



Candy Cane Christmas!



Introduction:

This Christmas program is built around the book *The Legend of the Candy Cane* by Lori Walburg, beautifully illustrated by Richard Cowdrey. I've used it many times with primary-aged children, and it continues to resonate. The book is still available for purchase, and second-hand copies are easy to find online. Someone in your congregation may even have a copy you can borrow.

Warm Up Activity: Guess the Number of Candy Canes in the Jar!

What to do:

- Find a clear, clean jar with a lid
- Fill it with candy canes (keeping note of the number to fill it)
- As children sign in, ask them to guess how many candy canes are inside the jar and keep a note of their name and their guess
- At the end of the program, announce the child who was correct or closest in their guess, and award them with the jar of candy canes!

Storytime:

Create an engaging environment:

- Blankets or rugs on the floor (preferably Christmas-patterned)
- Christmas cushions
- Storytelling chair decorated in tinsel, candy cane decorations, and a mouse or two (the mice tie in with the craft. I bought cat toys from the pet aisle of the supermarket.)

Know Your Story:

You can't memorize your story, but you do have to know it. Fluency is important. Use everything you've got to keep the children listening. You want to invite them to become part of the story. Facial expressions, gestures, sound effects, changes in voice and pitch are all vital to the success of your story reading.

Additional Prop:

I brought in a giant candy cane to visually reinforce the part of the text that describes its shape and stripes. Since my hands were full holding the book, I invited a child volunteer to come up and hold the candy cane for the class.

Resources: Christian Preschool Printables

Download free colouring sheets, activity sheets, and Candy Cane Mini Book here: <https://christianpreschoolprintables.com/holiday-bible-printables/candy-cane-bible-printables/>

Circle Game: Candy Cane Ball

This game is a fun mash-up of Pass the Parcel and the Chocolate Game – combining suspense, speed, and sweet rewards!

You Will Need:

- Candy canes (the ones that come individually wrapped)
- Bubble wrap
- Sticky tape
- A Christmas bell (optional, but hearing it jingle adds to the fun)
- Prize (small toy, decoration or whatever you feel appropriate)
- 2 dice (optional Christmas plastic cup to help shake and roll the dice)

What to do:

- Wrap the bell and the prize in the bubble wrap
- Continue to wrap the bell and the prize, layer upon layer, making a ball
- Between each layer, place a candy cane

How to Play:

- A child holds the Candy Cane ball
- The child to their left rolls 2 dice; they need to roll doubles to remove a layer of bubble wrap and get a candy cane
- No doubles, pass the ball on, and continue to pass on until doubles are rolled
- When doubles are rolled, the child who rolled them can remove layers, retrieving candy canes until the next double is thrown
- If your children are older, you can make them wear Christmas oven mitts!

Game: Candy Cane Relay

You will need:

- Start and finish lines (marked clearly)
- Candy canes — one per child, plus one extra per team
- A few extra candy canes in case of breakages

How to play:

1. **Form teams:** Divide the children into equal teams.
2. **Set up the lines:** Each team splits in half, with one group lining up at the start line and the other at the finish line directly opposite.
3. **Begin the relay:**
 - The first child at the start line hooks the team's extra candy cane onto their own.
 - Holding only their candy cane, they walk across to their teammate at the finish line.
4. **Transfer the candy cane:**
 - Without using their other hand, the child must transfer the hooked candy cane onto their teammate's candy cane.
5. **Continue the relay:**
 - The teammate now walks back across to the next child in line and repeats the transfer.
6. **Winning the game:**
 - The first team to successfully pass the candy cane through all teammates — start to finish and back — wins!

Craft: Candy Cane Mice

The children absolutely loved making these candy cane-tailed mice! With limited time and a large group, I opted for cardboard instead of felt and pre-cut all the pieces—such a time-saver. Whether you go with felt or cardboard, it's well worth the effort. Can't you just see these little mice living in a candy store?

