

PEACE

LOVE

...and

CANDY CANES

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Christmas With  
A Sweet Twist!



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## PEACE

"I have said these things to you,  
that in Me you may have peace."

John 16:33



## LOVE

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"For God so loved the world  
that He gave His only Son,  
that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but  
have everlasting life."

John 3:16



## CANDY CANES

"How sweet  
are your words  
to my taste,  
sweeter than honey  
to my mouth!"

Psalms 119:103



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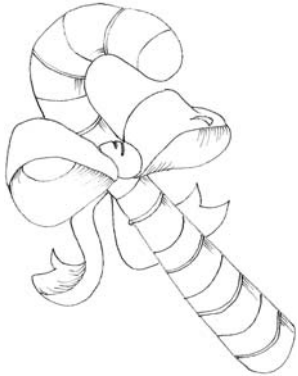
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## PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES

### Christmas With A Sweet Twist For The Littlest Among Us

**PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES** is an easy-to-prepare Christmas program designed exclusively for children aged 3-5. Include older students as desired. Feature costumed little ones in an appealing display of the story of Jesus' birth as told by **Elizabeth**, Mary's cousin who had a first row seat to the birth of Jesus. Add a **sweet story teller** at the end of the program to wrap up the story *...with candy canes!*

**PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES** is rehearsed with familiar teachers. Gather children for a final dress rehearsal and this delightful Christmas program is set to go!

**PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES** is a 20 minute presentation sprinkled with humor and inspiration. Is there anything sweeter than preschool children in Bethlehem costume? Is there a better way to tell the story of Jesus than asking grown ups to enter the fun? Children bring the Nativity scene to life and hear the Jesus story from loving Elizabeth.

**PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES** involves the audience singing Christmas Carols. Teaching simple songs to the little actors rounds out the event which becomes a charming Christmas presentation accomplished by the youngest among us!

**PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES** concludes with a sweet **CANDY CANE CHRISTMAS PARTY!** Serve snacks, play Christmas music and celebrate Jesus!



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## Preschool Christmas Director

*Church preschool, Day Care Center, Christian preschool  
or Home School leaders, this is the fun, easy program for you.*

It is necessary to have enough children to participate in the program. A little 'cheating' on the upper age range is okay. Fill spots with Kindergarten students if you need them!

*Lead your children into a sweet celebration of the Bethlehem story. Create well organized leadership teams. Ask small group leaders or parents to organize children with Nativity props and costumes. Be prepared to help the leaders. For the most part they should be able to handle their material. The result will be a precious telling of the Bethlehem story by the youngest among us.*

### Prepare Your Heart!

**Mistakes Become Memories.** Relax and let it happen! Parents, grandparents and guests will be blessed. Dust off that sense of humor and use it.

*Are you thinking, "Why me? I cannot do this!" Put those feelings aside and dive into this charming Christmas drama as seen through the eyes of a sweet story teller. Eager preschool children embrace the amazing story about the day Baby Jesus was born.*

**Young students take to the stage in full costume to re-create the Bethlehem Nativity scene.** They sing simple songs inserted as desired. Elizabeth. The Story Teller, helps them respond at appropriate moments.

### Delegate!

**Trust the staff to carry out their tasks.** Never apologize when asking people to help.



## Positively Positive!

This event is worth extra effort in the midst of personal holiday preparations, party going and travel. Statements like, "We can't do it", "We never did it this way", or "No one wants to do it", have no place in the process. Simple planning is appreciated. If the Director's attitude is right, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully!

## Pray!

Pray for the staff, students and set-up. Take details before the Lord and then-Relax! God is in control. Carry out tasks at hand.

## Plan!

**Read the entire program.** Make a personal copy from the master copy and mark areas requiring special attention.

*Create your own event!* Adapt material to fit the size of your preschool. Eliminate what cannot be used, divide parts according to available participants. Combine parts when necessary.

**Add preschool songs.** Include special music and/or Christmas Carols that the audience sings! We give preschool lyric suggestions. You make the final decisions.

## Prepare!

**Order *Peace, Love and Candy Canes* with at least one month lead time.** Copy materials for individual leaders. Assign specific responsibilities to each teacher/leader.

*This program is read aloud by the story teller. No memorization is needed. If you desire memorization, lead time must be longer and more intensive rehearsal is essential.*



# PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES

## At A Glance

This is a program sample. Insert favorite Christmas Carols sung by the audience and Special Music performed by guests where it is appropriate. Consider the total time when planning music options.

### Prelude

Elizabeth Welcomes Guests  
Preschoolers Entrance

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PEACE  
LOVE  
CANDY CANES

Christmas With A Sweet Twist



### Conclusion

Candy Cane Christmas Party





## Adapt!

**Preview the entire program.** Adapt it to fit the needs of your preschool. The program is designed to last about 20 minutes depending upon added music. The CANDY CANE CHRISTMAS PARTY is not included in this time frame and is an optional event.

