



connected Christmas

A No-Stress Family Advent
Experience From Kaleidoscope

Holly Mackle
Hailey White



introduction

My husband, David, and I stuffed our squirming and long past bedtime two-year-old into every toddler-sized sweater and pair of jeggings in the house, bracing her for the unseasonable cold on the night of our family outing to Christmas at the Zoo. It was going to be fun! It was going to be festive! It was going to be what every other family in a thirty mile radius had also decided to do that night!

We were barely past the gift shop when David and I caught one another's eye, the unmistakable, "What are we doing here?" passing effortlessly between us. We left. It stands as one of the best decisions our family has ever made.

What is it about Christmas—why do we put so much pressure on ourselves to do all the things?!

As believers in the completed work of Jesus, we experience the grace and freedom provided by setting our foundation not on what we do, but on what Christ has done for us. This extraordinary dependence sets us apart from every other religion, spiritual practice, or belief system, many of which direct their followers toward specific parameters for celebrating holidays.

That's not so for believers in Jesus, who have a lot of liberties in choosing how we celebrate and mark Christian holidays, Advent among them. When it comes to the specifics, we have tremendous Advent-leeway.

Beyond attending corporate worship services and participating in the sacraments, the Bible instructs us simply to love God and others (Matt. 22:37-40), to elevate others above ourselves (Romans 12:10), and to do justice and love mercy (Micah 6:8). That's some wide open freedom, and for some of us, maybe all this wide open freedom is part of the problem...

A neighbor mentions an activity and suddenly it's a "can't miss." School and work and friends vie for space on the calendar. Overwhelm threatens to attack at every turn. Can we give ourselves permission to stop and go slow, to pause and make intentional choices in how we remember and give thanks? It seems to me that's what Advent is all about anyway.

In our harried lifestyles we forget to pause and define parameters and protective boundaries. We forget to rest—especially at Advent—and so we miss. Oh how I don't want to miss!

Connected Christmas is a different kind of Advent resource. There are no rules, no daily schedule, no linear progression for your family. Instead, it's an invitation to decide what matters to you. And while I hope you enjoy the content this year, I pray it will take on extra special meaning in the coming years—a family artifact of an Advent past.

In future years, I hope you'll unpack Connected Christmas along with all your other meaningful Christmas items. Set it on a coffee table and reminisce as this book captures and collects all the un-photographables. I pray it will quickly transport your future family back to the laughter you shared, the memories you made, and the worship of the Christ child you enjoyed together.



How to Celebrate a Connected Christmas

Unclench your shoulders. We're about to celebrate Advent a little differently.

Welcome to an Advent resource unlike any other—Connected Christmas seeks to bring your family together this holiday in praise of the newborn King Jesus in unexpected, fun, and heartfelt ways. A couple suggestions before you get started:

- This book is flexible! Flip to a page that matches your family's mood/time allotment/location/schedule that day.
- The only day to do in order is...wait for it...Day 1! And don't be afraid to sit down with Day 1 long before December 1st in hopes of a productive family brainstorm. (Remember it's not a must, just a suggestion.)

- A word to the high-achievers: Jesus was perfect so we don't have to be. Did your toddler put stickers all over the pages? Seven-year-old list all the potty words they know on page twelve? Cool! Stickers and potty words make for a more hilarious time capsule.
- Want to begin with the church calendar? Want to change your mind and start December 1st or vice versa? Cool!
- Miss a day? Didn't finish the whole thing? Cool!
- To further the theme of a connected Christmas, each day you'll find an Old Testament passage pointing forward to the promise of the coming King Jesus and a New Testament passage showing how he fulfilled that promise. Use the scripture how you like. (Read aloud, memory contest with chocolate chips as a reward? Yes, please!) Encourage creativity from your family with the fill-in-the-blanks of the names/attributes/truths Jesus fulfilled—for each set of scripture passages there are many ways to phrase a theologically-solid answer. If your family gets stumped, peek at the appendix in the back of the book.
- It's time to celebrate. I pray you can breathe deep, snuggle up, laugh readily, and remember: Jesus came for us!

DAY
1

what we do & don't do at Christmas

Okay, so you can totally skip around throughout this journal, just don't do it for this one day. Please, please: for the love of everything sane and kind make this your first Advent activity!

Drumroll, please, for the most freeing holiday activity ever: making a list of the things you DO NOT do at Christmas! Listen, it's fun to add things to the "do" list, but nothing quite touches the joy of the "don't do" list. Notice the nice big checkboxes next to the things you don't do at Christmas—check them off with confidence when that opportunity passes you by!

