

Bake through the Bible

at Christmas

12 fun cooking activities to
explore the Christmas story
with young children

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Bake through the Bible at Christmas
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Published by The Good Book Company
Tel (UK): 0333 123 0880, International: +44 (0) 208 942 0880 Email: info@thegoodbook.co.uk
UK: www.thegoodbook.co.uk North America: www.thegoodbook.com
Australia: www.thegoodbook.com.au New Zealand: www.thegoodbook.co.nz

Food photography by Gavin Kinnaird Food prepared by Tom Beard

Additional photography @istockphoto.com/André Parker ISBN: 9781910307984 Printed by Proost Industries NV, Belgium



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Welcome to *Bake through the Bible at Christmas!*

The Christmas story is full of excitement and wonder. There are stars and angels, dangerous journeys and unexpected visitors... and the mind-blowing, earth-shattering truth that God came to this earth as a tiny baby.

Amazingly, this story is no fairytale. It is recorded in the historical accounts of Matthew and Luke in the Bible. It really happened!

Bake through the Bible at Christmas is designed to help children engage with the Christmas story in a fun and memorable way, and to help us keep the good news of Jesus at the heart of our Christmas celebrations. And, of course, it can be used at any other time of year too!

At Christmas, many people take time to cook with children. The recipes in this book may offer fresh ideas, or prompt you to consider ways that your own Christmas cooking traditions could be used or tweaked to help little ones glimpse a little more of the real reason for the season.

It's written by mums who've experienced some of the joy and challenge it is to introduce little ones to the wonderful message of God's love. We think cooking with children provides a natural context for conversation, and the end result serves as an edible reminder of the things you've talked about!

We hope that this book will help children to see why Christmas really is worth getting excited about, and help them to know the God who loves them.

Bekah
Susie

How to use this book

Don't feel you have to be a good cook! Rather, we hope this is a way to include children in an activity that (to varying degrees) is a part of everyone's day-to-day life.

The cooking activities are designed to help unpack Bible truths for children. They are a means to an end. So it really doesn't matter if the cakes turn out a bit gooey or the gingerbread burnt round the edges. If a seed

of biblical truth has been planted in a child's heart, praise God for that!


The book takes you through the events of the very first Christmas. It can be used to help children follow the biblical account of Christmas, though each activity also works well on its own.

Each unit is made up of the following:

The Bible story

A story from God's word, simply explained, for you to read with your child.

Instructions

Look out for this symbol.  It shows steps that would be best done by an adult.



The cooking activity

This includes time-saving suggestions if you're pushed for time. See "Cooking with Children" on page 6 for more ideas.

While you cook

Questions to help your child understand the story. You may want to read the story and talk these through before beginning to cook—or you may choose to discuss them as you cook.

While you eat

A question to discuss once the cooking is done and the product finished. Your child might also like to use what they've cooked to tell someone else about the Bible story.

Cooking with children

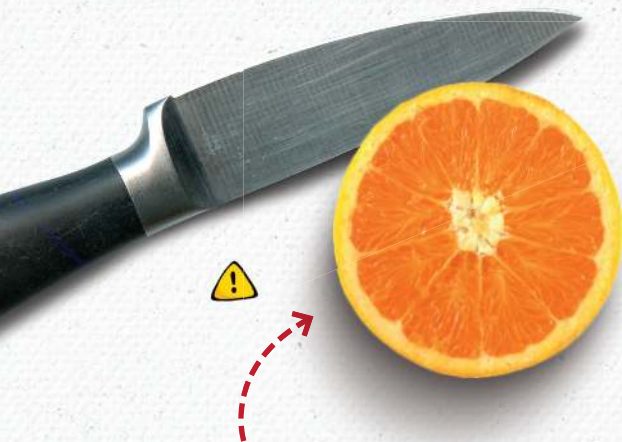
Many children enjoy cooking from a very young age. It has numerous educational benefits: it encourages communication, develops motor skills and gives opportunity to practise listening skills and following instructions. Nevertheless, it can be a daunting prospect. Some parents feel they aren't very competent themselves in the kitchen, while others feel their children have too short a concentration span for any kind of cooking to take place successfully.

We want to assure you that cooking is possible for everyone! Some children will help their parents with a recipe from start to finish. Others will help mix the ingredients for a few seconds before getting distracted, and then return later to lick the bowl clean.

