

# CANDY CANE CHRISTMAS

*by Gail Gaymer Martin*



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

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# **Candy Cane Christmas**

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

Christmas legends are widespread — the Christmas rose, animals speaking on Christmas day, adorning the first Christmas tree — and each legend presents a beautiful story to explain many of our Christmas traditions as they revolve around our Savior’s birth. The candy cane is no exception. Legends abound as to its creation many years ago. This program provides one of the most lovely explanations of the symbolism of the candy cane, supported with Bible verses. After adults and children hear the candy cane story, they will always see the Christmas candy in a new light, as a wonderful symbol of our Savior’s birth and ministry.

## ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

**Child 1/Narrator**

**Child/Choir Child 2**

**Child/Choir Child 3**

**Child/Choir Child 4**

**Child/Choir Child 5**

**Child/Choir Child 6**

**Child/Choir Child 7**

**Child/Choir Child 8**

**Mr. Durkey (choirmaster)**

**Mrs. Durkey (choirmaster’s wife)**

**Shepherd (non-speaking role)**

**Extra singers (optional)**

## *PRODUCTION NOTES*

This program may be presented on a simple stage or in the chancel area in the worship setting. The cast can accommodate a few or many. The children's parts can be divided among more children to accommodate a large Sunday school. For example, the choir children and the children who read the symbol explanations can be different children, and all Sunday school children can join in the final song. A duet is sung by the choirmaster and his wife. Lyrics for both songs were written by the author, with the tunes in the public domain. The song lyrics are repeated in the appendix for the director's convenience. Microphones may be used if available.

No special costuming is needed. If desired, extra children who help sing the songs may wear either a red or white shirt. When they stand, they should be alternated for a striped candy cane effect. Two older children, preferably teens, who play the choirmaster and his wife, should dress age appropriately.

The Narrator's part of the program may be read from a podium or stand. Children who read Scripture as they explain the meaning of the candy cane may also use the podium or another microphone. The choir children may hide their lines on the sheet music props. Except in a few instances, memorization is not required.

The set is fairly basic. A large candy cane may be created from cardboard, papier-mâché or plywood. It should be painted white with three narrow red stripes followed by a larger red stripe and repeated. It can be freestanding or suspended at Center Stage for the entire program. An easier alternative may be to use several of the oversize candy cane lawn ornaments that are available at discount stores for decoration. You will also need two rows of chairs for the choir at Stage Left, with a music stand in front of them for the Choirmaster.

The props needed are enough regular-sized candy canes for

each child to carry one, a baton (or pencil) for directing, a small kitchen-type table angled at Stage Right holding a 3x5" recipe card, mixing bowl, measuring cup and a spoon. A kitchen chair is nearby. Choir children carry sheets of paper "music." These pages could hold their lines and song lyrics. Two boys should have sheets of blank paper to make paper airplanes.

At the end of the program, miniature candy canes may be distributed to those in attendance by selected children. Each candy cane could include a note attached with a brief explanation of the candy cane symbols, if desired. Another option is for the children to make ornaments from pipe cleaners strung with alternating red and white beads and bent into a candy cane shape.

The performance lasts from fifteen to twenty minutes.

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- 1           (*CHILD 1/NARRATOR enters licking a candy cane. He*  
 2           *stands at Center Stage. CHILD 2 enters from Stage Left with*  
 3           *a candy cane.*)
- 4       **CHILD 1: What are you doing?**
- 5       **CHILD 2: Same as you.** (*CHILD 2 holds up the candy cane.*)
- 6       **CHILD 3:** (*Enters Stage Right, licking a candy cane.*) **Candy**  
 7           **canes and Christmas seem to go together.** (*Holds up his*  
 8           *candy.*) **They're a tradition.**
- 9       **CHILD 2: Christmas has a lot of traditions — giving gifts,**  
 10           **decorating Christmas trees and singing Christmas**  
 11           **carols. I wonder how those traditions began.**
- 12       **CHILD 1: I know how the candy cane came to be.**
- 13       **CHILD 3: You do not.**
- 14       **CHILD 1:** (*Beckons them toward Stage Right.*) **Yes, I do. A long**  
 15           **time ago a choirmaster —**
- 16       **CHILD 3:** (*Cuts off CHILD 1.*) **What do you mean by a long**  
 17           **time ago?**
- 18       **CHILD 1: It began a few hundred years ago in Germany. If**  
 19           **you don't believe me, watch.** (*Gestures toward the chairs*  
 20           *lined in rows Stage Left. CHILD 2 and 3 vanish Off-stage.*  
 21           *CHILD 1 becomes the NARRATOR and stands behind the*  
 22           *podium or stand.*)
- 23       **NARRATOR: In the 1670s, a German choirmaster was**  
 24           **preparing his music for Christmas.** (*CHOIR CHILDREN*  
 25           *2–8 come from Stage Right and Left. Each carries sheets of*  
 26           *paper as if they are music. One BOY tugs a GIRL's hair. The*  
 27           *GIRL sticks out her tongue at him. Another CHILD nearly*  
 28           *topples a chair. They talk and make noise until they*  
 29           *eventually are all seated. As the dialog begins, two*  
 30           *CHILDREN use blank paper to form paper airplanes.*)
- 31       **CHILD 5 and CHILD 8:** (*Nearly simultaneously*) **Boring.**
- 32       **CHILD 4: My mother makes me sing in the choir.** (*Leans over*  
 33           *and dangles her arms toward the floor with a groan.*)
- 34       **CHILD 6:** (*Stands, looking.*) **Where's Mr. Durkey?**
- 35       **CHILD 7: Durkey-Turkey.** (*CHILD 6 plops back into the chair.*)

