

# Advent Challenge

## Making Space for the Christ Child

"This age detests the things that silence brings us to: encounter, wonder, and kneeling before God."  
- Cardinal Robert Sarah

### Step #1 Detox from Sin

- **Start and end Advent with Confession.** Make a fresh start by cutting out what is clearly hindering us from our goal. Bookend this Advent with sanctifying grace! Click [here](#) for examinations of conscience for the whole family.

### Step #2 Detox from Noise

- **Add space at the beginning and end of each day.** Remove all screens from bedrooms. Consider a family charging station for all phones and "media free" hours from X pm - X am. Buy alarm clocks if needed! For more tips, check out the book, "[How to Break Up with Your Phone](#)" by Catherine Price.
- **Significantly reduce neutral media as a family.** This is a big one. What you read, watch, listen to, and do all affect your soul. Commit as a family to removing bad media and reducing neutral media (eg social media, music, sports, news, video games, tv shows, podcasts, etc). Come up with a specific and measurable goal for each family member or the entire family (eg no social media apps on phones, pause your Netflix account, only one sports game per weekend, total media time not to exceed XX minutes per day unless the entire family is watching, etc).
- **Discuss taking the [Marriage 4:29 Social Media Pledge](#) with your spouse.**

### Step #3 Fill the Space with God

- **Stick to a daily prayer schedule.** Develop a routine of daily prayer as individuals, couples, and families for the Advent days. Commit to adding one aspect of the following Daily Plan of Life (Back Cover of the [Paradisus Dei Prayer Handbook](#)) to you and your family's routine this Advent:
  - Morning, Midday, and Night Prayers
  - The Rosary
  - Lectio Divina
  - Liturgy of the Dinner Table
  - Practice of the Presence of God
- **Read together.** "A reading Catholic is a contagious Catholic," says Scott Hahn. Have each family member choose the life of a saint or other spiritual reading for Advent. Here are a few recommendations:
  - Adults - [Rejoice! Advent Meditations](#), [Joy to the World](#)
  - Teens - [Life Teen Collection](#), [Go Bravely](#), [I Choose the Sky](#)
  - Children - [ABC Get to Know the Saints with Me](#), [A is for Angel](#), [Saints Chronicles 5](#)
- **Check in and reflect.** Consider setting aside one meal a week to discuss as a family how the challenge is going and share highs and lows. **Ask: What might God be teaching you this week?** If you or your kids are "feeling the burn," talk to your spouse about it and consider how best to love them through it.

## Step #4 Fill the Space with Family

- **Eat dinner together.** Commit to being together (without the media) for dinner. Don't forget your Advent wreath!! [Catholic Advent Calendars](#) help bring joy to the table as well.
- **Play together.** Instead of TV or endless scrolling on phones, consider a family walk to see Christmas lights or a group game or creating a skit or a dance to show the grandparents or the grandkids! Remember St. Philip Neri: "Run, jump, have all the fun you want at the right time, but, for heaven's sake, do not commit sin!"
- **Watch the media together as a couple or a family.** Here are a couple of movie review sites: [Plugged In \(Focus on the Family\)](#), [The Dove Foundation](#), [Catholic News Service Movie Reviews](#)



## Other Tips:

- **Add reminders in the home.** Nativity scenes, an Advent wreath, special candles, or seasonal artwork can remind the family it's Advent and time to make space for the Christ child.
- **Make it a team effort.** We meet fitness goals by teaming up with friends so ask another MTF family to help you make space for Christ in your home while you help them in return.
- **Don't give up!** If you don't quite get to prayer or end up binge watching Netflix one day, don't give up! As Mother Teresa said, "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."
- **Use the Advent Checklist.** Use the checklist below to keep yourself and your family accountable. Personalize it as you need and print it so the whole family can see the goals for the season.

# Advent Checklist

## Step #1 Detox from Sin

Accepted

Achieved

- |                          |                              |                          |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Start Advent with Confession | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | End Advent with Confession   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Step #2 Detox from Noise

Accepted

Achieved

- |                          |  |                          |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Remove Screens from Bedrooms                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Create a Family Charging Station             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Implement "Media Free" Hours                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Remove Bad Media                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reduce Neutral Media                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Take the <a href="#">Social Media Pledge</a> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Step #3 Fill the Space with God

Accepted

Achieved

- |                          |                           |                          |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prayer Addition: _____    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Read Together Weekly      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Weekly Challenge Check-In | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Step #4 Fill the Space with Family

Accepted

Achieved

- |                          |                           |                          |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Eat Dinner Together Daily | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Play Together Weekly      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Watch Media as a Family   | <input type="checkbox"/> |