The level of participation doesn't really matter. If your child has enjoyed the experience, you can consider it worthwhile. And you might find you quite enjoy it yourself!

We want the cooking activities to help reinforce the wonderful truths of the Bible. So if you can find just one way to involve your child with the baking—and then use the finished product to talk about the Bible truth it goes with—what a success! If your hidden surprise cake is burnt, your gingerbread manger crooked or your pyramid toast falls over—and yet you've both had fun and you've been able to share how wonderful God is with your child—what a success!

We hope the following tips will encourage you to bake through the Bible this Christmas.



Prepare your recipe

Look at the recipe and any time-saving tips, and decide how much you'd like to do.

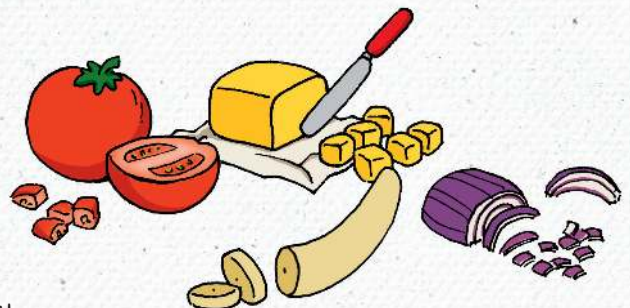
Decide which steps your child will help you with, and which you'll do before you call your child in to help you.

Work out when it will be best to do your recipe. Some recipes can be done in two parts, sometimes over two days.

Prepare your ingredients

You may want to involve your child in checking which ingredients you don't have and shopping for them. The shopping lists for each recipe are available to download—see page 48 for web details.

Decide whether your child can help you weigh out/cut the ingredients or if you should do it before they come in to help.



Prepare your kitchen

Move anything dangerous out of your child's reach. Also, look out for the "warning" symbol ⚠ used in some recipes to show steps that would be best done by an adult.



Find an apron or old clothes for your child.

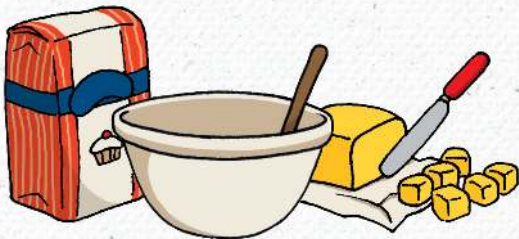
Consider sitting at the table, maybe with your child fastened in a booster seat, to encourage them to sit still.

As well as the equipment listed for each recipe, consider buying a small rolling pin (large ones can be dangerous if dropped or thrown), reusable non-stick lining parchment (to save time greasing and lining tins), and a portable timer (so your gingerbread won't burn while you're upstairs putting the washing away).

Be prepared for lots of mess. That way, you won't be frustrated when that bowl of flour falls onto the floor!



Baking tips

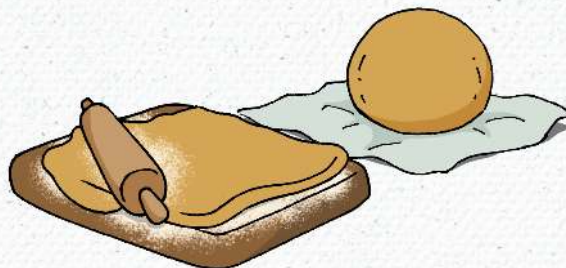


Rubbing in butter (p9, 13, 25)

Your hands need to be clean and cold. Use the ends of your fingers to squash the butter. Every few seconds, use your whole hand to mix everything in the bowl together. Then get squashing with your finger tips again! Keep squashing and mixing until all the lumps of butter have gone and the mix is fine like sand.

Rolling out dough (p9, 13, 25, 26)

The dough and your hands need to be cold. Sprinkle a clean surface and your rolling pin with a little bit of flour. Put the dough in the middle of the surface and roll it from the middle to the sides. Turn the dough around and roll again. Keep going until it is even and thin enough. If the rolling pin begins to stick to the dough, sprinkle on more flour. Don't flip the dough over—keep the top as the top!



The light in the darkness

Isaiah 9 v2-7

When it's dark all around and you can't see, what do you need? A light of course!

Living without God as your friend is like living in the dark. And that is what it was like for God's people living long, long ago. They didn't love God. Their lives were dark and sad. They needed a rescue. They needed a light.

