

# Advent windows

Build anticipation of Christmas with this Advent windows poster to use as a daily countdown and to discuss the Nativity story

## Activities to support the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Explore the poster and talk about how Advent calendars are used to count the days until the birth of Jesus. Explain that the word 'Advent' means 'coming' and that it is a time when we await and prepare for the Christian celebration of Christmas.
- Ask children to share memories of Christmas. What do they look forward to most? Discuss other eagerly anticipated times, such as birthdays and holidays. Explain that, every time they open a window on their calendar, it will be one day nearer to Christmas. How will this make them feel?

### Communication and Language and Literacy

- Read or tell the nativity story before adding curtains to the poster windows (see 'Advent curtains'). As you do so, ask children to point to appropriate windows that link to the event or character you have mentioned. Later, as you open a curtain each day, discuss which aspect of Christmas the image relates to.
- Encourage the children to make up songs about opening curtains on their calendar, for example, sung to the tune *Frère Jacques*:  
*Opening curtains, opening curtains,  
One by one, one by one,  
What is in the window, what is in the window?  
A Christmas pudding, a Christmas pudding!*

### Mathematics Development

- As you open calendar curtains ask your children questions to encourage counting and problem solving, for example: *How many curtains have we opened? How many are still closed? If we open number six on Wednesday, what number will we open on Friday?* The complexity of questions should challenge children's current understanding.
- Hang a normal calendar alongside the Advent calendar to establish the date of each day. Talk about what the date was 'yesterday' and what it will be 'tomorrow'. Mark off the days on this calendar after opening the curtains on the Advent window to reinforce the idea of a countdown to Christmas (remember to open two extra sets of curtains after each weekend).

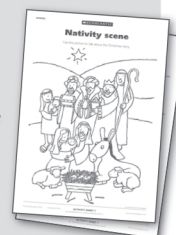
### Understanding of the World

- Explore each image as it is revealed and look for further information in books to extend children's knowledge. For example, find information and images of palaces or different types of bells. Find definitions of unusual words such as myrrh.
- Extend vocabulary and enhance concentration skills by playing a memory game involving taking turns to remember as many poster images as possible, for example, *Through the windows of my calendar I can see a donkey, some angels, a cracker...*



### How to use the poster

Talk about the poster images. Photocopy or print out the sets of curtains from our website. Number and attach them to the poster (see the suggested order on 'Numbered Nativity' online resource). Display with the 'Nativity scene' (or colour version online), to which you could add your own set of curtains!



### Physical Development

- Physically reinforce the idea of 24 days by creating a wavy line of 24 carpet tiles leading away from and back to the displayed poster. Invite children to take turns to jump from tile to tile while the others count and clap. When they reach the number for the curtains they have just opened they should stop on that tile and call out the number loudly.
- Invite children to decorate a large box with Christmas wrapping paper, fill it with shredded paper and hide 24 baubles inside. Stand the box beside an artificial Christmas tree. When a curtain is opened on the calendar, invite a child to feel in the box for a bauble and hang it on the tree.

### Expressive Arts and Design

- Explore the 'Nativity scene' A4 picture (online resource) before inviting children to paint their own nativity scene. Help to tape coloured paper to each side to form curtains kept closed by a small piece of sticky tape. Suggest they open them at home on Christmas Day.
- Invite children to draw a picture on a card star about what they most look forward to at Christmas, write a caption for it and decorate it with glitter. Collect 24 stars in a container covered in glittery paper. Every day, as you open a calendar curtain, ask someone to choose a star. Have the artist read and talk about their star content and hang it beside the poster.

Jean Evans is an Early Years consultant and author

### FREE RESOURCE

Access up to 10,000 ready-made resources at [scholastic.co.uk/subscribe](http://scholastic.co.uk/subscribe)

Membership from as little as £1.25 per month!

**Resource Bank**  
early years