

Alley SG - December 16-17, 2017

Bible Story: Miracle from Heaven (Jesus is Born) • *Luke 2:1-18*

Bottom Line: God gave us Jesus.

Key Question: What does Christmas mean to you?

Memory Verse: "Command the rich to do what is good. Tell them to be rich in doing good things. They must give freely. They must be willing to share." *1 Timothy 6:18 (NIV)*

Prep needed before service... Need table and 2 chairs

Supplies Needed: 12 candy canes, Paper Plates (4 total per service), Christmas Peeps for winner and their small group.

Worship Experience Supplies: Candy Cane on Cardstock, Markers, Pens

CONNECT TIME: Candy Cane Hook 'Em (to be played at start of service)

"OK, show me those hands; who enjoys a good candy cane this time of year? Candy canes, peppermint bark, peppermint mochas, or hot chocolate . . . this is basically *the* flavor of the Christmas season. And today I need two volunteers to play a candy-cane extravaganza!

- *Leader chooses **two players** (boys vs. girls, 4th vs. 5th grade, or whatever makes sense in your service), has them come forward, and introduces them to the rest of the group.*

"Alright, each of you can take a seat at this table here. You are about to get the best Christmas feast ever! Bring out the candy canes!"

- *Small Group leaders (or other volunteers) bring out 4 paper plates and set them side by side in front of the players. One plate needs 6 candy canes and the other is empty.*

"Okay, maybe not the best Christmas feast ever . . . but candy canes for dinner/breakfast? Oh yeah!"

"Here's how this will work. When I say GO, you need to move all of your candy canes from this plate, to this empty one. Sounds easy, right? Well, maybe not so much. There's a catch: you can't use your hands. Take one of those candy canes and stick it between your teeth with the hook side hanging out. This is called "Candy Cane Hook 'Em" because you gotta use the candy cane in your mouth to hook 'em off of the plate and move them to the empty one. The first player to move all of his or her candy canes wins! Got it? Okay, ready set GO!"

CG: Candy Cane Hook 'Em Slide with Game Music

- *Leader comments on the game play and gets the rest of the group cheering for the person they hope wins. After the game, count and declare a winner. (Both players keep candy cane that was in their mouth. Save the other candy canes for next round. If they break, you can tape them to be sure they have a "hook".)*

"Wow! That was a close one! But we do indeed have a winner! *(To winner)* You and your small group will get a gooey delicious Christmas surprise...Christmas Peeps! You can head back to your seats. Let's get started today! **(BEGIN SMALL GROUP)**

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1. Just For Fun

- **Ask:** Would you rather have to loudly sing the chorus of "Jingle Bells" every time you walked into a room for a week or wear a jingle bell necklace 24/7 for one week?

2. Wrap it Up Game

What You Need: 2 gift bags filled with wrapping supplies (per group), Alley Cash

What You Do:

- **Divide** the group into 2 teams.
- **Give** each team a gift bag filled with wrapping supplies.
- Teams **select** a teammate to be the "gift."
- Teams **race** to be the first team to wrap their "gift," using all the wrapping materials supplied. Remind them not to cover the person's face.
- The first team to finish **wrapping** their "gift" wins Alley Cash

3. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: Sticky notes, pens, timer

What You Do:

- **Give** each kid several sticky notes and a pencil.
- **Ask** them to write a word they associate with Christmas on a sticky note.
- **Challenge** kids to see how many words they can think of in 30 seconds, one word per sticky note.

Tip: *Participate in this activity as well. Make sure you write on a note the word "anticipation" or "expectation." Not only do we anticipate Christmas Day, but it will tie in with a later discussion about the shepherds anticipating the arrival of a Messiah.*

- When time is up, have the kids **post** their sticky notes with their words written on them in one place (wall, door, table) working as a team to **group** together notes with same or similar words.
- **Discuss** the words.
 - Are there a lot of words of similar words? What are they? Why do you think those words were chosen by several people?
 - Were there any unique words? Discuss how the unique words could be associated with Christmas.
 - Be encouraging so no one feels singled out for the words they chose; there are no wrong words. Some words will simply need more explanation than others.

(Say things like, “I didn’t even think of that!” “Great point!” “Glad you wrote that down.”)

- What words are associated with family traditions or with celebrating Christmas?
- Are there any words describing the feeling or emotions we associate with Christmas? (This is an opportunity to discuss the excitement of Christmas: the anticipation of visiting with relatives, of giving and receiving gifts, of vacation from school or work, etc.)
- You will revisit the sticky notes in the next activity; so **leave** them grouped together wherever you did the activity (on the wall, door, table).

4. Discussion Questions

- What are some things about Jesus’ birth that may have been unexpected by Mary and Joseph?
- What about things that might have been unexpected by the shepherds?
- What was the shepherds’ response to Jesus’ birth? What should be our response to Jesus’ birth?
- How would you explain Christmas to someone who had never heard of or celebrated it before? What would you tell him or her about your family traditions, gifts that are given and received, or the emotions you experience on and around that day?

5. Verses to Take with You

What You Need: Bibles, scrap paper, pens

What You Do:

- **Read** Luke 2:10 and ask:
 - What was the Good News?
 - What are other words you would use for “great joy”?
 - What brings you joy during the Christmas season?
 - Are there activities or traditions you do every year that you would miss if you didn’t do them? What are they?
- **Emphasize** that Jesus’ birth is a time for celebration, a time for great joy and lots of fun.
- **Challenge** kids to create a new Christmas tradition, using a combination of new ideas and existing traditions they currently do with their families each year.
- **Let** students break up into groups of 3 or 4.
- **Give** them 3 minutes to quickly gather their ideas.
 - They can use paper and pencils/markers to make notes or draw things out if they need to.
- **Tell** them when time is up and ask them to wrap up their conversations.
- **Go around** the group and let teams quickly share about the new tradition they came up with.
 - Then **let** the group vote on which tradition they would pitch to their families to try this year.

6. Pray/Dismiss (No God Time Sheets this weekend)

- *Remind them there is no Alley next weekend for Christmas Services*