

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED GENERAL/CORE RE RESOURCES**GO TO MASS FOR SOMEONE WHO CAN'T: #Go2Mass****NOTES FOR TEACHERS:**

Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN UNITED KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION

“Go to Mass for Someone Who Can’t (#Go2Mass),” a project for schools, colleges and universities, is a nationwide initiative to promote peace and tolerance by highlighting the plight of persecuted Christians (and all people of faith) whilst teaching young people about Mass, the Eucharist and the power of prayer.

It is a free resource for Catholic youth across the country produced by Aid to the Church in Need.

WHAT IS AVAILABLE?**Twelve ready-made, multi-media lessons for General/Core RE (6 lessons X2)**

Each lesson includes:

1. A one-page lesson plan
2. A presentation
3. Starters, plenaries and ideas for extended learning
4. Video clips* produced for this project embedded within the presentation
5. Support materials in the form of: worksheets, pictures drawn by Syrian children, infographics, animations, reflections, readings, debates, prayers and art activities
6. A variety of options so that teachers can adapt the resources to their own classes
7. References to the Curriculum Directory, the Bible and Saints where relevant
8. Intellectual challenge, opportunities to extend religious literacy and cross-curricular links
9. A variety of teaching and learning methods including AfL, individual research, personal stories, games, quizzes, art and ‘sketchnotes’

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WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Part 1: Lesson 1A-6A

- Begin with the students' experience and understanding of the faith, culture and reality itself, using examples from current understanding of science, philosophy, neuroscience, sociology and psychology
- Introduce a challenge
- Give non-religious, cultural or scientific reasons why the challenge may make sense
- Offer reasons why belief makes sense
- Encourage a relationship with God and the Church
- Give space for response
- Present the power of prayer in a radical way

PART 2: Lesson 1B-6B

- Encourage students to see the world beyond their own lives
- Give students space to learn about Syria and Iraq at their own pace
- Explain the reality of religious persecution
- Apply the ideas from part 1 to the reality of other people
- Facilitate response in prayer (#Go2Mass)
- Encourage and support further action (fundraising, awareness etc.)

ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP THIS PROJECT BEYOND THESE LESSONS?

We know that when we teach about slavery, the Nazis or Rwanda, pupils always ask why people didn't do more about it at the time. **With 80% of all religious discrimination today directed against Christians**, and two million Christians at risk of persecution, the young need to be armed with the tools to take a stand against such injustice. There are a number of possibilities for further development including:

1. Taking part in ACN's #RedWednesday Campaign in November- <https://acnuk.org/search/?q=red+wednesday> (as a red mufti day/charity day with funds going to those who most need it)
2. Schools could have a day of prayer/retreat/assemblies (Marie Fahy, ACN's Schools and Youth Officer can be contacted for materials and sometimes is available to come to schools to lead such events)
3. A small number of pupils could be appointed to come on retreats/information weekends organised by ACN
4. Linked schools have access to other ACN events, such as speakers from Syria or Iraq and tours of the Houses of Parliament etc.
5. Lent and Advent fundraising and prayer resources available
6. Parishes to encourage individuals and families to join in and go to an extra Mass for someone who can't
7. Schools in areas with a large intake of students from certain countries could focus on one country (e.g. Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan, etc.) and learn about/raise money for those countries
8. Links to PSHE programmes: rights, discrimination etc.
9. Retreats for teachers and supporters

10. Joining ACN's Ambassador Programme which is an extra-curricular club supported by ACN and Marie Fahy with ready-made resources and opportunities for cross-school links
11. The resources can be used as Preparation for 'Adoremus' - the Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool (7-9 Sep 2018). This is an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to create a special opportunity to reflect on the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church

WHAT IS THE "GO TO MASS FOR SOMEONE WHO CAN'T (#Go2Mass)" CAMPAIGN ABOUT?

Aid to the Church in Need is asking every Catholic to make the small sacrifice of going to one extra Mass to pray for one of the 200 million Christians who are facing the threat of persecution for their faith and even risking death to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. It is time for us to re-discover that "the **most powerful force in human history** is prayer joined to sacrifice." – St Pope John Paul II.

Imagine the immense power of our prayers offered for our persecuted brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ; imagine how we can renew our faith in the power of the Eucharist where "**violence is transformed into love, and death into life ...**" – Pope Benedict XVI.

This simple campaign is about interceding for those suffering injustice and answering Pope Francis' call to pray for the persecuted when he reminded us that, "Today there are more [martyrs] than in the first ages – but the media says nothing about them, because it's not news." In order for young people to make a commitment to going to an extra Mass and praying selflessly for another person, they need to understand the both gravity and magnitude of religiously motivated discrimination as well as the power of the Eucharist. This resource/campaign addresses these two realities.

Students are invited to become part of a wave of prayer bringing hope to the persecuted Church. They will be asked to re-evaluate the transforming love of Jesus, which, through the Eucharist is an "intimate explosion of good conquering evil [that] can then trigger off the series of transformations that little by little will change the world."

How to Get Involved:

- ✓ Go to a Mass you wouldn't normally go to. If you already go on Sundays go to an extra Mass in the week. If you don't go on a Sunday, you could go then
- ✓ Offer the Mass for all persecuted Christians/a particular person being persecuted/a country e.g. North Korea, Syria, Nigeria etc.
- ✓ Share your #Go2Mass post – Take a selfie outside the Church and share your post using #Go2Mass

Will you go to one extra Mass and offer it for a persecuted Christian?

