

The Christingle: Galatians 5.22-26

Today's TFTD comes from Kate. *Don't forget to go to our church website to experience the Advent Calendar online! You'll find a story, a song and a craft activity linked to today's TFTD. Just click on the link below:*

<https://www.stphilipandstjames.co.uk/advent>



Today's TFTD is on Christingle. I remembered the first few years after arriving in the UK as a youngster I experienced how amazing the Christingle services were. Later on after completing my training in youth ministry and sharing the message of Christingle with children, I learnt that this is indeed a very powerful way of communicating and sharing God's message of hope and love.

The idea of Christingle came from a Moravian Church in Germany in 1747. The minister, John de Watteville, gave children at the service a lighted candle with a red ribbon around it, which represents Jesus being the light of the world. The custom went around the world with the church; and Missionaries subsequently brought the Moravian church to England in the late 1700s.

Over the years the symbolism of the Christingle grew into what's known as a Christingle (Christkindl) today. And here's a brief reminder of what the different parts of the Christingle represent:

- The orange represents the world
- The red ribbon symbolises the love and blood of Christ
- The sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creations and four seasons
- And the lit candle represents 'Jesus the light of the world', bringing light and hope to people living in darkness.

This message of the light and hope of Christ Jesus is much needed today in the world as we are faced with so many difficulties and challenges, the effects of covid-19, loneliness, depression, poverty, war, climate change just to name a few.

This light of Jesus brings healing, comfort, peace, joy and hopefulness and has given us every reason to celebrate the coming of Christ into our world. A powerful example of a message of hope is the Children's Society Christingle 'Making a difference together'. Since 1968 The Children's Society Christingle has been a key part of celebrations within the Anglican Church and has raised essential funds to support the charity's work with the country's most vulnerable children. Here are few examples of their work: Helping young runaways, caring for young carers and supporting disabled children.

Jess' story

Thirteen-year-old Jess felt all alone. She rarely saw her dad, and her mum spent little time with her now she had a new boyfriend. Jess started running away and would stay out for long periods of time. Jess faced a lot of danger on the streets and would resort to accepting things from strangers and stealing. Jess took her first steps towards progress after being set up with a project worker from *The Children's Society*. This gave her someone who would listen to her and whom she could trust. Today, Jess is feeling better about her future and has plans to go to college to study cooking, painting and decorating.

Charlotte's story

Charlotte is sixteen, but she started caring for her mother when she was just five. These days she looks after her mum, who is very unwell, and her five year old niece. Every day she sorts out her mum's medicine and gets her niece ready for school. She checks on her mum during the day and when she gets home she cooks dinner and does the cleaning, because she is so busy, she doesn't really have any friends. But thanks to *The Children's Society* she went to the young carer's festival and had a break from her responsibilities. She says it was amazing. Having a few days of fun really makes a difference to carers like Charlotte.

These stories and many more are examples of what we can do in bringing the light, hope and love of Christ to others. This brings us to what St Paul says in Galatians 5:22-26 urging us to possess and live by the fruit of the spirit which is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In the same manner Christingle urges us to be bearers of the light of Christ and allow it to shine in our world.

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