




## RED WEDNESDAY NOVENA FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

 Aid to the  
Church in Need  
ACN UNITED KINGDOM

### How to pray Aid to the Church in Need's #RedWednesday Novena

Each day:

1. Make the sign of the cross.
2. Begin with the Introduction.
3. Read the Scripture passage.
4. Read the Reflection.
5. Pray the Our Father.
6. Invite the pupils to pray one more Our Father in their own time if they would like to.

### Novena Dates 2021

Day 1 - Fri 12 Nov | Day 2 - Mon 15 Nov | Day 3 - Tue 16 Nov  
| Day 4 - Wed 17 Nov | Day 5 - Thu 18 Nov | Day 6 - Fri 19  
Nov | Day 7 - Mon 22 Nov | Day 8 - Tue 23 Nov | Day 9 -  
Wed 24 Nov—#RedWednesday.



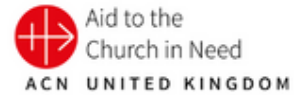
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Thank you so much for joining us to pray together in the lead-up to  
**#RedWednesday 2021!**

The word “novena” is from the Latin word for nine, or *novem*. Usually a novena consists of nine days of prayer, asking God for a special intention (asking God to help us in a specific way or for a specific thing). There are many different varieties of novena, and people might pray one that already exists, or they might write one of their own for something in particular they’d like to pray for.

Our prayer intention for the #RedWednesday Novena this year is for the end of religious persecution and for comfort and protection for those who are suffering.

*novena*

FROM THE LATIN  
WORD FOR NINE OR  
'NOVEM'

Sometimes it is difficult to think of what we can do to help when we are far away, but prayer is one of the easiest ways to show love and support for people across the world who are suffering. Prayer really does work miracles, and it is something that means so much to the people who are supported by ACN’s project partners.

This novena starts on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> November, and can be prayed for the 9 school days leading up to #RedWednesday. (The novena excludes weekends.) The feast day of Christ the King (Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> November) will fall whilst we are praying this set of prayers. This date is also National Youth Sunday—the theme this year is ‘Together’. For that reason, we have decided to centre our novena on the idea that the Kingdom of God is for each one of us. Jesus tells us, in Luke’s Gospel,

**“For, in fact, the Kingdom of God is among you.” [Luke 12:32, NRSVCE].**

But what does this mean? It means that God gives His kingdom to each of us. No matter who we are, where we live or what our life is like, each of us is equal in the eyes of God. He loves each one of us.

Because we are one family, it means that we have to do what we can to support one another. One of the things we can do to help people who are suffering throughout the world is to pray, just like we are going to do in this Novena. We can also use this prayer time to pray for ourselves, our family, our friends and whatever might be in our hearts.



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### Day One:

#### Make the sign of the cross.

**Introduction:** Today we are praying for freedom and tolerance for all religions and people of faith. We are praying for the freedom to believe in God, to practise our faith and for the religious freedom of those of other faiths and none. We pray for peace in our world, especially in places where it may be difficult for people to practise their faith. We pray that our world may become somewhere where all faiths are respected.

We pray especially for those who live in places where they may be hurt or killed for their religious beliefs. As we get closer to #RedWednesday, we pray for the strength and courage to speak up for those who are discriminated against for their faith.

**Read:** *“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.” [Isaiah 43:1-2, NRSVCE]*

**Pray together: x1 Our Father, x1 Hail Mary, x1 Glory Be**

#### Make the sign of the cross.

Demonstration organised by citizens of Karachi, Pakistan. Christians, Hindus and Muslims gathered at Karachi Press Club. The protesters were campaigning for the release of kidnapped 14-year-old Arzoo Raja. The protest was organised by National Peace Committee Interfaith Harmony. ©ACN



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### Day Two:

#### Make the sign of the cross.

**Syria:** Today we pray for the people of Syria. They have suffered through war and fighting for over a decade, and are still in the midst of crisis today. Many Christians say that today's economic crisis is worse than the many years of war they have endured.

The high and rising costs of rent, medicine and food have left many households unable to cover their basic costs. Now nine out of ten Syrians do not have enough money to buy the food and clothing they need and to pay for somewhere to live. The effect of the war on the local Christian community has been immense. Today Christians comprise around 3.6% of the Syrian population, down from 10% before 2011.

