture.**

Now use your pointy pencils or clay tools to add texture to your "painting". Whether it's dots or short and long lines, just about any shape will work.

And that's it! Take your time to enjoy this process, air dry clay is a fun material and pairing it with Van Gogh was truly mind blowing! Last of all, don't forget, you can add a string to the back to hang or display it over a table with a wall as support.

