

DIY PROJECT

Enjoy the thrill of the Christmas countdown with a DIY advent calendar that's choc-filled with festive activities

Photography **Anna Briggs**

FUN HOUSE



NIKKI KETTLE
DIY expert

Is there anything more thrilling than the countdown to Christmas? The suspense is almost enough to rival the actual day – almost. This DIY advent calendar adds to the fun, so get your little ones involved and let them design the house exterior. Fill the inside shelves with little gifts, which when opened reveal fun festive activities such as ‘decorate the tree’, ‘Christmas movie night’ or ‘bake a gingerbread house’. Number the gifts, or allow the kids to pick at random. The best part? You can reuse it year after year.



You will need

- Skill saw and jigsaw (or have the timber pre-cut on a 45-degree angle at a merchant to form a house shape)
- 90mm x 10mm pine clears (2 x 375mm for sides, 250mm for shelves and frame)
- 135mm x 10mm pine clears (2 x 375mm for back, 2 x 500mm for doors)
- Clamp (corner attachment)
- Square
- Drill and 2mm drill bit
- 24 6g x 24mm screws
- Ruler
- Tape measure
- Resene EzyFill Quick
- Sandpaper
- 1 big brush and 1 small art brush
- Resene Quick Dry waterborne primer undercoat, Resene Alabaster, Resene Charcoal, Resene Glorious, Resene Gold Dust and Resene Green House
- 4 hinges

Paint tip For an alternative design, use Resene FX Chalkboard paint on the exterior and allow the kids to take turns designing the exterior of the house each morning with chalk. Or use it to paint the interior, and use chalk to number each gift on the shelves.

Resene colour palette



IDEAS FOR YOUR ADVENT CALENDAR

1

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Start a fun Christmas tradition by getting your kids to choose a new decoration for the tree each year. Or they could make their own.

2

CHOOSE A TREE AND DECORATE

A great one for the start of December. Take the family out to choose a tree, then spend the day decorating it together.

3

READ A CHRISTMAS STORY

This could be a current book or a new one waiting under the tree for the kids. Maybe they get a Christmas hot cocoa too?

4

MAKE REINDEER FOOD

Use this one just before Christmas, in the last days before Santa's arrival. We hear reindeers love oats and Christmas sprinkles.

5

BAKE COOKIES FOR SANTA

The ideal task for Christmas Eve. Bake Santa some cookies, then get the little ones to write or draw him a little note to leave beside them.

6

CHOCOLATE TREATS

Twenty-four is a lot of tasks to come up with, so why not help yourself out and put the odd chocolate bar in there? It is Christmas!

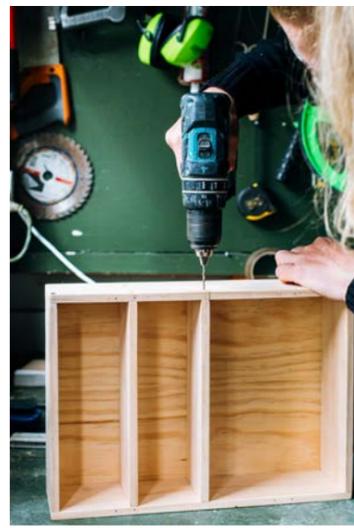
Step-by-step guide



1 To make the frame, fix together the side pieces and the top and bottom piece of pine clear to form a rectangle. Pre-drill all the screw holes with a 2mm drill bit, and then attach together using screws.



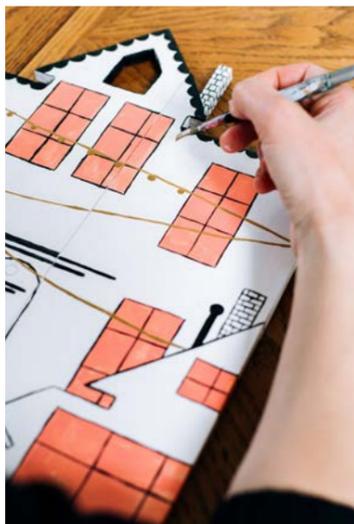
2 Flip the box over and attach the two back pieces, side by side.



3 Turn the box back over and measure out where you want the shelves, I have divided up my box evenly (about 90mm apart). You may choose to do them at different heights to allow for bigger gifts, or you may choose to put dividers in both horizontally and vertically to create a grid with 24 slots.



4 Fill the screw holes with Resene EzyFill Quick and allow to dry. Sandpaper the box, then paint with Resene Quick Dry waterborne primer undercoat. Allow to dry completely, then follow with an overcoat, I used Resene Charcoal.



5 It's time to make your doors. If you've had them pre-cut on a 45-degree angle, then sand and paint with undercoat. If you want to do a more intricate design, pencil it in, then cut with the jigsaw. Sandpaper, undercoat, and then give the doors a topcoat. I used Resene Alabaster on the exterior and Resene Charcoal on the interior. Finally, paint the exterior of the doors in a Christmas house design and allow to dry.



6 Attach the doors using small cabinet hinges. Make sure the doors line up nicely. You may have to fiddle around with them a bit. Finally, create and fill your advent calendar house with Christmas-related tasks and chocolate treats. You can do this by wrapping up little wooden boxes with a note inside, or simply roll up a note like a scroll and tie it with a festive ribbon. Make it yours.

Construction tip If you don't want to make the inside of the calendar yourself find an old printer's tray and cut to size. All you need to do after that is cut the doors, attach them, then paint and decorate it.

