Prayer and Reflection Activities

This resource is intended to support prayer and reflection activities during your Christingle celebration. Christingle services provide a wonderful opportunity for us to reflect on the message of the gospel, and what it means for us and our world today. In addition to the activities contained in this document, you can find other activities and ideas in our Guide to hosting a Christingle. To see the full list of resources available, visit christingle.org/resources.

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A prayer to use in schools

Loving Lord,
We thank you for the light in our lives, for those who give us love and hope.
We thank you for The Children's Society as it brings light to children and young people who feel unloved or without hope.
Help us always to be a light shining in the darkness so that we can share the love of God with those around us.
In the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world,
Amen.

A prayer for Christingle making

1. Insert foil into the cross in the oranges and pray:
   Generous God,
   how glorious is your name in all the world!
   We give thanks for the earth, our home.

2. Wrap the red ribbon around the orange and pray:
   Thank you for Jesus, who died on a cross to show your great love for us all.

3. Insert the four cocktail sticks of fruit or sweets one at a time as each line of the prayer is said:

   First stick
   We give thanks for the seasons,
   with their many gifts and fruits, so varied in different parts of the globe.

   Second stick
   We give thanks for night and day, a time for rest and sleep, and a time for play and work.

   Third stick
   We give thanks for people, all so wonderfully different, yet each created in your image.

You will need:

- 1 bag per person, containing all the elements needed to make a Christingle: 1 orange, 4 cocktail sticks, 8-12 sweets/pieces of dried fruit, 1 wax candle, a small strip of red tape, and one square of foil.

Make sure the hole is cut in the top of the orange and the sweets or fruit are on their cocktail sticks.

Give each person a Christingle bag. As you build each part of the Christingle, say a part of the prayer below.
4. Insert the candle into the hole in the top of the orange.

We give thanks for Jesus, our Saviour, at whose birth in Bethlehem a star lit up the sky.

5. When the Christingles are finished, use the response.

Leader: Christ is our light. The light shines in the darkness, All And the darkness has never put it out.

Prayer Stations

You might like to have an informal time of prayer, in which people are able to move around and pray in different places and spaces. We have some suggestions as to how you might structure this, but do feel free to add in your own prayer stations, depending on the congregation, and their needs.

Station 1: Praying through the Christingle

The Christingle is a great starting point for prayer, as each part of a Christingle tells us something about God, and the world in which we live.

You will need:

- Instructions on how to use this station
- Paper cut-outs of each part of a Christingle – an orange, ribbon, sticks with sweets on, a candle.

At this station, people are encouraged to write prayers on different sections of the Christingle according to what each part represents, as follows:

- Orange – pray for the world, for countries in need, for those that face war, political problems or natural disasters.
- Ribbon – thank God that he sent Jesus to dwell amongst us, and for the sacrifice of Jesus that means we might know his love.
- Sweets – pray for those around you: friends, family and neighbours; those who need God’s love and care, and vulnerable people in your community, particularly young people who are in need of protection, safety and a loving family.
- Candle – thank God that he brings light to dark situations, and hope to those who need it most. Give thanks for the work of The Children’s Society, as they work in the darkest of situations, bringing light to those who need it most.

Station 2: The prayers of young people matter

A Christingle service is a time to celebrate the contribution of young people to your church, and to your community. The words and prayers of young people are not insignificant. Whilst all these prayer stations are suitable for all ages, why not have a station which specifically encourages young people that their prayers matter to God.

You will need:
Ask young people to write down their hopes and dreams - the things that really matter to them. Encourage young people that they are precious and valuable in the eyes of God – every prayer matters to God, who listens. You might like to arrange these so that the rest of the group can read and pray these prayers.

**Station 3: Prayers at the cross**

There is something symbolic about taking your prayers to an actual cross. If you can, try and represent the wood of Christ’s cross physically as this can be a powerful way to pray.

**You will need:**

- Wooden planks/branches which would form a cross (these can be any size, but the bigger the better)
- Tealights
- Matches
- Handwritten/printed copies of Bible verses about light
- A map of the UK
- Stickers/post-its
- Information on The Children’s Society’s work

Encourage people to light a tealight, and carry it to the cross, leaving it on/near the cross (depending on how you’ve been able to make it). As they take the light, they might pray for a particular situation which feels dark, remembering that the candle of a Christingle represents the light of Christ shining into that situation.

**Verses of light**

Take some time to reflect on verses in the Bible which talk about light. Do feel free to choose your own verses, or use our suggestions below.

- John 1.4-5: ‘In [Jesus] was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.’
- John 8.12: ‘Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ’I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’”
- Matthew 5.14: ‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid.’
- 2 Corinthians 4.6: ‘For it is the God who said, ’Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’
- 1 Peter 2.9: ‘But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.’

**Prayer for the work of The Children’s Society**

As you remember young people who are living in darkness, pray for those who help bring them into the light.

You can find information about The Children’s Society’s work and impact in the How to talk about The Children’s Society resource, as well as national information from our impact report. These pages might help to guide your prayers, as you give thanks for the work The Children's Society has done, and pray for the work of the charity in the year ahead.
Prayers for young people everywhere

Pray for young people you know across the UK.

