



The
Children's
Society

Muddy Church Christingle



What is a Christingle?

Christingle celebrations were introduced to The Church of England over 50 years ago by The Children's Society. (Although the Christingle tradition goes back much earlier to the Moravian Church in 18th century Germany, and some Moravian churches still celebrate Christingle today). The celebration is named after the Christingle itself – an orange, adorned with red tape, cocktails sticks and sweets/fruit and a candle, representing Jesus, the Light of the World.

Christingle is celebrated each year by thousands of churches, schools, uniformed groups and others. Christingle celebrations have raised millions of pounds to support The Children's Society's work with this country's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.



About The Children's Society

The Children's Society fights for the hope and happiness of young people when it is threatened by abuse, exploitation and neglect. We take inspiration from the courage and hope we see in young people every day. It fuels our belief that a good childhood is something every young person deserves.

Since 1881, we've been understanding young people's needs and providing local services that support them through their challenges. We also campaign tirelessly for the big social changes that will transform the well-being of young people, and strive to improve the lives of those who need hope most.

In the decade ahead, our focus and goal are to overturn the decline in well-being, ensuring this generation of young people can have happier, safer childhoods. Driven by hope and working alongside young people and supporters, we will not rest until together, step-by-step, we've created a society built for all children.



About Muddy Church



Muddy Church is designed to help people connect with their community, God and nature – to adventure with God beyond the walls.

Every Muddy Church is different, each is autonomous, because it is about you engaging with your community. Some people are in very rural areas, others in the inner city. For some people there is a specific age group but generally we aim to be intergenerational. Muddy Church is delighted to join with The Children's Society to offer another way to celebrate Christingle in your community. The ideas and resources here are to spark ideas, to add some additional ingredients to your celebration or to help support you. They can be used as a trail, session plans or as activities in a group or home.

Muddy Church aims to help people find ways of connecting with God and nature and so has a range of activities that don't just get us outside but help us to notice the world around us. In noticing nature we hope that people are able to see fresh ideas about God and their place in the world. The idea of Muddy Church is to 'wander and wonder' together and that invites us to take time and space but our wandering may be outside or a metaphorical journey from our home or school. Wondering is simply taking the time to allow yourself or others to ask questions, to think about ideas and to understand that we don't always have the answers. It offers moments of awe – noticing the 'wow' as well as exploring deeper thinking about the character of God in our lives. Whilst the questions encourage connections with God, Muddy Church is suitable for people on different stages of a faith journey and Christmas offers a wonderful opportunity to introduce a God not limited to a stable but present in the world around us.

If you are doing Muddy Church as a one-off event or part of a group please:

- Always make sure you have appropriate insurance.
- Always make sure you have appropriate safeguarding in place.
- Make sure you have permission for using any location.
- Make sure you don't take away from an environment and leave it in the same or better way that you found it.

Muddy Church has a range of resources that you can find:

muddychurch.co.uk

and is on a range of social media sites.

If you would like more information or help with your Muddy Church Christingle please do not hesitate to contact **lucie@muddychurch.co.uk**



How do we do a Muddy Christingle trail?

Think of a location in your local community.

It might be a church garden or car park, shop windows, around a housing estate, lampposts or the local park.

Get permission to use any spaces you do not own!

The QR codes can be used to save printing and link people directly to the website to follow the Trail.

Print out any sheets or QR codes that you are going to use.

Plan your dates.

Trails can be set up over a day, week or even a month. It could run up to the date of a Christingle celebration you are having or after it.

Tell people about your trail!

You could use social media, groups you run or know, local newspapers and radio.

Place the sheets around your location – if it's not an obvious route you might need to make a simple map for people.

Part of the trail refers to the elements of the Christingle. To begin the trail you may want to distribute paper bags (available to order from christingle.org/resources) including:

An orange, red ribbon (or tape), a candle, sweets or raisins, cocktail sticks or invite.

The trails are designed to invite people into wondering about the spaces that they are in, so encourage people to take their time.

The trail sheets can also be used individually as sessions looking at The Children's Society and Christingles.