### Small Church/School

**Remove segments that require more people than available.** Combine parts so fewer people are needed. Eliminate what you cannot do. Use children who are younger or older than the target group. Adults and teens are crucial to the small church/school presentation. Some people may participate several times in various roles.

### Medium Church/School

**Adaptations take the form of personal preference.** Choose presentations you personally like and eliminate the rest. Tell the Christmas story but don't leave out anything important!

### Large Church/School

**Use as many people as possible.** Organize speakers, snack makers, servers, prop master, sound and lighting staff, musicians and others who make the program exciting.

### Candy Cane Christmas Party

**Adult Sunday School class, women's group or loving parents take party responsibility.** Decorate, prepare food and arrange clean up. The *Candy Cane Christmas Party* is a wonderful conclusion where little ones show off their costumes. It is definitely a fun option. If time does not allow for a party, the program is complete without it.



## Christmas Music

*Choose familiar Christmas Carols to be sung by the audience. Include words in a printed program or use power point. Coordinate music with church or school musicians.*



### Christmas Carols

Audience sings traditional Christmas Carols. This adds Christmas festivity to the gathering for the grown ups. Choose Carols you like and place them wherever you prefer in the program.

### Preschool Music

**We have included lyric suggestions.** Words only! Choose several short songs. We found a collection of nursery rhyme melodies with Christmas-words. There are many more songs than needed but we include them all for your enjoyment and a large selection for many group sizes.

**Sorry—No piano sheet music or CD available from our end!**

**Teach children the words.** Place songs of your choice anywhere you desire in the program. No piano accompaniment is required. Eliminate preschool songs if time is an issue.

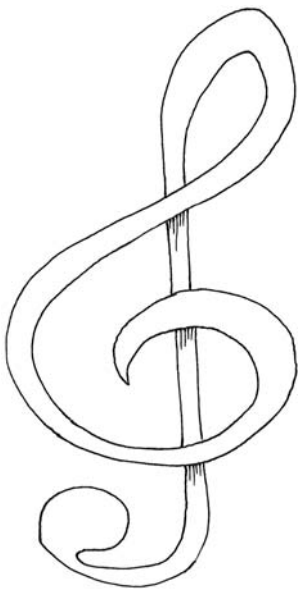
### Special Music

**Feature local church and community talent.** These musical options are NOT in the existing program but may be inserted as desired. Think about time limitations during planning stages.

Vocal Solo  
Vocal Group (Duet-Trio-Quartet)  
Youth/Adult Choir

Instrumental Ensemble  
Handbell/chime Choir  
Instrumental Solo





## Preschool Christmas Songs

Consider teaching your little ones Christmas words to familiar melodies. No piano is needed. Let them sing a capella in all their 'little voice' glory. We provide these words but we do not provide piano sheet music or CD accompaniment.

When choosing extra material for the program, consider how much time preschool children can sit still and focus. Shorter is better. You know your group best.

### Three Wise Men (Tune: Three Blind Mice)

Three wise men, three wise men,  
Traveling far, See a bright star.  
They found the Savior in Bethlehem,  
They fell on their knees  
and they worshiped Him,  
Never before has there ever been  
A Baby like Him, A Baby like Him.



### Take Me Out To the Stable (Tune: Take Me Out To the Ball Game)

Take me out to the stable, out to where Christ was born.  
Show me the manger He used for His bed.  
Show me the sweet dove who cooed by His head.  
And let's look way up at the heavens, look for the star where He lay.  
For it's --why--we--have Christmas morning,  
It's Jesus' Birth-day!

### J-E-S-U-S (Tune: B-I-N-G-O)

The Lord above us gave His Son 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-o.



**The Baby In The Manger**

*(Tune: The Wheels On The Bus)*

The cow in the manger went moo-moo-moo  
Moo-moo-moo! Moo-moo-moo!  
The cow in the manger went moo-moo-moo  
All through the night.

The hay on the ground went crunch-crunch-crunch...(repeat)  
All through the night.

The Baby in the manger went waa-waa-waa...(repeat)  
All through the night.

His mother Mary went ssh-ssh-ssh...(repeat)  
All through the night.

**Happy Birthday Jesus**

*(Tune: Happy Birthday)*

On the first Christmas Day  
From the Father above,  
Came the little Lord Jesus,  
To show His great love.

Happy birthday to you,  
Happy birthday to you,  
I love you dear Jesus,  
Happy birthday to you.



**Mary Had A Little Lamb**

*(Tune: Mary Had A Little Lamb)*

*choose as many verses as desired*

Mary had a little Lamb, little Lamb, little Lamb.  
Mary had a little Lamb, born in Bethlehem.

Jesus was her little Lamb, little Lamb, little Lamb.  
Jesus was her little Lamb, wrapped in swaddling clothes.



He was in a manger bed, manger bed, manger bed.  
He was in a manger bed, sleeping in the hay.

Shepherds came to see the Lamb, see the Lamb, see the Lamb.  
Shepherds came to see the Lamb, Angels sent them there.

