

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED - RESOURCE FOR UKRAINE

THE MOBILE PHONE CHALLENGE: NOTES FOR TEACHERS/ CHAPLAINS/ STUDENTS FOR PRESENTATION

Introduction

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Aid to the Church in Need has sent 1 million Euros of emergency aid to support priests and religious Sisters caring for families, orphans and the elderly. We want to continue to help those in desperate need, so we are inviting schools and universities to participate in our Mobile Phone Challenge for Ukraine.

Thank you for your support! For further information on any of the resources here, please email Schools@acnuk.org.

If you have any questions about the resources please contact marie.fahy@acnuk.org

PRESENTATION

Slide 1: This challenge is for Ukraine. Aid to the Church in Need are asking for your prayers and fundraising efforts to support all those who are suffering because of the war in Ukraine.

Slide 2: A chance to think about or discuss how they feel about the war. If in a lesson, ask how they felt when they heard about the war/ when they have seen news reports/ etc.

Slide 3: Many of them may be feeling that they want to help but don't know how to. Explain that the Ukrainian people, whom ACN is in touch with, have asked for prayer.

They believe that God will help them through our prayers and are extremely grateful to those who pray for them. Through this challenge, ACN is asking young people to pray and help materially by being sponsored to give up their mobile phones for 24 hours. This quote is from Archpriest Vitaliy Herasymiv in Ukraine: "I would like to say a heartfelt 'thank you' for your financial and prayerful support of our archdiocese during the war. May God reward you."

Slide 4: This video explains the challenge. This challenge is for Ukraine. Aid to the Church in Need are asking for your prayers and fundraising efforts to support all those who are suffering as a result of the war in Ukraine.

Slide 5: This is a 'challenge' because we all rely on our phones so much. Fasting is about giving up something that is important. There are many reasons why each of the world's religions advocates fasting:

To sacrifice willingly something that makes our lives more comfortable and to offer that to God for the good of another person is an act of selfless love, so it has spiritual power for our own good and the good of the world.

When we fast, we learn:

That we do not need exterior material things as much as we think we do.

That when we clear our minds from the noise and distractions of the world we are better placed to hear God's voice.

- The value of self-sacrifice and to become less self-centred

- To imitate Jesus in the desert: Jesus fasted before he began his mission - this shows us its value as a spiritual practice in growing in holiness and resisting evil
- By doing this challenge and being sponsored, we can do something concrete for the people of Ukraine.

Slide 6: Here is Roman Laba, priest of the Catholic Parish in Brovary (Ukraine), asking for prayers. Possible discussion questions:

1. What do his words show about his faith?
2. How do you think he is feeling?
3. He says, "I will make a new song to the Lord because He has done works of wonder. With His right hand and with His holy arm He has overcome." Please pray for Ukraine.' Do these words surprise you? What is he expressing with them?

Slide 7: This clip also shows how dedicated to prayer the Ukrainians are. Here they are praying in the underground shelter of a church.

Slide 8: The images on the mobile phone show how the money the students raise, through their sacrifice, may be used. The quotes are to help the students understand that their role is important.

1. How might the quote from Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI apply to the Mobile Phone Challenge?
2. How might the quote from Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI be encouraging if they are finding the thought of being without their mobile phones for 24-hours difficult?
3. What does the quote from St Dominic Savio teach us?

Slide 9:

1. FASTING - We fast from our mobile phones (except for emergencies).
2. FUNDRAISING - We raise money through asking our friends and family to sponsor us (this is also a sacrifice, because many of us find it difficult to ask our friends and family for sponsorship money, and organising the collection of the money can be difficult). The money we raise will go directly to those who need it at ACN emergency aid in Ukraine.
3. PRAYER - We ask that participants pray during the challenge, particularly when they miss their phones. There are two prayer services that can be used as a group at the end.

1434 *The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others. Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: effort at reconciliation with one's neighbour, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbour, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity "which covers a multitude of sins. (Catechism of the Catholic Church*
http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P4B.HTM)

Slide 10: Why are we sacrificing our phones? This slide answers that question.

