

Christmas lights: sharing the light of Christ and a message of hope in our communities

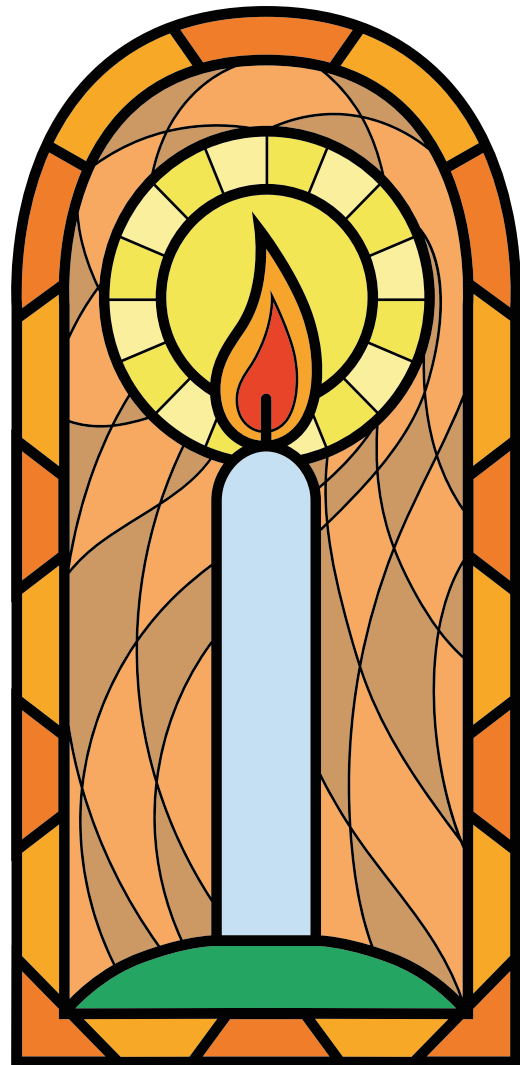
'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.' (John 1:5)

You'll need:

- One larger candle or enough candles for everyone
- Matches or lighters



Scripture Reading: John 1: 1-14



Candle lighting

At the end of the reading light a candle, or invite everyone to light their own candle. Spend a few quiet moments observing the flame. If you are using this reflection as part of a group, ask people to notice the difference that the light makes.

Reflection

We are aware of the darkness around us. The darkness of poverty, inequality, anxiety, and injustice. We are aware that right now people are struggling without light and warmth and hot food. The impact of the issues facing individuals and families in our communities seems overwhelming and we can feel lost and helpless in the darkness.

Sometimes it is easier to dwell on the darkness than search for the light, but the simple act of lighting a candle can redirect us to hope. Even a single candle transforms a room and makes a difference.

Light provides warmth and comfort. Light can guide us by highlighting danger or revealing that there is nothing to be afraid of after all. Light marks moments of celebration and joy.

In the reading from John, we are reminded to look to Jesus, the light of the world, our comforter, healer, guide. We are called to do the same for others.

When we feel overwhelmed by the darkness, we can turn to the light of Jesus that is full of grace and truth and hope for us and for our communities. And we can share this light with others through our words and actions.



Questions for reflection (as a group or for individual reflection)



- Where are you aware of darkness in your community? What are people struggling with? Where do you see poverty, suffering, fear or injustice?
- Where do you see light in your community? Who are the people, organisations and projects that are making a difference and bringing hope?
- How can you share the light of Christ this Christmas? Is there one thing you could do individually or as a group to make a difference? Can you encourage or join in with something that is already happening?

Closing Prayer*



People of God: awake!

The day is coming soon when you shall see God face to face.

Remember the ways and the works of God. God calls you out of darkness to walk in the light of his coming.

You are God's children.

RESPONSE:

Lord, make us one as we walk with Christ today and for ever.

Spend some time praying for your community - focusing on the challenges and opportunities you have identified.

IDEA!



- You will need clean jam jars, thin paper, simple stencils, scissors and glue.
- Cut a strip of paper or thin card so that it is long enough to wrap around the jar with some overlap, and tall enough to cover the height of the jar.
- Draw and then cut a shape – we suggest a star or a heart – in the strip of paper (you could provide biscuit cutters for people to use as a stencil).
- Wrap the paper around the jar fairly tightly and glue the two ends together where they overlap.
- Place an unlit tealight in the jar and ask an adult to light it carefully with a long taper or lighter.

Staying safe: Never leave a burning candle unattended. Never burn a candle on or near anything that might catch fire. Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets.