The wise men brought him three nice gifts,  
three nice gifts, three nice gifts.  
The wise men brought him three nice gifts, placed before the Lamb.

Mary had a little Lamb, little Lamb, little Lamb.  
Mary had a little Lamb, Savior of the earth.

**Mary Had A Baby**

*(Tune: The More We Get Together)*



Mary had a baby, a baby, a baby.  
Mary had a baby, one glorious night.

She named the baby Jesus, dear Jesus, dear Jesus,  
She named the baby Jesus,  
'Cause God told her too.

The shepherds came to worship, to worship, to worship.  
The shepherds came to worship  
The newborn King.

The star above was shining, was shining, was shining.  
The star above was shining  
On Jesus sweet face.

Joseph gave him baby hugs, baby hugs, baby hugs.  
Joseph gave him baby hugs  
And Jesus was glad.



**MARY AND JOSEPH WENT TO BETHLEHEM**

*(Tune: Ten Little Indians)*

Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem (3x)  
Riding on a donkey. (Act like bouncing on donkey)

So they rested in the stable (3x)  
The could go no further. (Fold hand like sleeping)

Baby Jesus was born to Mary (3x)  
She laid him in a manger. (Rock a baby)

The shepherds and wise men came to Jesus (3x)  
to bring the baby gifts. (Hold out hands to give gift.)

Now we celebrate Jesus' birthday (3x)  
On each Christmas Day! (Hold arms up to rejoice.)

**TWINKLE CHRISTMAS STAR**

*(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)*

Twinkle, Twinkle Christmas Star  
How I wonder what you are.  
Shining high up in the sky  
Show the wise men where Christ lies.  
Twinkle, Twinkle Christmas Star.  
How I wonder what you are.



**'TIS CHRISTMAS**

*(Tune: Away In A Manger)*

'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The Christmas bells ring.  
The birthday of Jesus, Our Savior and King.  
'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The candles all glow;  
The birthday of Jesus, Let everyone know.  
'Tis Christmas! 'Tis Christmas! The Christmas star shines.  
The birthday of Jesus, A glad, happy time!  
'Tis Christmas, 'Tis Christmas! Our Bible recalls,  
The birthday of Jesus, God's love gift to all.







### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO JESUS

*(Tune: Happy Birthday To You)*

On the first Christmas Day, From the Father above,  
Came the little Lord Jesus, To show us God's love.

Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you.  
I love you, dear Jesus. Happy Birthday to you.

### JESUS CAME

*(Tune: Deep And Wide)*

Jesus came, Jesus came, Had a manger for His tiny bed.  
Jesus came, Jesus came, Had a manger for His tiny bed.

Angels sang, Angels sang, Told the shepherds Baby Jesus came.  
Angels sang, Angels sang, Told the shepherds Baby Jesus came.

Star above, Star above, Told the wise men Baby Jesus came.  
Star above, Star above, Told the wise men Baby Jesus came.

Jesus grew, Jesus grew, As a Man He made the sick ones well.  
Jesus grew, Jesus grew, As a Man He made the sick ones well.

Jesus gave, Jesus gave, Gave Himself to take away our sin.  
Jesus gave, Jesus gave, Gave Himself to take away our sin.  
Went away, Went away, Went away to make a home for me.  
Went away, Went away, Went away to make a home for me.

He will come, He will come, He will come and meet us in the air.  
He will come, He will come, He will come and meet us in the air.

### CHRISTMAS! CHRISTMAS!

*(Tune: Praise Him, Praise Him All Ye Little Children)*

Christmas, Christmas, now it's time for Christmas.  
Jesus came, Jesus came.

Christmas, Christmas; Now it's time for Christmas.  
Jesus came, Jesus came!

ADD STANZAS: Angels Sang, I'm so glad, Praise His Name.



**WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM**

*(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)*

Twinkle, twinkle, little star  
(hold diamond shaped hands above head)  
Wise Men followed from afar.

(Shield eyes with hand)

They found the boy of whom we sing  
(hold out hand to show height on little boy)

And gave Him gifts fit for a king  
(arms, as if giving a gift)

They fell right down and gave a nod  
(kneel and bow head)

Jesus was the gift from God.  
(Clasp hands as if in prayer)



*There are several traditional Christmas songs  
preschool children can learn easily.*

*Consider "Away In A Manger" and  
"We Wish You A Merry Christmas".*

*Audience may sing "Shine, Jesus, Shine".*

*(Sheet music not included in this program.)*



## Stage And Props

*PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES is a preschool presentation of the Bethlehem story using a minimum of props and staging.*



### Set Up

The church/school will be decorated for Christmas. Christmas trees, Nativity scenes, twinkle lights, poinsettias, candles and other displays add to the festive atmosphere. Leave holiday decorations in place.

