

# MAKE ROOM THIS ADVENT **ACTIVITY 1**



1

## Aid to the Church in Need Lesson

Information and Overview of Lesson (45-60 minutes or for more discussion time, over two lessons)

A C N

### Aim:

To introduce students to ACN projects in Ukraine, Lebanon and Syria.

To show how they can help alleviate the suffering of others and therefore 'make room for Jesus' by love of neighbour.

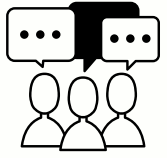


### You will need:

1. The presentation
2. One copy of each 'Advent with ACN' and the 'shopping list' templates with ACN' story below
3. Sugar paper and pens for each group

### Outcomes:

1. Analyse examples of ACN projects which help those who are suffering.
2. Consider why there is so much need in Lebanon, Syria and Ukraine.
3. Evaluate my own circumstances and decide what I might be able to do this Advent.



NOTE: This activity can be reduced or extended - please use discretion.

## 1. Starter

7 minutes

Make a list of groups in society that most need help/others to care for them: e.g. the elderly, people in situations of war, etc.

Discuss:

Why does it feel even more important to help others at Christmas?

Do we put too much pressure on ourselves to have 'the perfect Christmas'?



## 2. Link

3 minutes

Watch ACN video: <https://youtu.be/Hb9QKDICQfk>

## 3. Task

20 minutes

Split class into 5 groups. Each group should have one of the 'Advent with ACN' sheets (below).

Explain that they have ten minutes to write on some sugar paper:

Who is suffering? / Why are they suffering? / What do you think they are most worried about? / How are they being helped? / Who has intervened to help them? / If I were a billionaire, I would give them...

Each member of the group should prepare ONE sentence to answer ONE of the questions above to feedback to the whole group (not all questions need to be answered).

**VIDEOS WHICH COMPLEMENT AND EXPLAIN THESE AND OTHER ADVENT PROJECTS FOR THE RELEVANT COUNTRIES ARE LINKED ON SLIDE 8. THEY COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE DURING THIS TASK.**

## 4. Feedback

10+ minutes (longer if extending)

OUTCOMES 1 & 2 FOR MINI PLENARY

Each member of each group will have one sentence to feedback to the whole group.

## 5. Evaluation

10 minutes

Do I want to help ACN in their mission to help the people in Ukraine, Syria and Lebanon make room?

See presentation

## 6. Response

10 minutes

Once students decide how they are going to fundraise, explain the following:

Each person/friendship group/class/year group decides which item(s) from the Christmas Shopping List they would like to buy. They then plan how they will do so - by making room (giving their time, energy and creativity) to raise the donations.

The item templates are to be offered at the Advent Liturgy as Christmas decorations. Pupils can work on theirs in one lesson or over a series of lessons and it should correspond with what they are offering.



## 6. Challenge

See quote from Pope Francis in presentation: How do Pope Francis' words make you feel in relation to the work of ACN?

# ADVENT WITH AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

## LEBANON: Make Room for the mentally and physically unwell



To you, from Sr Marie, who cares for the patients in the hospital: "While assuring you of my unceasing prayers, I count on your closeness, in order to offer our patients, most of whom have been abandoned by their parents, a dignified life full of His peace and love..."

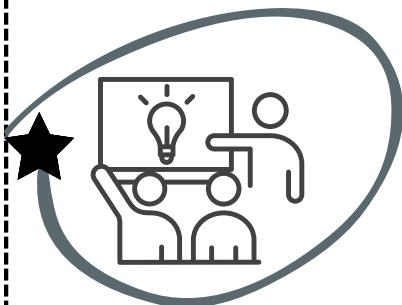
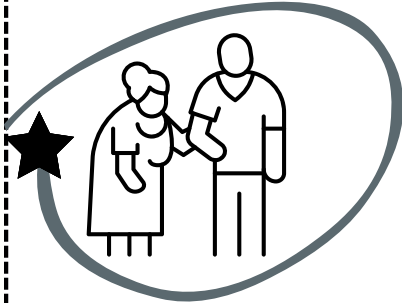
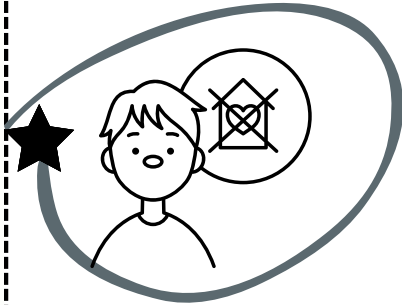


