

Finding the Meaning

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1

**Lesson 3****Focus:**

The message of Jesus is for everyone.

Lesson 3**Bible Basis:**

Luke 2:1-20, Acts 13:22-23, Romans 8:3-5, Ephesians 2:6-8

Lesson 3**Memory Verse:**

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. —Luke 2:11

Students will compare different ideas and messages about the meaning of Christmas and demonstrate an applicable way to share the message of Jesus with others.

Materials:

- Internet access
- Whiteboard or screen-shared document for online meetings (optional)

With COVID-19 still active in our lives, many holiday gatherings and traditions have been cancelled or changed this year. How would you feel if a decision was made to skip Christmas altogether this year? What if throughout the world, Christmas would be cancelled? No decorations, no Christmas trees, no Christmas carols, no gifts under the tree. None of the excitement that this time of the year typically brings. How would you feel about that? What exactly would you miss most? Give your students a few minutes to freely verbalize what they would miss most about the holiday; there are no right or wrong answers here.

The importance of Christmas is communicated in a lot of different ways. Let's take a look at two different videos and identify the messages that they communicate about Christmas. As you watch, think about any ideas and messages about Christmas that you hear and see from the video.

Share video #1 [3:27]:

Michael Bublé - It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJ5DOWPGxwg>

➤ **What ideas or messages about Christmas did you see and hear as you watched the video?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Students may have a lot of responses—you can list them on the white board or screen shared document as ideas are shared.)

This second video also communicates messages about Christmas. Think about any ideas or messages that this video shows.

Share video #2 [1:51]:

Title: Linus explains the true meaning of Christmas

URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BeVDOu2_Fuc

➤ **What messages about Christmas did you hear on this video?** (Accept all reasonable answers. You can write responses on the white board or screen shared document.)

Even though both of these videos are about Christmas, they obviously have very different messages. Though we don't know the exact date of Jesus' birth, at this time of year throughout the world, believers and non-believers alike, pause to celebrate the birth of our Savior. At no other time is the world more open to hearing about Jesus.

We know that the story of Jesus coming to earth as a baby is the reason most celebrate Christmas in the first place; it should always be our primary focus as we walk through the Christmas season and every other season.

➤ **Are the messages from the first video bad?** (Allow students to respond. Some may say that the focus of Christmas shouldn't be on the "stuff" like decorations, gifts, and Santa. Others may share that the traditions of Christmas add to the spirit of the holiday and help us focus our minds on Jesus. Accept all reasonable answers.)

Think about the children around the world who don't have Christmas trees, lights, or gifts. That first video about Christmas wouldn't have much meaning for them, would it? But the message of the second video means everything to everybody! The Christmas season is filled with countless messages that communicate various ideas about Christmas. Some of those messages do a great job of pointing people to focus on Jesus, while others focus on us. In today's lesson, we'll take the story of Jesus' birth and go beyond the facts of the story to see how the tidings of great joy are important for everyone to hear.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Finding the Meaning

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 3**Focus:**

The message of Jesus is for everyone.

Lesson 3**Bible Basis:**

Luke 2:1-20, Acts 13:22-23, Romans 8:3-5, Ephesians 2:6-8

Lesson 3**Memory Verse:**

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. —Luke 2:11

Materials:

- 1 candy cane for demonstration
- Candy canes (optional; 1 per student)

Today, we took the familiar facts about the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 2, and we connected them to what Paul wrote about: *why* we need a Savior. Paul taught us that the good news of Jesus and the promise of eternal life is for everyone. Sure, we can have fun with the traditions and the excitement of Christmas; you can look forward to the decorations, the music, and the gifts. But our ultimate focus and our reason for celebrating during this time of year, and year 'round, is because of the gift of Jesus.

- **Because the gift of Jesus is for everyone, we are to share that gift with others. What are some ways that you can tell someone about Jesus?** (Take them to church/Sunday school, share the story of Jesus' birth, share how Jesus changes your life.)

Hold up one wrapped candy cane. Candy canes are a popular part of Christmas; you see them hanging on trees, used as decorations, or being enjoyed as a special snack! A candy cane can also be used to share the message of Jesus! A story is told that the candy cane was made by a candy maker in Germany over 250 years ago. During that time, Christianity was not allowed in certain parts of the world, and Christians weren't allowed to share the gospel openly. The candy maker asked God to help him find a way to share the meaning of Christmas with others; God answered his prayer through the inspiration of the candy cane, and it became a simple tool to share the good news of the gospel.

Look at the candy cane, and let's talk through the different ways it can point us to the message of Jesus.

- **What is the shape of the candy cane?** (A long stick with a curved end.) **What does it look like?** (A hook, a shepherd's staff.)

The candy cane's shape can remind us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Just like a shepherd uses his staff to take care of his sheep and to protect them from harm, Jesus is our shepherd; He keeps us from wandering away, from getting lost or hurt.

➤ **If I turn the candy cane upside down, what do you see? (The letter J.) What message could you share with an upside-down candy cane? (The J stands for Jesus; Jesus came to earth as a baby so He could die for our sins.) Jesus means Savior, and He became that for us.**

The colors on a candy cane can help in sharing the Good News too. White is a symbol of purity and reminds us that by dying on the cross for our sins, our sins could be washed away, and we would become white as snow. The red stripes on the candy cane remind us of the blood that Jesus shed on the cross for our sins; by suffering on the cross, Jesus took our sins upon Himself.

If you decided to provide candy canes for the class, you can give one to each student.

In a very simple way, a candy cane can point someone to the gift of Jesus that the world was given. As you celebrate with your family and friends, I encourage you to pray that God would provide an opportunity for you to share the gospel with someone who doesn't yet know Jesus. Share with them the candy cane gospel, allowing them to see who Jesus is and what He did for them.

Christmas is a time of excitement, joy, celebration, and wonder. It's okay for you to look forward to Christmas morning and the gifts that you will open and enjoy. It's okay to have fun with family and friends, to enjoy yummy food, to decorate with lights and ornaments.

Though we don't know the exact date of His birth, we can celebrate the joy of His coming. Finding a reason to celebrate is simple—a baby was sent by God and born in a stable; he would grow up and ultimately die on the cross for our sins. The best gift that we can receive is the gift of eternal life, and the best gift we can give is the good news of Jesus, given to those who are eager to hear tidings of great joy.

Close in prayer.

Additional resources:

The Candy Cane

<https://www.sermons4kids.com/candycane.html>

Teach About Jesus with the Legend of the Candy Cane

<https://www.thebettermom.com/blog/2013/12/13/teach-about-jesus-with-the-legend-of-the-candy-cane>

(At the time of writing, we carefully review the referenced material and non-referenced web page content. However, due to the nature of the Internet, non-cited content on the website [including pop-ups, links, and ads] changes frequently and is beyond our control. Please review carefully before showing links in the classroom.)