



strengthening
our home
and family

Deseret Book®

Family Home Evening Materials

Theme: The Birth of Christ

Packet #120306

5 tips for successful Family Home Evenings

- 1. Pray.** Pray about the needs of your family as you consider topics for home evenings, and pray as you prepare.
- 2. Prioritize.** Make Family Home Evening a priority; learn to say no to other activities.
- 3. Involvement.** Involve everyone in the family; help little children take part.
- 4. Commitment.** Be committed and be consistent. Set a designated time and stick to it. Holding Family Home Evening on a weekly basis takes dedication and planning on the part of all family members.
- 5. Relax** and enjoy it. The most important thing your children will remember is the spirit they feel in your family home evenings and activities. Be sure the atmosphere is one of love, understanding, and enjoyment.

The Birth of Christ

Thought:

The most important event in the history of the world was the birth of Jesus Christ. From the days of Adam to John the Baptist—some four millennia—righteous men and women looked to the day of His heralded birth. Prophets foretold the event, and sacrifices, symbolism, and signs portended His birth.

(Ezra Taft Benson, “Jesus Christ: Our Savior, Our God,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1991, 2)

Song:

“Away in a Manger” *Children’s Songbook*, p. 42.

Scripture:

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

(Luke 2:11)

Lesson:

Invite family members to show with their fingers how many wise men came to see Jesus. Show a picture of the wise men with King Herod (such as Gospel Art Kit, no. 203, or *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 44). Ask why they think most people believe there were three. Have your family look for how many wise men are mentioned as you study Matthew 2.

Read together Matthew 2:1–11 and discuss the following questions:

- Where was Jesus born and who was the king of Judea? (Verse 1.)
- Who were the wise men looking for? (See Matthew 2:2, footnote a. The wise men were not seeking just a “king” but the “Messiah.”)
- Why were Herod and “all Jerusalem with him” troubled? (Herod was a jealous king and didn’t want anyone else, not even a son, to take his throne.)
- Why do you think Herod really wanted to know where and when this “King of the Jews” was born? (See verse 16.)
- How did the wise men find Jesus?
- Where did the wise men find Jesus? (Invite family members to mark the words house and young child.)

Ask family members if they noticed the words manger or baby or any mention of the number of wise men. What does this tell us about the Christmas story as it is told year after year? Share the following statements by Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“There came from unnamed eastern lands . . . an unspecified number of wise men. Whether they were two, three, or twenty in number is a matter of pure speculation.” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:102–3.)

“It appears from Matthew’s account . . . that . . . the wise men came two or three years after the birth of our Lord. It was a ‘young child,’ not a baby, they were seeking; he was found in a ‘house,’ not a manger; and Herod ‘sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem,

and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under.”” (Mormon Doctrine, 230.)

Invite family members to look once more at Matthew 2:10–11 and mark phrases that show how the wise men felt about finding the young child. Have family members record in their journals how they would have felt if they had been the ones who found the child Jesus.

(Dennis H. Leavitt and Richard O. Christensen, *Scripture Study for Latter-day Saint Families: The New Testament*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006], p. 6.)

Story:

The Wondrous Gift

(Spencer W. Kimball)

We set up the evergreen tree with its gleaming, brightly colored lights; we hang wreaths and bells; and we light candles—all to remind us of that wondrous gift, the coming of our Lord into the world of mortality.

We send Christmas cards to numerous friends and relatives, pulling back into happy memories the loved ones who have moved out of our immediate association. Like the wise men who opened their treasury and presented to Jesus gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, we present to our loved ones things to eat and wear and enjoy.

Though we make an effort to follow the pattern of gift giving, sometimes our program becomes an exchange—gift given for gift expected. Never did the Savior give in expectation. I know of no case in his life in which there was an exchange. He was always the giver, seldom the recipient. Never did he give shoes, [socks], or a vehicle; never did he give perfume, a shirt, or a [coat]. His gifts were of such nature that the recipient could hardly exchange or return the value. His gifts were rare ones: eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and legs to the lame; cleanliness to the unclean, wholeness to the infirm, and breath to the lifeless. . . . His gifts were . . . light in the darkness, forgiveness to the repentant, hope to the despairing. His friends gave him shelter, food, and love. He gave them of himself, his love, his service, his life. The wisemen brought him gold and frankincense. He gave them and all their fellow mortals resurrection, salvation, and eternal life. We should strive to give as he gave.

