



Messy Church at home

22 November 2020 - Messy Christingle

Light in the darkness

While the pandemic is ongoing, we are still unable to meet together as a Messy Church, so for the time being, how about trying Messy Church at home?

Read:

John 1: 1-5

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 8: 12

¹²When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Matthew 5: 14-16

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Activities

Here are some activities to try, using bits and pieces you might have at home. If you can't find the exact same items, what things could you use instead?

Mini Christingle orange

You will need:

- Satsuma or clementine
- Red ribbon, or thin strip of red paper

- 4 cocktail sticks
- A birthday cake candle
- Selection of dried fruit and/or sweets
- Pin or sellotape to secure the ribbon

Start by sticking a length of red ribbon around the middle of the satsuma. Create a hole in the top of the satsuma big enough to hold your birthday candle. Push the candle into the hole. Push some dried fruit and sweets on to the four cocktail sticks and the stick them into the orange.

Think about our first two readings that talk about Christ as the light of the world. As you make your Christingle, reflect on each of the symbols of the Christingle: the orange (satsuma) representing the world, God's red ribbon of love around the world, his gifts in creation symbolised by the fruit and sweets, and of course, the light of the Christingle candle - Jesus the light of the world.



Create your own candle

You will need:

- Coloured paper (or you can colour in/paint your paper before you start)
- Scissors
- Glue

Cut two strips of coloured paper and stick them one on top of the other to form an 'L' shape.

Fold length A over length B, maintaining the 'L' shape. Then fold length B over length A, in the same way. Repeat this, until you have a square pile of folded paper. Stick the top two pieces together, so it doesn't unravel and then gently pull the bottom and the top of your pile of paper away from each other, a bit like a concertina, to create a 3D square tube. This forms your candle.





Using some yellow and orange paper, cut out two flame shapes, one larger than the other, and stick the smaller one on top of the larger one. Make a small fold at the base of the flame and put some glue along it. Stick it to the top of the candle.

Think about how a candle works. It can't light itself. It has to be lit. It's the same with us. We need to receive the light of Jesus.

Think about our third reading. Jesus is the light of the world, but he passes his light on to us. He tells us in Matthew 5, that we are the light of the world and that we should let our light shine for others to see. Jesus wants us to share his light and hope in the world.

Lights in the darkness

You will need:

- A cardboard box
- A world map (see template below)
- Scissors and glue
- Drawing pins, skewer, or something else sharp to make small holes
- A torch or battery operated tea light

First create your map. Print out the template below, or trace a world map from a book on to a piece of paper. You might also find it useful to stick your map on to a piece of card to make it a bit stronger.

Put your torch or tea light into the box and turn it on. Now place your map over the opening to the box, like a lid. Make sure that no light can escape.

Find Israel/Palestinian Territories where Jesus was born. Make a small hole there. Now put the map back over the box and see the effect of this one bright pinpoint of light in our world. Now make some more holes. You could do them randomly, or you could think about particular places you know. Now put the map over the top of the box again and see how Jesus' light has spread in the world. How can you help spread the light of Jesus?



Think about some places in the world where you know there are difficulties and how much they need the light and hope of Jesus. You might like to write some prayers asking God for the light of Christ to shine in these places.

Christingle services are often held in support of The Children's Society, which supports vulnerable children and young people who are enduring hardships, including depression, loneliness, anxiety and bullying. You could also write a prayer to ask for Jesus' light to shine in the lives of children who are suffering. [Find out more about The Children's Society here.](#)

Lemon star biscuits

You will need:

- Biscuit ingredients:
 - 175g cold butter, cubed
 - 250g plain flour
 - Pinch of salt
 - 100g icing sugar
 - 1 lemon, zested, plus 1-2tsp juice
 - 1 large egg yolk
 - 100g lemon curd
- Star shaped biscuit cutter (if you don't have one, you could draw a card star template and use a knife to cut round it)
- Small round cutter, apple corer or knife
- Baking tray lined with baking paper or greased (you might need two trays if you have them, or bake in batches)
- Oven heated to 180C/160C fan/gas 4

1. In a food processor, whizz up the butter, flour and a small pinch of salt until it looks like breadcrumbs. If you don't have a food processor, you can get the same effect by rubbing the flour and butter together through your thumbs and fingers.
2. Add the icing sugar and lemon zest and whizz again (or rub with your thumbs and fingers again).
3. Add the egg yolk and lemon juice and whizz again until clumps of dough form on the blades, carefully take the dough out of the mixer and form a ball with your hands. If not using a food processor, mix in gently with a spoon or palette knife and bring the dough together eventually using your hands. Try not to handle the dough too much - just enough to make a nice smooth ball of dough.
4. Wrap the dough in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for about 30 minutes.
5. Lightly flour your work surface and roll out the dough to about the thickness of a coin - you might find it easiest to split your dough in half and do in two batches. Then cut out an even number of star shapes.
6. Put half your star shapes on to your prepared baking tray. With the other half, you need to carefully stamp out a hole in the middle of your star shapes. I used an apple corer, but you could use a small cutter, or a knife.



