



Count Your Blessings 2016



This Lent, reflect each day on the blessings in your life and join us in giving thanks. Be inspired by daily opportunities to give, act and pray for communities in need. Enjoy Count Your Blessings as a personal journey or share it with family, friends or your church.

christianaid.org.uk/lent

Introducing...

This year Count Your Blessings features stories from Bangladesh, our focus country for Christian Aid Week 2016.

To learn more about the communities we are working with there, and to order great resources, visit caweek.org

How to count your blessings

1. Read the daily reflection.
2. Count the blessings and write your total in the box.*
3. Join us in prayer and action to share your blessings. You can find further reflections at christianaid.org.uk/reflect
4. After Easter, add up your blessings and send your total gift to Christian Aid using the form provided or go online christianaid.org.uk/lent

*Please give what you can afford. Daily giving amounts are suggestions only.



Involve the family

We've also got a version of Count Your Blessings for children, so the whole family can join in this Lent! To order your copies or to get more copies of this resource:

visit: christianaid.org.uk/lent

email: orders@christian-aid.org

phone: 0870 078 7788



Week 1

10–14
February

Climate change

Your total for
week 1:

Wednesday 10 Ash Wednesday

Changes in the seasons and cycles of weather in Bangladesh over the years wreak havoc and destroy people's livelihoods and harvests.

Give £1 for each meal you eat today, whatever the weather!

Thursday 11

The annual average rainfall in the Dogon Plateau, Mali, has dropped by 90mm over the last 20 years. Pray for the farmers and families affected by the lack of rain.

Pray also for our partners in Mali who help farmers adapt to the changing climate.

Friday 12

Malawi is one of the countries worst affected by climate change. Heavy rains, floods and droughts threaten the livelihoods of farmers who rely on the land.

Give 50p for each outdoor space you have available to grow your own food.



Weekend 13 & 14

Around the world our sisters and brothers are affected by the changing climate. All people around the world share this, our common home. We are called to care for the Earth and one another with joy, recognising that the Earth cares for us all.

This Valentine's Day, help raise awareness of climate change and how it is affecting everyone and everything we love. Make, wear and share a green heart following this simple guide at christianaid.org.uk/greenhearts and in your church service or home group, explore how the climate change relates to faith.

Download our Valentine's Day church pack from christianaid.org.uk/greenhearts

Week 2

15–21
February

Emergencies

Your total for
week 2:

Monday 15

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated and disaster-prone countries in the world. Disasters push poor and vulnerable communities further into a cycle of poverty.

Pray for those in disaster-prone countries building resilience in a changing climate.

Tuesday 16

Families who aren't reliant on one source of income are less vulnerable to a disaster – a pest may wipe out one crop, but if you're growing several then the impact is less severe.

Give 40p for each type of vegetable you have in your fridge/freezer.



Wednesday 17

Climate change disasters like droughts, typhoons or sea level rise, affect all areas of people's lives; property, business, financial systems, state institutions and health.

Visit christianaid.org.uk/emergencies to find out what we're doing to help people recover from disasters.

Thursday 18

In countries with a high level of natural disasters, such as Bangladesh, schools are sometimes used as shelters, disrupting education and the children's learning.

Give 10p for every year of education you have completed.

Friday 19

Natural disasters often make the headlines, but the consequences endure long after the news coverage fades. Nearly 2 million people in northern Mali are still affected by the droughts of 2010 and 2012.

Give 20p for every drink you have today.

Weekend 20 & 21

World Day of Social Justice

Justice is very close to Christian Aid's heart. This weekend, take time to pray for the leaders of countries across the world where injustice is rife and poverty prevalent. Our partners in Bangladesh are training poor communities living with the constant threat of losing their homes and possessions due to river erosion. Their jute crops and paddy fields are frequently destroyed, trapping farmers in poverty.

Pray for Bangladeshi farmers as they adapt to life in these precarious circumstances.

Week 3

22–28
February

Education

Your total for
week 3:

Monday 22

Enrolment in primary education in developing countries has reached 91% but a staggering 57 million children still remain out of school across the globe.

Give £1 for every family member who has completed secondary school.

Tuesday 23

Though there have been improvements in gender equality in Afghanistan, barely 16% of women have jobs, and less than 6% have completed secondary education.