How to use this pack

Also included in this pack are sheets that can be used for group activities, things to do at home and reflection sheets. These sheets are available to download from the bottom of each Trail page.

The activity ideas gives you the opportunity to think and talk together about what each part of the Christingle means.

Some of the activities require extra equipment. You may want to create activity packs to give out along with the Christingle for people to use at home.

The activity sheets can also be used for group sessions as part of a children or youth activity to explore the symbols and meaning.

The reflection sheets offer personal response spaces and mindful activities for all ages.

By connecting to the theme and idea the sheets offer personal reflection and could be used as part of a prayer response or bible study.

The reflection sheets offer personal spaces for thinking about the themes of the Christingle.

Bonus idea: You could email a theme for each day over the week leading up to your live Christingle event.



Introduction

You can access the Muddy Church Christingle Trail directly from the website: muddychurch.co.uk or through the QR code.

The interactive page offers a link to register your Muddy Church Christingle Trail or to donate personally to The Children's Society. The money raised through Christingle celebrations makes a huge difference to the lives of children and young people through offering support, listening, help and research.

The Christingle trail can be accessed independently through clicking on the different elements or from beginning with the Orange where the Trail will allow you to continue through at your own pace.



Introduction sheet

Muddy Church aims to help connect with nature and the world around you.

Please be considerate of others on the trail and respect appropriate distances.

Muddy Church encourages you to wonder

Take your time to reflect on any of the spaces. It's okay to ask questions, it's okay to not know the answers.

The trail can be followed by an individual or as part of a group

(abiding by any appropriate restrictions)

Each part of the trail has additional sheets and activities available to download from the website: muddychurch.co.uk

Simply follow the trail through the parts of the Christingle.



The orange represents the world

The Muddy Church Christingle takes us into our part of the world and this is a great time to think about what your community is like. Where might you see God in your space?

There's something special about the feeling of knowing that your church is part of a community of people all across the country who are holding Christingles to help children and young people.

It also offers us to think about the world that God has created, as we hold or smell the orange it might help us to think about the creation around us.

If we held the world in our hand how might we treat it differently?

Why does the Christingle start with an orange?



As you wander...

This is where we start our wander. As you begin I wonder what you will see, smell and hear?

How many things that are orange can you spot?

What different smells can you discover?

Orange trees grow to over 25 feet high. What's the tallest thing you can see?

Can you see any things that you or animals could eat?

What does the ground feel like as you walk?



I wonder what God enjoyed making the most?

Taste and see

I wonder if there are any seeds inside your orange? How many oranges could come from one of those? How much difference can we make with one seed of hope?

How does your orange feel?



Does the orange smell the same outside as it does inside?

Where has your orange come from?

I wonder how many segments are inside your orange?

Reflection

Where can you see or feel hope growing?

