

**Lent & Easter
Appeal 2018**

Meet Dimma.

**Will you
walk with
her this Lent?**



Count Your Blessings 2018

Walk into the wilderness this Lent.

Through daily reflections, share
your journey with your sisters and
brothers around the world.

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We believe in life
before death

Welcome!

As we follow Jesus' journey this Lent, let's confront the wildernesses in our own world. Let's walk with our neighbours – like Dimma, Ibrahim and Sori – who have been forced to flee their homes.

You'll reflect on the blessings in your life, and you'll see how your support gives people hope.

We're so pleased you're with us.

How to count your blessings

1. Read the daily reflection.
2. Count the blessings and jot your total in the space.*
3. Pray and act with us to share your blessings.
4. After Easter, add up your contributions and send your total gift to Christian Aid. It's really easy – just use the form provided or donate online at christianaid.ie/lent

*Please give what you can afford. Daily giving amounts are only suggestions. Remember, every pound you give will transform lives.

Get the kids involved!

We've made a special version of *Count Your Blessings* for children.

Order your copies before they run out...

visit: christianaid.ie/lent
email: belfast@christian-aid.org
phone: 028 9064 8133



Dimma



Ibrahim



Sori

Week 1

14-18
February
Into the
Wilderness

Your total for
week 1:

Wednesday 14 February

Ash Wednesday

Today is also Valentine's Day. What do you love? Climate change threatens the things we love, and hits our poorest neighbours hardest. Extreme weather from drought to flooding forces so many to flee their homes. Hold them in your heart.

Show love by wearing a green heart today. You'll meet new neighbours on your Lent journey – share their stories with your loved ones. And give £1 for every new person you meet today. christianaid.ie/climate

Thursday 15


Imagine having to leave everything: your home, your family, your community, all for an uncertain future. For many of our sisters and brothers, this wilderness is all too real. Whatever they're fleeing, be it conflict or the devastation of climate change, they're all hoping for a new start.

Give 30p for every mile you travel from home today, or £3 if more than 10 miles.

Friday 16

More than 40 million people worldwide are 'internally displaced'. This means they're forced from their homes but remain in their own country. They're often overlooked, without the protections given to refugees, and must create lives for themselves in unfamiliar places.

Take a short walk in your area. As you walk, thank God for everything that brings you joy in your community.

 Share a photo of something you're grateful for in your community. Use #CountYourBlessings on social media.

Weekend 17 & 18

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness' Luke 4:1

Jesus faced challenges in the wilderness, but he was not alone. The Holy Spirit guided him on the journey.

Dub works for Christian Aid's partner in northern Kenya. He comes from a family of nomadic farmers and now speaks up for those in desperate need. Our sisters and brothers in the wilderness often find support from people like Dub on their journey.

Who would be there for you in times of need? Give 50p in thanks for each person.



Week 2

19-25
February

Ibrahim's Journey

Your total for week 2:

Monday 19

Nana and Ibrahim's village in Nigeria was taken over by Boko Haram. For the past year, they've survived in a displaced people's camp with their three children.

Home is an important place for us all.

Give 50p every time you walk through your front door today.

Tuesday 20

Just like the early Christians, many of our sisters and brothers around the world courageously stand up for their beliefs, even when threatened with death. Ibrahim refused to join Boko Haram, putting his life on the line.

Today, pray for all those who face persecution.


Wednesday 21

When Nana escaped, Boko Haram stopped her in the road and stole her donkey. She and her children were forced to walk for three days to reach safety. They slept under trees on the way.

How many shoes do you own? Give 20p for each pair.

Thursday 22

Colombia. The Democratic Republic of Congo. Iraq. Nigeria. Sudan. Syria. These countries have the highest numbers of internally displaced people in the world. Ibrahim and his family are just one story among millions.

 Light a candle and pray for one of these countries. Share a photo on social media and invite others to pray.

Friday 23

Before Ibrahim was forced to flee his home, he was a farmer. But he can't farm in the camp. He works hard to collect firewood to sell, and has managed to build a small shelter, but still struggles to feed his family. 'We have nothing', he says.

Today, fast through one of your meals. Donate the money you would have spent on food.



Ibrahim and his family have sought refuge in a camp.

Weekend 24 & 25

'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen... to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?' Isaiah 58:6-7

Our journey through Lent is one of hope. Hope that we can grow in our discipleship, hope that our hearts will be filled with more of God's love.

This weekend, take some time to reflect on your Lenten journey. Are you letting God change your heart? How are you taking action for a better world?

Week 3

26 February-
4 March

Dimma's Journey

Your total for week 3:

Monday 26

Fairtrade Fortnight

Did you know that Fairtrade helps farmers protect the environment? They learn to grow their crops in sustainable ways, and invest in projects that care for their community.

Challenge yourself to buy more Fairtrade and environmentally-friendly products this week.

Tuesday 27

The last time Dimma remembers rain in her part of Kenya was two years ago. Climate change is making droughts much worse in Kenya, and Dimma's family have lost many of their sheep and goats. They've been forced to move in desperate search of water.