**Read:** *"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." [Matthew 5:1-10, NRSVCE]*

**Reflect:** We pray, Lord, that the people of Syria are able to access the help they need, and we thank you for those who are there to deliver aid and provide support. We pray for peace in Syria, and ask you to bring peace to the hearts of your people there. Please continue to give them strength and courage to face the challenges of each day.

#### Pray together: Our Father...

#### Make the sign of the cross.

*Aid to the Church in Need has been able to support children and young adults attending summer camps in Syria.*

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### Day Three:

#### Make the sign of the cross.

**Mozambique:** Today we pray for the people of Mozambique. The people of the Cabo Delgado Province in northern Mozambique often live in fear. A rebel army in the region has been staging terrorist attacks since 2017.

Christians in this area are particularly scared. Christian villages have been attacked, buildings have been destroyed and men, women and children are being kidnapped, injured and killed. This has meant that many Christians have had to leave their homes behind and become IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). Towns and villages hundreds of miles away are becoming their temporary homes. Sister Monica of the Congregation of Our Lady of Fatima's Sisters of Reparation said all displaced people are at the centre of her concerns: "They are people with nothing, who depend entirely on solidarity. They're empty-handed people".

**Read:** *"You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you."* [Psalms 32:7-8, NRSVCE].

**Reflect:** Lord, we pray for the Christian people of Mozambique. We pray for those who have lost their lives in the violence and for those who mourn them. We thank you for the people who have welcomed others into their community, and pray for all those who live in fear. Today we pray the Lord's Prayer for peace, for every person suffering for their faith and for tolerance for all people of faith.

#### Pray together: Our Father...

#### Make the sign of the cross.

*Victims of the violence in  
Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.*

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### Day Four:

#### Make the sign of the cross.

**Nigeria:** Today we pray for the people of Nigeria. The Catholic Church in the north of Nigeria is under siege. The militant extremist group Boko Haram is committed to using force to drive Christians from northern Nigeria and turn the region into a hard line Islamist state. These campaigns by the extremists can target a variety of people, but Christians have been frequently singled out.

Towns and villages have been destroyed. People have been forced to flee their homes. Women and girls have been kidnapped and forced to marry and bear children for the extremists who have taken them. Despite this, many stand strong in their faith.

**Read:** *“Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. Yes, all who are incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, “Do not fear, I will help you.” Isaiah 41:10-13, NRSVCE]*

**Reflect:** We pray that one day the people of northern Nigeria who have been displaced will be able to return to their home towns and villages and rebuild their lives there. We do not understand why so much hatred and violence exists in our world, but we know that you keep your promises and that you will bring some greater good out of all evil.

#### Pray together: Our Father...

#### Make the sign of the cross.


*IDPs learning under trees at  
Ukpiam, Guma Lga of Benue.  
©Catholic Diocese of Markurdi*



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### Day Five:

#### Make the sign of the cross.

**Lebanon:** Today we pray for the people of Lebanon. Sister Micheline Lattouf, who is a religious Sister in the country, summed up the situation in Lebanon in the following words: "We are currently living through catastrophic times. One crisis after another."

Lebanon has welcomed a large number of refugees and migrants fleeing war and persecution in neighbouring countries over many years, including a large number of Syrian people.

However, over the past two years, the people of Lebanon have faced huge challenges of their own.

The value of their currency has plummeted drastically, meaning that simply getting hold of the necessities of day-to-day life has become incredibly expensive. This, coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic and a huge explosion which destroyed part of the city of Beirut, has made life very difficult for the people of Lebanon.

**Read:** "The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you." [Psalms 9:9-10, NRSVCE].

**Reflect:** We pray that things will get better for the people of Lebanon. God's kingdom is not one of power and wealth; Jesus showed us that his kingdom is one of love, peace, joy and selflessness. The people of Lebanon have showed true kindness to those they welcomed to their country. Let's pray today for those who are hungry, sad, scared or hurting in Lebanon.

#### Pray together: Our Father...

#### Make the sign of the cross.

*Young people in Lebanon join a group of volunteers helped to clean up the Maronite Cathedral in Beirut after the explosion in 2020. ©Maronite Church/Beirut*



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### Day Six:

#### Make the sign of the cross.

**Iraq:** Today we pray for the people of Iraq. In 2014, life changed drastically for many Christians in Iraq. Many people were forced to leave their homes because they were told they were no longer welcome there. The extremist group Daesh (known also as ISIS) took control of the Nineveh Plains, an area of Northern Iraq which has long been the home of Christians, Yazidi and other religious minorities. People there have faced many difficulties. But things there are changing. There is hope for the future of the Christians of Iraq.

