



“Pass It On”

A Christingle Service

of the Word

using

Common Worship

Manchester Diocesan Board of Education

“PASS IT ON”

A CHRISTINGLE SERVICE OF THE WORD

PREPARATION

(When everyone is settled, the church is darkened)

Leader: “Let your light shine before all people, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven”. (Matthew Chapter 5, verse 16)

Leader: *(Lights a candle and holds it up)*
The light and peace of Jesus Christ be with you

All: and also with you.

(Church lights come on)

Leader: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

(A large bright cardboard sun rises from behind some appropriate piece of furniture)

All: Let us rejoice and sing God’s praise for ever.

(Fanfare/loud chords on organ/air horns; banners/prompt placards saying ‘hurray’)

All: Hurray!

(NB to make a hearty cheer, have several people scattered around the congregation and ‘primed’ to shout out)

Leader: * Welcomes the congregation to the service and reminds them of the symbolism of the Christingle: orange = world; 4 cocktail sticks = seasons; fruit and sweets on sticks = fruits of the earth; red ribbon = Christ’s blood; candle = Jesus – Light of the World: ‘Christingle’ means ‘Christ-light’ (perhaps making up a large card Christingle, with help of children, whilst explaining meaning of each part).

* Introduces focus of the service – thanksgiving for God’s gifts, in particular the gift of Jesus ‘The Light of the World’ and the idea of ‘passing on’ this light to others.

* Points out how ‘passing it on’ was central to the idea of the first Christingle: in 1747 Moravian Pastor John de Watteville (from Marienborn, Germany) gave Christingles to children and told them to take them home and display them in their cottage windows to share the Christ-light with passers by (not to be emulated today due to fire hazard of curtains!) Also, as the Moravians settled around the world they took the tradition with them and ‘passed it on’ to the communities around them. Now it’s our turn to take the Christ-light and pass it on.

Leader: Heavenly Father, you give us our world, and Jesus to light it up. Help us to be guided by his light, and to pass it on to others. Through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever, **Amen.**

Leader: And now we remember that God gives us the world and everything in it, by receiving the gift of a Christingle.

SONG

(During the song, which should reflect the theme of God's generosity in creation, children give out unlit Christingles to the congregation)

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

(A child acting as 'postman' runs down the church and delivers a letter to the reader)

Reader: *(Turning letter over in hand)* I do like getting letters – don't you? It's like someone sending you a present. This one's come a long way. I don't recognise the stamp at all. Just think of all the people who've handled it – passed it on until it got here. Lets see who it's from. *(Opens it and starts to read silently. Looks to the end, puzzled)* No signature – sounds like something from John, though. Listen: *(reads the letter)*

“My dear friends” – see, it's for all of us – “let us really care for one another; such care and love is God's gift to us. Everybody who loves and cares is his son or daughter, and knows God. Those who have no love in their hearts for anybody haven't the slightest idea what God is like, for the very heart of God is love.

“This is how God's love has been made clear to us: he sent his only Son to live among us to help us to live splendidly. I'm not thinking, you see, of the way we love God, but of the way he loves us. He loved us enough to send his Son to help us to get rid of all that is wrong in our hearts and lives. That's how we know what love means.”

(a version of 1 John chapter 4, verses 7 to 10
from “New World”, by Alan T Dale p298)

SKETCH ONE

(A child wanders up the nave, dressed in a shabby coat, peering at a leaflet from time to time and looking around – the child is trying to find the address on the leaflet. As the child reaches the front of the church one or two adults drift past. The child calls out to them, but they walk on by. Finally one of them stops)

PERSON 1: What is it?
CHILD: Can you help me?
PERSON 1: I don't know – what's your problem?
CHILD: I'm trying to find this place *(shows the leaflet)*. D'you know where it is?
PERSON 1: *(Reading leaflet)* The Children's Society – they say they can help kids that have run away from home. *(looks closely at child)* Is that what you've done?
CHILD: Mind your own business.
PERSON 1: Sorry – you just look so young.
CHILD: I don't feel it – look do you know where this place is or don't you?
PERSON 1: Sorry – yeah – it's just along here.

(Person 1 leads child off, then comes back reading the leaflet aloud, but to him/her self. The leaflet should be a genuine piece of publicity from Children's Society, briefly outlining their work. When the leaflet has been read, child reappears)

PERSON 1: Oh hello – you got fixed up then?
CHILD: Yeah – I just wanted to say thankyou.
PERSON 1: That's alright – you were taking a big chance you know, going up to people on the street like that – it's dangerous..
CHILD: Yeah – I wouldn't've, but I was desperate. They all ignored me anyway. *(pause)* 'Cept you. Why didn't you walk past? Why did you stop?
PERSON 1: Good question. Don't know really. You reminded me of me when I was your age a bit. Made me think. I grew up round here you know – it was different then - a dump – nothing to do, nowhere to go. Then a bunch of people came and opened up this club one day

SKETCH TWO

(As Person 1 narrates, a group of children and adults mime out what is being described)

PERSON 1: They got us clearing a piece of ground
They organised games they got some money from somewhere and we even helped build a bit of a playground and then that summer, they organised a day out to the sea side

I'd never been before. I've always remembered how they helped us kids – so I suppose I don't like to walk past people when they want help.

