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# Martin and Sylvia's Audio Advent Calendar Cheat Sheet

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It's almost Advent! We're busy getting ready over here for a full, rich season.

Our most popular Advent stories are found in *Martin & Sylvia's Audio Advent Calendar*. In each of the 25 stories, the children enjoy a delightful Advent adventure, following hidden clues in golden envelopes.

As you are planning and preparing for your own Advent season, we thought you might enjoy a little "cheat sheet" for what's ahead with Martin and Sylvia. You can let the ideas from the stories inspire your own daily activities.

Below you'll find some notes on the entire collection, plus details for the daily activities.

## How to Use the Cheat Sheet

You can pattern your own daily advent activities after Martin and Sylvia's! Many of them are quite simple and you can adapt the basic idea to fit your own family's culture or interests.

## What You Need to Know Before You Start

The overarching emphasis of the stories is twofold: Paying Attention and Waiting. If you cultivate a sense of wonder in the waiting and a sense of purpose in the patience, you'll find an abundance of Advent magic.

In the stories, the children find their clues on cards in hidden envelopes. Some cards are written with words and others have with pictures for your non-readers.

The cards are all in yellow envelopes, and some come with a little gifts wrapped with a pink ribbon! If you want to offer the same experience, it's a



good idea to plan ahead so that you have the materials on hand to present your cards and gifts in a pleasing way, too.

*Important Note:* This cheat sheet for adults' eyes only, as discovering the "clue" is a big part of the fun for children.

# Advent Cards Activities

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## December 1: "Waiting"

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It's the first day of Advent. The children practice what it means to pay attention and wait.

**The hiding place:** Underneath an apple pie box

**The message:** *"You've waited all day and into the night Hunting and searching with all of your might. And now with your hearts filled with delight Share something sweet by candle light."*

**The activity:** There is a beeswax candle (and a pie) in the pie box. The family enjoy their Advent treat by warm candlelight.

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## December 2: "Christmas Cards"

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In their daily lesson, Martin and Sylvia experience the Advent magic of "watching and waiting." They receive four gifts that set them up for a holiday activity.

**The hiding place:** A bin of pencils and morning lesson work materials

**The message:** There are four little drawings of what look like gifts. Each gift has a pink ribbon. In the middle of the card are words:

*"One is for drawing, One is for folding, One is for licking, And one is for holding."*

**The activity:** "Today's morning lesson is to make Christmas cards!" Drawing the cards, folding the cards, licking the stamps, and holding the cards in envelopes.

And there are clues to find the materials in four small packages hidden around the room!

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## December 3: "Rufus"

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Martin and Sylvia go next door on an icy morning to walk the neighbor's dog.

**The hiding place:** In Rufus's mouth as he bounds away from the hiding spot on the porch!

**The message:** *"Inside – something warm"*

**The activity:** Hot cocoa waiting in the kitchen. Children enter and the stove is off, but the pot is warm. On the counter next to the stove are three white mugs and a ladle with a little note that says: "For you"

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## December 4: "The Advent Table"

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Each year, Martin & Sylvia's family creates an Advent Table to celebrate the season. This year, they get to go on an Advent hunt for something special to add to the decorations.

**The hiding place:** In the Advent nature table treasure box. It is filled with a bag for stones, one for plants, and one for crafting felt animals.

**The message:**

*"Four stones in the brook – White as snow – Yellow as gold – Black as night – and Red as a kiss."*

There are also four drawings of what look like rocks. One is white, one is yellow, one is black, and one is red.

**The activity:** The children go for a stone hunt in the brook for their table this week. They also look forward to the next week when they will start to decorate the table with gifts of the plant world like acorns and pine needles and flowers!

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## December 5: "Christmas Books"

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Oh, how Martin and Sylvia love to pull out the Christmas books each December! This year they enjoy a little something new.

**The hiding place:** On the door to the attic, where the Christmas books are stored for the year.

**The message:** "X"

A red X can only mean one thing... a treasure hunt!

**The activity:** Each card offers a picture that leads to the children's favorite family Christmas books, each bundle of wrapped books tied together with a ribbon. And a new book could be waiting at the end!

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## December 6: "The Bakers"

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Martin and Sylvia aren't sure this sixth day of Advent is going to be very magical — they are just running errands with Daddy. But when they get to the bakery, they receive a surprise invitation that turns their afternoon into sweet fun.