- 1 **CHILD 4: Don't be disrespectful.** (*One BOY tosses a paper*  
 2 *airplane just as the choirmaster, MR. DURKEY, enters Stage*  
 3 *Right. He picks up the airplane and goes to the music stand.*)
- 4 **MR. DURKEY:** (*Taps his baton [or pencil] on the edge of the*  
 5 *music stand as the CHILDREN continue to be noisy.*) **Boys**  
 6 **and girls, we're preparing for Christmas. Are you**  
 7 **ready?** (*Another paper airplane is thrown. He ignores it.*)  
 8 **Please stand.** (*The CHILDREN rise and MR. DURKEY*  
 9 *begins directing as they sing "Away in a Manger" out of tune*  
 10 *and not together.*)
- 11 **CHILDREN:** (*Singing*) **Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,**  
 12 **The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.**  
 13 **The stars ...** (*After a few bars, he taps his baton for them*  
 14 *to stop. The CHILDREN begin whispering.*)
- 15 **MR. DURKEY:** **Please stop talking. A choir must blend.**  
 16 **Listen to each other as you sing.** (*Raises baton.*) **We will**  
 17 **begin again.** (*MR. DURKEY directs as CHILDREN silently*  
 18 *move their mouths to give the illusion they are singing. While*  
 19 *this continues, the NARRATOR speaks*).
- 20 **NARRATOR:** **The choirmaster was very discouraged. The**  
 21 **boys and girls were badly behaved during practice, as**  
 22 **they were during most worship services. He knew he**  
 23 **had to find a solution to his problem. When choir**  
 24 **practice ended, the children left, and the choirmaster**  
 25 **went home.** (*At the words "When choir practice ended," the*  
 26 *CHILDREN exit Stage Right and Left as MR. DURKEY*  
 27 *walks slowly toward the table and chair at Stage Right. As*  
 28 *he nears, his wife, MRS. DURKEY, enters and stands behind*  
 29 *table and lifts a recipe card up to read before she notices her*  
 30 *husband.*)
- 31 **MRS. DURKEY:** **You look discouraged.**
- 32 **MR. DURKEY:** **I am. The children misbehaved again.**  
 33 **Christmas is almost here, and I don't know what to do.**  
 34 (*Sits in the chair beside the table.*) **Are you making**  
 35 **Christmas cookies?**

1     **MRS. DURKEY:** No, candy. Have you ever thought about  
2           giving the children a treat during the worship service  
3           to keep them quiet?

4     **MR. DURKEY:** I doubt if anything will keep them quiet.

5     **MRS. DURKEY:** Have you asked God for help?

6     **MR. DURKEY:** (*Hangs his head.*) No. I was too upset. I know  
7           I should.

8     **MRS. DURKEY:** Let's pray together. (*Steps to her husband's*  
9           *side as the pianist introduces the song, and they sing the*  
10          *"Candy Cane Prayer."*)

11

12                                   **Candy Cane Prayer**

13                                   (*Sung to the tune "Morning Has Broken"*)

14

15    **MR. and MRS. DURKEY:** (*Singing*) Christmas is coming,  
16          soon       it will be here.