(*The Gifts of Christmas*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], p. 129.)

Activity:

Take a tour of your home, looking at the Christmas decorations. Explain to everyone the meaning behind the symbols of Christmas. For example, the green of the tree represents life, the red ornaments the blood of the crucified Lord, the candy candy the crooked staff of the shepherds, the stars the Bethlehem star marking the Savior’s birthplace, the candle the “light of the world,” and the wreath symbolizes the eternal round of everlasting life that the Savior gave us.

(Kimberly L. Bytheway and Diane H. Loveridge, *Tradition*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], p. 89.)

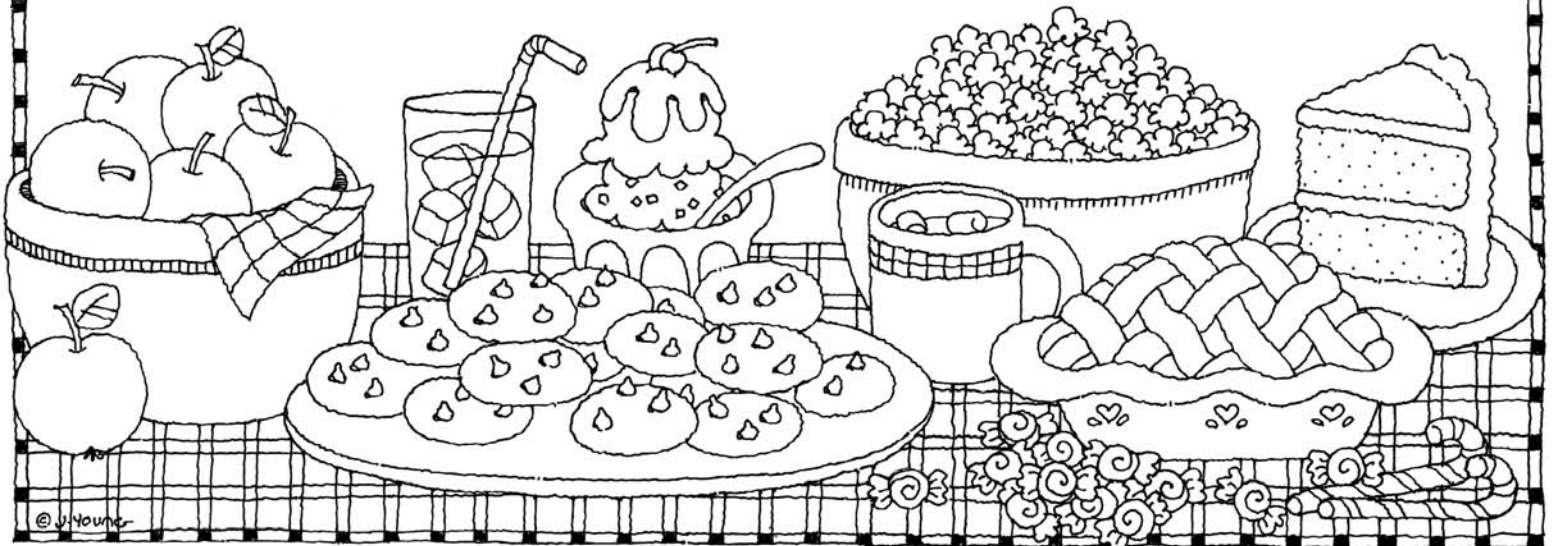
Refreshment

Danish Christmas Cookies

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 cup butter | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1 cup dark corn syrup | 4 to 5 cups flour |
| 1 tablespoon grated orange peel | 1/4 cup finely chopped almonds |
| 1 teaspoon cardamom | Split blanched almonds |
| 1 teaspoon cloves | |

Melt butter in a large saucepan; add brown sugar and corn syrup. Remove from heat and stir in orange peel, cardamom, cloves, salt, and cinnamon. Add enough flour to make an easily manageable dough. Knead in chopped almonds. Shape dough into two rolls about 15 inches long. Refrigerate dough for up to three weeks. When ready to bake, cut into thin slices and place on lightly greased baking sheet. Decorate each cookie with an almond half. Bake at 375 degrees F. about 8 minutes or until crisp. Cool on wire rack. Store in tightly covered container. Makes 15 dozen.

(*Lion House International*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], p. 94.)



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