

## Christingle - Sunday December 5<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.

A service not to be missed is this year's Christingle, a family celebration to raise money for the vital work of The Children's Society. This is a service for everyone, family, friends and neighbours.

If you have attended a Christingle service before you will already know what a lovely service it is. If you have never attended one, let us briefly explain what it is all about. The Christingle, which symbolises the light of Christ's love, is a lighted candle mounted in an orange, which has a red ribbon or tape around it. Also surrounding the orange are four cocktail sticks, each bearing dried fruits or sweets. The orange represents the world and the candle symbolises Jesus the light of the world. The red ribbon or tape identifies with the blood of Christ, who shares in the suffering of the whole world. The fruits and sweets are symbolic of God's Creation and His love for us.

The most moving and memorable part of the service is when all the Christingles are lit; illuminating faces, and making every child look angelic! It is the perfect opportunity to celebrate Christ's love and spread a bit of that to families who may not come to church regularly. But most importantly it is a great opportunity for everyone to come together to do something extremely worthwhile - raising money for The Children's Society.

Their focus for this year's appeal is to look at the problem of young runaways and those children and young people thrown out of home. Did you know that 100,000 children run away from home every year? That is one child in every four. Children run away because something or someone makes them. Through opening minds to why this happens, the Children's Society will help prevent the crisis that force children to leave home. In the extreme situation of having to leave home, every child should be able to turn to somewhere safe. Food, shelter, under-standing, protection and hope - whatever needs a child on the street may have, the Children's Society goal is to support them and ensure others do too. This year The Children's Society hopes to top the £1 million raised last year. Help shine a light into the darkness of those runaway's lives by taking part in our Christingle service.

### **Running away – facts and figures**

Many children leave home due to family conflict, violence or abuse. Each day around 50 children under the age of 11 run away from home for the first time. One quarter of runaways sleep in unsafe places such as back alleys, public parks, and bus shelters, putting themselves at serious risk of harm.

Quotes from young people at risk on the streets:

*"I ran away because my dad hit me and broke my cheekbone and jaw. The school got the social services. My mother asked me to go as dad would have carried on hitting me" Tony, 12*

*"I was sleeping rough. Being homeless breaks your heart, you lose everything... I survived but I want to make sure some other poor soul doesn't go through that." Naseem, 17*

*"Without the support I received from The Children's Society, from a hot cup of tea and a shower to someone to talk to, I wouldn't have been able to sort out the problems I've had. I feel that the ongoing help has helped me gain the settled secure life I now lead" Andy, 16*