Thank God for whatever weather comes your way today.

Wednesday 28

Christian Aid's partner gave Dimma livestock feed and cash. Dimma uses it to keep her flock alive and buys food her family urgently needs, such as milk, rice and beans. They wouldn't have survived without our support.

Have you bought a treat today? Give the same amount to help people like Dimma.

Thursday 1 March

It's not just Dimma's family that can't survive where they are. Climate change makes survival a struggle for millions. Everyone should have a safe home.

Give £1 for every car journey you've made today, or 60p if you haven't travelled by car.

Friday 2

Dimma's journey has been difficult, but she and her family have now settled in their new home. Now she's near a shop, so she can buy milk for her children, giving them a healthy diet. It's a small but significant step to a better life.

Could you live without milk in your tea? Try today or give £1.

Weekend 3 & 4

'He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.'

John 2:15

When Jesus saw his Father's house being exploited, he immediately took action to restore justice. This weekend, ask yourself: who exploits power in our world? Which tables still need to be overturned?

You can take action on climate change. Join our Big Shift campaign and ask banks to invest our money in clean energy. Visit christianaid.ie/bigshift



Dimma feeds her remaining livestock with supplies from our partner.

Week 4

5-11 March

Aisha's Journey

Your total for week 4:

Monday 5

Aisha has witnessed more than anyone should. When Boko Haram attacked her hometown, her sister-in-law was killed in front of her eyes. They threatened to marry Aisha to a stranger. She fled.

Even in bloody violence and the darkest of times, Jesus is there.

Raise our sisters like Aisha up to God today.



Aisha received welcome in her new community.

Tuesday 6

Since 2013, Boko Haram have used brutal tactics to terrorise people in north-eastern Nigeria. Women and children are particularly vulnerable. Millions have been displaced. Christian Aid's partner has been supporting affected people and their communities.

Imagine the fear our global neighbours endure. Give 40p for every hour of sleep you had last night.

Wednesday 7

Imagine walking from Manchester to Leeds through the night. Could you manage it? Heavily pregnant, Aisha walked more than 45 miles with her children to safety. The journey took three days.

Where have you travelled since Sunday? Give 10p for every journey.

Thursday 8

International Women's Day

When Aisha reached safety, she began to build a new life with her children. She used her talents to make handmade cards, selling them to pay rent for a new home.

We pray for all women living in poverty. Offer their hopes for themselves and their families to God.

Friday 9

Christian Aid's partner Jireh Doo Foundation is working with displaced people in Nigeria to help them thrive. They train men to become gender champions, helping them to understand women's rights and stand up for them.

Education changes lives. Give 30p for every unread book on your shelf.


Weekend 10 & 11

Mothering Sunday

'I gave birth to my child, and we were sleeping in the open, so the cold was too much for the child and me as a mother.' Aisha

After Aisha gave birth in the camp, she struggled to look after her baby. When she rented her new home, her landlord saw her difficulty and refused to take any more rent. She said, 'I am thankful to God, and to our landlord for giving us this space.'

Reflect on who has shown you compassion. Write them a thank-you letter for their love and care.

 **Share a photo of that special person on social media, using #CountYourBlessings.**

Week 5

12-18 March

Sori's Journey

Your total for week 5:

Monday 12

Sori and her husband, Galgallo, live in northern Kenya with their six children. The drought forced them to move to find water. Galgallo often looks after the animals away from home and Sori misses him a lot. She prays that in the future her family will be together.

What are your prayers for the future? This week, include Sori's family in your prayers.



Sori receives a life-saving cash grant.

Tuesday 13

Sori made sure all her children are in school. 'I haven't been to school, [but] people who have are now the ones who are self-reliant', she says. 'The future of my children is really important to me.'

Sori's children walk to school. Give 50p for every school in walking distance from your home, or £4.

Wednesday 14

Sori and her husband used to be able to pay for their children's schooling, but the drought made this difficult. Now, Sori uses the money she received from Christian Aid's partner to keep her children learning.

Give 20p for every year of education you've completed.

Thursday 15

'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.' John 1:23

Internally displaced people are often overlooked by the international community. This year, we're speaking up for them at the UN.

Join us. Contact us for updates on our campaigns at christianaid.ie/actnow

Friday 16

Although their situation is still uncertain, Sori is hopeful. 'We're not willingly moving away from our homes, but we remain optimistic, looking forward to a good season when families will be reunited', she said.

Give 20p for every year you've been able to live in your home, or £3.

Weekend 17 & 18

'[I pray for] health for my children, family, and animals, and so we can be strong for each other.' Galgallo Elema

Isn't it amazing that, wherever we are in the world, whatever our situation, we share many of our prayers with our brothers and sisters. How can we be strong for our global family?

This weekend, share a meal with some family or friends.

