

Count Your Blessings 2014

christianaid.org.uk/lent

Make Lent count

Adult Edition

Instead of giving up treats this year, why not make Lent count in a different way with this *Count Your Blessings* calendar.

Throughout Lent, these bitesize reflections will inspire you to give thanks for the blessings in your life, and enable you to help change the lives of poor communities around the globe.

Free app

Forty daily reflections and actions, complete with inspirational photos from our partners around the world, delivered straight to your smart phone, iPad or iPod touch. Available for free from the Apple Store or Google Play.



Get the whole family involved with a children's version of *Count Your Blessings*, or order more copies of this version for your church:

visit: christianaid.org.uk/lent

email: orders@christian-aid.org

phone: 0870 078 7788

Please quote code: **A018091**

A special version for 16-25 year olds is also available online or as an app – have a look at christianaidcollective.org to find out more.

How to count your blessings

1. Read the daily reflection.
2. Count your blessings by recording your response in the space provided.*
3. Pray for the people, countries and issues mentioned here and give thanks for the blessings in your life.
4. After Easter, send your total gift to Christian Aid with the form provided. You can also donate online at christian-aid.org.uk/lent

* The daily giving amounts are suggestions only. Please give what you can.

'This is a wonderful thing – it makes giving fun, and certainly focuses your thoughts on the many problems faced by the world's poor.'

Mrs Mary Tarling, Wales

Thank you to all those who counted their blessings last year. Your generous offerings raised more than £300,000 for Christian Aid's work to eradicate poverty.

Zanan Bchuk's story, and those of other communities also trying to build a safe place to live, will be explored in Christian Aid Week this year. To order your resources, go to caweek.org

Week one

5-9 March

A week for people and planet



Wednesday 5

Ash Wednesday

Climate change hits the poor the hardest. Changing weather patterns put crops and livelihoods at risk, and poor communities are especially vulnerable when floods strike or rains fail.



Has the weather disrupted your normal routine this year? Give 50p.

Give an additional 50p if you managed to cope with it.

Thursday 6

Areas of Zimbabwe suffer from worsening droughts and more and more erratic rainfall. Farmers here find it hard to grow enough food even to feed their families.

Go to christianaid.org.uk/actnow to demand climate justice for the world's poor.

Friday 7

At the current rate of deforestation, the world's rainforests could completely vanish in 100 years.



Give 20p for every sheet of paper you write on today.

Weekend 8 & 9

Climate change is a major concern for the people of Zanan Bchuk, a small pastoral village in northern Iraq. Desertification affects an estimated 39% of the country, and a further 54% is at risk. Families from Zanan Bchuk used to have to leave the village and travel for water in the driest times; and yet on the other hand they feared their crops would not survive the often sudden and harsh rains. Christian Aid partner REACH helped the community to build a reservoir to collect water to see them through the dry periods.



Give 15p for every time you turn on a tap today.



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10-16 March A week for food and water

Monday 10

Despite us having the technology and the knowledge that we need, a staggering 783 million people still do not have access to clean drinking water.

Give 20p for every drink of water you have today.

Tuesday 11

In Sierra Leone, three out of every four rural households do not have enough food to eat.

Give 40p for every meal you have today, and 50p for every pudding.

Wednesday 12

On average, a five-minute shower in the UK uses twice as much water as someone in Africa uses in a day.

Give £1 if you took a shower today that lasted more than two and a half minutes.

Thursday 13

Nearly half the population of Africa live on less than \$1.25 a day. Most of us have spent that by the time we've had breakfast.

Consider taking the Live Below the Line challenge and get an idea of what it's like to live in hunger. Visit christianaid.org.uk/livebelowtheline to find out more.

Friday 14

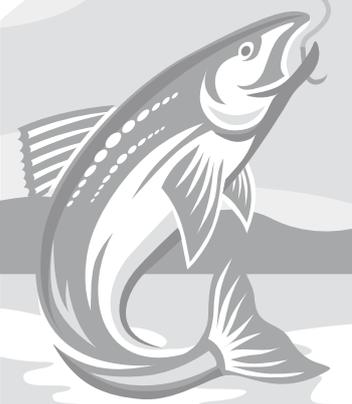
It takes over 130l of water to create a single cup of coffee. Since all of our coffee is grown overseas, that's water taken from scarce supplies in Latin America and Africa.

Give 30p for every cup of tea or coffee you have today.

Weekend 15 & 16

Wahid Fatir Mohammed Babakr lives with his family in Zanan Bchuk, northern Iraq. He knows that a varied diet is essential for his family's health. Because of the reservoir they were helped to build, the community can now grow vegetables that wouldn't otherwise have survived the harsh dry seasons. With the backing of Christian Aid partner REACH, they also decided to fill their reservoir with fish. Wahid and his family can now eat fresh fish and vegetables all year round.