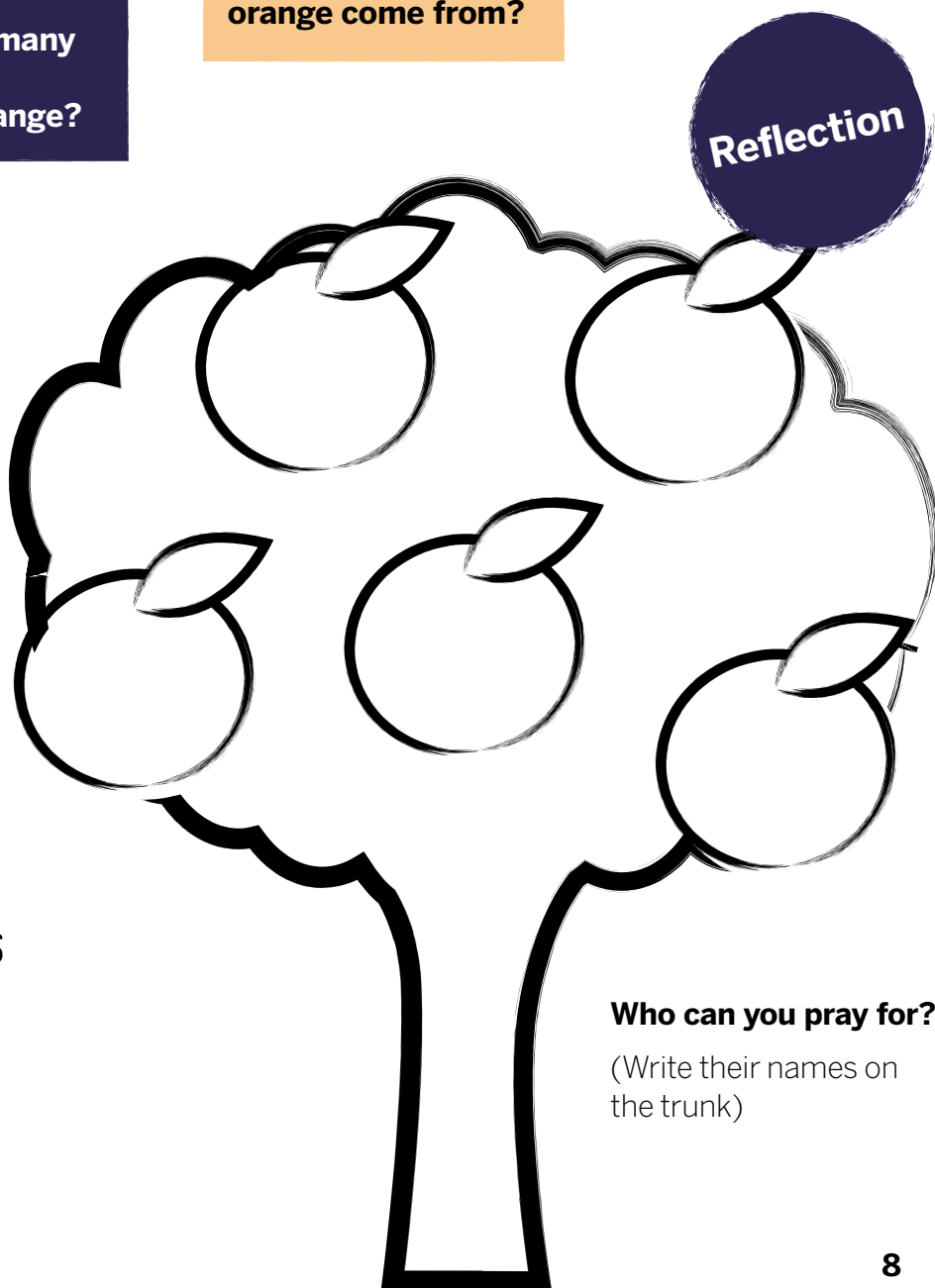
(Write your thoughts in the oranges)

'The word 'hope' to me means carrying on and that may sound really strange, but it is hope that drives that knowing, hoping that things will get better.'

Charlie, young carer supported by The Children's Society

Who can you pray for?

(Write their names on the trunk)



Taste and see

Activity

Campfire orange cake

1. Make your choice of cake using a box mix or simple sponge recipe.
2. Cut the top off the orange and scoop out the flesh.
3. Add your cake mix and then wrap your orange in foil, sealing it at the top.
4. Cook your orange cake in the fire until it is ready (check every 10 minutes but it depends how hot the fire is).



Activity

Orange bird feeder

1. God cares about all the world – the land, people and the animals.
2. You can make a simple bird feeder by cutting your orange in half and scooping out the flesh.
3. Add some string to hang the orange with.
4. Fill with seed or bird food.



Taste and see

You could place your hand on the world and pray for the places you know about.

What emoji do you think God would put in the different places? You could draw them on the map.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever. (NLV)

John 3:16



The red ribbon (or tape) symbolises the love and blood of Jesus

As we continue our Muddy Church Christingle we add the red ribbon or tape all around the orange, the symbol of the world. It is a wonderful reminder of God's limitless love and one that embraces people regardless of culture, country or background.