And yes, I also hope you enjoy hearing what each member of your family does want to do at Christmas, and if you're like our family, you just might find some meaningful surprises that turn into traditions.

things we do

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things we don't do

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God made a BIG promise in 2 Samuel 7:12-13...

"I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

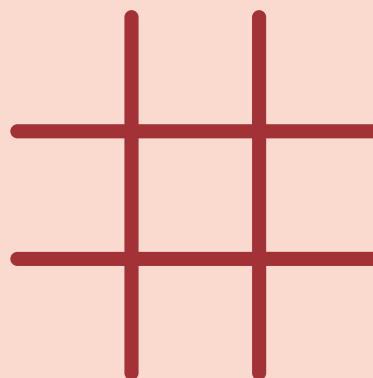
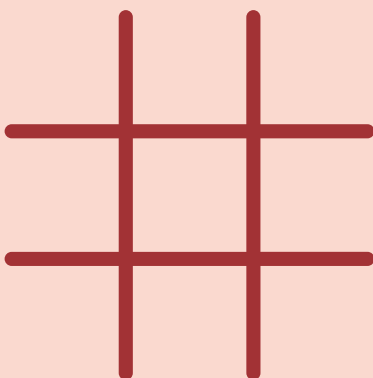
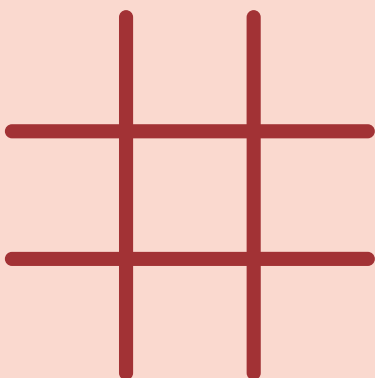
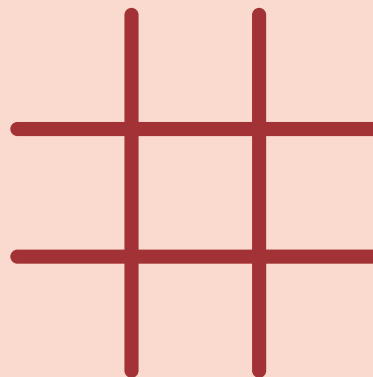
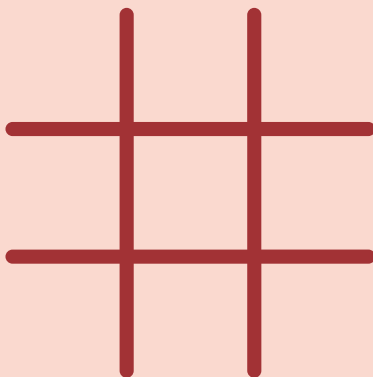
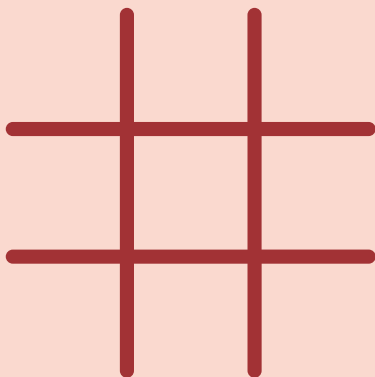
In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said this BIG promise is about him...

"For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment."

(Luke 22:37)

When you look at the two passages together,
what did Jesus come to fulfill?

Let the games begin!
Record who won each
tic-tac-toe game below.



DAY
2

reindeer games

Earn points each time every member of the family is in the car together. Good luck not looking when you're alone in the car, but just think of it as sharpening your skills—points only count when you're all together!

Earn points by being the first to spot these Christmas items on other cars:

- Nose – 1 point
- Antlers – 2 points (single antler – 1 point)
- Wreath – 2 points
- Bow – 2 points
- Christmas stickers (lights, stars, etc.) – 2 points
- Tree on top of a car – 3 points
- Blow-ups (i.e. Santa, Elf, often in passenger seats) – 5 points
- Christmas lights on inside or outside of car – 5 points

Set an end date and an agreed-upon prize. (For instance, play through Dec. 24th and the winner gets to open a present on Christmas Eve.)

family scoreboard

Write your names here!



The Old Testament spoke of Jesus in Genesis 3:15...

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

In the New Testament, John saw the solution to this problem...

"Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8)

How does 1 John 3:8 fulfill the promise of Genesis 3:15?