

# SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMAS

For a great teaching activity at Christmas you can introduce your students to the Symbols of Christmas. It works best if you have the actual items but you could just have pictures. I enjoy making it a door prize type thing and after I talk about each item, I give it away. Think ahead towards next year and you can get these items very cheap after Christmas this year for next year.

Start the activity by going through the Christmas story in simple English. Or you could show it from the Matthew DVD or the Jesus Film. Then go through the symbols of Christmas below.

These are just brief descriptions. According to your time limit, you can go into a lot more detail. Just remember to keep it slow and in easy English.

The whole point of this activity is to get our students to associate the decorations that they will see out in the world at this time of year with Jesus. A good resource book for this type of thing is “The ADVENTures of Christmas” by Lisa Whelchel. It is available in most Christian bookstores and on Amazon.com.

It’s also nice if you do the Candy Cane Story to give every student a Candy Cane.

**Christmas Tree** – Why aren’t Christmas trees apple trees or oak trees? They are always Evergreen which symbolizes eternal life.

**Wreath** – most wreathes are evergreen which also symbolizes eternal life and they are always round to represent that God has no beginning or ending.

**Star** – the star the Wisemen followed to find Baby Jesus

**Angels** – the angels that announced Jesus’ birth

**Bells** – to announce that Jesus is born

Song: Come on ring those bells  
Round the Christmas Tree  
Jesus is alive  
Born for you and me  
Come on ring those bells  
Everybody say  
Jesus we remember it's your birthday!!

**Tree Topper** –points to Heaven where Jesus is alive today

**Christmas Ball Ornament** – traditional Christmas tree ornaments are round symbolizing that God has no beginning or ending and also symbolizing the earth (God created the earth and loves everyone on the earth)

**Lights** – to remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World

**The Colors of Christmas** – red and green  
Red for the blood Jesus shed for us.  
Green to represent the eternal life that He offers us.

**Nativity Set** – depicts the real Christmas and helps us to remember that Christ came for us personally

**Christmas Stocking** – use this to tell the real story of Santa Claus. (Get a good children's book that tells the real story)

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF SANTA CLAUS**

Santa Claus was a real man. He lived about 400 years after Jesus. He was the Bishop of a church. He loved Jesus.

Bishop Nicholas had a friend that had 3 daughters, but they could not get married because their father did not have the money for their dowries. So late one night, in secret, Bishop Nicholas threw 3 bags of gold into their living room. The bags landed in socks that were drying by the fireplace (thus the tradition of stocking hung by the fireplace).

Later the Catholic Church made him a Saint, thus Saint Nicholas.

The Santa Claus that we know today in America is a result of Clement Moore's poem, *The Night Before Christmas*, written in the mid 1800's. This description of Santa Claus was expanded upon by Coca-Cola in an advertising campaign in the early 1900s.

(I would encourage you not to ignore Santa Claus with your students. He is everywhere this time of year. It is better for them to know who he really was and that he loved Jesus.)

## **CANDY CANE**

A Candymaker in Indiana wanted to make a candy that would be a witness, so he made the Christmas Candy Cane. He incorporated several symbols for the birth, ministry and death of Jesus Christ.

He began with a stick of pure white, hard candy. White to symbolize the Virgin Birth and the sinless nature of Jesus, and hard to symbolize the Solid Rock, the foundation of the Church and firmness of the promises of God.

The candymaker made the candy in the form of a “J” to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to earth as our Savior. It could also represent the staff of the “Good Shepherd” with which He reaches down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs who, like all sheep, have gone astray.

Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candymaker stained it with red stripes. He used three small stripes to show the stripes of the scourging Jesus received by which we are healed. The large red stripe was for the blood shed by Christ on the cross so that we could have the promises of eternal life.

Unfortunately, the candy became known as a Candy Cane, a meaningless decoration seen at Christmas time. But the meaning is still there for those who “have eyes to see and ears to hear.” I pray that this symbol will again be used to witness To The Wonder of Jesus and His Great Love that came down at Christmas and remains the ultimate and dominant force in the universe today.