

# Finding the Meaning

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## Upper Elementary

- Lesson 3
- Winter 2023-24
- By: RLD Editorial Team
- December 17, 2023

### Lesson Focus:

The message of Jesus is for everyone.

### Bible Basis:

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

### Materials Needed:

#### Step 1:

- Internet access
- Optional: Whiteboard (or screen-shared)

#### Step 4:

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

### Summary & Links:

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

### Memory Verse:

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

#### Step 1:

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

**Imagine a decision was made to cancel Christmas altogether this year. No decorations, no Christmas trees, no Christmas carols, no gifts under the tree, and 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; stop at 2:12]:

Michael Bublé – It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas (Official Music Video)

**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 [1:59]:

Charlie Brown Christmas – TRUE MEANING

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

**Even though both of these videos are about Christmas, they obviously have very different messages. We know that the story of Jesus coming to earth as a baby is the reason we get to celebrate Christmas in the first place; it should always be our primary focus as we walk through the Christmas 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 the true reason for celebrating Christmas, 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 true message of Christmas is important for everyone to hear.

#### Step 4:

Today, we took the familiar facts about the Christmas story from Luke 2, and we connected them to what Paul wrote about: *why* we need a Savior. Paul taught us that the message of Christmas 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 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 you asked Jesus into your heart.)*

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! It is said 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 were washed away, and we became 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 real message of Christmas and the gift of Jesus that the world was given. As you celebrate Christmas 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 or the real meaning of Christmas. 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. However, we have the blessing of knowing that Christmas is so much more. Finding the meaning of Christmas 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 true message of Christmas, given to those who are eager to find the meaning of Christmas.**

Close in prayer.