



Jesus Is the Sweetest Gift

Getting Started

*You'll need a traditional candy cane to show the children during "Getting to the Heart."
Bookmark Romans 5:19 in your Bible.*

Introduction

What's the most exciting part of Christmas for you?

Some people enjoy finding the Christmas tree, bringing it home, and decorating it. Some people enjoy baking—and especially eating—all those Christmas goodies! Some people look forward to all the beautiful music and the wonderful worship services in church!

Probably all of us, though, look forward to giving and receiving gifts with those we love. It's exciting to think about how Mom or Dad will be surprised by what we've made or purchased and wrapped up, just for them. It's fun to think about what might be in all those mysterious packages with our name on them already under the Christmas tree!

Getting to the Heart

Once upon a time, a candy maker thought about the goodies he sold at Christmastime. He liked to think about how the children who received all those goodies would enjoy them. But still, he wasn't happy. He wanted to give the children in his village a gift that was much, much, MUCH more precious! He wanted them—each and every one of them—to know Jesus and his love.

But how could a candy maker share the true meaning of Christmas?

As he thought about this, he suddenly had an idea! And here it is! (*Hold up a candy cane.*)

The white candy would remind the children of Jesus' purity, his holiness. Jesus never sinned. He never disobeyed his mommy or daddy. He never hated or hurt anyone. He never forgot to say his prayers or wanted to play instead of worshipping in God's house. Jesus was holy. Jesus was the perfect child we cannot be. We, though, are not perfect, are we? But here's the Good News: Jesus was perfect *for us*! God looks at Jesus' goodness and says it belongs to *us*!

Suppose your mom or your dad would say, "No playtime until you clean your room." When you come home from school, all you can think about is how long it's going to take to clean up that room. All the toys to put away. All the ruffled sheets to straighten or wash. All the

dust under the bed. You slump off to your room discouraged, but when you open the door, everything is perfect! Your brother or your sister cleaned it for you! WOW! Jesus lived a perfect life for us. WOW! (*Read Romans 5:19.*)

The white candy reminds us that Jesus obeyed God for us. The red stripes remind us of Jesus' death. Jesus died on the cross for us. He let himself be punished—not for his own sins, but for ours! He died for us because he loves us! Wow—that's a *lot* of love!

The cane shape, which is the same shape as a shepherd's staff, would remind the children that Jesus is our Good Shepherd. Shepherds live with their sheep every minute. They protect their sheep from all harm and danger. Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He died on the cross, but he didn't stay dead. He came alive on Easter morning and now he lives forever. He walks beside us day by day, caring for us and helping us in times of sadness and pain. He helps us avoid temptations to sin. He gives us food to eat and puts joy and peace into our hearts. I'm so glad Jesus is my Shepherd!

If you turn the candy cane this way, it makes a letter. What letter is this? Yes, it's a *J*. That is the first letter of Jesus' name. I'd like to teach you a song about that, a song that tells more about who Jesus is and why he came (*tune: "B-I-N-G-O"*):

God gave a Savior for the world
And Jesus was his name, O
J-E-S-U-S, J-E-S-U-S, J-E-S-U-S,
And Jesus was his name, YES!

Taking It Home

We give gifts to one another at Christmas. I hope you give and receive some wonderful gifts this year. But I also hope you remember that God gave us the very best Gift of all, a Savior to take away our sins and give us a brand-new life, an eternal, forever life with him. It's the best Christmas gift we will ever get. The Bible says, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Remember that gift every time you look at the (*mention the Jesus Is the Sweetest Gift item you're distributing to the children*) you are receiving today. Jesus is God's Gift to **you** and to **you** and to **you** and to **you** and to **all of you**. (*Point to each child and everyone in the congregation.*)

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for all the fun we have at Christmas. Thank you for all the beautiful music and the great gifts. Thank you most of all for Baby Jesus, our Savior and our Good Shepherd. Amen.

Faith Talk @ Home

Today we talked about how candy canes can remind us of the best Gift of all, Jesus our Savior! You can extend the lesson by teaching the following song to your children. The song's repetition makes it easy to sing! You may want to use stiff cardstock and markers to make a large candy cane. Use this visual as you sing. For example, point to the colors mentioned in the song; turn the cane to show the "J" for Jesus and then the "shepherd's staff":

(Sing to the melody for "London Bridge is Falling Down.")

See my little candy cane, candy cane, candy cane?

See my little candy cane? Learn its meaning.

White is for Christ's purity, purity, purity.

White is for Christ's purity. He is sinless!

Red is for the blood Christ shed, blood he shed, blood he shed.

Red is for the blood Christ shed. On his cross.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd, Good Shepherd, Good Shepherd.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. How he loves us!

God sent us his sweetest Gift, sweetest Gift, sweetest Gift.

God sent us his sweetest Gift. He sent Jesus!

#CCJ18DC



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Red is for the blood Christ shed. On his cross.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd, Good Shepherd, Good Shepherd.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. How he loves us!

God sent us his sweetest Gift, sweetest Gift, sweetest Gift.

God sent us his sweetest Gift. He sent Jesus!

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