The Children's Society transforms the hopes and happiness of young people facing abuse, exploitation and neglect and the Christingle is a reminder of those who need to feel loved and valued. Just as our bodies require blood to flow around us so our communities need love shared with all people.

I wonder as you add the ribbon or tape if you can think of people who need to know God's love?

What is the red ribbon for?



As you wander...



As you wander I wonder if you can think about things you love?



How many things that are RED can you spot?

Can you see things wrapped around other things?

How many heart shapes can you see?

What can you hear – can you hear anything singing or talking?

I wonder if you can see God's fingerprints anywhere?

True love

How can you help people feel loved?

How long is your ribbon?

I wonder how the ribbon feels?

The ribbon represents Jesus' blood and his love for all the world.

How can you help people feel loved?

'I had no hope whatsoever when I came to The Children's Society. Now I have hope. I have confidence. I have an identity.'

Taylor

The Children's Society helps children and young people find love and hope in their lives.

I wonder if God's love ends?

Yarn heart

Activity

1. Cut out a heart-shape from card
2. Take some wool or yarn and wrap this around the heart-shape until it is covered
3. As you wrap the heart-shape, think about the people who care about you.
4. Place this somewhere to remind you that

You are loved!

True love

Reflection

What are the things or people you love?

Can you fill in the hearts with all the things that you love?



Can you find a rock, stick and acorn or nut to stick on the cards and pass them on to someone?

Activity

You rock!



Let's stick together



Nuts about you!



True love

Can you trace the path with your finger and thank God for the times you have felt his love?

Reflection

I wonder who needs to find love right now?



I wonder what things make it hard to feel God's love?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever. (NLV)

John 3:16

The sweets or dried fruit remind us of all of God's creations

I wonder what things in nature or the world around you make you smile and are 'sweet'? As we place sweets or dried fruit on sticks into the Christingle it reminds us of good things.

Sometimes the world can seem dark, sad and lonely. The Children's Society work to help bring light, hope and happiness, to be able to sense the good in the world around us. The sweets can be a symbol that no matter how hard things are there is the hope of goodness and signs of this all around us.

People often think of the four sticks as representing the four seasons and it is good to be able to look around and to see the ever-changing world. Things are constantly transforming from death and endings to life and future hope. The seasons offer different experiences from the amazing colours of Autumn to the shoots of new life in Spring.

I wonder what are your favourite things in each season?

Can I eat the sweets?



As you wander...

As you wander I wonder if you can see things that have changed over different seasons?



Can you spot 5 yellow things?

Are there things that aren't good?

What things look like they were fun to create?

What food for animals or bugs can you see?

I wonder what gifts God likes to receive?

So sweet

What is the sweetest thing you have ever tasted?

What good things could you share?

Have you ever grown any fruit?

Sweets and fruit that we add to the Christingle remind us of all of God's creations.

What is your favourite treat?



So sweet

Activity

Growing Gummy Bears

Have you ever wanted to grow a gummy bear?

This is not a special plant but try putting a gummy bear in a bowl or cup of water.

Watch it over 2-3 days and see if you can notice any difference?

You can also try the same with a raisin!

I wonder how the good things about you could grow and develop?