### *Make Room for all those being helped by The Franciscan Sisters of the Cross in Lebanon*

The Franciscan Sisters of the Cross in Lebanon care for 170 orphans as well as 800 elderly men and women suffering from Alzheimer's and other chronic diseases. The sisters also educate 3000 students, mostly from deprived communities, but at the moment, they are struggling to survive and keep their institutions running.

The sisters look after over one thousand patients (Christians and non-Christians) at the Psychiatric Hospital of the Cross. The patients are mentally and physically disabled. Many were rejected by their families because of their disability or they had to be left behind during the war (some families didn't have the money to care for a child with special needs). Most of the patients spend their entire lives in these hospitals with illnesses such as bipolar disorders, depression and drug addiction. These patients have nowhere to go; the only other option would be for the sisters to send their highly vulnerable patients onto the streets, which is unthinkable. They need love, care and proper medication.

The sisters need help to buy medicine, equipment, food, water and electricity, as well as funds for industrial laundry (serving all of their institutions - they process 4 tons of laundry per day).



### *Christmas List*

for £17 you can...

...provide the hospital with one box of vital medicine. This will enable The Franciscan Sisters of the Cross in Lebanon to continue to look after the mentally sick who have nowhere else to turn.



# ADVENT WITH AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

## LEBANON: Make Room for the hungry



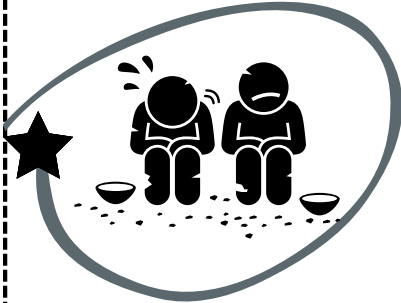
We can reach the most vulnerable with an all-embracing “action plan”, bringing emergency food support for hungry families.



### *Make Room for those with no food*



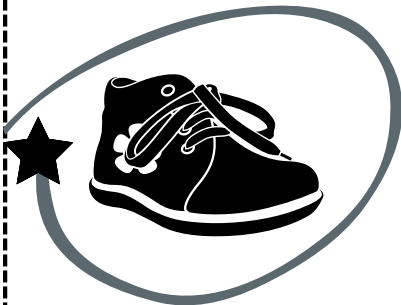
In some of the poorest parts of Beirut, the financial crisis has badly affected those who were already suffering. Now they are in a situation of dire poverty, suffering from unemployment. Without a regular income, they are unable to pay for housing, electricity, food and medicine. Cancer and dialysis patients can no longer get their treatment. Their mental health is also suffering.



The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are trying to respond and help these families. They distribute daily meals, clothes, medicines, nappies and milk for the children. Several religious groups have worked together with a specialized team to set up a clinic as there is no access to free medical and social services. Today, more than 4000 families are enrolled in the clinic and being given a life-line by the sisters. The families have no money at all so they need urgent help with basic needs. This gives them dignity, helping them not just in a physical way, but as whole people: emotionally, socially and spiritually.



At school, children need shoes or warm clothes as well as books and supplies. Parents cannot pay the first instalment of the school fees and children live under the threat of having to drop out of school. This makes for a bleak future. With help, the sisters can provide families with the minimum needed at the start of the school year.



### *Christmas List*

for £100 you can...

....support one whole family in dire poverty for a whole month.



# ADVENT WITH AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

## SYRIA: Make Room for children to receive a Christmas present



"My mother works in cleaning houses, and she can hardly provide my father with medicine and food. Christmas is going to be tough this year. And if my mother can find some money, she will think first of providing medical treatment for my father, and then food for the family."