 **Share a photo of your get-together using #CountYourBlessings.**

Week 6

19-25 March

Ayuba's Journey

Your total for week 6:

Monday 19

In Maiduguri, north-eastern Nigeria, Christian Aid distributes emergency food to displaced people and their host communities. For some, this is the only support they're receiving.

Give £1 for every meal you have today.

Tuesday 20

Maiduguri's population has doubled because of people fleeing there. Even though the communities are already living in poverty, many are opening their homes in hospitality to displaced people.

Ask our politicians to speak up for all displaced people – join our campaign today: christianaid.ie/ignorenomore



Our partner gives food to displaced people in Nigeria.

Wednesday 21

Ayuba has opened up his home to those who've fled violence. Although his house has only nine rooms, at one point he was sheltering more than 100 people! He told us 'they have no one else to help them but me'.

Give £1 for every bedroom in your household.

Thursday 22

World Water Day

In Borno state, Nigeria, water facilities can't cope with the growing numbers of displaced people. Christian Aid's partner is providing lifesaving water and sanitation.

Give 30p for each minute of your shower or £2 if you had a bath today.

Friday 23

The money Ayuba loses in rent means he struggles to care for himself and others. Christian Aid has been providing food for Ayuba and those living with him. 'I'm happy someone is thinking about us somewhere. Pray for us so our lives can return to normal', he said.

Pray for Ayuba and everyone staying with him.

Weekend 24 & 25

Palm Sunday

'They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord – the King of Israel!"' John 12:12-14

The crowd held branches high, waving them for a man on a donkey. How do we welcome newcomers, weary travellers, arriving with little splendour? How can we celebrate their coming? How can we lay our coats on the ground for them?

How many people will you greet this weekend? Give 40p for each one, or £2.50.

Week 7

Holy Week

26 March-1 April

Journey to the Cross

Your total for Holy Week:

Monday 26

Elama from Kenya prays: 'Firstly I pray for peace and secondly for what we don't have. By peace I mean everyone being together, for people to come home, for people to live happily. And thirdly, rain!'

Did you check the weather forecast today? Give £1 if so.

Tuesday 27

'The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me.' Isaiah 49:1

We believe everyone is made in God's image. We know that 40 million people are displaced within their countries by conflict, but the true figure is likely much higher as many displaced people are overlooked. Let us remember all displaced people as children of God.

If you had to flee your home, what couldn't you bear to leave behind? Carry it with you wherever you go today.



Share a photo of what you treasure on social media using #CountYourBlessings, and invite others to do the same.

Wednesday 28

Deborah works for Christian Aid in Maiduguri, Nigeria. She helps to care for displaced people living in camps, providing food and hearing their stories. She says 'You have to be strong for them. It's very difficult, but you find a way to take it in.'

Do you ever ignore stories which are hard to bear? How can we listen with compassion?

Thursday 29

Maundy Thursday

'Not my will, but yours be done.' Luke 22:42

Bread is broken. Wine is shared. Jesus' journey to the Cross begins. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prays: 'Not my will, but yours be done.' Even on this, the most difficult of journeys, Jesus trusts that God is with him, guiding him in the darkest of moments.

Do you fully trust God? How can you place more trust in him today?



The drought in northern Kenya forced Elama Dido to rely on aid.

Friday 30

Good Friday

'He said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.' John 19:30-31

Jesus walked the most difficult of human paths. For those today who have faced grief and fear on their own journeys, Jesus shares their suffering. They do not walk alone. We walk with them, we grieve with them, in solidarity, as sisters and brothers. We know this is not the end of the story.

Look back on your Lenten journey. How will you continue to walk with those in need?



Dimma holds a baby goat, kept alive by feed from our partner.

Weekend 31 March & 1 April Holy Saturday & Easter Sunday

He is Risen! Death turns to resurrection, despair turns to hope. Around the world, wherever our neighbours are on their journey, we are there. We extend our hands to communities torn apart by violence, to our neighbours forced from their homes. We proclaim the message of hope.

We believe in the joyful, glorious world that Jesus' resurrection brings. We will walk together until we arrive.



At Easter, we celebrate a hope which cannot be contained. This Christian Aid Week, join with thousands of churches to share the hopes of displaced people around the world. Get involved at caweek.org

Thank you for counting your blessings!

YOUR LENT TOTAL:

Empty box for Lent total.

Thank you for walking with our neighbours like Dimma this Lent. Your generous gift means we can continue to walk alongside those most in need throughout the world.

£20 could provide animal feed to protect the livestock of a family like Dimma's.

£40 could provide cash for two families, so they can buy the food they desperately need.

£70 could buy a month's supply of beans for a family in Nigeria, a lifeline for those forced to leave their home with nothing.

It's really easy to donate:



Visit christianaid.ie/lent and donate online.



Call 028 9064 8133 quoting A030351 to donate by credit or debit card.



Send a cheque with the form below. (Please write 'Count Your Blessings' on the reverse of the cheque.)

Please return this form, along with your generous donations, to: Count Your Blessings, Christian Aid, Linden House, 96 Beechill Road, Belfast, BT8 7QN

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