

# **Well Fed Family**

## *Lessons for Christmas*

### *The Prophets Foretell Jesus' Birth*

#### **I. Memory Verse:**

Matthew 1:22-23 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

English Standard Version

#### **II. Lesson:**

The Bible is an amazing book. It is an ancient book, but it is still in use today. People read and study the Bible every day. The Bible was written by about 40 different men over a span of about 1,600 years. From Genesis at the beginning of the Old Testament all the way through to Revelation at the end of the New Testament, the Bible contains the actual words spoken by God as well as many other words that were inspired by God and given to the writers.

There are over 6,000 verses of prophecy in the Bible. A prophecy is the foretelling or prediction of what is to come. The prophecies of the Bible were divinely inspired by God. Over 300 prophecies were made over 1,000 years' time about Jesus the Messiah, the promised One.

Names:

Why is it important for everything to have its own name? What if we only called things "stuff" or "liquid" or "thing"? Can you imagine how confusing it would be to order at a restaurant? You might say something like, "I would like to have some stuff to eat", and then you would just hope they would bring you something you liked!

What about you? How many names can describe you? Are you a son or daughter? Brother or sister? Student? Grandchild? Artist? Athlete? Do you have a nickname? What do your names tell about you?

Sometimes parents name their babies after special family members. Sometimes they choose a name because it has a special meaning. My son was named for a famous person in history, and my daughter was named after special family members. Our names help to make us special, they distinguish us from other people around us.

There are prophecies about Jesus about special names given to him. They also told the place he was to be born and also how and when he would die. In Luke 24:44 Jesus himself said "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms"

Open your Bible and let's read together a prophecy from Isaiah 7:14.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

In this prophecy we learn how Jesus' birth was special. We also learn one of the names of Jesus – Immanuel – which means “God with us.”

Let's read another verse from Isaiah. Find chapter 9:6-7

Isaiah 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and of peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Can you find some of the other names used to describe Jesus? Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. These verses in Isaiah tell of names that are like royalty; names that tell about Jesus' divine qualities as well as his human qualities. He was born like a human being, but his virgin birth is something only God could do. He is mighty as a warrior because he protects his people. He is the everlasting father who cares for his children, and his reign will bring peace everywhere.

“David's throne” means that Jesus the Messiah will be a descendant of King David. David's kingdom was great, but Jesus' kingdom, which is Heaven, will be so much greater! Justice and righteousness means that when Jesus rules in Heaven there will not be anything that causes problems between people such as war or stealing.

Now we can read in the New Testament the writings of Matthew, an apostle of Jesus, and his account of Jesus' birth.

Matthew 1:18-24 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to put her away quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

We know that Jesus is indeed the Messiah because he fulfilled all the prophecies made about him. The Bible gives us words from God to look for when we are looking for the real Savior. We know Jesus is the real deal because all of these things describe him – that is Good News!

### III. Extending the Lesson to the Kitchen:

One of the most favorite flavors anywhere in the world is vanilla! Even though you can find vanilla-flavored foods all around and some people even call it “plain” vanilla, the flavor of real vanilla is very complex and precious. For a long time Europeans used vanilla only as an ingredient in making chocolates, until 1602 the pastry chef for Queen Elizabeth the First suggested trying vanilla as a flavor by itself. Soon vanilla flavored things became popular all over Europe. Today vanilla is popular in ice cream, milk shakes, cakes, cookies, custard, pudding, and candies. You can also find vanilla-scented candles, lotions, perfumes, and air fresheners.

Only a small percentage of all of these vanilla things are made from “real” vanilla.

#### Real Vanilla:

Real vanilla is made from the fruit of an orchid whose blossoms open only one day per year. It requires a lot of special work to grow and harvest vanilla. Each flower must be hand pollinated in order to grow a successful crop. Then the vanilla beans are dried and aged for up to one and a half years. Vanilla orchids are grown in tropical climates, primarily in Madagascar, Tahiti, Mexico and Indonesia. Some vanilla is labeled “Fair Trade” which means the vanilla farms were inspected to make sure the workers and farmers are safe and have enough food, shelter and medical care and are paid a fair wage for their work.

All of these things are the reason real vanilla costs so much! You can pay more than \$10 for a small jar with just two vanilla beans inside. Vanilla is also the only flavor that is regulated by United States law. The law says that a gallon of real vanilla extract must have 13.5 ounces of vanilla beans in a solution of 35% alcohol.

The main part of the flavor of vanilla is a chemical called *vanillin*. Real vanilla has more to its flavor than just vanillin, however. There are as many as 250 other flavors found in real vanilla beans. Taste testers say these things taste like hints of honey, maple, licorice, dried plum, spice and nuts.