ACN

### *Make Room for children all over Syria this year*

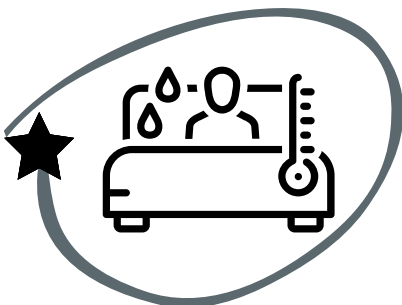
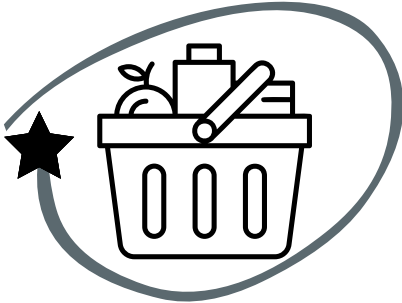
Sr Annie Demerjian has been a friend of ACN for many years. She and her volunteers have been caring for the most vulnerable, isolated and/or disabled Christians throughout the war, doing so at great risk to themselves. They continue this work today providing necessities such as food, clothing and medical care.

Children are by far one of the most vulnerable groups. During 2022 prices increased by 50 - 200%. Families have had to spend their savings on food and many cannot buy meat, or even vegetables, for their children.

One child who says he doesn't expect to get presents at Christmas, speaks for many; his father became unemployed as a result of an illness that left him housebound. This child says that his family's circumstances made him unable to buy vital new clothes for a while.

Sister Annie writes: "Your assistance to us in distributing Christmas clothes to our poor children during the past years has expressed the meaning of giving... They would not be able to get a Christmas gift without your concern and help. Finally, we would like to thank you in advance in the name Sisters of Jesus and Mary, our families and work team."

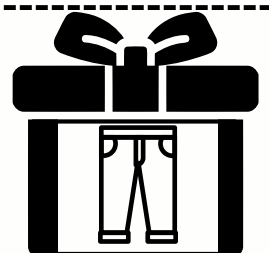
Will you help us bring joy to thousands of Syrian children between the ages of 3 to 18 in Syria by helping us to secure clothes for 30,000 children as a Christmas gift ?



## Christmas List

for £12.50 you can...

...offer a shirt and a pair of jeans to a Syrian child.



# ADVENT WITH AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

## Ukraine: Make Room for Refugees



"Ukraine: without vehicles there is neither aid nor hope."

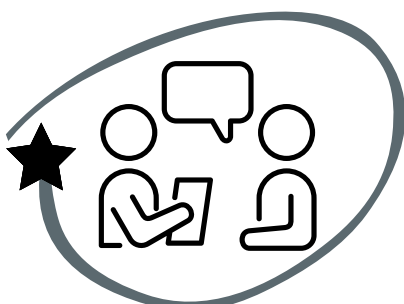
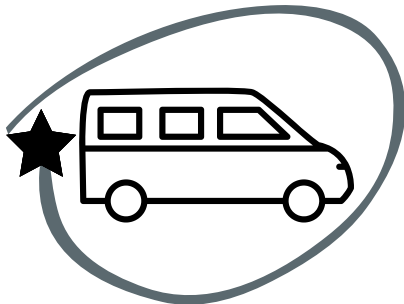
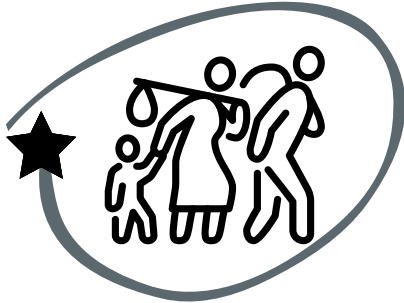
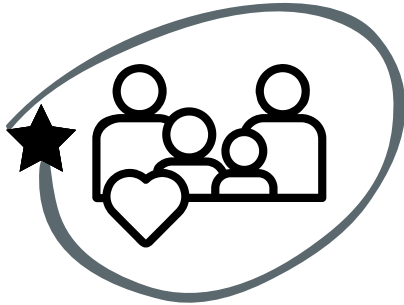


### *Make Room for refugees by contributing to a vehicle*

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, Pilgrim House (which is part of a religious shrine in a village called Stradch) has opened its doors to refugees from the war zones. Over the past six months it has become home to more than 350 people. Today, it is still full to capacity, hosting 50 people, including 19 children, between the ages of 16 and six months.

