

Count Your Blessings 2017

When I needed a neighbour,
were you there?

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**This Lent, journey with your
neighbours from around the world.**

Your calendar of reflections offers daily opportunities to give, act and pray for your neighbour, and to give thanks for life's blessings.

**Will you be there for your neighbour,
like Michael, this Lent?**

christian
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We believe in life
before death

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Welcome!

We're so pleased you're joining our Lenten journey.

This year's *Count Your Blessings* has been inspired by the hymn, 'When I Needed a Neighbour Were you There?'

Over the next seven weeks you can meet some of your global neighbours and see how your support will help people live in safety and hope, as God intended.

How to count your blessings

1. Read the daily reflection.
2. Count the blessings and jot your total in the space.*
3. Pray and act with us to share your blessings.
4. After Easter, add up your contributions and send your total gift to Christian Aid. It's really easy – just use the form provided or make your gift online at caid.org.uk/lent

*Please give what you can afford. Daily giving amounts are only suggestions. Remember, your generous gift will transform lives.

Get the kids involved!

We've made a special version of *Count Your Blessings* for children, so the whole family can join our Lenten journey!

Order your copies before they run out...

visit: caid.org.uk/lent

email: orders@christian-aid.org

phone: 0870 078 7788



Week 1

1–5 March

When I needed a neighbour

Your total for week 1:

Wednesday 1 Ash Wednesday

'The creed and the colour and the name won't matter...'

Jesus broke down barriers and connected us one to another. This Lent, walk with your brothers and sisters from across the globe.

It's also Zero Discrimination day. Give £1 for every new person you meet today.

Thursday 2

How often do we ask, 'Who is my neighbour?' Across the world, 65 million people have been forced to flee by conflict and persecution and don't have a safe place to call home. Here in the UK, many communities and churches are united in welcoming those seeking refuge.

Join our **Change the Story** campaign at caid.org.uk/change-the-story and ask for refugees to be treated with dignity and compassion.

Friday 3

Even in situations such as hunger in South Sudan or the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake, we find vibrant communities holding on to hope and dignity.

What do you value in your community?

Why not invite your neighbours in for a drink, as a fundraiser for Christian Aid? Or give £2.50 instead.

Weekend 4 & 5

'When I needed a neighbour, were you there?'

Thousands of churches and supporters like you responded to that challenge by establishing Christian Aid. We continue to work throughout the world. We each need to answer this challenge, not in words but through action, living out the love God desires for us all.

Jesus was there, feeding, healing, welcoming children, calling for justice with a compassion that consumed him and walking with those pushed to the margins.

Will you be there too? Prayers move us towards God and each other.

Pray by an open door and reflect: what do you need to be open to?



Refugees in Europe

Week 2

6–12 March

I was hungry and thirsty

Your total for week 2:

Monday 6

Fairtrade grew out of a demand for trade justice. From soap produced in the occupied Palestinian territory to flowers grown in Zimbabwe and coffee in Nicaragua, Fairtrade feeds a more secure future.

This Lent, buy a Fairtrade product each week from your local shop.

Tuesday 7

In the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew in Haiti, unsanitary water put people at risk of cholera. Through our partner KORAL, we provided clean water and water purification tablets.

We often take precious, clean water for granted. Donate 5p for every mug or glass in your kitchen.

Wednesday 8

Pray with us this International Women's Day:

God, you made us all in your image.

We give thanks this day

for women across the world,

whose leadership, resilience and resourcefulness: in raising and feeding families, resisting despair, embracing new ways to thrive in a world

threatened by climate change,

is transforming their communities

to challenge poverty.

Amen.

Thursday 9

In Bolivia, our partner Fundación Solon mobilised thousands of people to lobby the UN. They were successful in getting water recognised as a fundamental human right, so ensuring access for all.

Give 10p every time you turn on the tap today.

Friday 10

Malawi's terrible drought left millions without enough to eat. Our solar-powered irrigation systems, which enable year-round harvests, protect people from hunger.

Count the vegetables in your fridge. Give 15p for each one.



Hurricane aftermath, Haiti

Weekend 11 & 12

'I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?'

Just as hunger and thirst can consume our global neighbours, may we who are fed be consumed with a desire for justice. In Thailand, thousands of Burmese refugees live in border camps, forced from their homes by horrific violence.

Our partner gives healthy meals to refugee children. We hope they can return home soon.

Fast over one of your meals today and donate the money you would otherwise have spent on food. Use this time to pray.

Week 3

13–19 March

I was cold and naked

Your total for week 3:

Monday 13

When Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti, Madame Yveline's home collapsed, wiping out her belongings, livestock and money. With the wind still howling, she fled for safety with her five children.

Give 10p for every year you've had home insurance, or give £3.

Tuesday 14

Because of climate change, storms and flooding are becoming more frequent and more deadly. The world's poorest people are hit hardest, often fleeing their homes with only the clothes on their backs.

Give 50p for every piece of clothing you wear today, or give £4.

Wednesday 15

Also due to climate change, the glaciers in Bolivia are disappearing at an alarming rate, leaving farmers without access to water for their crops.