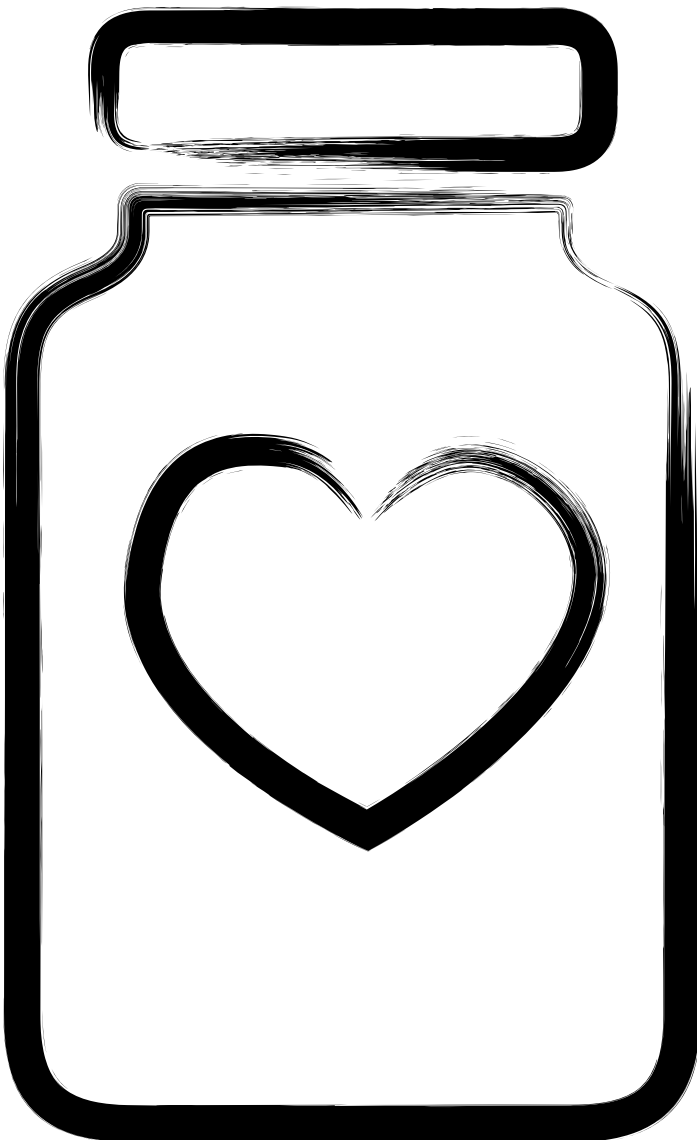
Can we try this at home?

Reflection

Psalm 103:5 says

God fills our life with good or sweet things.

What are the sweet things in your life?
Write or draw them in the jar.



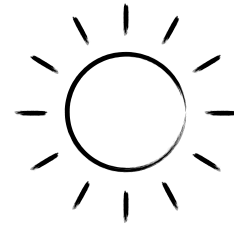
What are the different things in each season that you enjoy?



