

December 1

Decorate and place your bag in a prominent place as a reminder of your Reverse Advent Calendar.

December 2

READ: 1 John 3:17-18, If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion – how can God’s love be in that person? Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

***ADD A Box of your Favorite Cereal to your Advent Bag.**

December 3

READ: Proverbs 22:9 The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.

***ADD 2 Cans of Meat (chicken/tuna) to your Advent Bag.**

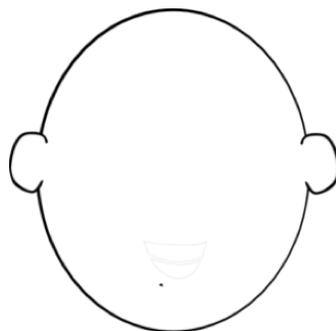
December 4

LEARN: On a piece of paper, in the outline of a face, write down what types of people do you think struggle with hunger here in our city?

December 4 continued . . .



advent



December 4

READ: “The Face of Hunger”

We are in contact with people affected by hunger every day and most of us are unaware of it – the senior citizen at the post office, the child walking home from school, the co-worker in your office, the construction worker on the job site, the cashier at the coffee shop. These are all familiar faces, and most likely one or all of these people are struggling with hunger in our community. Of San Diego County’s 3.1 million residents, 467,054 people live in poverty – that’s 14.7% of the population of San Diego County.* Of this number, 136,124 are children. These individuals face “food insecurity” which means that little or no food is available at home, and often they will not know how they will get their next meal. The food you and/or your family collects this holiday will be given to the Food Bank. Of the 400,000 the Food Bank serves monthly, 28,000 are low income military personnel and their dependents; 10,000 are fixed income seniors; over 100,000 live at or near the poverty level and 1,600 are elementary school children living in poverty who receive weekend backpacks full of food.

(*U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2014. Compiled by SANDAG, 4/16.)

What surprised you?

For so many people Christmas is a time of eating; Christmas cookies, Christmas pies, Christmas dinner. Yet for 467,054 people here in San Diego, Christmas is yet another day that they will feel hungry. Thank-you for being willing to share your abundance with those who are hungry this Christmas season.

December 5

READ: Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

***ADD Infant Formula or Diapers to your Advent Bag.**

December 6

READ: Acts 20:35 ... Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

***ADD Rice (brown or wild) to your Advent Bag.**

December 7

READ: Matthew 5:42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

***ADD Beans (black, pinto, or kidney) to your Advent Bag.**

December 8

READ: Deuteronomy 15:7-11 If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need... Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land. **Dec 8 continued . . .**

December 8

ASK: When it comes to the poor that “live in your town”, do you think you are more tightfisted or openhanded?

ACTIVITY: Make a fist, then make an open hand. Which is more able to receive a gift from God or from someone else?

PRAY: Ask the Lord to help you continue to have open hands.

December 9

READ: John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He GAVE His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

***ADD Toothbrush and Toothpaste to your Advent Bag.**

December 10

READ: Matthew 10:42 “And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

***ADD Granola Bars to your Advent Bag.**

December 11

READ: [Lord]You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. you.

***ADD Raisins to your Advent Bag.**

December 12

LEARN: Did you know that Jesus was Poor?

The New Testament teaches that Jesus was poor and that he came from a family with limited wealth. At the time of his birth, Jesus was born in a cave. This may or may not indicate how wealthy Joseph and Mary were. However, when Jesus was presented in the temple, his parents sacrificed two turtle doves which, according to the Book of Leviticus (Leviticus 12:2-8), was the sacrifice offered by poor people. When a scribe came to Jesus and declared his intentions to follow him, Jesus said to that man: “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have no home of my own, not even a place to lay my head” (Matthew 8:20). Jesus did not have a home to call his own. In 2 Corinthians 8:9 Paul wrote that Jesus, “though he was very rich,” yet for our sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make us rich. However, Paul is not speaking about finances but of spiritual matters. Jesus became poor by leaving his riches in heaven and by humbling himself and by becoming a servant of all. Isn't it interesting that we often celebrate Jesus' coming to earth in very lavish, expensive ways; gifts under the tree, decorations, big dinners, fancy parties, Christmas outfits, Christmas pajamas, etc. Yet, Jesus gave up His riches in heaven to come here. Perhaps, if we desire our Christmas to be about Jesus, we would better celebrate his life by reflecting his life through acts of sacrifice and generosity. That is what he did the very first Christmas. If our desire at Christmas is to celebrate the life of Jesus, then perhaps we would better celebrate his life by reflecting his life.