Give thanks that we are able to enjoy a varied and nutritious diet throughout the whole year. Pray for those who don't have this privilege.



17-23 March A week for education and children

Monday 17

Education is a basic human right, and a powerful tool to help lift communities out of extreme poverty.

Give 20p for every one of your teachers that you can still name.

Tuesday 18

More children than ever are in school. In 2012, 90% of children in developing countries enrolled in primary education (up from 82% in 1999). While this is good news, not all of them will be able to finish even primary school.

Give thanks for this progress, and pray for the 10% of children not in education.

Wednesday 19

115 million children are currently involved in hazardous labour that keeps them out of school.

Give 50p for every job you have done where you felt safe.

Thursday 20

In Afghanistan, more than one in 10 children die before their fifth birthday.

Give 10p for every fifth birthday you have celebrated.

Friday 21

Christian Aid partner Soppexcca supports Nicaraguan coffee farmers. It teaches children about the environment, and encourages sports and leadership skills – to create better futures for the communities.

Give 50p for every after-school club you belonged to as a student.



Weekend 22 & 23

Sarmand Wahid loves to go to school and wants to be a policeman when he grows up. Sarmand has to walk far to get to his school and often misses lessons, especially in the winter when walking is harder. Sarmand's sister, Vian, lives away from home so that she can go to school. The community in Zanan Bchuk, northern Iraq, is lobbying for secondary school teachers so that their children don't have to leave their village to go to school.

Give 10p for every year of your education, remembering the opportunities it has given you.



24-30 March A week for women

Monday 24

Women make up 70% of the world's poor. If we crack gender inequality, we get to the roots of poverty.

Reflect on how gender affects your everyday life. Give 70p for every gender-based remark you hear today.

Tuesday 25

Christian Aid programmes all over the world train women in the skills they need to earn a living, and give them financial and practical opportunities to find work or start their own businesses.

For some inspiring products made by women's groups around the world, go to traidcraft.co.uk

Wednesday 26

In 2014, over 600 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not a crime.

Pray for vulnerable women who are trapped in poverty.

Thursday 27

In Kenya, over half of all births happen without a trained medical professional present.

Give £1 if a midwife was present when you (or your children) were born.

Friday 28

Across the world, women make up only 20% of members of parliaments. Much more needs to be done to give women equal say in decision-making processes.

Give 20p for every female politician that you can name.



Weekend 29 & 30

Mothering Sunday

Despite changes in law to promote gender equality, women in Iraq have suffered economic, social and political marginalisation in recent years. Christian Aid partner REACH works with communities in northern Iraq, including Zanan Bchuk, to ensure women are part of decision-making processes and have a say in how their community is run.

This Mothering Sunday, pray for mothers everywhere who don't have the freedom to determine what kind of a world their children will grow up in.



31 Mar-6 April A week for standing up for your rights

Monday 31

Campaigning changed Bolivia's tax rules. Now the state funds breakfast for every primary school child, improving health and education.

Give 40p for those in your house who had breakfast today.

Tuesday 1

Tax dodging by some unscrupulous multinational companies costs poor countries and their communities an estimated \$160bn every year – far more than the global aid budget.

Take action! Help to stamp out tax dodging at christianaid.org.uk/ actnow

Wednesday 2

Brazil's quilombolas are the descendants of escaped slaves. Many quilombolas of the Oriximiná region still live in the rainforest and rely on gathering brazil nuts for income. Christian Aid partner CPI helps them to gain legal rights to the land.

Give 15p for every type of nut you can name.

Thursday 3

Thanks to your pressure during the IF campaign in 2013, the UK government kept its promise to spend 0.7% of UK income on aid, giving desperately needed help to people living in poverty.

Give 10p for every gift you have received this year.

Friday 4

In 2013, a bill was passed by the Indian government to meet some of the demands of the march for justice organised by Christian Aid partner Ekta Parishad. This could be the key to lifting 400 million landless people out of poverty.

Give £1 if you have land where you grow plants.

Weekend 5 & 6

The people of Zanan Bchuk knew they needed electricity to improve their lives. Christian Aid partner REACH helped them – including Milko Fatir Mohammed (left) – to go to the First Lady of Kurdish Iraq, and then to the Ministry of Electricity, to ask to be connected to the grid. They agreed, and soon the community will be able to pull water from the reservoir, power lights so children can study in the evenings, and preserve food with a refrigerator (and not pay expensive generator costs).