We all have a part to play in tackling climate change and creating the Big Shift to a cleaner, safer and fairer world.

Visit christianaid.org.uk/bigshiftaction

Thursday 16

In 2014, Marie Kargbo became a caregiver to Ebola orphans in her village in Sierra Leone. She is one of many people funded through our partner REWAP who care for and clothe the children left behind by this devastating epidemic.

Donate 50p for each of the adults who cared for you as a child.

Friday 17

When Bokiya, 13, refused to marry an elderly community member, her family stripped her of her clothes. She walked naked to seek protection. Thanks to our partner HUNDEE, laws in Ethiopia now protect young girls from early marriage.

Pray that the futures of girls across the world are safe and secure.

Weekend 18 & 19

'I was cold, I was naked, were you there?'

When military forces ravaged Michael's village, he fled to the swamps and had to be guided to safety by neighbours.

When he returned home, Christian Aid's partner was there. We provided fishing nets and hooks so Michael could provide for his family. Now, he's teaching his family how to fish, giving them some security for the future.

Reflect on acts of selflessness. Give 50p for every act of kindness that comes to mind and let them inspire your own actions today.



Michael, South Sudan

Week 4

20–26 March

When I needed a shelter

Your total for week 4:

Monday 20

When earthquakes devastated the homes of more than 1 million people in Nepal, our partners supported people like Janak, pictured, to rebuild. Nearly two years on, those houses have proved safe places to call home.

Give 50p for every good quality home you have lived in.



Janak Shrestha, Nepal

Tuesday 21

Living in refugee camps can be even harder for people with disabilities. In Lebanon, our partners are giving vulnerable people money to buy food and water.

Pray for all disabled people and those who support them.

Wednesday 22

Women in Iraq are often vulnerable to violence and so-called 'honour killings' by family members. Our partner ASUDA provides safe shelters for women victims and lobbies the government for better protection of women's rights.

Give 20p for every room in the secure space you call home.

Thursday 23

Domestic abuse worldwide strips homes of safety. Christian Aid partner SAAD, in Brazil, gives women a place of sanctuary and support for the future, beyond the reach of violence.

Pray for all who feel vulnerable in the place where they should feel most safe.

Friday 24

Sagar Tamang's village in Nepal was destroyed by the earthquake in 2015. He helped set up a camp on the outskirts of Dhading, providing urgently needed shelter for his community.

Reflect on when you've been given a helping hand and when you've supported others on the journey.

Weekend and Mothering Sunday 25 & 26

'When I needed a shelter, were you there?'

Theresa and her family fled their home in South Sudan after their village was attacked. Her husband was killed. They fled to the bush but hunger finally forced them to seek refuge in a UN camp. Her new home currently shelters 14,000 people.

Because so many men are caught up in the conflict in South Sudan, the women like Theresa often support their families alone. Their role as mothers is more important than ever. With your help we're there for women like Theresa, making sure that life has some stability and renewed hope.

This Mothering Sunday, reflect on your relationships: where have you given or received care or shelter?

Week 5

27 March–2 April

When I needed a healer

Your total for week 5:

Monday 27

Simple hygiene steps mean better health. Community health workers in Sierra Leone helped to stop further spread of Ebola by teaching people about the importance of washing their hands regularly.

Give 30p for every time you wash your hands today.



Tackling Ebola in Sierra Leone

Tuesday 28

It's easy to forget that we benefit from a free and responsive health service in the UK. In Nigeria, Christian Aid partners are supporting people to demand quality healthcare from their local authorities.

Pray that communities are empowered to demand access to essential health services.

Wednesday 29

Thanks to our partner in Burundi, HIV positive faith leaders are challenging the stigma that prevents people from accessing healthcare.

How would you manage if you couldn't access healthcare? Give £1.50 for every health centre and hospital in your area.

Thursday 30

In Lebanon, our partner is helping scared children affected by the war in Syria to express themselves, process their emotions, and integrate into society.

Pray for the millions of people whose emotional wellbeing has been thrown into disarray by conflict and other crises, often made worse by climate change.

Friday 31

By working with local partners, Christian Aid is getting healthcare to the heart of remote communities. By training volunteers in rural Myanmar to test for malaria and show people how to use mosquito nets, we're saving lives.

Thank God for volunteers who give their precious time. Could you volunteer for Christian Aid?

Weekend 1 & 2 April

'When I needed a healer, were you there?'

In Balaka, Malawi, Lita Daudi used to travel 15km to her antenatal clinic. She often had to walk. Our partner FOCUS has been working with women and men from Balaka to decide how to improve maternal healthcare.

Now, the men are more aware of their supporting role, the women more confident in asking for better services in their village. Together, they're ensuring that families are starting out in the best of health.

Give 30p for every person who would be there for you when you need it most.

Week 6

3–9 April

Wherever you travel

Your total for week 6:

Monday 3

'Justice is the light at the end of the tunnel that keeps moving us forwards.'

Temitope Fashola, Christian Aid Nigeria.

Reflect on Temitope's words and pray for those speaking out for justice in Nigeria. Give 50p for every torch you have in your home.