**The hiding place:** A tray of cookies at the local bakery

**The message:** "Jerry needs some helpers..."

**The activity:** The children are helpers at the bakery.

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## December 7: "The Tree"

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How Martin and Sylvia enjoy the apple trees in their yard! Today the apple trees lead them to another very special tree — and the children are ever so delighted.

**The hiding place:** Inside a plastic bag hanging from the branches in an apple tree in the yard

**The message:** "Today" — with a drawing of a Christmas tree

**The activity:** "We are getting our tree!" called Sylvia. "Today!" added Martin.

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## December 8: "The Elf"

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Today is the day that Martin and Sylvia's family decorates their Christmas tree. And what is that hidden in the branches? A special family companion!

**The hiding place:** In the box of Christmas tree ornaments.

**The message:** With a drawing of a little man with a tall hat and a pointy beard:

*"Greetings. I am your new Christmas Elf. I do not have a name yet, but if you can find me, I will take care of your tree this year and years to come."*

**The activity:** Sylvia finds their green-felted elf with a red scarf and brown hat hiding behind the tree.

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## December 9: "The Warmth of Wool"

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What do Christmas Angels and sheep have in common? Find out today in Martin & Sylvia's Advent adventure at the Brown's farm!

**The hiding place:** In a pail used for chores and feeding the sheep

**The message:**

*"A warm and cozy angel for your tree"*

~signed by Pinochle and Roseberry (the family sheep)

And a bundle of wool wrapped in paper with a pink ribbon

**The activity:** The sheep give the children some wool to make an angel for their tree.

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### December 10: "Library Magic"

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When Martin is trying to decide what to make Daddy for Christmas, he gets the perfect idea from an unexpected source — a library book.

**The hiding place:** On the floor at the library

**The message:** There wasn't a picture. There weren't even words. There was just a series of capital letters. "E FRA"

**The activity:** The message is the book's library card stack number! And the book that the code leads him to gives him the instructions for making the perfect Christmas gift for Daddy.

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### December 11: "Storytelling Surprises"

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It's a gray day and everyone is grouchy. Nothing is quite right. What to do today? Momma gives Martin and Sylvia a fun storytelling exercise to help them decide and all three are surprised by the magical Advent card answer.

**The hiding place:** Ice-skating bin in the garage

**The message:** "Skating today"

**The activity:** "We are going skating today!" called Sylvia.

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### December 12: "Spunderful Day"

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When Martin visits the Spunderful Shop to get materials for a present for Sylvia, he doesn't realize that some Advent magic is waiting for him.

**The hiding place:** Part of a beautiful crafted animal display at the boutique

**The message:** "Advent Box"

**The activity:** Materials are put in the Advent Box that can be used to make Advent animals like the ones at the store.

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### December 13: "Woodshed Theater"

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Today's Advent Card provides costumes and an idea that transforms into a Woodshed Theater production.

**The hiding place:** There is a card for each child hidden at the breakfast table.

**The message:** "You are King. Your costume is under your bed. Make ready the theater"

"You are a beggar. Your costume is under your bed. Make ready the play."

Each card specifies a role in a play.

**The activity:** "We are putting on a play!" said Sylvia.

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### December 14: "Downtown"

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Martin, Sylvia, Momma, and Daddy go downtown to look at the holiday window displays and are delighted to find something...well, surprising in one of them.

**The hiding place:** Window-shopping displays

**The message:** "A2S4R"

**The activity:** The catalogue number leads the children to a beautiful gift for their tree.

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### December 15: "A Little Singing and a Lot of Love"

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When brother and sister hear Momma coughing on the morning of the Hallelujah Sing-Along, they decide to take good care of her for the entire day.

**The hiding place:** Taped to a shelf inside of the refrigerator

**The message:** The yellow card is decorated with little dollar signs and little forks and spoons all around the outside and then the word "Coupon" is written in capital letters in the middle.

**The activity:** The coupon is valid for dinner out for the entire family!

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## December 16: "Forest Treasures"

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Sylvia has a hard time finding the acorn caps that she needs for Momma's gift. Then brother and sister are invited on an Advent Nature Scavenger hunt where they find all sorts of treasures – including just the things Sylvia needs.