The Nineveh Plains have now been liberated, and people have gradually begun to return. But many of the towns and villages taken over by Daesh have suffered serious levels of destruction. Houses, schools and churches were burned and destroyed. The task of rebuilding is huge, but there are people who are willing to take it on for the chance to return to their homes. The visit of Pope Francis in March 2021 has also given hope to many. Revan Possa, from the Qaraqosh Reconstruction Board, said: "We have heard about families from Qaraqosh who cried when they saw photos of the trip and are thinking about returning home."

**Read:** *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."* [Jeremiah 29:11, NRSVCE]

**Reflect:** We pray that the Christian people of Iraq continue to have faith in you, Lord, and we pray for continued kindness and generosity from all those around the world who are helping Iraqi people rebuild their lives. Please continue to bring hope to those who are living in desperate situations.

#### Pray together: Our Father...

#### Make the sign of the cross.

Christians celebrating  
and praying at after the liberation  
of Qaraqosh, Iraq.  
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### Day Seven:

#### Make the sign of the cross.

**Pakistan:** Today we pray for the people of Pakistan. Christians in Pakistan are no strangers to extreme poverty, discrimination, violence, kidnapping and sexual abuse. Women and girls face a particularly hard time.

Maira, a 14-year-old Pakistani Christian, was abducted from her home near Faisalabad in April 2020. She was forced to deny her Christian faith and made to marry her abductor. Maira escaped and was reunited with her family, but they are still in danger.

Although they are receiving support and protection, they are still in danger and are “very afraid”. More than 12,000 people have signed a petition here in the UK, calling on the Prime Minister to grant asylum to Maira and her family.

**Read:** *“It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” [Deuteronomy 31:8, NRSVCE]*

**Reflect:** We pray in faith for the people of Pakistan who face extreme poverty and the Christians who are suffering discrimination, acts of violence and kidnapping.

We pray for Maira and her family, and for all other girls and women who face violence. Please bring hope to all those who feel hopeless and lost.

**Pray together: Our Father...**

**Make the sign of the cross.**

***As an additional reflection, you could read the letter to Maira, and ask students if they would like to add their names to this letter >***

***<https://acnuk.org/resource/go2massformaira/>***




**Maira Shahbaz © ACN**



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### Day Eight:

**Make the sign of the cross.**

**Read:** “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” [John 3:16, NRSCVE]

**Reflect:** In the month of November, we remember those who have passed away. Today we pray for people across the world who have been hurt or killed as a result of war, fighting, persecution or natural disasters. We pray too for those mourning their loss. God, please come to the aid of those who are bereaved, and give them the strength and courage to keep going. We remember also our loved ones who are no longer here on earth with us. May you grant them eternal peace, Lord.

**Pray together: x1 Our Father, x1 Hail Mary, x1 Glory Be**

**Make the sign of the cross.**

### Day Nine:

**Make the sign of the cross.**

**Read:** “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” [2 Corinthians 3:17]

**Reflect:** Today we pray for the work of ACN, and all the people, parishes and schools involved in ACN’s mission. Thank you, Jesus, for making sure that their hard work helps to provide safety and freedom for so many Christian people across the world. We pray for the many people who would not survive without the help of ACN, and for the project partners who deliver the much needed aid and support to Christian communities all around the world.

**Pray together: x1 Our Father, x1 Hail Mary, x1 Glory Be**

**Make the sign of the cross.**

*Abanoub attends Ephremite Nursery in Mosul, Iraq, which was damaged by Daesh (ISIS). ACN has helped to restore the nursery back to somewhere that can be enjoyed by the children.*




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**Thank you so much for taking part in our novena to pray for those who are persecuted for their faith around the world. If you share any photos on social media, please tag us in, and use the hashtag #RedWednesday.**

**Please do join in solidarity on #RedWednesday (November 24<sup>th</sup>) with all the people around the world who suffer as a result of their faith.**

**See our website [[www.acnuk.org/our-campaigns/redwednesday/](http://www.acnuk.org/our-campaigns/redwednesday/)] for more information, and keep an eye on our social media accounts.**



**Westminster Cathedral lit up red on #RedWednesday 2016.**

*@Weenson Oo/picture-u.net*

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