17          Lord, we do ask you to hear our prayer.

18          Let the choir's music ring with your blessing.

19          Help them to love you and show they care.

20

21          We praise you, Father, for all you give us —

22          Health, food, and shelter — all things you share.

23          Thank you for Jesus, the gift of salvation.

24          Thank you for caring and hearing our prayer.

25

26    **MRS. DURKEY:** An idea came to me while we were praying.  
27          (*Returns to spot behind the table.*) Before baby pacifiers  
28          were made, sugar sticks were used to keep babies from  
29          crying. Maybe I can make special sugar sticks for the  
30          children.

31    **MR. DURKEY:** Sugar sticks? But what has a sugar stick to  
32          do with Jesus? Christmas is a celebration of our  
33          Savior's birth. I want the children to learn the meaning  
34          of Christmas.

35    **MRS. DURKEY:** (*Picks up the measuring cup.*) Just you wait and

1       see. (*MR. and MRS. DURKEY exit as the NARRATOR*  
2       *begins.*)

3       **NARRATOR:** The choirmaster’s wife made her own style of  
4       sugar sticks and bent them into a shepherd’s staff, and  
5       that made all the difference. (*CHILDREN 2–8 process in*  
6       *from Stage Right and Left, side by side, each licking a candy*  
7       *cane. They sit quietly. MR. DURKEY enters, taps his baton,*  
8       *and the CHILDREN rise. Pianist plays the introduction and*  
9       *the CHILDREN sing “Away in a Manger,” this time in tune.*  
10      *When the number is finished, the CHILDREN exit. MR.*  
11      *DURKEY carries the music stand and exits after them. The*  
12      *NARRATOR begins the reading, then as each CHILD comes*  
13      *forward, he or she replaces the previous speaker at the*  
14      *podium or microphone. At the end of each reading, the*  
15      *CHILD returns to the choir chairs On-stage. SHEPHERD*  
16      *enters and stands by NARRATOR. With the exception of*  
17      *CHILD 4, the CHILDREN do not carry candy canes.*)

18       In time, the sugar stick became known as the candy  
19      cane, shaped to represent the shepherd’s staff. In Luke  
20      2:8–12 we’re told, “And there were shepherds living out  
21      in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at  
22      night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the  
23      glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were  
24      terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid.  
25      I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all  
26      the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has  
27      been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a  
28      sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and  
29      lying in a manger.’”

30      **CHILD 2:** (*Comes forward.*) The shepherd’s staff reminds us  
31      of Jesus in another way. Jesus called himself the Good  
32      Shepherd. We all remember Psalm 23: “The Lord is my  
33      shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down  
34      in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he  
35      restores my soul.” Isaiah 40:11 says, “He tends his flock

1           like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and  
2           carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those  
3           that have young.” (*CHILD 2 sits.*)

4   **CHILD 3:** (*Comes forward.*) The Bible tells us that we need  
5           the Good Shepherd because we are the sheep and  
6           sometimes we get lost. We stray from God’s Word. In  
7           Luke 15:3–7, Jesus tells us in a parable why he is the  
8           Good Shepherd. He said, “Suppose one of you has a  
9           hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave  
10          the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the  
11          lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he  
12          joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then  
13          he calls his friends and neighbors together and says,  
14          ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you  
15          that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in  
16          heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-  
17          nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”  
18          Jesus is always by our side, guiding and protecting us.  
19          (*CHILD 3 and SHEPHERD sit.*)

20   **CHILD 4:** (*Comes forward with candy cane.*) We know the  
21          candy cane is shaped like a shepherd’s staff, but when  
22          it’s turned upside down (*CHILD 4 turns candy cane upside*  
23          *down*) we see a J — the first letter of Jesus’ name. In  
24          Matthew 1:20 we read, “An angel of the Lord appeared  
25          to [Joseph] in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David,  
26          do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife,  
27          because what is conceived in her is from the Holy  
28          Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give  
29          him the name Jesus, because he will save his people  
30          from their sins.’” The name Jesus means “Savior” in  
31          Greek and Hebrew. (*CHILD 4 sits.*)

32   **CHILD 5:** (*Comes forward.*) God’s Word is sweetness to our  
33          ears. In Ephesians it says, “And you also were included  
34          in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel  
35          of your salvation ... and with your feet fitted with the