#### Artificial vanilla:

In 1858 a French chemist discovered how to separate the vanillin flavor from all the other flavors in the vanilla bean. Once that happened chemists could find that same molecule in other places, and then reproduce it in the laboratory. Then in 1874 two German chemists discovered chemical compounds in coal that smelled and tasted just like vanillin. This was exciting for the food processing industry. Now they could make synthetic vanilla from something much less expensive than real vanilla beans. So for many years coal tar was used to make artificial vanilla, but then other scientists discovered that eating too much coal tar could cause cancer, so in the United States using coal tar wasn't allowed anymore.

Over the last 100 years chemists have learned to make artificial vanillin from all kinds of things including cinnamon, wood pulp waste from the paper industry, pine bark, rice bran, corn and even cow poop! Making vanillin from cheap ingredients means that artificial vanilla is much cheaper for the industrial food manufacturers to use. Imitation vanilla demand is 37 times higher than real vanilla extract for this reason. To make things more confusing the U.S. FDA's labeling laws say that any flavor, including vanillin, that is made from something edible such as corn or rice bran, can be labeled as “natural flavor”.

This is why you will find the words “made from natural flavors” on some packages that use artificial vanillin instead of real vanilla.

Vanillin made from wood pulp or other alternative ingredients looks the same chemically as vanillin from real vanilla beans. The biggest difference between real and artificial comes from those 250 other flavor components we talked about in real vanilla. Plus, if the artificial vanillin came from someplace outside the U.S. it could still be made from coal tar or another dangerous ingredient.

This is why it is important to read the labels and know how to identify the real thing.

#### **IV. Recipe**

Let’s make something really yummy using real vanilla!

##### **Real Vanilla Ice Cream**

adapted from [Nourishing Traditions Cookbook](#)

3 egg yolks (preferably from organic or pasture raised hens)

½ cup real maple syrup

1 Tablespoon real vanilla extract

3 cups heavy cream (look for cream that is not ultra-pasteurized if you can find it)

Beat the egg yolks in a large bowl, then blend in the remaining ingredients with a whisk. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and process according to the instructions on the freezer.

If you don’t have an ice cream maker you can still make this recipe! You will need 2 heavy-duty quart-sized Ziploc bag, 2 heavy duty gallon-size Ziploc bag, 2 bath towels, ½ cup rock salt/ice cream salt, and plenty of crushed ice.

You will need to divide the ice cream mixture equally between the two quart-size Ziploc bags and then zip them securely. Now place each quart bag inside a gallon bag. Now fill each gallon bag with enough crushed ice so that the ice cream bag is completely surrounded. Now add ¼ cup of rock salt to each gallon bag of ice, and seal up the gallon bag.

Now wrap the each gallon bag in a bath towel and give it to the kids to shake and roll around for about 15 minutes. Please supervise this! You don’t want the bag to get punctured and have ice cream and salt water all over the place!

After 15 minutes the ice cream should be at the soft-serve stage. You can eat it now, or you can stick the whole bag into the freezer to let it firm up more before eating. If you leave it in the freezer too long it will get very hard and you will have to let it sit out for a few minutes to soften enough to scoop.

## **V. Music for Listening and Learning**

George Frideric Handel composed an oratorio called Messiah in 1741. His text came directly from the King James Bible and from the version of the Psalms in the Book of Common Prayer. This selection is called “For unto us a child is born” and comes directly from the prophecy in Isaiah.

[https://youtu.be/g\\_KSzeumoQM](https://youtu.be/g_KSzeumoQM)

## **VI. Art Connection**

Vanilla orchids are not the most beautiful of the orchid family. That’s ok since they aren’t grown only for their beauty, but also for their delicious vanilla pods! You can do an image search for vanilla orchid flowers and then try to sketch or draw one yourself, or you can print the clip art orchid included at the end of this lesson and color it yourself. You can also visit the potted plant section of a garden center or nursery and see other kinds of beautiful orchids in bloom. Some orchid plants are easy to care for and will bloom every year at the same time of year. We have two orchids at our house that bloom each year around Valentine’s Day since they were once originally Valentine gifts to our daughter from her dad!

## **VII. Going Further**

A. Look up other prophecies in the Bible that tell about Jesus. Some prophecies are general, some are specific. Isaiah, Psalms, and Zechariah are three Old Testament books to start with.

B. We love the Drive Thru History DVD series. Here is a short clip from Drive Thru History: the Gospels that gives a list of many other prophecies about Jesus. <https://youtu.be/RfOGnvOgScI>

C. Try looking up your own name in a baby names book to find out the meaning. Does it fit with who you really are? Do your parents know who you will be before you are grown? Did they have a prophecy to tell them what to name you? Talk to your parents about how they chose your name.

D. You can make your own real vanilla extract. There are easy recipes on the internet.

E. Other ingredients to research that are often substituted with artificial substitutes include chocolate, olive oil, and many fruit flavors. You can research the Italian extra virgin olive oil scandal from 2008. Or try comparing ingredients on lemon-flavored drinks you can buy at the store such as frozen lemonade, juice boxes, sports drinks, etc. and determine which is “real” and which is artificial. Try making your own lemonade. 1 cup lemon juice (about 7 lemons squeezed), 1 cup sugar, and 5 cups water.