### Staging

**Nativity Props:** Place an empty manger on stage. One small bench or chair for Mary is placed near the manger. Add stable items as available. Add a few large baskets, blankets, floor pillows, stuffed or cardboard animals, pottery and greenery at the edges of the staged scene. Keep it simple.



**The Story Teller's Chair and Script:** Place a chair covered with quilt/blankets that give a Holy Land flare beside the stable scene, center stage. Elizabeth, the Story Teller reads from the script placed inside a large scroll made to resemble a tattered old journal.

**The Story:** Read the scripted story aloud. Follow instructions in the story to include children and audience participation.

**Seating:** Costumed children stand in the back and follow 'Elizabeth's' instructions to come and sit on stage until they leave the room. Preschool seating is not needed in the audience. Assign several teen or adult assistants dressed in Holy Land costume to sit on the floor with children on stage.



## Sound System

Use the existing sound system to its' best advantage. Place a microphone near the Story Teller or attach a wireless microphone. Any teacher/leader who speaks should have a microphone available. This detail makes the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program.

*Place a microphone near students so they can be heard while they sing. Special music participants should have microphones available.*

## Stage Lighting

Turn off normal lighting and overhead lights. Light Christmas trees, candles and other mood lighting. Place small spot lights on the floor of the stable area if desired.



*Notes:*

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## Costumes



Prepare simple costuming. Students become specific Bethlehem people. Follow our suggestions for Holy Land costuming or create your own costumes for each little one. Choose their costume according to the person you choose for them to portray.

*When costuming a large group, one solution is to ask each participant to prepare their attire. Parents of young students may be willing to supply the necessary clothing.*



## Costume Pattern Suggestions

**Pillow Cases:** For small children, cut a neck hole in the pillowcase. Cut up the front to the neck hole. Cut arm holes in the sides. This makes a long, vest type costume. Sometimes plaid or striped flannel pillowcases are available and work great for shepherds and wise men.

**Fabric:** Two wide strips of fabric (one over each shoulder) crossed across the back and front of the person, tied with a sash makes a great costume.

**Head Wraps:** A square of fabric over the head with a wide ribbon or piece of cloth around the top of the head makes a headpiece. Fasten the head piece fabric tightly.

**Bathrobes:** Purchase bathrobes at garage sales/resale shops. Use contrasting fabric for headdresses and sashes to complete the costume.



**Angels:** Dress angels in white cotton or silver lame' found in most fabric stores. Angels may wear cardboard wings or remain wingless. Place gold or silver tinsel garland taped in a circle on each angel head. Tie tinsel around the waist for a sparkling angel belt. Angels may wear face/hair glitter for that "extra sparkle"!

**Stars:** Dress 'stars' using a posterboard, glittered star draped over their neck. They can dress simply in black or white slacks, tights and simple tops. The 'stars' may wear star garlands in their hair and have a bit of glitter brushed here and there.



*Option: Very funny to have each 'star' wear sunglasses because of their bright light!*

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## After The Show

Ask young participants to remain in costume at THE CANDY CANE CHRISTMAS PARTY. This is the time to congratulate them for a job well done and reward them with hugs and small gifts as desired.

*Notes:*





## Publicity



*Publicize PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES through all normal church/school communication channels. Announce it in your newsletter, the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.*

## Bulletin And Newsletter

**Print an announcement in November and December newsletters.** If planning *THE CANDY CANE CHRISTMAS PARTY*, let church, school and families know there will be a celebration following the program.

## Local Newspaper and Social Media

**Contact the local news source.** Include an announcement along with other holiday programming publicity. Talk to a reporter and photographer to see if a feature article is possible. Print several quick announcements on the church/school website and Face Book pages.

## Television And Radio

**Popular Media.** Consider advertising on your local television cable advertising channel. Radio stations often have free spots available as community service.

## Christmas Card Invitations

**Send family invitations home with students.** This is effective for families are not involved. Use real Christmas cards with invitations tucked inside.

*Daycare/Preschool children make paper Christmas cards as a project and tuck each invitation inside to be placed in their backpack.*



## Teachers!

Pray! Prepare! Present!

*When you play with puppies, expect puppy tricks!*



### Involve Students

**Preschool children do not have individual speaking parts.** They sing together. Use every child available. Dress each one in Holy Land costume and add appropriate props for their character.

### Highlight Individual Parts

**All speaking is done by the story teller.** Written material is prepared in an easily readable format. Preschool children do not need materials in their hands. Their responses are short and coached during rehearsal.

### Practice

Take charge of preschool costumes, practice music and prepare them for the big event. Make changes as needed.

### Communicate With Parents

**Let parents know when to have children at rehearsals and the performance.** Invite them to attend. Be sure they know what props or costuming their child is responsible to bring. Collect items. Store them in the classroom.



## Smile and Help!

**The Christmas Director values your leadership!** Dress in appropriate costume, line up according to specific instructions and enter the performance area as directed. Lead your small group on and off stage. Perform your part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly if they need help.

Write your thoughts here.

