



# FAMILY STUDY

A Candy Cane Christmas

EPISODE  
**6C**  
NIV

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## "A Candy Cane Christmas"

### How Can Candy Remind us of Jesus?

It's Christmas, and everywhere you look, whether people realize it or not, there are reminders of Jesus. Nativity scenes, crosses, stars, and Christmas carols remind us of what Christmas is about. But what about the candy we eat? There is a legend about a particular kind of Christmas candy which gives us multiple reminders of Jesus. It's the legend of the candy cane, and it tells of how the color, consistency and shape of the candy all point to Jesus. While it is not clear where this legend began or whether it is factual, the story nonetheless shows us how even a piece of candy can remind us of Jesus. That story, along with some Scripture references, is the basis of this Family Study. We encourage you to use this sheet for your family devotions this week and consider how many ways we are reminded of Christ this Christmas!

### Ancient Beginnings

The symbol of the shepherds' crook is an ancient one, representing the humble shepherds who were the first to worship the newborn Christ. Its counterpart is our candy cane - so old as a symbol that we have nearly forgotten its humble origin. Anyone who's even been near a child knows the impossibility of keeping one of them still and quiet for any reasonable length of time. And it's even worse in church, especially if it's a long service. This was the concern of the Choirmaster of Cologne back in 1670. His solution was probably the same as any harried child-care provider: Give 'em candy. But not just any candy would do. He wanted the candy to remind the children of Jesus. Hard candy was freely available. Legend has it that the choirmaster handed out sugar sticks among his young singers to keep them quiet during the long Living Nativity ceremony. In honor of the occasion, he had the candies bent into shepherds' crooks. It became a mini-shepherds crook, instantly transforming a bad distraction into a heavenly one. They were pure white then.

### Jesus is the Good Shepherd

A candy cane is shaped like a shepherd's crook to remind us that Jesus is our Good Shepherd. A flock of sheep rely totally on their shepherd for survival. Without a good shepherd, a flock of sheep can be destroyed. Back in Bible times, a shepherd was responsible for making sure all of his sheep were well fed and watered. He also had to be wary of predators who would like to feast on his sheep. Often bandits would try to steal sheep. The shepherd was responsible for keeping predators and bandits at bay. In fact, a good shepherd was willing to put his own life in danger to protect his sheep.

Christ is called the Good Shepherd. He provides everything we need. Without him, we could not survive. He also protects us and guides us where we need to go. He also laid down his life for us, His sheep, who had wandered away from Him. He gave up His life so that we might live.

Psalms 23

John 10:11, 14-15

1 Peter 2:25

### White: A Symbol of Purity

It was not until the 1920s that the candy cane's more recognizable red and white stripes and peppermint flavors were added. A candy maker wanted to make a candy that would be a witness, so he created the Christmas candy

cane. He incorporated several symbols for the birth, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ. He began with a stick of pure white hard candy. White symbolizes the virgin birth and the sinless nature of Jesus. Back in Bible times, a person was supposed to present a lamb for sacrifice when he had sinned. This lamb had to be a very special lamb. It had to be spotless, and perfectly white. It could not be sick or crippled. It had to be perfect for it to be acceptable for sacrifice.

Leviticus 5:17-19

Exodus 12:5

### Mint: The Flavor of Sacrifice

The flavor of the cane is peppermint, which is similar to hyssop. Hyssop is in the mint family and was used in the Old Testament for purification and sacrifice. Jesus is the pure Lamb of God. He came to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus is called the spotless lamb of God without blemish or defect. This means that Christ was perfect, without sin. Only perfection was acceptable for the sacrifice of sins. Jesus was the only one who met that standard. Only He could take away our sins.

2 Corinthians 5:21

1 Peter 2:22

1 John 3:5

Hebrews 4:15-16

Revelation 5:12

### Christ the Solid Rock

The hard candy symbolizes the solid rock - the foundation of the church and firmness of God's promises. A rock is solid, heavy, and unmovable without heavy equipment. Christ is our solid rock. He provides us with an unshakable foundation on which to stand.

Psalms 18:21

Corinthians 10:4

### "J" for Jesus

The candy maker made the candy in the form of the staff with which the Good Shepherd reaches down to the pits of the world to lift out the fallen lambs that, like all sheep, have gone astray. It also represents the letter "J" to represent the name of Jesus.

Isaiah 9:6-7

Matthew 1:21

Luke 1:31-33

### Stripes of Red

Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candy maker stained it with red stripes. The large red stripe was for the blood shed by Christ on the cross. The candy maker used three thinner red stripes for the stripes He received on our behalf when the Roman soldiers whipped Him. It was because of us and our sins that Jesus died.

Isaiah 53

Romans 6:23

Ephesians 1:7

Hebrews 9:22

### Lest We Forget....

This nameless candy maker began making candy canes as special Christmas treats for his children, friends and local shopkeepers. Since that time, however, the candy has become known as the candy cane. The story of its creation has been lost to tradition and mass production, and it is now available in many different colors, shapes, and sizes. But we don't have to forget!

We encourage you as a family to share with others the meaning of the candy cane. Use it as a witnessing tool to spread the good news of Christmas. May your Christmas be filled with joy, peace, and love as you celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.