7. Transfer the stars with holes to the baking tray with the others and bake all the biscuits for 15 minutes. Keep an eye on them and take them out a minute or two early if they start to get too brown. They should be a nice golden colour.
8. Cool on the tray for a few minutes and then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
9. When the biscuits are cool, pop a small spoonful of lemon curd on to the middle of all the stars without a hole and then sandwich those with a hole on top, so you can see the lemony centre in the middle.
10. Enjoy with a nice cup of tea! Your biscuits will keep for three days in an airtight container.



While you're making your star biscuits, think about the light that stars provide in the dark night sky. Consider how stars have been used across history to guide people on journeys, for example, sailors used them to help them navigate the seas. Do you remember, in the Christmas story, how a bright star in the night sky guided the wise men to Jesus when he was born in Bethlehem?

As Christmas approaches, we remember how Jesus is the light that came to the world as a light in the darkness for all people. This Christmas how can you make sure you keep shining that light where you live?

Cake case angels

You will need:

- Some cake cases
- Glue
- Ribbon
- Pens for decorating (you might have other shiny bits and pieces for decorating too)



Cut a cake case carefully into quarters. Turn all the quarters so the curved part is nearest you and the pointed part points away from you. Stick one quarter over the top of another about half a centimetre from the top. Repeat with the next two quarters, so you have all four pieces layered on top of each other. This is the angel's body.



Cut another cake case in half and cut one half into quarters. These are the angel's wings, so you need to stick them either side of the body.

Cut a small semi-circle to use for the angel's head and attach it. Decorate the angel how ever you like. Then take a small piece of ribbon, make a loop and stick it

behind the angel's head, so you'll be able to hang it on the Christmas tree. You might like to make a whole host of angels for your tree.

Think about how the angels came to the shepherds in the fields in the Christmas story - they shone with a light so bright in the night sky and told the shepherds to go and find Jesus in Bethlehem. The angels brought with them great news of joy and hope to the world.



Reflect

Light your Christingle. (Please be careful when lighting candles.) You might also like to have some other different types of candle available to light while you consider these reflections.

Think about your Christingle candle flame.

A candle can't light itself; it has to receive light. In the same way, each one of us needs to receive the light of Jesus for ourselves.

The problem is that this light will eventually burn down if we do nothing more than light this one candle. The light of the candle needs to be passed on. Jesus wants his light to be passed on in the same way. You might like to try lighting some other candles from your Christingle flame to demonstrate this.

Notice how, when you light more candles, the original candlelight does not lose any of its brightness; instead, the brightness grows between all the candles as they are lit. When we pass on God's light, we don't lose it. This is what is so special about the light of Jesus.

But there's still a problem. Even these flames will eventually die out if we do nothing more than just light our Christingles and a few candles. We need to go on sharing the light again and again and again. The more we give away the light, the more light there is.

Notice how all the candle flames are the same - it doesn't matter what size the candle is and whether it is old or new. We can all be in God's light wherever we are.

In our third bible reading, Jesus said his light should be held up high to bring light to as many as possible. This light should help all who are hurting or vulnerable or in need, like those The Children's Society works to protect and support.

Finally, notice what is happening at the heart of the flame on your candle. Can you see the black wick in the middle and can you see some of the wax dribbling down

the side? At the heart of the light there is a dying, as the wax melts and the wick is used up. The light Jesus gives us comes because he had to die before rising again to pass on the light that now burns in us.

It's been a difficult year for everyone - and Christmas might be quite different this year. More than ever, we need to keep Christ's light, love and hope shining in our hearts through the darkness.

Sing

Don't forget to keep singing Jesus' love is very wonderful.

And how about singing This little light of mine? If you can't remember how it goes, [have a listen here](#).

Pray

Thank you, Jesus, that you are the light of the world and that you have passed on that light to us through your cross and resurrection.

We are the light of Christ for the world.

Thank you, Jesus, that your light is stronger than darkness and you have passed on the power of that light to us by your Holy Spirit.

We are the light of Christ for the world.

Thank you, Jesus, that your light is shining through the work of The Children's Society, bringing hope and happiness to children and young people in dark times.

We are the light of Christ for the world.

Thank you, Jesus, that as we pass on your light in the care we give to others, your light never dies but continues to give light to the whole world.

We are the light of Christ for the world.

As we approach this Advent and Christmas season, may your light shine brighter and brighter as we celebrate your light in us and through us for your glory.

We are the light of Christ for the world.

Amen

You might also like to say The Lord's Prayer. And perhaps you'd like to finish with Messy Grace - can you remember the actions we do when we say it? Here's a reminder...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out your hands in front of you)

And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)

Be with us all now and for ever. Amen (Raise hands together on the word 'Amen' and shout loudly!)

World map template