*Stage fright is not uncommon. Preschool children are notorious for doing the unexpected. Keep that sense of humor! The audience will love whatever happens.*

## After The Program

**Stay for THE CANDY CANE CHRISTMAS PARTY.** Collect props before your children attend the party. Consider asking children to remain in costume. Mingle with party goers and enjoy the experience with your children and their families.

## If You Need Help

**Prepare your specific preschool children.** The Director is available if you need help. The program comes together at the last moment with little formal large group rehearsal.

## Enjoy The Experience

**Enjoy your small part of the bigger picture.** The Bethlehem Jesus Story is life changing. The spiritual experience is delightful! This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to touch the lives of children and grown ups.

## Don't Forget

**Bring your camera!** There will be many picture taking opportunities. You may be amazed 20 years from now how precious these memories become. Record them for 'posterity' and for your own photo album!

Lined writing area for notes.



## Elizabeth!

# The Bethlehem Story Teller

*Ask a happy gal who enjoys leading the group to become Elizabeth. Choose the perfect person in your specific preschool setting!*

**Be Prepared.** Memorization is not required. Carry the script on stage inside a homemade, rolled tattered paper scroll. Be humorous. Dress in Holy Land costume to become Elizabeth, the famous relative of Mary. The children bring the story to life visually, standing in their stable places.



**Be Flexible.** When the children say or do something unexpected this does not ruin the program. Their innocence, enthusiasm and curiosity make their first on stage experience enjoyable for the audience.

*The children dress in various Holy Land costumes. After their entrance, seat them on the floor around the chair. Once placed in the Nativity scene, they should stay there. If a few children wander, keep your sense of humor and remind them of their important part!*

It is helpful to have teen or grown ups guiding the children as needed.

**Be Gentle.** Preschool children are most comfortable with those they know best. Visit their classroom, talk with them and become an approachable friend. This pre-program preparation reaps great benefits. The youngest children will not be afraid.

If you are the daily/weekly preschool teacher, they will respond more readily to you on stage.



## 'Sweetness' - Our Candy Lady

### The Legend of The Candy Cane

*'Sweetness' concludes the formal program telling the Legend of the Candy Cane.*

*Read the script. Carry a large wicker basket filled with large candy canes for program participants and mini candy canes for each audience member.*



**Costume:** Create a festive, over-the-top holiday outfit. Wear bright red clothing. Include sparkly shoes, ribbon in hair or around wrist or ankle. Become a 'living candy cane'. Add a bit of sparkle by spraying hair and then sprinkling glitter for shine in the lights.

**The Story Book:** Read the script conclusion *The Legend Of The Candy Cane*. Make a red and white posterboard storybook. Tie the book front and back with a wide, red ribbon. Wired Christmas ribbon is easily purchased and makes the book look bright and interesting.

*Add a drawing of a large candy cane. Sprinkle glitter across the outer covers of the story book so the audience can see it sparkle.*



The script Conclusion should be securely attached inside the cover. It is not necessary to hide the fact that it is being read. It is supposed to be read aloud. Highlight private instructions or adaptations.

**On Stage:** *'Sweetness'* sits on Elizabeth's chair. The 'child filled' Nativity scene is all around the chair on stage. It should appear that *'Sweetness'* is in the middle of the Bethlehem story.



# Preschool Children Become Bethlehem People

*PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES includes every single child available. To tell the entire story of Jesus' birth, don't forget any of the important Bethlehem People! Assign specific children at the beginning of the planning process. Costuming should be appropriate to character.*

Mary  
Joseph

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Baby Jesus-Wrapped Doll

NOT FOR USE  
Angels  
PLEASE PURCHASE  
Shepherds

Wise Men  
Stars

Student Stable 'Animals'  
*Option: Cardboard or Plush Animals*



Dress students in appropriate Holy Land costume .  
Stars may wear a large posterboard star  
around their neck or over their head.





## Preschool Participation

*Preschoolers are encouraged to respond with enthusiastic reactions. They sing and focus on the story while becoming their character on stage.*



**'Tis A Gift To Be Simple:** Keep participation childlike. Easy songs with familiar melodies like "Away In A Manger" or nursery rhymes work well and are well received by the audience.

**Hand Signal Option:** Because they are so young, develop a special hand sign to signal it's time to say "I know!"..or whatever the appropriate group response is. Encourage enthusiasm and repeat the responses as needed.

*It may be helpful to have one grown up in the front row who gives the hand signal at the right time and join in with the verbal response.*

**Rehearse:** Encourage the group to speak and sing with enthusiasm. The more comfortable they feel, the better the performance. Preparation eliminates the 'deer in the headlights' look! Practice songs with the group, including leaders and assistants, in the weeks leading to the Christmas program.

## Free To Be Three

**Preschoolers are delightful on stage no matter what happens.** If one or two children cry, comment or run off stage, don't panic. Take time to handle the issue or regroup as needed. The more casual the effort, the better the result. Don't aim for perfection. Avoid chaos and have fun with your little ones!