Tuesday 4

Today is International Mine Awareness day. The footsteps of people living in South Sudan are threatened by unexploded mines from decades of conflict.

Give thanks for the network with which Christian Aid works. Together, we help villagers identify and understand the dangers of landmines.



Demonstration against climate change, Paris

Wednesday 5

In Christian Aid Week 2015, we heard about Loko in Ethiopia. Loko now has a cow and goats, so she can support her family. She says: 'You have brought me happiness.'

Reflect: Does giving or receiving bring you greater happiness?

How does your answer affect how you live your life today?

Thursday 6

After travelling hundreds of miles to reach safety, many seeking refuge have found they are not permitted to travel any further. In Serbia, our partners are providing hot food, hygiene kits and warm clothes for stranded people.

Give £1 for every hot meal you will have today.

Friday 7

Christian Aid has been there for refugees since 1945. We won't turn our backs now.

This Christian Aid Week, 14-20 May, thousands of churches will seek to ensure a safe and secure life for all.

Download your inspiring Christian Aid Week resources at caweek.org

Weekend 8 & 9

'Wherever you travel, I'll be there.'

Your support enables Christian Aid to work in 39 countries around the world. Wherever we go, we follow in other people's footsteps on the long road to justice and freedom for all. Our hope is that our work, and the transformation it brings, will inspire others to continue that march.

Thank you for leading the way for others to follow, and may you be encouraged and inspired by those who have gone before.

Give 30p for every pair of shoes you have.

Week 7

Holy Week

10–16 April

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Read the Bible passages and reflections together on each day of Holy Week.

Your total for Holy Week:

Monday 10

Luke 19: 28-40

Palm branches still lie scattered on the pavement while hosannas echo through the streets – 'blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' Part of the body of Christ – that is who we are called to be.

Long after the media lost interest in South Sudan, we're still there helping families to thrive. Our partner in Thailand has been supporting Burmese refugees for 25 years.

With your help, Christian Aid stays where the need is greatest all over the world.

Will you be there after the parade moves on?

Tuesday 11

John 12:1-8

Love lingers, hope holds, peace perseveres long after the lover and the hoper and the peacemaker are gone.

Join the ones whose lives have proved this to be true. When your moment comes, pour out your love with utter abandon. And you will gain everything.

Reflect: where can you pour out your love in your community after Easter?

Wednesday 12

Mark 11:15-19

Will we be there to help Jesus turn the tables – on injustice, on inequality, on the violence and poverty that steal safety from our brothers and sisters?

Your support makes bold campaigning possible. Your action on tax and climate change is tackling two key causes of poverty.

Give 30p for every news story that makes you angry today.

Thursday 13

Maunder Thursday

John 13: 31-35

Love's radical hospitality offered bread, wine and new life to all – deniers, doubters, betrayers, saints and sinners, prodigal children. In the face of hate, Jesus loved. Do not wash your hands of the world's needs, but join hands with the one who gave everything.

Pray for the world's displaced people and ask that many will find a place of safety in the UK.



Friday 14

Good Friday

The only good in 'Good' Friday is that we are here telling the story, sharing his love – still. Jesus went before us and stands in solidarity with those who face death and despair.

In 1945, Christian Aid was born out of Jesus' commission to stand with the most vulnerable. Through your generosity and action, we can still be there.

You are the God in whom we take refuge: to you we bring our downcast souls, disquieted by questions, we refuse to be silent. Be our help as we call for welcome and hospitality for all. Amen.



Michael, South Sudan

Weekend 15 & 16

Holy Saturday & Easter Sunday

Matthew 27: 57-66 and Matthew 28: 1-10

We wait, watch and pray for the love so strong even death cannot destroy it or make it cower. Our faith in resurrection is a profound acclamation of the sacred nature of life. Christian Aid's firm vision, 'We believe in life before death', calls us to rise up to share Jesus' healing peace in a troubled world.

From Myanmar to Colombia, from Nepal to South Sudan, we are there and we will be there, helping communities torn apart by violence, poverty and disaster to thrive again. Love lives again and cannot be defeated.

Christ is risen, he is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

At Easter, love stronger than death called those first disciples into the world, declaring new life for all.

For the last 60 years, thousands of churches have joined together to witness that good news through Christian Aid Week, proclaiming our belief in life before death.

Join us at caweek.org



Thank you for counting your blessings!

YOUR LENT TOTAL:

This Lent, you were there for vulnerable people like Michael. Your generosity means we'll be able to be there for our neighbours for years to come.

£30 could provide fishing gear for two families like Michael's.

£50 could buy emergency shelter and hygiene supplies for a family like Michael's fleeing for their lives.

How to donate



Visit caid.org.uk/lent and donate online.



Call 020 7523 2269 quoting the reference number below to donate by credit or debit card.



Send a cheque with the form below. (Please write 'Count Your Blessings' on the reverse of the cheque.)

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

We would love to hear your thoughts on *Count Your Blessings 2017*. Please email info@christian-aid.org or write to us at the address above.

If you are new to Christian Aid, please tick here if you do not want to receive marketing information from us.

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I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Christian Aid. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify Christian Aid if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

Today's date