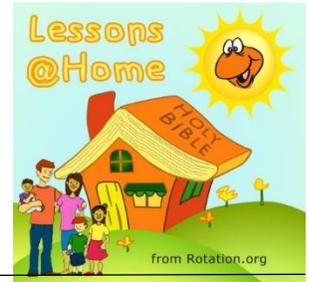


Rotation.org's @Home Advent Lessons: Jesus Is Born!

Made for portability, Journey Cakes are take-out food, made to last on a journey or to sustain a worker during the day. Your family will explore two passages from the Christmas story and consider the Advent journey to Christmas as you make this tasty fried snack.



Jesus Is Born! Journey Cakes



Summary of the activity:

You will make and eat traditional Journey Cakes. Though not a traditional Advent bread, Journey Cakes are a fun and tasty way to learn about our Advent journey.

Scriptures for the lesson:

[Matthew 1:18-25](#): the angel's announcement to Joseph.
[Luke 2:1-7](#): Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and Jesus' birth.

For additional insight, see the [Bible Background](#) at Rotation.org.

What you need:

- Bible or a device to read Scripture passages online
- INGREDIENTS (Makes about 10 flat Journey Cakes approximately 3/4" high and 3 to 5 inches round.)
 - 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 tablespoon baking powder
 - ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - 3 tablespoons sugar
 - 3 tablespoons butter (use real butter for both authentic flavor and rich color)
 - ½ – ¾ cup cold whole milk
 - Oil for deep frying
- A temperature controlled fryer or skillet
- Mixing bowls, spoons, measuring cups, and a metal slotted spoon
- Paper towels

Background:

Journey Cakes are a traditional, fried, semi-sweet, dense quickbread. Somewhat similar to cornbread or cake donuts, Journey Cakes are more of a "staple" food: simpler, denser, and less sweet. The history of Journey Cake goes way back. Recipes are found along the eastern seaboard of the US, the southern US, and they are still a common food in the Caribbean. The cakes in West Indian culture are known as, "Johnny Cakes" ("Johnny" being how the word journey is pronounced in the islands). Similar breads are found in many cultures, including Native American (typically made with corn) and in Biblical times (a fried and sweetened unleavened wheat bread, and perhaps even manna).

Start your lesson!

1) Introduce the Bible story

Begin by reading [Matthew 1:18-25](#), the story of Joseph and the Angel.

Ask:

After learning that his soon-to-be wife Mary was pregnant with a child not his own, what kind of “journey” was Joseph expecting? Easy? Hard? Guilty? Embarrassed? Staying hidden? Public? (The scripture says he was going to send her away quietly.)

After hearing the angel’s announcement, what kind of journey do you think Joseph expected? Mary? —giving birth and raising the Savior of the world?

Is it easy obeying God? Do God's promises and actions make our lives easier or more complicated? Would you rather do something other than a Bible lesson right now?

Say: Our journey toward God, like Joseph and Mary’s, isn’t always easy. There are surprises, and sacrifices to be made. But do you remember what the angel said first to Joseph?? (“Do not be afraid...” verse 20)

And do you remember who the angel said would be with us? (“God is with us!” verse 23)

2) Mix and Knead

Pre-heat oil for deep frying – about 350 degrees F.

Put the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, and sugar in a large bowl and mix well. Smoosh the butter into flour with your fingers or a fork, until it resembles a fine crumble. Add enough milk a little at a time to form a dough.

When the dough comes together, knead for 2 to 3 minutes. Kneading is important to activate the gluten (binding) in the mixture. (You can divide the dough and give each person a portion to knead.)

As you knead the dough, **explain what the “Journey Cake” is all about** (see notes above).

3) Make Patties and Begin Frying

Divide the dough into 8 to 10 equal pieces (about the size of a golf ball), roll into balls and then flatten them between your palms into 3/4-inch thickness. (Fatter cakes will take more cooking time.)

Gently lower the flattened patties into the hot oil. Flip the cakes when the underside is golden brown (about two minutes per side) using the metal slotted spoon. Usually, the dough will sink a little when added to the oil and then float within 10 to 15 seconds.

Drain and let cool on paper towel.



Important: A half inch to 1 inch of frying oil in a 12 inch frying pan (temperature controlled) will be enough for about 10 cakes. Maintain oil level as needed in-between frying of cakes. Do not add cakes to oil that it not hot enough, as this will cause the cakes to absorb the oil, instead of frying in it.

Take precautions against splattering.

As you make the dough into patties for frying, read [Luke 2:1-7](#), the story of a couple making their own journey into the unknown (and probably carrying some sort of journey bread with them).

While patties are frying, ask:

How do you think Joseph and Mary reacted when they heard the decree that they had to travel all the way to Bethlehem while she was pregnant?

Have you ever come to the end of a long journey only to discover that you didn't have a place to sleep or had to wait your turn to use the bathroom? How do you think Mary and Joseph felt about hearing there was “no room in the guestroom/inn”?

What does it feel like when your Christmas journey is over? ...and all the gifts are unwrapped? (The journey can feel a bit like a let down.)

When Jesus was born, do you think Mary and Joseph felt like YOU do on Christmas morning after the gifts are all unwrapped?

Like you, they were probably tired and overwhelmed, but looking forward to something. What was it?

On December 26th, will you feel like Christmas is “over” or “just begun”??

How can you keep the journey going? What can we look forward to in the weeks and months ahead?

Make this point: In a sense, WE are the baby at Christmas, and Jesus is our parent. We are the ones who need to leave the manger, grow up, learn to walk, talk, and love. It is OUR journey that’s ahead, and Jesus goes with us.

What do you need to do in the weeks ahead to “go grow in faith”?

4) Snack after you pray to prepare for the Journey

Before you eat the tasty treat you have prepared, pray a “journey blessing” that as you go out to celebrate and get ready for Christmas, your journey won’t end at the manger, but will be just getting started!

Adapted from [this lesson](#) by the Rotation.org Writing Team

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