## Teachers And Assistants

*PEACE, LOVE and CANDY CANES is the Bethlehem story told by Elizabeth. Conclude with a grown up portraying 'Sweetness' using the candy cane to reinforce Jesus' story. Preschoolers become the Bethlehem People in the Nativity scene.*

**Assistants:** *Elizabeth and 'Sweetness' need helpers to keep children in place on stage. Become one of these valued helpers.*



### Dress In Costume

Helpers dress in Holy Land costume. Keep it simple. Become people of Bethlehem. If guiding children on and off stage or sitting with them on stage, wear a costume.

*If assigned a short speaking part, say it with enthusiasm. Unless instructed otherwise, read all parts. Memorization is not necessary.*

### Sing Along

As simple songs are used, teachers and helpers should sing along to encourage student participation. The suggested songs are short nursery rhyme tunes and can be repeated two or three times.

*Choose music that is most comfortable for the staff and students. Piano sheet music or CD accompaniment is not included. The songs can be sung a capella!*

### On Stage/Off Stage

Keeping children focused on stage is the goal. Let them sit on your lap or place your arms around them as they sit near you. Guide them gently into their position. Teen and adult leaders mixed with little ones is charming and is an excellent way to keep order on stage. Guide children and sit with them. Help with costuming.



## Prelude

Play Christmas Carol music as the audience gathers. Choose happy music suited to a children's program. A variety of instruments can be included as available.

## Procession

**Gather costumed children in an outer room.** To keep children calm, it may be desirable to have the audience welcome, introductions, first audience song and offering (*if appropriate*) completed before the little ones enter the performance area.

**Dim the lights.** Existing holiday lights are left to glow merrily in the background. Leave stage lights, spotlights, twinkle lights shining so The Sweet Storyteller can see.

Children enter the room from the rear and are invited forward by Elizabeth. This provides a dramatic entrance as well as picture taking moments.

## On Stage

Place the costumed children on the floor around Elizabeth as they arrive at the stage. At the right time in the program, *Elizabeth* places Mary and Joseph near the manger, angels in the back, shepherds on one side and wise men on the other side at the appropriate time.

Scatter angels along the edges. Children dressed as 'stars' mingle with angels. If a few children dress as animals, place them on the floor in the front.

Insert preschool songs at the beginning, middle and end of the program. We suggest song options but you choose music as desired.





## Becoming Elizabeth and 'Sweetness'

**Elizabeth:** Become Elizabeth who lets the Bethlehem Story of Jesus unfold by telling the story from the real Elizabeth's unique perspective.

**Sweetness:** 'Sweetness' is a fun concluding character who reminds everyone of the whole story of Jesus telling the legend of the candy cane.



## Follow Script Directions

**Encourage preschool reaction and sing the songs inserted by the Director.** Your own enjoyable, gentle personality as *Elizabeth* will make their participation delightful as you include them in the stage scene. They respond casually at appropriate times. Prompt them as needed. Repeat their responses with them. Whatever happens....happens!

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

NOT FOR USE  
Sing!

Guide the children through simple songs. Songs we suggest and include with this event are short. Let the group repeat melodies a couple of times. The songs can be sung a capella.

Choose several favorite Christmas Carols that the audience sings. Decide where to insert these songs: Beginning and end of the program.

*Notes:*



# PEACE, LOVE AND CANDY CANES

## Christmas With A Sweet Twist!



### Introduction

#### ELIZABETH WALKS ALONE TO CENTER STAGE.

*Elizabeth stands on stage alone to begin the program.  
Children walk from the back of the room when called forward.*

*(Bowing to Audience)* I am Elizabeth. I am of the daughters of Aaron. You know, Moses' famous brother on the journey from Egypt? That makes Moses my great, great, great uncle. Uncle Moses! It has a nice ring to it but that was a very long time ago. Today it is a blessing to know my life has been pleasing to God.

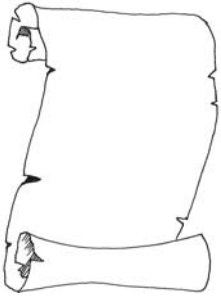
We wanted a baby very much but getting older is a sign that no baby will come to join us. My husband, Zacharias, wanted a son, prayed for a son, no son. His faith weakened.

Zacharias got the first clue that something BIG was about to happen. He was honored to be the priest in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem's Temple. That's where an angel scared the living daylights out of him.

God's angel appeared and said we were going to have a son named John. You can imagine how this news hit Zacharias. He didn't believe it! God did something very kind to help him believe. He gave him a sign. "You shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe My words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time". And that's the way it was.

You won't believe what happened next! I have some young friends who can help me tell our family story and YOUR family story.





*Call the costumed children to walk down the aisle and join you on stage.  
They find places to sit around the story teller's chair.  
(Background piano music is played as the children come.)*

Well, look at you! Aren't you something? You are just the children to help me tell the story of the night Jesus was born. I took notes. Let me see if I can read my own handwriting.