Without a van, securing the needs of the refugees is impossible. Fr Ivan Koltun, the shrine's manager, had a car but it was destroyed by someone who could not be traced. When refugees arrive at the train station they need to be picked up, and when they decide to return to their own homes, they have to be taken to the station with their belongings. Once they have settled in, the new arrivals need help to obtain all the necessary documentation, which means travelling to the city of Yavoriv, 35 km away. Furthermore, feeding the 50 residents requires making large purchases of food, which means almost daily trips to Lviv.

In the future, the Pilgrim House will not only welcome group retreats and pilgrims but will also provide psychological rehabilitation for those affected by the war. Thanks to the help provided by ACN benefactors, Fr Ivan has just received the necessary funds to purchase a car, so that he can better serve those who need it. Make room, by helping ACN fund more transport to give vital support to refugees in Ukraine.



## Christmas List

for £25 you can...

...contribute to the cost of transport to someone like Fr Ivan who looks after refugees.





# ADVENT WITH AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

## Syria: Make Room for the elderly



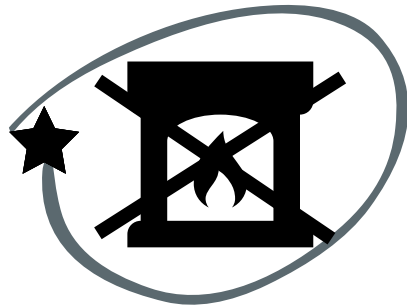
Bring a spark of hope to the forgotten ones.

"It is a true gesture of charity for the least of the least in a forgotten tragedy."

(New bishop of Safita, Syria)



ACN

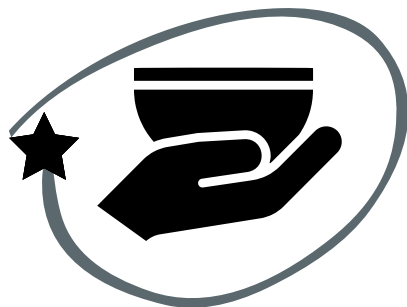


### *Make Room for older people with no family*

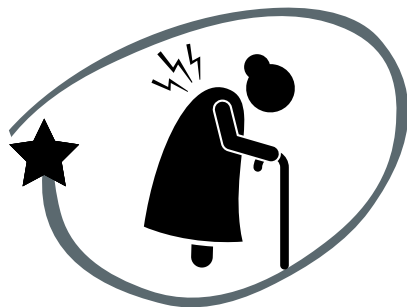
The effects of the war in Syria have been particularly harsh on the elderly. Huge numbers of young Syrians had to emigrate, leaving the older people on their own. The situation has become an emergency, as many of the elderly don't have savings and some were abandoned by their families and have no support without the Church.



The diocese of Lattakia covers mostly a poor, rural area with limited resources to support the charitable work of the local parishes. ACN hopes to support the local church by providing enough money for their survival. This help will also give them hope because they will know that their Church is with them and supports them. This therefore helps those in most need on a material, spiritual and emotional level. It is an act of pure charity. These people have nothing and nobody to rely on. They have survived a brutal war, are unable to see their families and have no control over the situation they are in.



ACN wants to support 309 elderly persons (70 people who are 'special cases' which means there is an additional need) for at least 6 months. This will cost just over £41,000.



## Christmas List

for £135 you could support...

...an elderly person for 6 months



# MAKE ROOM THIS ADVENT: CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATION

Hole punch the top of your box on two edges, so you can weave string or ribbon through. Then you can hang it on the Christmas Tree.

PRAYER

When you have decided what how you are going to pray differently this Advent, make a note in this box.

Which item from the 'Christmas Shopping List' are you raising money for?

HELP FOR?

Write/draw or show a symbol of, the people you are helping.

THE ITEM E.G  
CAR, MEDICINE  
ETC.

GENERAL CHRISTMAS  
DECORATIONS  
AND SYMBOLS  
GO ON THIS SIDE.

MAKE ROOM?

Write/draw or show a symbol of how you are going to raise money for the people you have decided to help.

HOW?

Write/draw or show a symbol of something you need to let go of in order to 'Make Room' for God this Advent.