**The hiding place:** In Sylvia's explorer's backpack

**The message:** The card has a drawing of the back yard with little dotted lines connecting certain spots.

**The activity:** A scavenger hunt leads the children to find treasures from nature as gifts for the nature table.

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## December 17: "Good Ol' Dog"

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Brother and sister want to make Christmas gifts for their pets, Pickles and Billbill. It is easy to think of a good gift for their kitty, but what do you give a good ol' dog?

**The hiding place:** Under the family dog!

**The message:** List of ingredients with one drawing of a dog biscuit on top.

**The activity:** Make and bake a doggie biscuit.

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## December 18: "Silly Chickens"

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It is a very silly day filled with jokes and funny stories. But nothing is as surprising and silly as what they discover later in the chicken coop!

**The hiding place:** Daddy places the card on the back of Martin's chair in such a way that it sticks to his back.

**The message:** "Buckbuckbuckbuck b-cuck!"

**The activity:** The family Christmas wreath is waiting for the children in the chicken coop – but the silly chickens have decorated themselves in the greenery until Martin and Sylvia come to find it!

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## December 19: "Busy Day"

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Today is a busy day for Momma and Daddy, and Martin and Sylvia join them downtown. Brother and sister continue to look for the Advent Card but are surprised by who eventually gives it to them.

**The hiding place:** The children go to Momma's work with the treat of taking care of a co-worker's baby. Martin and Sylvia have to practice "waiting" a long time that day to get their card. (The card is attached to the baby!)

**The message:**

*"Can you draw a picture of me for my Mommy?"*

~ Baby Jessie"

**The activity:** Martin and Sylvia are excited to do this and to give the drawing to the baby's parents as a present.

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## December 20: "The Fairies' Advent"

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It is a quiet, magical sort of morning for Sylvia, and she decides to focus her day on the quietest, most magical folk in her life: the fairies!

**The hiding place:** Sylvia builds fairy houses, and then the children discover a string lying on the ground leading from fairy house to fairy house – and finally to the yellow card.

**The message:** In it is a thank-you note from the fairies for making the houses, and with the card are some yummy maple candies.

**The activity:** Doing something nice for the fairies during Advent time.

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## December 21: "The Angel"

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Sylvia is feeling envious of her friend Sofia because she is going to play the angel in the Christmas play. Luckily the day's Advent card has a gentle message for her.

**The hiding place:** At the local flower shop in the window display

**The message:** *"It is traditional in many cultures to give flowers to someone who has done something special, something brave, or something extraordinary in any way. Do you know someone who deserves some flowers?"*

**The activity:** Give someone flowers!

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### December 22: "Caroling"

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Martin is hesitant about caroling when he learns that they will be going to a senior living home to sing to the residents. But when they arrive, he is surprised and delighted by what he discovers.

**The hiding place:** The yellow card is with one of the residents, a family friend's mother.

**The message:** The card is a thank-you note from the residents.

**The activity:** The children sing at other places in tow, and then go to the senior center where they are received with delight. (Making muffins or cookies to hand out is a good idea, too.)

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### December 23: "A Cleaning Party"

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It is the morning of their annual Advent Spiral Walk Party and brother and sister are excited about everything except one thing: cleaning. But Advent magic has a solution to that!

**The hiding place:** In the utility closet

**The message:** The card has in it an Advent story.

**The activity:** Clean — then read a story!

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### December 24: "Christmas Eve for Animals"

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The day before Christmas is a quiet one – all their gifts are prepared and the house is decorated and ready for the special day. But Momma reminds them that there is one group that has yet to be celebrated: the birds and animals in their back yard.

**The hiding place:** The card is delivered by Sylvia's friend, Laura, who is coming over to play. (Laura finds the card in her hat.)

**The message:**

*"Christmas List"*

*"Twas the day before Christmas and all was ready  
Gifts were prepared for Momma and Daddy For  
family and friends, for dog and cat But there's one  
more group we mustn't forget."*

~from the animals in the wild — the blue jays, squirrels, deer

**The activity:** Martin helps to bring a bucket of birdseed and a few tubs of peanut butter to the table as well as a few other ingredients. They offer "room service" to the wild creatures in the neighborhood.

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### December 25: "Christmas Morning — Advent Memories"

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Brother and sister lay in bed early Christmas morning and wait until it is time to go downstairs. As they wait, they chat quietly about the 24 days that have led to this morning – all the delight and discovery they enjoyed – until Daddy whispers that it is time to come downstairs.

And Christmas begins...

