

FOREWORD BY KATHY IDE

Donkey Devos

LISTEN WHEN GOD SPEAKS



SUSAN K. STEWART

2025 Donkey Devo Guide for Advent

2025 Donkey Devo Advent Guide

Tradition tells us Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem. She and Joseph were following God's plan for Jesus to be born in humble circumstances. The humble donkey as part of the scene is appropriate. While humble, the donkey is also the symbol of peaceful leadership.

Modern Advent celebrations focus primarily on the first coming of the Messiah, Jesus. Early celebrations focused on both the coming of Christ as human and the Second Coming. The first two weeks of Advent were preparation for the return of Jesus. Believers cleaned their hearts, confessed sin, and hoped for a quick return. The second two weeks focused on Jesus in the manger.

The word advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning "a coming, approach, and arrival." A term appropriate to both comings of the Messiah.

Modern Advent commemorations lack the dual purpose. The emphasis is on the birth of Jesus rather than the second coming. Both are appropriate because Christians are a people who not only look back, we also look forward to the time when the Messiah will reign. Advent is a season of joyful hope.

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. The Twelve Days of Christmas begin on Christmas Day, ending the day before Epiphany.

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First Sunday

November 30 Hope

Jesus teaches us to love others as much as ourselves. During the Advent days leading up to Christmas, think of ways to love others as Jesus would. Create a calendar and mark a cross each day you lovingly helped someone at home, at church, in the neighborhood. Read “Give to the least”
<https://www.susankstewart.com/give-least/>

December 1 The Peaceable Kingdom Is. 11:6

How hard is it to get along with others? It can be difficult or easy. Often, we shift the problem to the other person—*If only they would*.... Too often, we fail to recognize we may be the lion. Ponder today how you can create a more peaceable kingdom—beginning with you.

December 2 Donkeys-God's Messengers Ps 85:8

Lent is a time of reflection, to look to God for peace, joy, hope, listen for the quiet spirit, think on all God has done. We must be quiet to hear God’s messengers. Spend time throughout the day blocking out the noise, even the noise in our own heads, to hear God speak. Strive to make this a daily practice.

December 3 Go to the Donkey Lk 11:28

How is it possible to listen for comfort and direction from God when we’re running hither and yon? God always finds a way. Balaam’s donkey is an example of God demanding attention. We’ll be blessed if we quiet ourselves and listen to the donkey God sends our way.

December 4 It’s A God Thing Phil 4:19

Have you looked back and realized only God could have put the pieces together for something to happen? That’s what I call a God thing. It’s said hindsight is twenty-twenty. It’s also an opportunity to see God’s work in our lives.

December 5 Heart Desires Psalm 37:4

I am anxious to be happy with God when it involves me getting what I want, my heart’s desires. What about delight in what God wants—his commands and his instructions? I have excitement as I sing praises to God, anticipating he will put his desires in my heart.

December 6 Our Value Gen 24:35

Donkeys had such great value at one time; they were considered a sign of wealth. By outward appearance, donkeys are considered of less value than a horse. But God thinks of them as having more value. A horse is not listed with a person’s items of abundance. How much more value do you think God places on us? Not from appearance, but from the heart.

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Second Sunday December 7 **Peace** 2 Cor. 1:3

Where do you seek comfort? Job went to his friends. How did that work out? Not so well. David looked for comfort in others, in God's rules. Ultimately, he found it in God's love (Ps. 119:76). Paul tells us God is the source of all comfort. Worship the Father of all mercy today. Seek him alone for comfort.

December 8 Balaam and the Angel Ez 3:21

During Lent, we look at how we live our lives. During the past year, have we had warnings of pitfalls in our life? Did we heed those warnings? Write a list of warnings not heeded. What can be done to change the situation?

December 9 Pumpkin Moves Lk 9:62

As we examine our lives, it's easy to view the past as more comfortable than what we face in the future. God has our future in his hands. If we look to Jesus rather than ourselves, what is before us doesn't need to be so scary. Look at a past event. Was it as comfortable as memory serves? Do you need to grab Jesus's hand to face something coming?

December 10 Haltering Donkeys Ps 143:10

Donkeys may not be stubborn, but they do need guidance at times. At those times, we use a halter and rope. Our experience has been that the donks will accept the halter with no fuss. Are we the same when we need God to guide us? Or do we pull away from his halter? In what areas of your life do you need God's halter?

December 11 Georgia May's Injury Ps 34:18

The past couple of years have been painful in so many ways. I don't think a one of us is exempt. The truth is, we all suffer some type of pain many times in our lives. God is ready to comfort and heal. What pain needs to be taken to God today?

December 12 The Great Donkey Chase Pro 3:5

Chasing a donkey can be easier than chasing solutions for our problems. Family problem, business problem, financial problem—it doesn't matter. We can chase it all around with no solution. Often, we give up. That's when God, who has been watching the mad problem dash, quietly nudges us to the solution he had all the time. Are there problems we need to stop trying to fix with our own solutions? What do we need to let God handle?