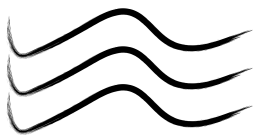
Spring



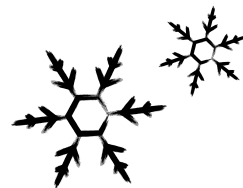
Summer



Autumn



Winter



So sweet

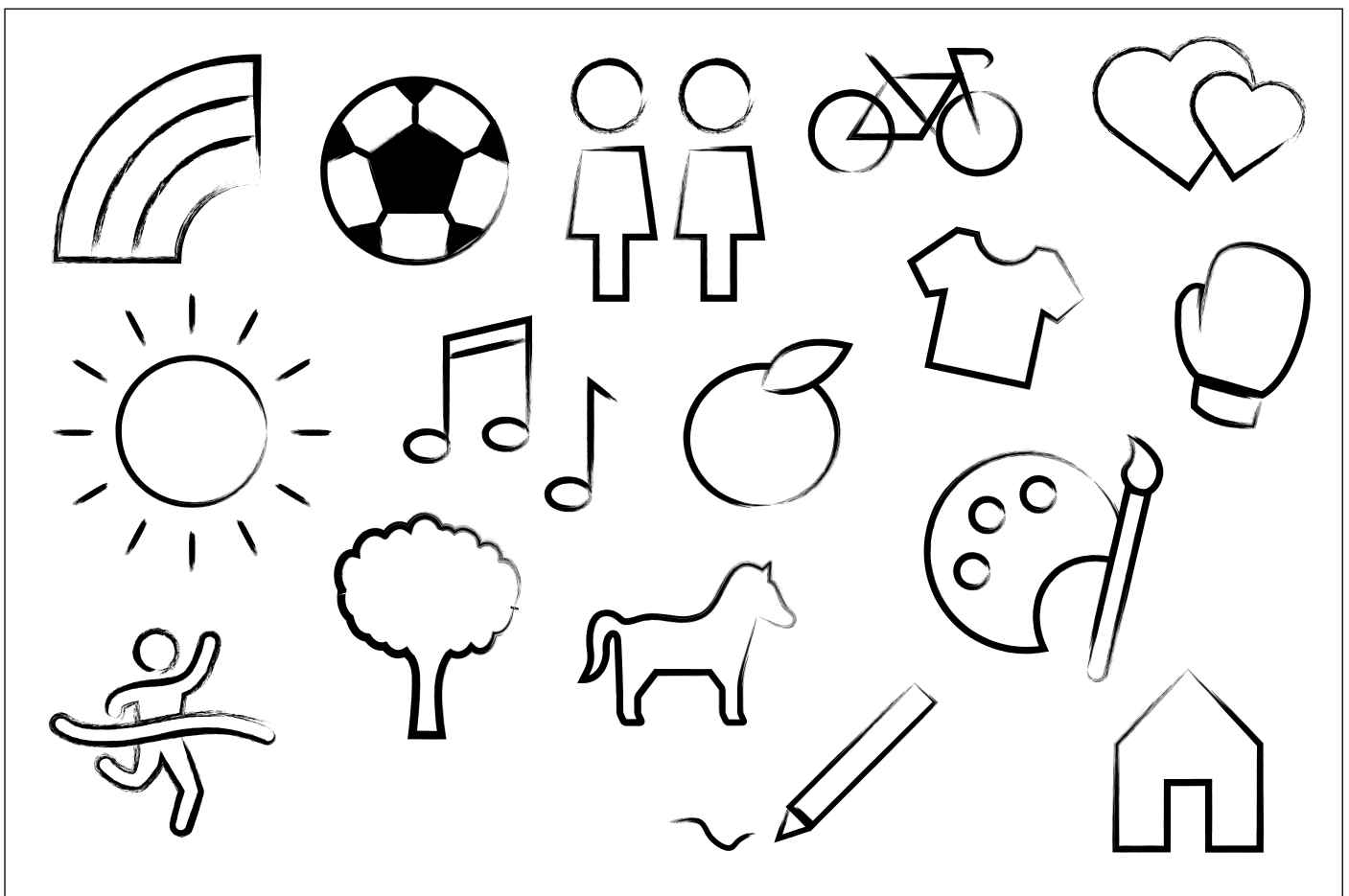
What would you choose from the picture as something good? Or what would you add?

Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars, who does not change like their shifting shadows. (NCV)

James 1:17

Reflection

I wonder how God feels when we enjoy something in creation?



The lit candle reminds us of Jesus's light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness

One candle can change a room from gloomy and dark to warm, light and even romantic. The candle in the Christingle reminds us of Jesus who entered the world, to live with people, share life and offer hope. He brought warmth to people who were lonely or excluded, he brought light into the dark moments of sadness and he brought love to the world.

Light around us reminds us when it is daytime and when it is night, it brings order to us. Light brings the essential elements for things in the natural world such as plants and trees to grow. In the same way The Children's Society is vital to the lives of many children and young people, offering them support and structure, spaces to grow healthily and develop.

The candle is the centre of our Christingle. We can invite Jesus to be the centre of our world and lives. To bring hope, light. To love to the places and people around us.

Can you see me shining?



As you wander...

Where can you see light?

Where are the dark spaces?

Can you move around to feel warmer? What could you do?

Can you see things that sparkle or glisten?

As you wander I wonder if you have noticed the light changing?



I wonder if there are places where you can see God as light?

See the light

Children should be supervised if using candles

I wonder if you can bring light when people feel things are dark?

What difference does the candle make to your space?

Remember to take extra care around lit candles and flames. Adults should ensure supervision.

I wonder how the warmth from the candle makes you feel?

I wonder how God might be like light?