CONSIDER: Besides participating in the Reverse Advent Bag which reflects the heart of Jesus, what is another way you can reflect Jesus more this Christmas?

December 13

READ: Proverbs 19:17 Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his deed.

***ADD Powdered Milk to your Advent Bag.**

December 14

READ: Proverbs 22:2 Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.

***ADD Pasta to your Advent Bag.**

December 15

READ: Psalm 82:3-4 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

***ADD Nuts and/or Seeds to your Advent Bag.**

December 16

READ: Jeremiah 22:16 He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. “Is that not what it means to know me?” declares the LORD.

***ADD A Bar of Soap or Deodorant to your Advent Bag.**

December 17

A Story of Hunger. Sometimes Molly plays in her closet. I think she chooses this small space because it makes her feel safe, protected from the outside world and all of the problems her family faces each day. Molly is only 8, but she knows about food stamps and the local food pantry. “Me and my mom go to the food pantry because we run out of food because they took \$200 off my mom's food stamps.”

Dec 17 continued . . .

December 17

This family struggles to get enough to eat. Molly's mom has a job, but it doesn't pay a lot. Her dad had to stop working because he suffers from a serious illness. Unfortunately, that means that Molly also knows about hunger and the pain it causes. "When we run out of food, it makes my heart very sad and it makes me cry," Molly told me. "And then my brother and mama and daddy starts crying." Molly even told me how hunger hurts physically: "What it feels like to be hungry is that you feel like you're getting sick because you don't have any food that you can eat... And you feel like you're going to throw up." With tears streaming down her cheeks, Molly's mom, Amber, says, "... it really tugs at your heart, that you're doing everything you can do to provide for them, and it just isn't enough."

PRAY: Would you take time right now to pray for children, like Molly, that are hungry here in San Diego?

December 18

READ: Luke 14:13-14 ...when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.

***ADD Peanut Butter (prefer no sugar) to your Advent Bag.**

December 19

READ: Isaiah 58:7 Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless.

***ADD A Can of Vegetables to your Advent Bag.**

December 20

READ: Galatians 2:10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

***ADD A Can of Fruit to your Advent Bag.**

December 21

READ: Proverbs 14:31 Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

***ADD A Can of Soup to your Advent Bag.**

December 22

A Story of Hunger. Rita lives in a low-income senior housing site. She worked her entire life and had all that life could offer and saved, but a divorce in her later adult years left her without many of the funds she now needs. Much of what she did save for her retirement years is now gone. She receives Social Security, but her current monthly income isn't enough to get through every month. When we asked about her food situation, she said, "There are days I do without or eat only one meal. That is difficult especially since I have regular medications to take and I don't feel well taking them on an empty stomach."

PRAY: Take a moment and pray for the elderly living in San Diego that are struggling to pay for food, medicine and daily expenses.

December 23

LEARN: Did you know 5-10% of homeless people have dogs and/or cats. Why do the homeless have pets when they can barely take care of themselves? Pets provide a deep comfort. Pets are non-judgmental. They are loyal. They provide warmth and security. Some homeless would sacrifice their own food for their pets. Then there is the protection factor. Living on the streets is dangerous especially for women and the disabled. For many on the streets these animals provide them with security from other homeless or from those that discriminate against the homeless with beatings or from others who may steal their modest possessions. Homeless people are as tenacious about finding food for their dogs as they are for themselves. Likewise, they probably know ways to stay warm, and find good spots to snuggle. When you love another being, you find a way to take care of them. You just do.

***ADD Pet Food to your Advent Bag.**

December 24

THINK ON: Earlier we saw that Jesus came to earth and became poor. Read and reflect on the following verses that describe all that Jesus gave up in order to save us.

READ: Philippians 2:5-11 (*Memory verse challenge for 2017*)

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Dec 24 continued . . .

December 24

8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

PRAY: Say a prayer of Thanksgiving for the Greatest Gift ever given, JESUS!

***ADD YOUR Favorite Food to your Advent Bag.**

(No glass containers or homemade items please.)

**Bring your Advent Bag to one of our
Christmas Eve Services on December 24th at
Marshall Middle School (1:00, 3:00, or 5:00)
and we will deliver all the bags to the
San Diego Food Bank.**

Merry Christmas!