December 13 Don't Be a Balaam Nu 22:28

We may not hear directly from a donkey as Balaam did. I know if one of my donkeys spoke directly to me, I certainly would listen. God speaks to us in many ways. He chooses what we need to hear in a way we can hear it. Too often though, we don't listen. What is God saying you need to listen to? Let's spend time today listening.

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Third Sunday December 14 **Joy** Col 3:13

“The effort to establish harmony & goodwill.” Conciliation is our effort to live in peace and goodwill with others. As we prepare our hearts for worship today, let’s pray to be an instrument of conciliation in our homes, churches, and communities.

December 15 Guard Donkey Deut 31:6

Isn’t it wonderful to know the real guardian of the galaxy? He is with us night and day through every tribulation and tear. We are told to guard our hearts (Pro. 4:23), and God is our guardian. What do we try to protect on our own? Ponder how you try to be your own guard donkey.

December 16 Jeb Talking to the Girls Ps 145:18

As when a donkey family is separated, when we are away from family and friends, we want to stay connected. Sometimes we feel disconnected from God. He’s there. All we need to do is call to him—he’ll hear and listen. What do we need to tell God today? He’s there waiting for the connection.

December 17 The Singing Donkey Ps 95:1-2

Georgia May’s unusual singing bray was a sound of joy. What better time to sing with delight than now, as we look forward to celebrating the resurrection of our Savior? What can we sing joyfully about today and the days leading up to Easter? Think of a favorite worship song to sing with gusto today.

December 18 Donkeys are Social I John 1:3

God found it’s not good for humans to be alone. Jesus experienced aloneness in the garden when he was praying and, most assuredly, on the cross. We weren’t meant to go it solo. What can be done when we believe ourselves to be alone, without any companionship? What was Elijah’s reaction in I Kings 19?

December 19 Now He's Alone Deut 31:8

Donkeys, like people, are social creatures. When Jeb was by himself, he became lonely, much the same way humans can be lonely. We need others like us. Who might need someone to visit, to talk to? Visit to someone who may live alone. Bring hope and joy with you.

December 20 It's A Unicorn Jn 8:12

Oh, so often we think we have a good view of life. When, in fact, we’re only looking at the dim outline. Jesus lights our way. Sometimes our way can seem dark. When we turn around to the Light, we see truth ahead of us. What appears dark today? Ask Jesus to turn the light on.

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Fourth Sunday December 21 **Love** Mt. 6:2 (NLT)

Charity, as often used in the Bible, is described as “the highest form of love.” Giving to a stranger in need is an act of love—giving without expectation of a return. Jesus exhibited the ultimate charity; he gave his life in love. Look for opportunities to love a fellow human without blowing our horn.

December 22 Samaritan's Donkey Lk 10:37

Our society has become driven by fear. We seem to be most frightened of strangers, especially someone who appears to be a street dweller. Jesus teaches us to be friends with strangers. Go the extra mile for them. Look for opportunities to show love to strangers.

December 23 Donkey Whisperer I Kings 19:12-13

People are called animal whisperers when they seem to be able to communicate with the creatures. God is a people-whisperer. He calls to us in a still, small voice. God whispers. Spend time listening for murmurs from him throughout the day.

Christmas Eve December 24 What Made Us Think? Pro 3:5-6

How often do we have a great plan, then we ask God to bless it? Do you think God chuckles when we do that? God has a plan far superior to ours. Like the seemingly stubborn donkey, we cling to our plan no matter the difficulties. Spend time talking over plans with God. What needs to be released? What better plan do you hear from him?

Christmas Day December 25 The Donkey's Cross Mt 16:24

Tradition says the cross markings on the back of a donkey come from the shadow of Christ's cross on a donkey. Our cross is the burden of sin. The shadow of the cross of Jesus covers our burden. Spend time reflecting on the burden of our cross and allow Jesus's cross to cover it.

December 26 Jeb Eats Boxes James 1:19-20

Our donkey Jeb likes cardboard, particularly the cardboard of delivery boxes. Several times a box has been set to close to the pasture fence within reach of a mischievous equine. I could be angry with Jeb, the delivery driver, or even myself. Nothing would change. God tells us to listen more, talk less, and be slow to anger. How do these three instructions go together? Ask God to show you ways this week to practice them.

December 27 Donkey Contentment Phil 4:10-11

Our donkeys rarely complain. Well, except when they think more feed is needed. How about us? Don't we seem to look for opportunities to complain? We're told to be content, which is the opposite of complaining. When things don't go well, find contentment in it rather than complain.

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Fifth Sunday December 28 **Conscience** I Cor 4:4 (NLT)

Our conscience helps us to distinguish between right and wrong. At least twice, the Bible records that David's conscience bothered him (I Sam 24:5 & 2 Sam 24:10) for disobedience. Paul tells the Corinthians his conscience is clear, but God would be the judge. As we move through these days of reflection, let's ask the Holy Spirit to reveal—judge—our conscience. Is it clear, or do we need to confess?