Slide 11: Most of us will find it difficult and think about it multiple times of the day. This is important. It is during these times that students can think of why they are doing this challenge, the impact their effort will have and give them space to pray for the peace in the world when they miss their phones.

Slide 12: Examine the feelings of the students about the challenge.

Slide 13: For more information about how ACN is helping Ukraine see: [Aid to the Church in Need | Emergency appeal for Ukraine \(acnuk.org\)](https://www.acnuk.org/emergency-appeal-for-ukraine)

Slide 14: WHO IS IT FOR? The following slides will answer these questions – we will learn about some of the people we are doing this challenge for!

Slide 15: ACN is helping the church to look after those who need somewhere safe to stay.

Slide 16: ACN is helping the church to look after those who need somewhere safe to sleep.

Slide 17 Despite the increasing risk of being injured or killed by remaining in a warzone, religious Sisters have stayed in their communities to serve the people and continue to provide spiritual care for families. For the local population the nuns are a sign of hope. Many neighbours say: *“We are staying as long as the sisters stay. When they go, we go too.”*

Slide 18: The Ukrainian army notified Alexander that he had been drafted into the army at very short notice. He had to report to the barracks in four hours. A close witness told ACN that with only four hours to say goodbye to each other, Alexander and Irina decided to spend one of those four hours with a priest, preparing for the sacrament of marriage. Then they both went to confession, received Holy Communion, and made their marriage vows. After the wedding, Irina told her husband, Alexander, *“Now you can go and defend your country”*.

Slide 19: As tensions rise, the situation in Kyiv becomes more desperate. In the diocese of Kyiv-Zhytomyr supermarket shelves are empty. There is no bread or water. The Bishop, Aleksander Yazlovetskiy, is responding to this need by transporting and distributing food, medicines and personal hygiene products to people in Kyiv.

Slide 20: The next few slides will demonstrate what types of things ACN will be able to help our project partners in Ukraine with.

Slides 21-23: Examples of emergency aid.

Slide 24: In time, we hope to be able to support rebuilding projects in places such as Kharkiv – you can see on the slide the destruction caused in the Main Square of the city.

Slide 25: We are providing support for refugees, orphanages and homes for single mothers.

Slide 26: We will continue to provide support for the elderly.

Slide 27: Ask students to think about and discuss the quotes on this slide. Why is prayer so important? Focus on the words: *“...most powerful force in the world”*, How is this a radical and challenging statement? St Pope John Paul II is saying that prayer is more powerful than ANYTHING. This means more powerful than any war or bombs - how can we take this teaching to heart?

Similarly, Archbishop Visvaldas Kulbokas, Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine, spoke to ACN’s Maria Lozano, head of press of the international Aid to the Church in Need foundation on March 9th 2022 and said:

“So, I say to myself, and also to many believers I speak to, that our main weapons, so to speak, are humility, surrendering ourselves totally to God, solidarity, and love. Because in any case if we are here for each other, if we are close to God, if we are faithful, He will look after us. And so it is during this war, which is not a purely human invention, there is something demonic about it – as there is in all violence. And we can only defeat the evil in this war together, all over the world, through fasting, prayer, much humility and love.”

Slide 28: Press play to watch this short video of Fr Frankie Mulgrew, talking about the power of prayer in a desperate situation. Discuss the power of prayer.

Slide 29: Press play to watch this short video, which explains why this help and support is needed for the people of Ukraine.

Slide 30: : Bishop Stanislav Szyrokoradiuk, Bishop of the Diocese of Odessa-Simferopol from the Odessa Cathedral talking about what it means to be in Odessa now.

Slide 31: Shows an image which shows the fullness of the challenge- you could use this to promote the challenge to students. This image is used infographic. You can use this image with your pupils and the activity (you will see it under linked on the same page as these notes).

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

Founded on Christmas Day 1947, ACN supports around 5,000 projects across the world each year.

For regular updates from the suffering Church around the world or to find out more information, please visit www.acnuk.org

Thank you for your prayers and support for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Ukraine.

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