God knew what his people needed. He had already made a plan. A plan to send a light into the darkness. Not a light like a torch or a lamp. No—much better than that. The light God would send was a person!

This person would rescue God's people from the darkness.

This person would bring joy and happiness.

This person would be born as a baby, and would be called Mighty God.

He would be God's King for ever and ever.

Can you guess who God's light is?

Jesus!

Jesus, the light of the world. Promised by God a VERY long time before he was born!

Spiced star tree decorations

When your Christmas tree lights shine through these dark biscuits, you can remember that Jesus is the light in our dark world. How exciting!

Pray: Father God, thank you for Jesus, the light of the world. Thank you for your wonderful promise to send a rescuing King. Amen.

Ingredients (for 12 stars)

- 150g/1/4 cups plain or all-purpose flour
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of ground cloves
- 50g/1/4 cup soft butter
- 50g/1/4 cup soft dark brown sugar

- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tbsp honey
- 12 boiled sweets/hard candies (ideally a little smaller than the bottle top), various colours (such as Barley Sugars, Jargonelle Pears or Sherbet Lemons)

Time needed
45 mins

Equipment

- Mixing bowl
- Wooden spoon
- Rolling pin
- Star cookie cutter
- 2 cookie or baking sheets, greased and lined with parchment
- Plastic bottle top (just smaller than the centre of your star cutter)
- Cocktail stick or toothpick
- 12 pieces of ribbon or string 20cm/8" long



1.

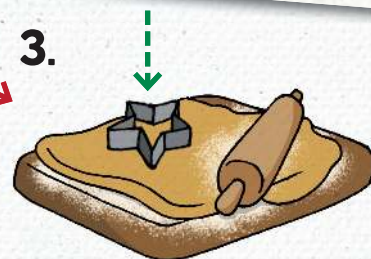
⚠ Preheat the oven to 160°C/310°F/gas 3. Mix the flour, salt, pepper, baking powder, cinnamon and cloves together in the bowl using the wooden spoon. Rub in the butter using your clean fingers (see page 7).

2.



Stir in the sugar. Crack the egg into the bowl and add the honey. Give it a good stir to make a firm dough (you might need to use your clean hands to bring it together).

3.



Sprinkle a clean surface with flour and roll the mixture out with the rolling pin until it is ½ cm/¼" thick (see page 7). Cut out stars and place them on the baking sheets.

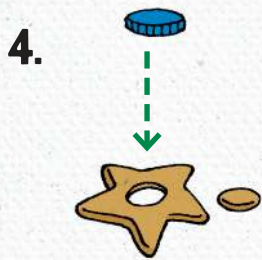
Note:

The melted sweet/candy will set very hard, so be careful this doesn't become a choking hazard (or a danger to teeth) if eaten by young children.

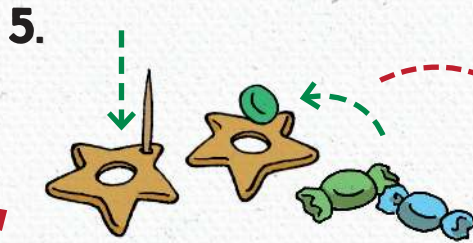
While you cook...

- What did God's people need?
- Why?
- Who is God's light?
- What are some of the things Jesus would do?

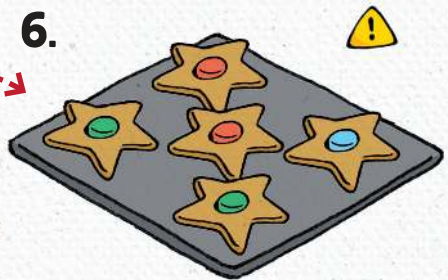




Use the bottle top to cut a hole in the middle of each star. Put the sweets in the holes.



Use the toothpick or cocktail stick to make a hole (about the size of the end of a pen) in each star, at the end of one of the star's points (you will thread ribbon through this hole!).



Put the stars in the oven for 18-20 minutes. (They will look very dark because they need to be well cooked and hard in order to hang on the tree.) Leave them on the trays to cool.

Note:

The biscuits will go stale very quickly on your Christmas tree, so why not keep most of them in a tin or airtight container, and hang just a few biscuits on the tree at a time.

7.



When the stars are cold, thread ribbon through each one so that you can hang them on your Christmas tree. Can you see the tree lights through the dark biscuits to remember that Jesus came as a light into our dark world?