



Legend of the Candy Cane, The (Pack of 25)

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Long ago there were two villages in a far-off land. One was in a valley, and one was on a mountain top. The people in the mountain village wanted to give each person in the valley a Christmas gift.

So the mountain townspeople formed a committee to think of something special. Money was limited, and each gift had to be of equal value to each person. After much time and discussion a decision was finally reached. The town's candy maker, an elderly gentleman who had loved Jesus for many years, came up with an idea—the candy cane.

Now, you may be thinking, what is so special about a candy cane—and *how* can it ever be tied in with the real meaning of Christmas? Well, here is how...and why...

1. The candy cane is in the shape of a shepherd's staff. Jesus is our Shepherd, and we are His flock. A sheep follows his own shepherd, knows his voice, trusts him and knows that he is totally safe with him. The sheep will follow no other shepherd than their own. In the same way, if we belong to Jesus, we are to follow only Him. (John 10:11; Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11)

2. Turned over, the candy cane is a "J," the first letter of Jesus' name. (Luke 1:31) It is made of hard candy to remind us that Christ is the "rock" of our salvation.

3. The wide red stripes on the candy cane represent the blood Jesus shed on the cross for

each one of us so that we can have eternal life through Him. He restores us and cleans us with His shed blood—the only thing that can wash away our sin. (Luke 22:20)

4. The white stripes on the candy cane represent Jesus' virgin birth and His pure, sinless life. He is the only human being ever who never committed a single sin, even though He was tempted just as we are. (1 Peter 2:22)

5. The narrow red stripes on candy canes symbolize Jesus' stripes, or scars, which He got when He was arrested and whipped. The Bible says we are healed (of sin) because He took those wounds. (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24)

6. The flavoring in the candy cane is peppermint, which is similar to hyssop. Hyssop is of the mint family and

was used in Old Testament times for purification and sacrifice. (John 19:29; Psalm 51:7)

7. When we break our candy cane, it reminds us that Jesus' body was broken for us. When we have communion, it is a reminder of what He did for us. (1 Corinthians 11:24)

8. AND, if we share our candy cane and give some to someone else because we love that person, we are sharing the love of Jesus. (1 John 4:7,8)

God gave Himself to us when He sent Jesus to earth to save us. He loves us so much that He wants us to spend eternity with Him. We are assured of that when we accept Jesus into our hearts as our Savior. (John 1:12; John 3:3,16)

Some people believe this story of the candy cane is only a legend. Others believe it really happened this way. We do not know for sure exactly how the candy cane was invented, but one thing is certain...it is an excellent picture of Christ and His love for you.

You can accept Jesus into your heart through a prayer like this:

Dear God, Thank You for loving me enough to send Jesus for Christmas. I believe Jesus died for my sins, and I accept Him now as my Savior. I promise to follow Him and share His love with others the best that I can. Amen.

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