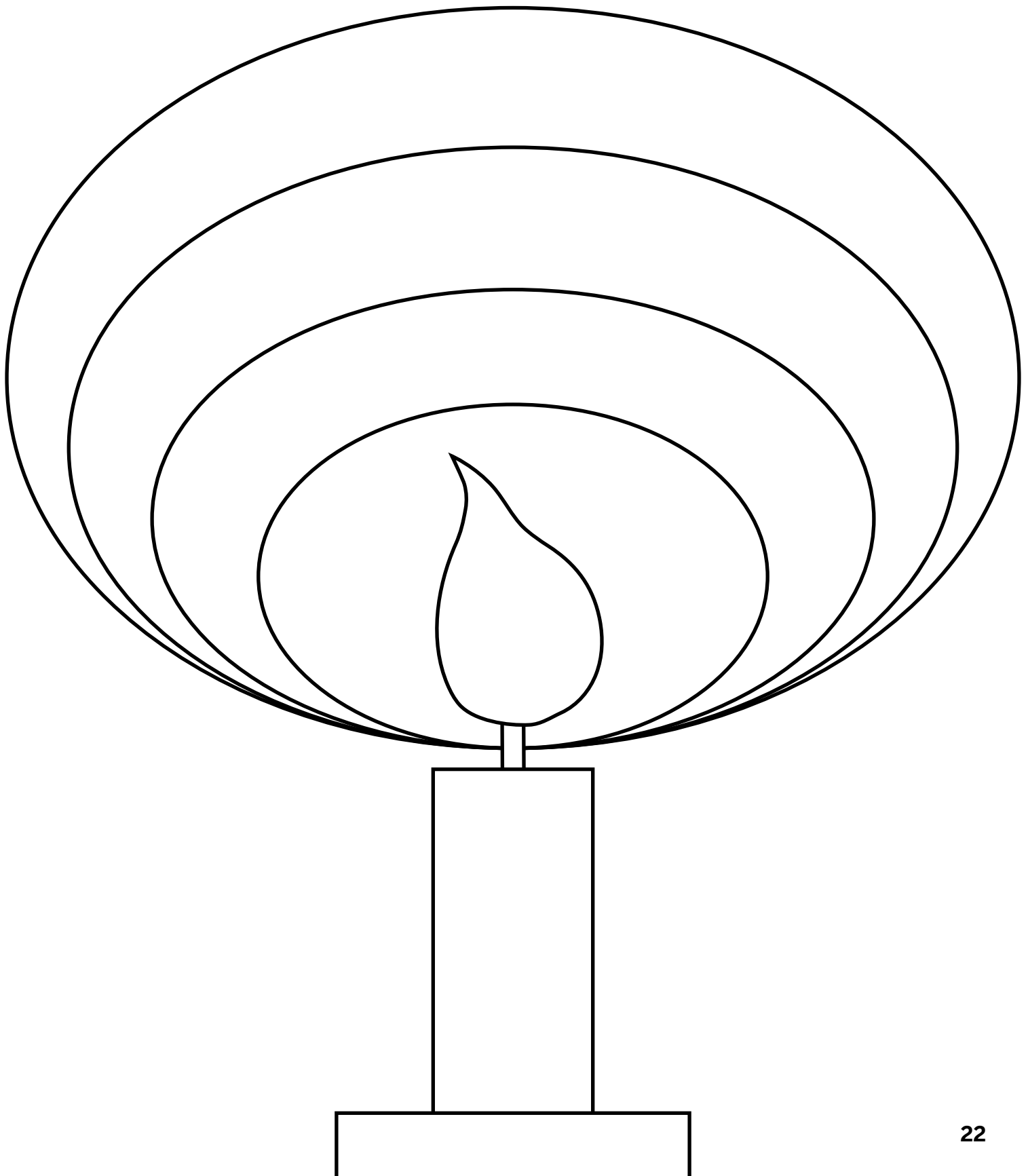
I wonder if you can see the smoke travelling around the room if the flame is blown out?



See the light

Reflection

Can you write or colour the circles with people or places that need God's light?



See the light

Activity

Amazing, appearing picture

Take a piece of paper and draw a picture on it with your candle.

Then take some water paint or a felt tip and colour over the paper.

Watch your picture appear!

You could try it with a word like light or hope!

Share your images

#Christingle

