

MOTHER'S DAY: AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

MAKE MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL

NOTES, LESSON PLAN AND FUTURE INFORMATION



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN UNITED KINGDOM

SUMMARY

We are asking you and your school, office, parish, chaplaincy group, to give the cost of one Mother's Day card to help a mother (or grandmother) suffering abroad. You decide whether that is a 'budget' card or something more expensive, depending on your means.

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) helps millions of people every year. When staff from ACN have visited countries affected by war, terrorism, persecution, natural disasters and poverty, they have seen that very often mothers in these countries are those who have particular need as they try to support their families. If we, through this campaign, can help a mum abroad, we are helping whole families and communities as we do so.

WOMEN

On World Women's Day (8-10-20), we have seen many organisations honouring and celebrating women and their role in society. We too want to honour the selfless mothers of the world by giving them the means to continue supporting their loved ones as they fight to keep their families safe under extreme conditions. As we thank our own mums on Mother's Day, we can also help someone else's mum by donating the price of a card to ACN so they may continue to fund projects supporting mums across the world. As a Catholic organisation, ACN believes that all people are created with equal dignity in the image of God, so the fact that women should be treated equally is a given.

HOW DOES ACN HELP MOTHERS?

ACN supports projects which help mums by: providing emergency aid (including food baskets, shelter, medicine, fuel and other necessities for needy) in crisis areas, giving pastoral and spiritual support to Christians in parishes and communities all over the world, supporting refugees, helping local priests and sisters to help people in desperate situations both materially and spiritually.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

1. Consider how much one Mother's Day card costs (generally anything from 69p to £5) and decide to help a mum in another country this Mother's Day by simply donating the cost of a card (or a box of chocolates or a bunch of flowers) to a mum abroad.
2. On Mother's Day, pray for the mums of the world. You could consider saying a prayer for mums with your own mum, grandmother or career.
3. At your school, university, place of work or in your family organise a short prayer service to pray for the mums who desperately need help and support.
4. Use the presentation to introduce the idea to your pupils either in an assembly or a lesson.

LESSON/ASSEMBLY PLAN: ACN: “MAKE MOTHER’S DAY SPECIAL” ASSEMBLY/LESSON PLAN*

**(You can use this as either. If using in a lesson, there are extra activities/options for development below).*

AIM:

To explain how ACN helps mums across the world and to invite pupils to join the “Make Mother’s Day Special” initiative.

OBJECTIVES (if using as a lesson): By the end of this lesson pupils will be able to explain:

1. How ACN helps mothers using real life examples.
2. Discussed how ACN helped Rasha in Syria.
3. Made a card to show their support for mums in difficult situations.
4. Decided how they will contribute to “Make Mother’s Day Special”.

RESOURCES:

1. Multiple-choice quiz.
2. Presentation.
3. Card templates.

STARTER: Multiple-choice quiz (slide 2).

INTRODUCTION: Explain initiative (slides 3-6).

LEARNING: Examples from Syria, Nigeria and Sri Lanka (slides 7-16) and see examples below for detailed information.

RESPONSE:

1. Discuss how ACN has helped mums in the three countries your school’s possible involvement (slides 17-18)
2. Card activity (slides 19-20).

PLENARY:

1. Revisit objectives and ask “what next?”
2. Link mothers of the world to the Solemnity of the Annunciation and plan a class prayer service.

EXAMPLES: SYRIA, NIGERIA AND SRI LANKA: (A simplified, age-appropriate version of this information is on the presentation. If using the information below, please check the age-suitability for your pupils as some of the details are upsetting).

For this campaign, we will explain how ACN helps support mums in three countries. There are thousands of other projects, but for simplicity we will discuss just three.

SYRIA

*Thanks to the support of the pontifical foundation **Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)**, the local church is helping thousands of families who were displaced throughout the war and now find themselves in dire straits in the Valley of Christians, a rural region in Syria near the Lebanese border. Suffering and hopelessness have become the norm for Syrians, who have now been living in a country torn apart after seven years of warfare. Not only do they have to deal with the daily life plagued by terrorism as well as the loss of their homes and all of their possessions to bombs. They*

have also lost people beloved to them – to violence, disease or the difficult living conditions of a society devastated by violence.

