Caritas Award – ACN Ambassadors

FAO: Caritas Award Co-ordinators

In support of the Caritas Award in academic year 2018/2019 Aid to the Church in Need in Scotland is writing to make you aware of opportunities for your Caritas students to engage with the work of our charity in becoming an ACN Youth Ambassador in their parish and school community. This will involve raising awareness of our charities mission and engaging their local community in fundraising initiatives.

Aid to the Church in Need is a Catholic charity and a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church. With offices in 23 countries throughout the world, ACN supports Christians where they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need. Every year ACN offers financial support to over 5,500 projects in 140 countries. At the present moment we are working closely with Syria, Iraq and Nigeria as well as many others.

Outline of Key Initiatives

**REDWEDNESDAY – 28th November 2018**

This Autumn, we are asking you to stand in solidarity with persecuted Christians and all those who suffer for their peacefully held beliefs. Get involved this #REDWEDNESDAY! Why not simply hold a non-uniform day (pay £1 to wear red), light your school/church red and hold prayer services. This year we are petitioning the Scottish Parliament to change their legislation to publicly support multiple charities and light parliament red. Sign our petition and encourage others to sign too. Petition accessible via ACN Website.

**’50 Mile Challenge - In their Shoes’ – Launch Aug 2018 Primary/Secondary/Universities/Parish Groups**

On 6 August 2014 the plain of Nineveh (Iraq) was overrun by the forces of IS. An estimated total of 100,000 Christians left their homes in the region of Nineveh in an exodus of apocalyptic proportions, fleeing in the direction of Erbil. People walked from as far as Mosul to Erbil in northern Iraq, a distance of 50 miles, to safety.

We are asking you to ‘walk in their shoes’ and learn about the many people who had to flee their homes as well as raise funds for their return home.  As a class or individual we are challenging you to travel the distance the Christians of Nineveh journeyed and get sponsored to walk, run, row, swim or cycle. How many miles can you walk alongside Persecuted Christians? An hour long workshop can be facilitated by ACN to launch the ’50 Mile Challenge’.

**‘Maisy Milk’– Launch – Launch Sept 2018 Primary/Secondary/Universities/Parish Groups**

The devastating conditions in both Syria and Nigeria has left many families struggling to survive and children malnourished. ACN in Scotland have created the ‘Maisy Milk’ initiative as a fun and educational tool to fundraise for Christian refugees and displaced families around the world. 2018/19 funds raised will provide food packages for families in Syria and Emergency Aid packages for Widows and Orphans in Nigeria.

We are asking our schools and parishes to fill empty one pint milk cartons with spare coins and raise funds to support our initiative. We will provide you with a two page booklet with ‘Maisy Milk’ on the cover, the record of donations in the centre-fold and a prayer for children in the Middle East on the back. When the donation card is completed, each child will receive a ‘Maisy Milk’ badge to thank them for their support.

On receipt of your registration to join the ‘Maisy Milk’ programme your schools name will be recorded in the book ‘Friends of Maisy Milk’, which will be shared with our project partners in Syria. £5 will provide food for one family for one day. How many families can you help?  An Assembly could be facilitated by Caritas student to launch the ‘Maisy Milk’ programme. You could be a ‘Maisy Milk’ Youth Ambassador for your feeder primaries.

**Scottish Touring Exhibition: Portraits of Faith: Syria’s Children Petition for Peace – Primary/Secondary/ Universities/Parish**

Why not host this touring exhibition and raise funds for the children of Syria.  ACN Portraits of Faith is an exhibition of drawings created by Syrian children of all faiths as part of a peace initiative by ACN project partners. The drawings alongside a petition for peace were presented at the UN on the International Day of The Child 2016. Your School could host the exhibition and organise a coffee morning or bring and buy sale to run alongside? You could explore the Portraits of Faith with your pupils/parish and exhibit their artwork/response too. ACN will set up this pop up exhibition and collect after max of 1 week.

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This is an opportunity for Scottish students to become Global Citizens who raise awareness of the challenge of being a Christian in today’s world, through their faith in action within schools and parishes in their community.

By being an Active Citizen, they will realise that they as individuals and as a group can make a difference to the lives of fellow Christians who are thousands of miles away.

Reflection

Throughout the Caritas process, students will be able to reflect on their faith through learning about the work of Aid to the Church in Need, reading about how the work reflects their faith and the teachings of the Gospel. By engaging with ACN, students will have the chance to see how their faith influences the way they act and respond to the needs of others.

Students will have the opportunity to lead and inspire their peers by holding prayer services at which they can highlight case studies of students their age who have suffered for being Christian. They will have information to hand from their research on the ACN website and from ACN literature that can be used at assemblies and in parishes. Using this information, students can reflect on and compare their current lifestyle style choices and opportunities to that of students in the Middle East or Africa.

As a result of their research and participation in ACN initiatives and workshops, students will consider and discuss Human Rights, Catholic Social Teaching, Faith, World News, Poverty and Global Citizenship as well as developing their skills in Communication, Leadership, Research, Team Work, Building Relationships in the Community and Public Speaking. Students will also have the opportunity to become an ACN Youth Ambassador in Scotland who will Stand up for Faith and Freedom.

Opportunities for Faith Witness

After consultation with SCES it has been agreed that through engagement with our key initiatives the following activities can contribute for up to **10** of the 20 hours faith witness in school/parish or faith community:

Complete for all initiatives:

* Approach parish priest and ask him if you can be an ACN Ambassador.
* Present short talk to parish outlining plight of persecuted Christians, the key initiative(s) you would like them to support you in and the impact that this support can have.
* Collect parishioners emails (on ACN email capture form) in order for them to keep updated on ACN e-news.

Select Initiative you wish to engage with from outline below:

REDWEDNESDAY

* Collect signatures for ACN Scottish Parliament petition
* Encourage School/church to light red
* Organise REDWEDNESDAY fundraising; bake sale, wear red, host Syrian exhibition.
* Organise prayer vigil for school/local faith community

’50 Mile Challenge’

* Collect sponsorship for ’50 mile challenge’ in Parish/school community.
* Present short talk to school at an assembly on the ’50 Mile Challenge’, encouraging others to take up the challenge.

‘Maisy Milk’

* Present a short talk at an Assembly in associated primary schools about the ‘Maisy Milk’ Initiative, encouraging them to engage with the initiative.
* Organise a rosary procession as part of ‘Maisy Milk’ initiative ‘Rosary Week’ (Wk beg 13th May 2018).

‘Touring Exhibition’ (This is an additional fundraising tool to incorporate into one of above initiatives)

* Host the exhibition Syria’s Children petition for peace in your local primary or parish and organise a coffee morning to run alongside it.

For more information

If you would like more information about ACN in Scotland and the opportunities for Caritas Award students to engage with our initiatives please contact our **Schools and Events Coordinator Clair Sweeney** at Clair.Sweeney@acnuk.org **Tel 01698 337 472**

More information about the work of Aid to the Church in Need in Scotland, and updates the plight of persecuted Christians is available on https://acnuk.org/, our Facebook page @acn.scotland.office, and Twitter @acn\_scotland