

## The Gingerbread Gospel

*Present the Gingerbread Gospel with everything you need for making a gingerbread house with your children or a group of children.*

**ASK:** Can you imagine what it would be like to live in a life-sized gingerbread house? What would your favorite candy house be made out of? What would you use for beds, chairs, pillows, and toys? (Let the children offer ideas.)

**EXPLAIN:** Wow, those are great ideas! That would almost seem like the perfect place to live, wouldn't it? Well, the Bible tells us about a real live "perfect place to live." It's called Heaven. Long ago, that's where Jesus lived. But God decided to send Jesus from His perfect house in Heaven to Earth (John 6:38).

**ASK:** What was the first house Jesus lived in on Earth? (Pause to let children offer answers, but lead them to use the term "stable.")

What is a stable? (Let them offer answers, but lead them to understand it by using the term "barn.")

What do you think it would have looked like? What would have been in that stable? What would it have smelled like? (Allow your children to think freely, but keep them on track and focused by moving along before they can become distracted.)

Jesus' first bed was a manger (Luke 2:1-7). What is a manger? (Help children understand it is a feeding trough for animals. Compare it to a dog's food bowl. Would they want to place a newborn baby in something like that?)

Was it anything like the perfect place Jesus came from? Now, why do you think that God would send His own Son from a perfect house in Heaven, to a dirty, smelly, cold place like a stable? (Let children offer answers.)

**EXPLAIN:** God sent Jesus because He loves you very much! He wanted you to know Him, and so He sent His Son Jesus to tell you about Him, and to show you what He was like. Jesus did just that. He taught us about God, and the things that He taught are all written down for us in the Bible (John 3:16).

One day, when Jesus was still a young man, He left His home on Earth. He took the punishment for all the bad things we've done when He died on a cross. And now He has a new home. Do you know where that is? He still lives in Heaven, but He wants to live in our hearts. He will come and live in our hearts if we just ask Him to. He will forgive us for all of the wrong things we've done (John 14:15-17).

**ASK:** Now, why do you think Jesus would want to live inside us? Why would He want to go to all that trouble for us, so that God would forgive us of our sins? (Pause for responses.)

**EXPLAIN:** He does that because He loves each one of you so much! He wants to always be close to you and help you with every single thing in your life, every day.

Finally, the Bible says one more important thing about houses. It says that Jesus is preparing a house for each one of us in heaven! He says that one day, we can all live forever with Him there in that perfect, wonderful place! (Luke 1:31-33; John 6:38-40; John 14:1-3)

**RECAP:** Can you tell me what houses we have talked about that Jesus has lived in? (Heaven, stable earth, our hearts, and Heaven again)

**REMEMBER:** Now, when you take your gingerbread house home, I want you to remember how much Jesus loves you every time you look at it. And I want you to remember that Jesus wants to live inside you now, and one day, He wants you to live with Him in Heaven. Let's pray together and thank Jesus for all His houses.

**PRAY TOGETHER:** Have children bow their heads with you to pray. Pause at each break and encourage them to repeat each phrase after you.

*Dear Jesus,*

*Thank you for leaving Heaven to come to earth to teach us about God. And thank You for dying, for taking the punishment for all the wrong things we've done, and for wanting to live inside us. Thank You for preparing a place for us in Your beautiful Heaven, and all because You love us SO MUCH. In Jesus' Name, Amen*