

# Countdown to Christmas Calendar

Begin counting backwards and give your child something to look forward to each day of the holiday season. This simple activity builds up a little extra excitement as it helps create fond Christmas memories. Creating a countdown calendar can easily become one of your family's favorite holiday traditions, and it is a non-painful way to boost your child's counting and reading skills!

## What You Need:

- 9" x 12" poster board
- Red & green construction paper, cut into 1 ¾" x 2" squares
- Scissors
- Glue
- Glitter (optional)
- Pen
- Index cards, cut into strips



## What You Do:

1. Draw a table with 4 rows and 5 columns onto a piece of 9" x 12" poster board. Divide the table into 2-inch squares.
2. Measure a table onto a piece of green and red construction paper using the same dimensions. Cut out the squares from each sheet.
3. Have your child number the colored squares from 1 to 25 (or up to however many days are left before Christmas). If your child is not yet writing, you can type and print out the numbers, and have him glue them onto the colored squares. A third alternative is to use glitter and glue to create the numbers. (If you use the third option, give the squares an opportunity to dry).
4. Help your child glue the colored squares onto the poster board, beginning with the number 25. Have your child apply some glue around the sides and bottom of each square and place them on the poster board in descending order. (Be sure to leave the top part of the square unglued as this will create a pocket or opening to insert the activity).
5. Cut several sheets of index cards into strips, about 1.5" wide, where an activity will be written for each day.
6. Write the activities onto the strips, and then place one in each pocket.
7. Have your child help you create a header for the calendar using either glue or coloring one that you have hand-drawn or printed. Invite your child to add additional decorations, such as stickers, to the calendar if desired!
8. Explain to your child that she will remove and complete one activity each day leading up to Christmas; watch her excitement grow as Christmas time approaches!

## Here are some ideas you may want to include as activities:

- Put up the Christmas tree and decorate it.
- Make a keepsake ornament using some supplies around the house.
- Prepare holiday cards. (Your child can make a great envelope stuffer or sealer and then help affix the stamps.)
- Bake cookies.
- Wraps presents. (Your child can help affix the tape and bows, or if she is old enough, she can fill out the gift tags.)
- Holiday song karaoke. (This just might become one of your family favorites, as you line up your

family members to sing along to some popular holiday songs.)

- Read a story about Hanukkah.
- Read a story about Kwanzaa.
- Read your favorite Christmas story.
- Pop some popcorn and watch a holiday movie.
- Load up in the car and ride through your neighborhood to see the holiday decorations.
- Color holiday coloring pages.
- Enjoy some cocoa and listen to holiday music.
- Make a string of jingle bells.
- Stuff a sibling's stocking with an homemade item. (If your child doesn't have siblings, perhaps you could use this as an opportunity to have your child donate or make something for another child.)
- A true wish list. (Many kids already have a list filled with the things they'd like to receive for Christmas, but take some time to help explain about the part that good will plays into the holiday season. Ask your child what type of things your family can do during the holiday season and throughout the year to fulfill wishes outside of your home.)
- Seasonal charades. Play this time-honored game, but everything has to be related to something about the holidays.
- Make some gingerbread men.
- Make a kid's choice for 3 of your days. (Apply your own stipulations.)
- Turn in early! (Christmas Eve)