*Pull out a crumpled looking scroll with script inside.  
(Prepare the scroll before event day.)*

Oh yes, my first words:

Mary and Joseph sitting in a tree,  
K-I-S-S-I-N-G.

Ha! I was quite a poet in those days. Everyone knew Joseph loved Mary. His eyes twinkled when she walked into the room. Where is Joseph? Come stand by me!

*Costumed Joseph stands beside Elizabeth.*

Joseph loved Mary  
That's plain to see.  
He asked Mary to marry  
It would soon come to be!

Where is Mary? Come stand by me!

*Costumed Mary stands beside Elizabeth and Joseph.*

Mary's big secret  
Was God's secret too.  
She would soon have a baby  
All dressed in blue!

I know the secret! I know the secret! Mary is my cousin. She came to my house before anyone knew about Baby Boy Jesus. An angel told her she would have a baby boy, God's own Son. She said it was okay with her. I had a secret too. I was going to have a son named John.





We had a party at my house. Happy days!

Mary and Joseph took a trip to sign their names. They went to Bethlehem where everything happened the day Jesus was born.

*Send Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem  
Place them near a manger and small seat.*



When Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem traveled,  
They faithfully followed God's hand,  
though quite baffled.  
They found a small inn, no room to be raffled.  
In a dark, little stable, their story unraveled.

The stable was smelly  
With cows, donkeys and such.  
Mary's time for the baby  
Came soon with God's touch.

*Ask 'animals' to come to the stable.  
If using students as animals, simple headbands  
with animal ears and small tails  
attached with pins works great.*



Out on a hillside the shepherds were watching.  
Some angels flew by with message quite shocking!  
"A Child will be born in the village tonight,  
He's God's perfect gift so you better start walking.  
To see the babe in a manger.  
He might be squawking!  
He's tiny, He's cute!  
He won't be a stranger."

*Place angels behind Mary and Joseph.  
Place shepherds near the manger,  
standing and kneeling.*



I bet you think that's the end of our story.  
It's beginning to look like a crowd for God's glory.  
There were men, strong and wise  
Who followed a Star  
All the way from the East!  
Now that was quite far!



*Place a large 'star' student on a chair, center back.  
Place wise men near the manger,  
standing and kneeling.*



Wise as wise, these men were gifted.  
Frankincense, Myrrh and Gold were presented.  
The Baby didn't care but His parents were lifted.  
The gifts were quite perfect and worth quite a lot.  
Each gift would be handy  
At the twist in the plot.

*Wise Men place wrapped gifts in front of the manger.*

Now that looks complete, don't you think?  
Wait one moment. Wait just one wink!  
There's something important that I think is missing.  
Where is the Baby? Where is He sleeping?

*Place a swaddled baby doll in the manger.*

There! Now our story is done.  
Baby Jesus arrived.  
Salvation had come.  
As the years rolled on by, the people would see  
God's Plan for the world would be Jesus,  
Who sets us all free!



*This is the perfect time, with all characters in place on stage,  
to have them sing one or more songs.  
Choose from our list or teach songs of your own choice  
and rehearsed in the time leading up to the event.*

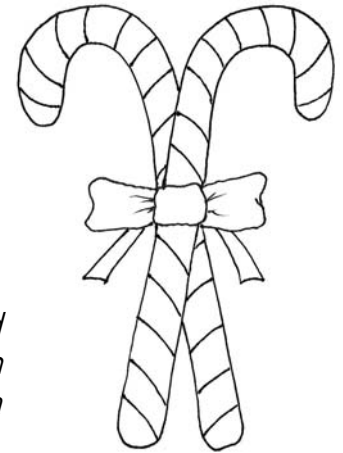
*Elizabeth quietly moves to one side.*



# Conclusion!

## A Sweet Twist

### Legend of The Candy Cane



**Props:** Large wicker Basket with flowing ribbon filled with large candy canes. One candy cane for each student. Each candy cane should be tied with a fancy **green** ribbon.

**Hold in Reserve:** Mini candy canes in baskets for each audience member.

**Script:** Memorization is not necessary. Read the Conclusion from the script. Make a colorful cover featuring a large candy cane.

My name is 'Sweetness', not because of my delightful personality but because I enjoy candy canes. I just love them! I take great joy in sharing this peppermint-y sweetness. My basket is filled with amazing, lovely delicious, peppermint candy canes!

What have we here? I recognize Mary and Joseph. It looks like some shepherds, a few angels, very wise men and even...what are you? A Star? My, you are very bright! I think I need sunglasses.

SIT IN CHAIR WITH STORY BOOK.

PLACE BASKET OF CANDY CANES BESIDE THE CHAIR.

I have a surprise story to tell you about Christmas candy canes. Listen carefully. In fact, come and sit on the floor near me. This is a story you don't want to miss.