Pray for young people and families you know across the UK. Write names on post-its and stick them on the map as you pray. Or, simply put a sticker on a city where you know young people face a particular issue. Pray that God’s grace and light would fill every place and every city.

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Liturgical Prayers

The following prayers can also be found in our liturgical service outline.

A simple response based on John 1

**Leader**  Christ is our light.

The light shines in the darkness,

**All**  And the darkness has never put it out

A gathering prayer

Eternal God,
in the darkness of winter,
and in the darkness of our broken world,
the light of Jesus shines to give us courage and hope.
Light up our hearts as we praise you

and our minds as we hear your word.

Amen.

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

Generous God,
how glorious is your name in all the world!
We give thanks for the earth, our home:
for the seasons, with their many gifts and fruits,
so varied in different parts of the globe.
We give thanks for night and day,
a time for rest and sleep, and a time for play and work.
We give thanks for people, all so wonderfully different,
yet each created in your image.
We give thanks for Jesus, our Saviour,
at whose birth in Bethlehem a star lit up the sky,
who died on a cross to show your great love for us all.

Amen.

A prayer for The Children’s Society

Loving Lord,
we thank you for The Children’s Society
as it supports children
when they are at their most vulnerable,
when they’re in desperate need of help,
when they have nowhere left to turn.
Guide and strengthen its work alongside
children and young people
who are frightened,
or who are neglected or along.
Grant us the wisdom to listen to their voices
and to recognise their gifts and insights.
Help us to work with them to create a society based on equality and justice,
where all may know the fullness of your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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A prayer of blessing when Christingles have been lit

May God bless the earth and all of creation.
May God bless all that we do throughout the seasons of the year.
May you know the love of the Lord Jesus close to you
and may you all shine as lights of love when the world seems dark.
Amen.

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Sending out

Leader  Go out in love and good will.
          Do not fear the darkness.
          Shine as lights in the world to the glory of God.
All      Amen.

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Creative activities and ideas

Parallel reading of John 1.1-5 and Genesis 1.1-5

You will need:
- Two people
- Print outs of the images in the Prayer and Reflection Images, or the ability to project them

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice 1 (John 1.1-5)</th>
<th>Voice 2 (Genesis 1.1-5)</th>
<th>Slide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the beginning…</td>
<td>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth…</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Word was with God, and the Word was God.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep…</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Word was in the beginning with God.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the beginning was the Word…</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>God said, 'Let</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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there be light’; and there was light.

| All things came into being through him… What has come into being through him was life, and the life was the light of all people. |
|God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. |
|The light shines in the darkness… |
|God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. |
|The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. |

### You will need:
- An image that conveys the idea of Christ as light of the world (minimum A4 size, ideally at least A3)
- One piece of strong card (larger than the image of Christ)
- A few gold or silver foil emergency blankets (Often available for minimal cost from outdoor shops)
- Electric tea lights
- A packet of black napkins, cut up into smaller squares
- A copy of the light of life activity worksheet
- Printed instruction card for the black napkin squares (included in the worksheet)
- Printed template of quotes about darkness and light cut up into individual cards (included in the worksheet)

### What to do:
- Download an image that conveys the idea of Christ as the light of the world.
- Stick the image onto the piece of strong card.
- Lean the image against a wall in your dark corner and create a river of light flowing from it using a couple of gold or silver emergency blankets shaken out and arranged along the ground in a flowing shape.
- Place electric tea lamps along your river of light: their light will be reflected by the foil and everything should shimmer.
- Cut up the quotes about light in the darkness (hyperlink).
- Distribute the cards in little piles around the river of light you have created.

**Light of life activity**

This activity has been designed to act as a drop-in prayer and reflection activity.

This installation could be left in a darkish corner during the Christingle season. You could also offer it outside in a sheltered spot. You could light it up for an hour or so at a time when people pass the building regularly after dark, or advertise its availability on a particular evening.
Place the cut up squares of black napkins near to the printed instruction card (hyperlink).

**Reflection: Can you make darkness?**

- Place the cut up squares of black napkins near to the printed instruction card (hyperlink).

**This reflection could be adapted to suit a service, school or group setting.**

**You will need:**
- A torch, a match or any other items you can use to make light

Ask the group how we make light. Answers may include flicking a switch, striking a match or using flint. Invite people to demonstrate this with your objects.

Next, ask the group what colour light is. Answers should include every colour of the spectrum.

Explain that scientists have found that light behaves as both a wave and a particle at the same time which is something fascinating that has baffled many great scientists.

Ask: what about darkness? Is it a solid, liquid, gas, wave or particle? This is a trick question, as darkness doesn’t exist in itself, but is simply the absence of light.

Can you make darkness? Explain: You can’t create darkness in the way you can make light, there isn’t a torch that emits darkness rather than light. Darkness only exists when there is nothing making light or the light is blocked out.

Explain that if we could turn off all the power, phones, the sun and everything else that makes light, everything would be dark because darkness is the natural state of affairs were no-one makes light.

In a similar way, it has been said that all it takes for evil to triumph is that good people do nothing.

- Ask: do you think that is a good comparison? How can you be someone who brings light?
- You may want to continue the conversation using the discussion questions in the discussion, study and youth group resource.

This reflection could be adapted to suit a service, school or group setting.