Rasha Drazy was only 23 when her husband, Michael, died. The young lorry driver drove the route from the Valley of Christians to Damascus. One day he was hit by sniper fire. He died instantly. She not only lost her young husband, but also her family's financial support. The mother of two children found herself in a terrible situation at the very beginning of the armed conflict in 2011.

"We lived in Damascus, then [we] fled to Marmarita to escape the rockets being fired onto the capital on a daily basis. We arrived here in 2012. My husband was killed just a few months later," Rasha explains, her eyes reflecting her deep sorrow. In spite of her youth, her features are marked by all the hardships she has been through. Her children sit next to her, 10-year-old Michael and 8-year-old Rachel. "Life was difficult even before the death of my husband. The children were no longer able to go to school because it was closed due to the war. Thanks to our meagre savings, we were able to survive until Michael found work again."

Stories such as this can be heard all over the country. The traumatic witness of thousands of women –Mother Courage personified – who have lost their children and husbands during the war. Many have not only lost people they loved, but also the provider for the family's wellbeing.

A similar story is told by Darin Abboud, who has recently been widowed. Her husband just passed away after having suffered a stroke two years before. "I am self-employed, sometimes working as a hairdresser, sometimes in the fields helping to bring in the fruit and vegetable during the harvest. I do everything I can to support my daughters," the 38-year-old mother said. "My five daughters are what motivates me to go on living. My happiness revolves around helping them continue to go to school, find work and be happy."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: <https://acnuk.org/search/?q=SYRIA>

NIGERIA

Aid to the Church in Need has agreed a £63,000 (70,000 euros) package of food parcels and schooling for 1,000 orphans, and counselling for 500 widows, many of whom saw their husbands killed by the jihadi fighters.

The aid for the persecuted Christians is going to the Diocese of Maiduguri, in north-east Nigeria, the area worst affected by Boko Haram which has repeatedly declared its intent to rid the area of Christians.

Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Maiduguri told ACN that the money will go to the large families who "have been struggling through life with great traumatic experiences".

With most families having more than six children, the bishop has established St Judith's Widow Association to ensure the support fulfils each family's needs.

Each widow will be receiving training with business skills, such as farming and tailoring, and adult education programmes.

Boko Haram has destroyed 25 schools in the diocese since 2009. The terrorist organisation's name means "Western education is forbidden".

Bishop Doeme stressed the importance of ACN's grant for orphans' schooling.

He said: "[I]t is mostly the children living in the eastern part of the diocese who will benefit from this, as this part is the most affected and the poorest."

On an ACN fact-finding and project-assessment trip to north-east Nigeria in March, Church sources reported that extremists had killed more than 20,000 people across the region.

Among those ACN met on the trip was Agnes, 40, a widow, who is raising nine children after her husband was shot dead by the extremists for refusing to convert to Islam.

She explained how her husband, a builder, was working outside a house when Boko Haram surrounded all the people and shot them dead. Agnes said the terrorists refused to allow family

members to recover the bodies and that no burial was possible. Thanking the charity for the ongoing support, Bishop Doeme said: "I wish, on behalf of all the Christians suffering in this part of the world, to thank you at Aid to the Church in Need for recognising and acknowledging our sufferings, our difficulties, our troubles, our pains and our hardships, and for standing by us in this challenging moment."

Since 2014 the charity has been providing emergency aid for refugees who have fled across the border to Cameroon to escape the extremists.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: <https://acnuk.org/search/?q=NIGERIA>

SRI LANKA

Even before the Easter Sunday attacks, Sri Lanka was still struggling with the consequences of the decades-long civil war between the Tamils and Sinhalese. Although just 7% of the nation's approximately 21.4 million inhabitants are Catholics, the Church continues to engage in the reconciliation of both ethnic grounds – ACN supports Christian communities here in an interreligious dialogue. We also support the Church of Sri Lanka in its pastoral activities, which include marriage and family counselling. Despite making up less than nine percent in a majority Buddhist population, Christians in Sri Lanka have traditionally enjoyed good inter-faith and inter-ethnic relations with Catholics and Protestants well represented in both Tamil and Sinhalese communities.

