

# PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF SYRIA

This month, join us in praying for the people of Syria and neighbouring countries. Since conflict began in Syria in March 2011, more than 100,000 people have been killed, more than 2 million people have fled the country and a further 5 million have fled their homes to other parts of Syria.

Christian Aid's partners are working with refugees in Lebanon and Iraq, as well as with people inside Syria, providing food, hygiene kits and other humanitarian essentials for thousands of families living in overcrowded conditions.

## All-age talk

Ask the children and young people in your congregation what they would take with them if they had to leave their house in a hurry. What would be the most important thing to have on a long journey if you didn't know when you might be able to go home again?

Explain that because of the crisis in Syria, around 7 million people have had to leave their homes; 2 million have had to leave Syria altogether and go to a different country. Some people were only able to take what they could carry and now live in makeshift camps, not knowing when they will be able to return home.

Moustapha, Aliyah and Hassan are from the same family. They had to leave their home because they heard bombs dropping nearby,

which was really frightening. They were very sad to leave and now live with another family in just two rooms, in Lebanon.

Ask the congregation if they can guess what Aliyah missed most about her life at home. It was something she wasn't able to bring with her – she desperately wanted to be able to go to school again. Mouvement Social, an organisation supported by Christian Aid, is providing classes for refugees like Moustapha, Aliyah and Hassan. Aliyah described the classes as like a lifeboat – something so important that she feels as though they rescued her and stopped her life becoming unbearable. She explained why the classes are so important to her: 'The thing that makes me happiest is that once again I am living like any other child in the world, but especially that I am accepted and treated like all the others. I am not different, I am their friend.'

We might not always want to go to school, but for Aliyah, far from home, after living in a very difficult situation, the classes run by Mouvement Social provide some normality. They are a place where she can make friends and carry on learning. But there are still millions of other children that need help – that are still waiting for a lifeboat.

Sometimes the things happening on the news can seem very distant from our



Families set up a makeshift refugee camp in eastern Lebanon after fleeing violence in Syria.



own lives, and when it's bad news we can feel very helpless and unsure about what we can do. At the moment, the people in Syria, and those who have left their homes for a different country, really need us to remember them in our thoughts and prayers, and to do what we can to support organisations that are providing education, food, shelter and help to children who have experienced frightening things.

Finish with a moment's quiet to give thanks that your congregation has somewhere safe to gather, and to offer prayers for children like Aliyah who are now far from home.

Lord, give the people of Syria hope,  
for peace and justice to prevail,  
for there to be new beginnings for all people  
living in that land,  
for freedom to replace fear and for there  
to be a better tomorrow.  
Lord, bless your people.

Amen.

**You can find a presentation of pictures from the crisis, and a prayer, on the [Christian Aid website](#).**

### Extra activities

#### Pray together

Spend some time praying for Syria. You can find ideas for prayer stations and creative prayers [here](#).

#### Memory game

Stand in a circle. Start by saying: 'If I had to leave my home in a hurry I would take with me ...' and finish the sentence with one item. The next person must repeat the sentence including your item and add their own item, and so on.

Ask the group to remember the people of Syria in their prayers this week.

#### Lifeboats

Draw pictures of lifeboats (you could all draw on one large piece of paper to make a display, or individually to allow children to take them

home.) Ask people to either draw or write things they worry about in the sea, and people or places that make them feel safe and calm in the boats.

#### Pencil-tidy craft

Make a pencil tidy, and encourage children to take them to school to share what they've heard about Syria (and to keep their desk tidy!)

- Give everyone an old toilet-roll centre, with a piece of card covering one end. (To weight the tube, stick a two pence piece to the inside of this end cover.)
- Get the children to decorate their tube using pictures from old magazines, colours, glitter or by wrapping coloured thread around it. Give everyone this quote from Psalm 46 to add to their tube: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.'

#### Hygiene-kit challenge

Ask the group to shout out things they might put in a wash bag and first aid kit. £43 could buy a hygiene kit containing soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, wound disinfectant, bandages and other essentials for a refugee family. Ask the group to come up with ways to raise £43 and challenge them to do it.

Find the latest information on the crisis, and what Christian Aid partners are doing to support people in need, on [our website](#).



**A woman washes a mattress in a makeshift refugee camp set up outside the Beqaa valley in eastern Lebanon**