1           readiness that comes from the gospel of peace” (1:13,  
2           5:15). A candy cane is sweet to remind us that through  
3           him we have received the gift of peace and salvation,  
4           and to remind us that the sweetest gift of all is God’s  
5           Son, Jesus, who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and  
6           laid in a lowly manger — like we heard in the song a  
7           few minutes ago. A candy cane’s hardness reminds us  
8           that Jesus is our firm foundation. Psalm 18:2 tells us,  
9           “The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my  
10          God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.” (*CHILD 5 sits.*)

11   **CHILD 6:** (*Comes forward.*) A candy cane is white. When we  
12          think of the color white, we think of purity. Jesus entered  
13          the world pure and holy. He is the Son of God, born of  
14          the Virgin Mary. In Matthew 1:23, the Lord said through  
15          the prophet, “The virgin will be with child and will give  
16          birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” — which  
17          means, “God with us.” White reminds us of being clean  
18          without dirt or spots, and we are clean when Jesus frees  
19          us from the stains of sin by dying on the cross for us.  
20          Isaiah 1:18 says, “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says  
21          the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be  
22          as white as snow.’” (*CHILD 6 sits.*)

23   **CHILD 7:** (*Comes forward.*) The white candy cane always has  
24          stripes. The traditional candy cane has three small red  
25          stripes and one larger red stripe. The three smaller  
26          stripes remind us of the marks of the whip that scourged  
27          Jesus after he was arrested in the Garden of  
28          Gethsemane and taken before Pilate. Isaiah 53:5 reads,  
29          “‘But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was  
30          bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace  
31          was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed” (NKJV).  
32          Some people say the three stripes represent the Holy  
33          Trinity — the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The large red  
34          stripe symbolizes the blood Jesus shed on the cross on  
35          Calvary so we may have eternal life. (*CHILD 7 sits.*)

1 **CHILD 8:** (*Comes forward.*) The peppermint flavor of the  
 2 modern candy cane tastes similar to hyssop. In the Old  
 3 Testament, hyssop was used for purifying and  
 4 cleansing. In Psalms 51:7 David says, “Cleanse me with  
 5 hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be  
 6 whiter than snow.” During the Passover, Moses spoke  
 7 to the people of Israel: “Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it  
 8 into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood  
 9 on the top and on both sides of the doorframe” (Exodus  
 10 12:22). By following Moses’ directions, the Angel of  
 11 Death passed by their doors, and the people were  
 12 saved. The peppermint flavor in today’s candy canes  
 13 reminds us that Jesus has cleansed us from our sins.  
 14 He has purified us through his death on the cross, and  
 15 he has saved us from the power of the devil and given  
 16 us salvation. (*CHILD 8 sits.*)

17 **NARRATOR:** (*Comes forward.*) A simple candy cane is not so  
 18 simple anymore, now that we have heard the story  
 19 behind the candy cane. The shepherd staff (*Holds a*  
 20 *candy cane upright*) or a **J** (*Turns the candy cane upside*  
 21 *down*) reminds us of Jesus, our Good Shepherd and our  
 22 Savior. The white and red color reminds us of Jesus’  
 23 sinless life and his death that gives us salvation.  
 24 Looking at this candy cane, we are reminded of the  
 25 sweetness and rock-solid strength of God’s Word. So the  
 26 next time we hang a candy cane on our Christmas tree  
 27 or strip off the cellophane and taste the sweet  
 28 peppermint, we will remember God’s special gift to us  
 29 at Christmas: the birth of our Savior, Jesus, who was  
 30 born in a humble stable, died for our sins, yet lives  
 31 forever as our Lord and King. (*All CHILDREN come*  
 32 *forward to sing the “Candy Cane Christmas Song.”*)

33  
 34  
 35

### Candy Cane Christmas Song

(*Sung to the familiar tune “O Come, Little Children”*)

1     **CHILDREN: (Singing) See candy canes hang from the bright**  
2             **Christmas tree.**

3             **A shepherd's bent staff or a J we can see.**

4             **The sweet candy cane shows the world of God's love,**

5             **The birth of our Savior come down from above.**

6

7             **The white says he's pure. From all sin, he is free.**

8             **The red stripes are signs of his suffering for me.**

9             **The sweetness, God's Word and salvation we gain.**

10            **We show God our love with the sweet candy cane.**

11

12            *(The CHILDREN may repeat the song again. Following the*  
13            *benediction, they may hand out miniature candy canes or*  
14            *candy cane ornaments as the congregation exits.)*

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32            *NOTE: The numerals running vertically down the left margin*  
33            *of each page of dialogue are for the convenience of the director.*  
34            *With these, he/she may easily direct attention to a specific*  
35            *passage.*



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