After the Easter Sunday attacks that left more than 320 dead and 500 injured, ACN launched an appeal to help those affected. In the aftermath, bishops and other church leaders contacted by Aid to the Church in Need asked for "prayers that peace and harmony may be restored". ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks, which targeted three luxury hotels and three churches in coordinated blasts that went off during Mass.

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) provided help for more than 2,000 people following the 2019 Easter Day bombings in Sri Lanka. ACN supported those caught up in the violence, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with them in their pain. ACN assistance included backing the local Church's psychological and pastoral aid programme for bomb victims. Father Nishantha Cooray, a Franciscan who ministered to the injured and dying following the atrocity, shared his testimony at recent ACN events. He said: "Our people need healing. We are accompanying them through their pain." Your prayers, support and kindness have helped their healing process begin. Unfortunately, the bombings were the latest in a series of attacks that have affected Sri Lanka's Christians and other minorities since the end of the civil war.

ACN has provided ongoing help including building churches, supporting Sisters and distributing Mass stipends to priests ministering to distressed Christians.

The Archdiocese of Colombo provided spiritual and material aid for affected families. Many not only lost a beloved family member, but also the family's only breadwinner, meaning they now face financial ruin. The archdiocese set up a team of 40 certified trauma therapists to provide psychological assistance to those traumatised by the bombings, including those who lost family members. ACN is funding this project. In the months following the bombings, our Church partners also developed therapy programmes designed to help children, families and people living alone. These initiatives are supporting more than 2,000 people. 300 specialists were trained to deliver the programmes. The programmes also look after the spiritual health of individuals, and includes a Bible-based session called "Healing for the Wounds of the Heart". Only through your generous love have our partners been able to follow the Lord, who "heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 146:3).

The Carmelite Sisters in Karaveddy ministered to the suffering people who bore the brunt of the bloody civil war between the Tamil rebels and government forces for almost three decades (1983-2009). The fighting eventually forced the Sisters to flee. When they returned after the war, they

found their monastery was ruined. Moving temporarily to a rented house, they immediately resumed their apostolic work, giving catechetical instruction, leading prayer groups, preparing children for their first Holy Communion and working with poor children and those still suffering from the war. The Sisters wanted to help more children, particularly the girls who have suffered during the war, but they could not do so in their temporary home. So, they turned to ACN, writing: "We hope and pray that the Lord may inspire still more people to help us to finish this urgently needed building."

Today, they are in their new home, and thankful for your help which has allowed their ministry to flourish. Their work is helping to give hope to the needy, the poor and those whose lives were devastated by the war.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: <https://acnuk.org/search/?q=sri+lanka>

FOR TEACHERS AND CHAPLAINS

Ask your class, year group or school to participate and collect the donations centrally. Please contact ACN:

<p>Errol Palmer Schools and Youth Officer errol.palmer@acnuk.org TEL +44 (0)208 661 5154</p> <p>Contact details for the ACN UK National Office: Aid to the Church in Need UK 12-14 Benhill Avenue Sutton, Surrey SM1 4DA Facebook: www.facebook.com/acnuk Twitter: @acn_uk Instagram: @aidtothechurchinneed_uk @aidtothechurch</p>	<p>Bridget Teasdale NW Schools & Events Coordinator Bridget.Teasdale@acnuk.org TEL: 01524 388739</p> <p>Contact details for the ACN NW Office: Aid to the Church in Need UK Office 7-4-4, Cameron House, White Cross Quarry Road, Lancaster LA1 4XQ Facebook: www.facebook.com/acnuk.northwest Twitter: @ACNUK_NW Instagram: @acnuknw</p>	<p>Clair Sweeney Schools & Events Coordinator in Scotland clair.sweeney@acnuk.org TEL: 01698 337 470</p> <p>Contact details for the ACN Scotland office: Aid to the Church in Need UK Office 2.9, Dalziel Building, 7 Scott Street, Motherwell ML1 1PN, Scotland Facebook: www.facebook.com/acn.scotland.office Twitter: @ACN_Scotland</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------