Pray for the women in the world unable to access this basic human right.



Wednesday 24

Approximately 250,000 Nigerian children under five die every year from malaria. Our recent Christmas appeal focused on our work training communities in Nigeria in how to prevent malaria.

Visit christianaid.org.uk/christmas to read more on our continued work.

Thursday 25

Poverty is the greatest barrier to education. In many developing countries, primary school is free but the cost of uniforms and books mean poor families cannot afford to send their children.

Give 30p for each exam you've passed at school.

Friday 26

Do you have pets at home? Many families in Bangladesh keep worms. They're not very cute or cuddly but they help households thrive.

Find out more with our Christian Aid Week children's and schools' resources from caweek.org/worms

Weekend 27 & 28

Forwara was struggling to make ends meet until she received training from our partner in vermicomposting. She uses worms to make good compost to grow crops. She says, 'My greatest pleasure is when people come to me asking for training. I really enjoy sharing my knowledge for others' wellbeing.'

Give 50p for each skill you have that you could pass on to others.

Week 4

29 February
–6 March

Financial security

Your total for
week 4:

Monday 29

Fairtrade Fortnight begins

It's Fairtrade Fortnight! Our partner in Mbeere, Kenya helps teach farmers how to secure a fair price for the produce they work so hard to grow. During your weekly shop, swap five items for fairtrade versions.

Get inspired at fairtrade.org.uk/products.htm

Tuesday 1

Many of us are used to having reserves to fall back on, whether savings in the bank or food in the cupboard. Our partners in Mali help farmers to store crops so they can eat or sell them in drought seasons.

Give 20p for every tin you have stored in your cupboard.

Wednesday 2

Today, as we enjoy imported goods such as coffee, tea, bananas and rice, give thanks for the difference made to the lives of producers and farmers who get a guaranteed fair price for their produce.

Pray for those who do not yet benefit from fairtrade and the security it brings to poor communities that Christian Aid works with all over the world.

Thursday 3

Poverty isn't just a lack of material wealth, it's a lack of power – vulnerable groups are often denied the opportunity to have a say in policies and decisions that affect their own lives. If you want to do more than sign a petition, consider becoming a local lobbyist.

Visit christianaid.org.uk/locallobbyist to find out how.

Friday 4

Small businesses account for over 45% of all employment in developing countries. Their growth is vital for financial stability, but the costs of setting up a business holds many back.

Give 40p for every independent business you can name on your local high street.



Weekend 5 & 6 Mothering Sunday

Julekha (pictured) lives in an area of Bangladesh prone to flooding. She has big dreams for her future and hopes to be a doctor, which would mean a financially secure future for her family. Julekha's mother has invested in a solar powered light so she can study in the evenings. Julekha says: 'I like school. I enjoy learning. I wish to be a doctor so that I can serve people and heal their sufferings and sickness.'

Thank God for all mothers who work tirelessly to secure brighter futures for their children.

Week 5

7–13 March

Gender

Your total for week 5:

Monday 7

Among the marginalised groups in Bangladesh, women are particularly vulnerable and lack most forms of power: political, social or economic.

Give £1 for every woman who has had a profound influence on your life.

Tuesday 8

International Women's Day

We believe in the equal importance of every woman – but women in northern Africa hold less than one in five paid, non-agricultural jobs.

Give 30p for every paid job you have had.



Wednesday 9

Christian Aid supports basic accountancy training in Guatemala, through which women are now becoming joint administrators of their families' money.

Praise God for the amazing progress of gender equality and pray for more women across the world to have equal rights in their households.

Thursday 10

More than 700 million women in the world today were married as children. In Bangladesh our partners teach the importance of young girls continuing their education instead of marrying too soon.

Give 20p for each wedding you've been to in the last 15 years.

Friday 11

As of August 2015, there are 37 states across the world in which women account for less than 10% of parliamentarians, including six chambers with no women at all.

Give 10p for every woman you can name in the UK parliament.

Weekend 12 & 13

In Bangladesh, earning an income can make women more valued, because it gives them a voice. Our partner supports women to learn new skills and branch out to new markets. With simple tools and traditional techniques, women develop creativity and self-expression and generate valuable income from wicker stools to wall-hangings, quilts and gift boxes. By working together, women can negotiate with buyers from a position of strength.