December 29 Jeb and the Feed Bucket I Peter 2:25

Have you ever been bored? Our donkeys will get bored and create some mischief in the Peaceable Kingdom. Have you ever been bored in your Christian life? I have. Instead of creating mischief, I quit—quit spending time with God. When this happens, God in his wisdom shakes up my life so I see joy in him again. Are you bored now? Ask God to jolt you from the ordinary to extraordinary.

December 30 A Thrasher Pro 15:4

Ever wonder why God comes to us with a small voice, a whisper. Like many animals, we respond to a gentle word. He knows how to woo us. Jesus went to Calvary quietly without even a whisper to draw us to God's throne. Let's listen to our voices this week. Are we screeching or speaking in a small voice? When we speak quietly, we hear others—we can also hear God.

December 31 Mr. Not-So-Donkey-Friendly Luke 17:23

Donkeys are cautious. They will stop if unsure about the path ahead. They'll also not respond to harsh words. Donkeys don't follow along a path because everyone else is. Unlike donkeys, we tend to take the path the crowd is following—even if it's uncomfortable. God has an easier, smoother path for us if we'll break away to follow him. What is our path this week, is it the rough way of others? Or are we traveling on God's easy road?

January 1, 2026 Delight Ps 119:35

David writes to delight in the Lord. That's easy, right? It's easy if life is smooth. When the going gets tough, delight isn't always our first choice. Our delight is in God, not in the comfort of our lives. Life has been tough recently. Despite all the negativity around us, what can we delight in now? How can we express joy during dark days?

January 2 Nestor I Sam 16:7

The story of Nestor is not well-known. Nestor is a donkey with overly long ears—a misfit. No matter his status among the other donkeys, he was chosen to be Mary's ride to Bethlehem. God uses the oddlings throughout the Bible—David, a small shepherd boy; Rahab, a prostitute; Zacchaeus, a short tax collector. How do we feel odd or out of place in the 21st century? What unique feature do you have that God can use for the benefit of all?

January 3 What's in a Name? Mal 3:6

We are known by our name. Some people don't like the name given at birth and have it changed. Our name connects us to others. Even if we change it, we don't want to change the connection. Several names are used for God. Whether it's Yahweh, Jehovah, or Christ, we know who we're talking about. Why? Because God doesn't change. People may change, but the Lord remains the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. What is the meaning of your name? Have you ever wanted to change it? Which name for God is most meaningful to you?

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Sixth Sunday January 4 **Confess** 1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins ...” our sins will be forgiven, and we’ll be cleansed. Jesus suffered and died, took our punishment, so we can be forgiven and declared clean. Our part is to confess—admit our sins. As we approach Holy Week, let’s spend time each day searching our souls for what we need to confess. Then thank Jesus for the cleansing he provided.

January 5 Another Side of the Story Luke 6:31

In this age of instant access to information, it’s too easy to see a tidbit of information and draw a conclusion. All too often, assumptions are made on partial details. We don’t know the rest of the story. Do we want to be on the receiving end of gossip or rumors? Of course not. As we scroll through social media, let’s begin the habit of prayerful consideration of what is posted. Let’s not be quick to judge without the whole story.

Epiphany January 6 Neesy Needs Love John 3:16

We all need love. And we can all share love—maybe not as enthusiastically as Neesy, though. How can we show love to others? Now is a good time to begin the habit of showing love through little actions. Soon it will be a habit. Jesus told us there’s no greater love than to die for someone else (Jn. 15:13). That’s exactly what he did for us on the cross.

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About *Donkey Devos*

Did you know the Bible mentions only two talking animals? Each of these creatures had a different message. The first to speak out was the serpent. This character certainly wasn't a model. If God was using this snake for a test drive, I can see why he kept the mouths of the other animals closed. This snake in the grass spoke words meant for evil. About two millennia later, another animal spoke—the lowly donkey. The beast of burden. This time, the animal had words of wisdom.

Susan K. Stewart expected dogs, cats, and the occasional goldfish would be all the pets she'd need. Until the day she met donkeys at a rescue center. A few years after that fateful visit, three donkeys became part of the Stewart family. Susan soon learned these humble creatures are still messengers of wisdom.

Recent Amazon reviews include:

“This endearing devotional collection contains enlightening and entertaining personal stories of interaction with these amazing animals and the spiritual lessons the author has learned from donkeys.”

“This was quite a unique devotional centered on the one animal you may never think much on; the donkey. The author has quite the knowledge on these gentle animals as the devotionals are based on her interactions of her own donkeys.”

“After reading these delightful devotions, I was ready to adopt a donkey and learn valuable lessons about God's ways of revealing His love.”

[Purchase *Donkey Devos: Listen When God Speaks*](#) (print or e-book)

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