Give thanks for having enough electricity all day, every day, at the flick of a switch. Reflect on how your life would be if you couldn't rely on this.



7-13 April

A week for health

Monday 7

Every 20 seconds, a child dies as a result of poor sanitation. That's a school class every 10 minutes.

Give 20p for every time you use a clean bathroom today.

Tuesday 8

Across sub-Saharan Africa, nearly one in 20 adults lives with HIV/AIDS.

Imagine the burden and pain of this debilitating disease. Pray for those living with HIV/AIDS and for their families.

Wednesday 9

The Myanmar government spends \$2 per person per

year on healthcare. In the UK the spend is over \$3,000.

Give 50p if you have needed more than \$2 of healthcare this year.

Thursday 10

An estimated 600,000 people will die from malaria this year, although it is a curable and preventable disease.

Give 30p for every infectious disease you have been inoculated against.

Friday 11

In Bangladesh there is only one doctor for every 5,000 people. In the UK there is one for every 350 people.

Give 35p if you can name your GP.

Weekend 12 & 13 Palm Sunday

Samira Mohamed can help keep her children healthy thanks both to the reservoir and a tarmac road that runs to the hospital. If the road started in Zanan Bchuk itself, it would be even better.

Give thanks for the hospitals and clinics we have. Pray for those in need.

14-20 April

A week for a safe place to live

Monday 14

War fuels poverty – homes and livelihoods are destroyed, essential services impaired. The effects are felt for decades.

Give 20p for every place you can name that is suffering from conflict today.

Tuesday 15

Four years after the Haiti earthquake, Christian Aid partners continue to work with communities to rebuild their homes and restart their lives.

Think about how many bricks make up your home. Now count the number of internal and external walls and give 10p for each wall.

Wednesday 16

Nearly 1 billion people today live in slums – often without access to clean water or sanitation.

Pray for those living in slums without any of the facilities we take for granted.



Thursday 17 Maundy Thursday

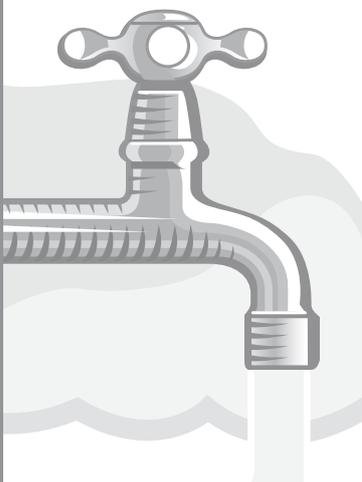
Conflict in Colombia has forced around 5 million people to leave their homes for other parts of the country.

What would you take with you if you had to flee your home? Give 20p for every object you couldn't bear to leave behind.

Friday 18 Good Friday

We hear of many conflicts, but some take place across the world without media coverage, in places such as Colombia, Somalia and Mali.

Reflect on the thousands who have died in conflicts in the last year. Pray for those left behind in impoverished conditions.



Weekend 19 & 20

Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday

Like much of northern Iraq, Zanan Bchuk carries the scars of violence. The village has lived through decades of conflict. Time and again, the community has returned to total devastation after fleeing bombs, tanks and soldiers. Houses were destroyed, livestock killed and family members murdered. The fragile peace of today brings freedom – freedom to build a life and to live without fear.

Give thanks for the peace that we enjoy. Pray for all those living in areas of conflict, and for peace and freedom to be brought to the whole of God's world.



Thank you for counting your blessings

Please return this form, along with your donations, to: **Count Your Blessings, Christian Aid, 35 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL**

We would love to hear your thoughts on *Count Your Blessings 2014*. Please email info@christian-aid.org or write to us at **Count Your Blessings, PO BOX 100, London SE1 7RT**

Title Forename
Surname
Address 1
Address 2
Town Postcode

I enclose a cheque for £ (please make cheques payable to 'Christian Aid')

This includes £ from a separate Children's *Count Your Blessings*.

Tick here to receive a receipt for your donation.

Christian Aid will not pass your details on to any other organisation. If you already receive information from Christian Aid we will continue to send it unless you tell us otherwise by writing to us at PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT. If you are new to Christian Aid, please tick here if you do not want to receive marketing information from us.

Make your *giftaid it* gift worth 25 per cent more, at no extra cost to you.

I want all donations I have made to Christian Aid in the past four years, and any donations I make in the future, to be Gift Aided until I notify you otherwise.

Tick here

Today's date

To qualify for Gift Aid, you must pay an amount of UK income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that you donate to will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year (currently 25p for every £1 given). Tax year is 6 April one year to 5 April the next.