*Children gather around the Story Teller Chair.  
Take time to seat them comfortably.  
Hold up one large candy cane.*



Look at this candy cane. What do you see? Candy, cane, a shepherd's crook, J shape, red and white, smells peppermint-y. I love candy canes. Christmas without a candy cane is missing something important. It's fun to hang candy canes on the Christmas tree!

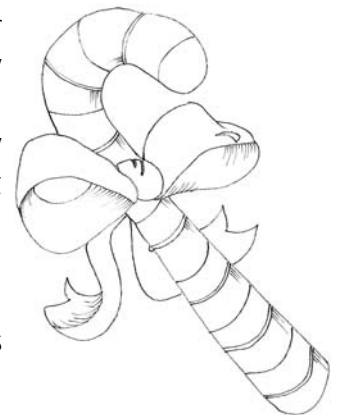
A long time ago, there was a young choir director at a church in Germany. He taught children just like you to sing Christmas songs. They had to sit quietly for a very long time during the church Christmas program. They got very wiggly. It was hard to be quiet and listen to grown ups talk.

The choir director had a great idea! He made small candies bent into shepherds' crooks for each child. They were all white at the time and he passed them around the choir when the Christmas program began. All the children licked their shepherds' crooks happily and never made one little sound. Their parents were impressed.

The choir director was quite proud of himself. His candy was a small gift that honored Jesus and helped the young children behave. All year he thought of what he could do to make his candy better for the next Christmas.

When the children arrived to begin practicing their songs, he told them a story. It was the story of baby Jesus and the choir director's story was all wrapped up in the fancy candy he gave each child. If they looked at their candy, they would remember about the night Jesus was born.

There were lots of happy children that Christmas and they licked their new candy canes and thought of the little poem they learned about Jesus.



Look at the Candy Cane  
What do you see?  
Stripes that are red  
Like the blood shed for me.

White is for my Savior  
Who is sinless and pure.  
“J” is for Jesus My Lord,  
that’s for sure!



Turn it around  
And a staff you will see  
Jesus my Shepherd  
Was born just for me!



The candy maker begins with a stick of pure white, hard candy. Think about how sweet and innocent Jesus was when He was born. The candy is so hard that we must not try to chew it. Think of Jesus as our solid rock, our foundation. We can stand firm on the promises of God.

Red stripes spin around the white cane. There are small stripes that show Jesus was hurt by the soldiers. There is a large red stripe to remind us of the sad suffering of Jesus at the end of his life on the Cross.

Sometimes a green stripe is added to the red stripes as a reminder that Jesus is a gift from God. Our candy canes have a green ribbon to remind you of our gift.

Why does each candy cane taste like Peppermint? Hyssop is in the mint family and was an old spice that made people think of clean, pure air and sacrifice. Jesus is the pure Lamb of God, come to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

When you break your candy cane, it reminds us that Jesus' body was broken for us.

Every time you see a candy cane, remember the message of the candy maker. Jesus is the Christ! Messiah! Our Savior! So you see? Christmas is all about,



Peace  
Love...  
and  
Candy Canes!

*End the program with a Christmas Carol of your choice  
Sung by the audience and/or another preschool song  
presented by the children.  
Hand out audience candy canes while they sing.*





## The Candy Cane Christmas Party!

*Assign party planning to one small group. This could be a few grown ups hand picked for this purpose or a Sunday School Class.*

*Parents of preschool children may set up the party area before the program begins.*

*Offer delicious desserts, background Christmas music and casual fellowship.*



### Preparations Before Party Day

**Menu:** Prepare a Christmas Cake with little candy canes as decoration. Ask people to bring their favorite Christmas dessert to share. If this is a Sunday morning event, consider serving a Continental Breakfast including doughnuts, orange juice and coffee. Provide a variety of beverages.

**Seating:** Decide the best arrangement for seating depending upon the size of the anticipated gathering. Position tables and chairs and serve buffet style with guests standing and moving around the room to chat. Place a few chairs in small circles throughout the area for small group conversation.

**Music:** Fill the air with Christmas music. This could be live music performed by local church/school musicians or favorite CD performances.

**Centerpieces:** Cover tables with red and white coverings. Make each centerpiece using candy canes as the themes. Flowers with candy canes, nativity pieces with candy canes in the middle, jars of candy canes.



## Preparations On Party Day

Decorate the serving table and guest tables. Plug in the coffee pot and put tea water on to boil while the program is in progress. Set out desserts, cream and sugar. Make your favorite Christmas Punch and place on a nearby serving table.

## During The Party

Assign people who cut and serve desserts, pour beverages and refill creamers as needed. Greet guests cordially as they wait in the serving line. Move around the group to be sure everyone feels welcome. Find seats for those who may not be familiar with your church. Introduce people. Enjoy the program participants as they mingle.

## After the Party

Don't forget! The party is not over until clean up is complete. Ask everyone to help with dishes, removing tables and chairs and sweeping the area clean.

Go home knowing  
you have been a good  
and faithful servant.



If your own Christmas Tree  
is not trimmed,  
You have a lot to think about  
while you decorate!



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