There is nothing so great, as the Eucharist! Put all the good works in the world against one good Communion; they will be like a grain of dust beside a mountain. – St John Vianney

WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS IN MY CLASS WHO ARE NOT CATHOLIC?

For multi-denominational Christian and multi-faith schools, this campaign can be extended to "Go to a Communion Service/Bible study etc. or Mosque/Synagogue/Gurdwara/Temple etc. for someone who can't". Within the resources there are examples of persecution aimed at members of other World Faiths.

Atheist and agnostic students can be encouraged to focus more on human rights, that freedom of religion and the right to practice one's religion is in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and any attempt to coerce an individual with

regard to their beliefs is unjustifiable. It is also worth pointing out that ACN holds that atheists too have the right to not believe in God as do all people who live in peace.

WHY IS RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION AN IMPORTANT ISSUE?

We know that as members of the Body of Christ, supporting our brothers and sisters at this point in history is crucial because “Christians are under threat as never before.” The students in our schools and universities cannot be ignorant of the “discrimination, injustice, assault, kidnap, forced conversion, torture and death [that] are realities for millions of Christians around the world today.” At a time when numbers of displaced and refugees hit an all-time high, Islamist groups have carried out religiously-motivated ‘ethnic cleansing’ of Christians. If this continues, the Church’s survival in these regions is threatened. The fear of genocide – in many cases well founded – has prompted an exodus of Christians, notably from the Middle East and parts of Africa. As a result of this exodus, Christianity is on course to disappear from Iraq within possibly five years – unless emergency help is provided on a massively increased scale at an international level. In China and North Korea believers risk their lives to practice their faith, whilst here in our Catholic schools, some students have a casual attitude to Catholicism and don’t see any need to develop their own relationship with God. There are additional challenges faced by people of faith today, such as “the rise of secularism and the New Atheism” and “the practice of selective adherence to the teachings of the Church and growing suspicion of the sources of any authority.” (CD) These lessons offer some guidance for students as they navigate their way through the various belief systems being offered to them.

WHY STUDY THIS IN GENERAL RE?

Inevitably, world events, current trends, the personal situations and the interests of the students find their way into lessons. The problem for many Core/General RE teachers is that they do not have the time to respond to current affairs in the world or the ‘big questions’ presented by their pupils as thoroughly as they would like to. Many RE teachers would agree that there is a need for greater variety of relevant General/Core-RE resources which both meet the criteria of the Curriculum Directory and give students a reason to care more about what they are learning.

For a large number of the students, the only regular contact they have with their faith and the Church comes through school. There is a culture of challenging the faith and the absorption of the secular values of society. Resources for KS5 in particular need to begin from this point. The aim should be to enable the students to engage with the materials and be open to the message presented, which requires some foundations. The CD states that:

“The primary purpose of Catholic Religious Education is to come to know and understand God’s revelation which is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. This revelation is known through the scriptures and the tradition of the Church as taught by the Magisterium. Religious Education helps the pupil to know and experience the meaning of this revelation in his or her own life and the life of the community which is the Church. Hence ‘the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.’ ”

This resource encourages participants to look at the realities of facing our brothers and sisters in some parts of the world - which is obviously distressing – but the crucial difference between this and some other programmes is that the situation is viewed through the lens of the real news, which is Jesus’ victory of love over hate. It is about truly challenging students to consider whether prayer may actually change things, and if so, what a great gift it is.

There are plenty of opportunities for higher level thinking within the lessons. Students will be asked to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and respond to of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life'. (CD)

ABOUT AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Aid to the Church in Need is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church, supporting the Catholic faithful and other Christians where they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need.

Who we help

Each year we fund over 5,000 projects in more than 140 countries around world, helping to support the Church in its mission, and bringing hope and solidarity to millions of people. From priests to catechists and seminarians to Sisters, we help persecuted and suffering Christians live out their faith. By helping these key Church leaders, we reach out to many more of our brothers and sisters – millions in fact, as the projects that we support have the specific aim of providing pastoral and spiritual support to Christians in parishes and communities all over the world.

Often they witness to Christ in the face of persecution, oppression or poverty. In their hour of need it is the hope of Christ that sustains them – as well as the prayers and solidarity of our benefactors.

Each year Aid to the Church in Need makes grants to help fund projects, primarily in the following areas:

- ✓ emergency aid to refugees
- ✓ provision of catechetical material and books
- ✓ broadcasting the Faith
- ✓ provision of transport for those involved in the Church's mission
- ✓ help with church buildings
- ✓ support for the training of seminarians
- ✓ grants for the formation of religious and catechists
- ✓ subsidies for priests through grants and Mass stipends

RECOMMENDATIONS

“The outgoing RE PGCE group from St Mary's University were fulsome in their praise for the outstanding session delivered in June. Evaluations commented on the excellent resources, suggested learning strategies, and challenging tasks. Trainees found their experience engaging, creative and relevant.”

(Cathy Hobday: Senior Lecturer and RE PGCE tutor at St Mary's University)

“This campaign dovetails perfectly with Bishop Egan's vision for the New Evangelization.”

(Edmund Adamus of Portsmouth diocese's Catholic Academies and Schools Office)

“The materials really engage children with what is happening to Christians and encourages them to make a positive difference. They motivate sixth formers to think about the 'big questions' and really challenge their own mindsets.”

(Anna Gomez RE Teacher)

'We are delighted that Aid to the Church in Need is able to provide resource material for Catholic schools. We are looking forward to hearing more about their work in our Heads of Religious Education meetings.'

(Patrick Harrison: Adviser for Religious Education Southwark)