CHILD: And why did those people help you?
PERSON: I asked one of them once, as it happens.
CHILD: What did they say?

SKETCH 3

(One of the adults from the mime steps forward – Person 2)

PERSON 2: *(Talking to Person 1, as if he was a child)* When I was a kid like you, I heard a story at school. It was a story Jesus told. It goes like this:

(As he narrates, children mime – or another form of presentation such as puppets could be used)

PERSON 2: A bloke was walking along a road when he got mugged. They left him lying there, unconscious. After a bit a couple of posh blokes came past. They saw him lying there but they were scared to stop, so they walked on by. Then another bloke came along who everybody thought was a load of rubbish. But he stopped and helped the bloke – got him patched up and everything.

Jesus said everyone ought to help their neighbours like that. That message sort of stuck with me ever since I suppose. *(Person 2 walks off)*

SONG

CHILD: *(To Person 1)* So Jesus said about helping people, and that made someone help you, and that made you help me. It's like a relay i'n't it – passing it on. But where did it start? Where did Jesus get it from?

PERSON 1: Dunno. I wonder what he'd say if we could ask him.

Reader: *(Possibly a disembodied voice – someone speaking on mike from a concealed spot.)*

I'm telling you this straight. The Son can't independently do a thing, only what he sees the Father doing. What the Father does, the Son does.

I am the world's Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in.

You have my word. And the word of the Father who sent me.

(‘The Message’: John Chapter 5 verse 19 & chapter 8 verses 12 & 18)

PERSON 1: You'd better get back in there and get settled – I hope things work out.

CHILD: Yeah – thanks – maybe someday I'll be able to pass it on myself.

PERSON 1: What?

CHILD: Helping people – the relay. *(They both go)*

Leader: Let us declare our faith in the God who gives us the light of love to pass on.

Leader: God loves the people he made.

All: We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

Leader: Jesus brings God's love into our hearts.

All: We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith and, fills us with his love.

Leader: The Spirit helps us bring love to others.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Common Worship p148, No 7)

SONG

PRAYERS

Leader: Jesus passes the light of God's love to us, and wants us to pass it on to others. As we look at our unlit Christingles, let us say sorry to God for the times we have not done what he wants us to do.

Lord God, our maker and our redeemer, this is your world and we are your people: come among us and save us.

We have wilfully misused your gifts of creation; Lord be merciful:

All: forgive us our sin.

Leader: We have seen the ill treatment of others and have not gone to their aid; Lord be merciful:

All: forgive us our sin.

Leader: We have condoned evil and dishonesty and failed to strive for justice; Lord be merciful:

All: forgive us our sin.

Leader: We have heard the good news of Christ, but have failed to share it with others; Lord be merciful:

All: forgive us our sin.

Leader: We have not loved you with all our heart, nor our neighbour as ourselves; Lord be merciful:

All: forgive us our sin.

(Common Worship p127)

Leader: May the God of love bring *us* back to himself, forgive *us our* sins, and assure *us* of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**
(Common Worship p136)

Leader: Now it is time to light our Christingles, and as we do so we can give thanks in our hearts for: God's forgiveness; all the times people have been kind to us; all the times we've been kind to others; and all those organisations like the Children's Society which try to bring God's loving kindness to those who need it. As you light your neighbour's Christingle say: "The Light of the World".

(Starting from the candle lit at the start of the service, the light is passed amongst the congregation and the church lights are lowered. When all are lit, the leader calls for a time of stillness again)

Leader: As we look at our Christingles, let us think of those known to us who are suffering in any way. *(pause)*

Father, may they know the light of your love, through those who are caring for them.

All: The light shines in the darkness
and the darkness has not put it out.

Leader: We think of those who have died. *(pause)*

May they know the light of eternal life.

All: The light shines in the darkness
and the darkness has not put it out.

Leader: These Christingles are only symbols – we blow them out now, but the love of God which they represent burns in our hearts forever.

(Christingles are blown out)

Leader: The light shines in the darkness
All: **and the darkness has not put it out.**

Leader: We end our time of prayer with the words that Jesus taught:

Our Father in heaven

CONCLUSION

SONG

Leader: May the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shine in *your* hearts, and transform *your* lives , to bring his light to others. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be amongst *you* and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**

(Patterns for Worship p179)

NOTES:

PERSONNEL

- ‘Leader’ does not have to be the same person throughout, although it might be confusing to have too many voices. Perhaps the more explanatory parts, together with the announcing of hymns and other practical directions could be taken on by one voice, and the more formal parts (eg greeting, collect, creed, confession and absolution, blessing) by a second.

PREPARATION

- If you want to use any supplies from the Children’s Society, don’t forget to order them well in advance.
- Estimate of the numbers expected in your congregation and make sure you have enough materials, and a working party organised to make the Christingles. Don’t make them *too* far in advance of the service though – no more than a couple of days!
- Allow plenty of time for rehearsing the sketches – the effect is so much better if the characters know their lines rather than reading them.

SAFETY

SONGS SUGGESTED BY THE CHILDREN’S SOCIETY

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(These practical notes owe much to Children’s Society publications on Christingle Services)

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