Give 5p for each handmade item you own.

Week 6

14–20 March

Hunger

Your total for week 6:

Monday 14

Rice farming in the Philippines is a constant battle. Faced with increasingly extreme weather and destructive typhoons, harvests can be wrecked and the means to feed a family lost.

Meat and dairy have a high carbon footprint that contributes to climate change. Could you go vegetarian one day per week?

Tuesday 15

School dinners may bring back memories of lumpy mash and dry turkey, but at least we had something for lunch! In Mali, four out of every five children are anaemic.

Give 40p for every day this week that you eat meat or another source of protein.

Wednesday 16

Some 795 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy, active life. That's about one in nine people on Earth.

Give 50p for each different item of food you eat today, eg cereal, bread, fruit, vegetables.

Thursday 17

What's the food you can't go without? In the Guatemalan Highlands, the staple food is maize tortilla. But it's low in protein, vitamins and minerals, so 62% of children there are malnourished.

In solidarity, challenge yourself to eat only one type of food such as rice or lentils for every meal today.

Friday 18

Last year during Christian Aid Week, we asked you to help us provide women like Loko in Ethiopia with livestock. Owning a cow gives women an income to buy food for their families, as well as status and a voice in their community.

Pray that this Christian Aid Week will also strengthen many more women and men.



Weekend 19 & 20

Palm Sunday

As we reflect on hunger this weekend, will you fight poverty with porridge? The simple act of gathering round a table with friends, family or your church community has incredible power: to connect, include and transform lives. That's why we're inviting you to host a Big Brekkie, a new addition to our Christian Aid Week fundraising – whether it's at home, work or church you really can make breakfast the most important meal of the day.

Order a pack containing everything you need to host your Big Brekkie now: caweek.org/brekkie

Week 7

21–27 March

Safer homes

Your total for week 7:

Monday 21

Many people were poorly housed in Haiti even before the 2010 earthquake left 1.5 million homeless. Our partner is working hard to ensure that citizens know about their housing rights and how to demand these from their government.

Give 30p for each room in your house or flat.

Tuesday 22

Around three-quarters of all deaths in earthquakes are due to building collapse, and so it's the poorest in the world, with unstable homes, who suffer the most.

Give 10p for every year you have lived in your current home or for each time you have moved house, whichever is more!

Wednesday 23

In Bolivia water is drying up. In recent years the glaciers in the Tropical Andes have reduced by 30%, and the livelihoods of millions of people are now at risk – in particular, the Andean indigenous communities who've lived there for many years. We all have a part to play in tackling climate change.

Find out what you can do at christianaid.org.uk/onemillionways

Thursday 24

Maundy Thursday

Today, as we remember Jesus washing his disciples' feet, a shocking 2.5 billion people worldwide lack access to basic sanitation and almost 800 million people lack access to water.

Give 50p for each toilet and tap you have in your home.

Friday 25

Good Friday

As a small group of elites hold power in India, ordinary people often don't get a say. Our partner helped communities march across the country to claim their rights to their land.

Give 30p for each election you've voted in.



Weekend 26 & 27

Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday

Joynal used to live and work in Dhaka as a labourer breaking bricks by hand to earn £1.66 for 16 hours work. Now with our partner's support, he works with his wife Feroza on their own land. Together they have created a thriving livelihood and a safer, more resilient home. Joynal has recently been able to replace the bamboo walls of their home with corrugated iron to protect against the rains.

Give £1 if you live in a safe home, protected from the elements, and give thanks this Easter.

Thank you for counting your blessings

Your total:

Your generosity makes a world of difference to poor communities all over the world!

£25 could buy two goats to provide milk and manure for a family.

£75 could help set an individual up to rear ducks, including:

- £30 – 15 ducks
- £17 – a duck house
- £28 – duck feed.

How to donate



Visit christianaid.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 donations, to: **Count Your Blessings, Christian Aid, 35 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL.**

We would love to hear your thoughts on *Count Your Blessings 2016*. Please email info@christian-aid.org or write to us at the address above.

Title Forename

Surname

Home address

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.

PLEASE TICK. *giftaid it*

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

reference number: **A025673**