

Count Your Blessings



This Lent, you can help us give children a safe and happy childhood. Join us and Count Your Blessings for 40 days.

Day 1

More than 150 years ago, the Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson helped homeless children living under the arches of Waterloo station. The spirit of our founder lives on today. We provide practical and emotional care and support, make sure children's voices are heard, and campaign to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

Spread the word about Count Your Blessings. Donate 10p for every person you tell.

£

Day 2

More than 4 million children in the UK were locked in poverty before coronavirus hit. Now, many more have been plunged into crisis through no fault of their own.

Take a moment today to pray for children and families who need help.



Day 3

40% of families told us that they struggled to feed their children during the pandemic.

Donate 20p if you went to the shops this week.

£

Day 4

Every child should be able to fulfil their potential. We offer specialist support, education and training that helps young people to thrive.

Think about five people who have helped you throughout your life.

Day 5

Sian is an Action for Children play therapist in Wales. She helps children who have experienced trauma to express their feelings through play.

Donate 20p in honour of someone you're thankful for.

£

Day 6

Sian says: "Play therapy helps us look beyond behaviour to see what children are trying to communicate."

Take some time today to write down any personal changes you want to make during Lent.

Day 7

Sian adapted her work during the pandemic. "A lot of families, who don't have a support network, lost any daily contact," explains Sian. "That's why it's so important that we continue to support them."

Donate 10p if you've received any support this week.

£

Day 8

Children are referred to play therapy for many reasons. Usually it's because something traumatic has happened in their lives. Staff like Sian are the reason Action for Children makes a difference to children across the UK.

Say a prayer for Action for Children staff, volunteers and the families they work with.

**Day
9**

Youth homelessness is a growing crisis in the UK. A young person can become homeless for lots of different reasons. These include family breakdown and violence at home. Half of all adults who are homeless first experience homelessness before they're 21.

Donate 20p for every bed in your home.

£



**Day
10**

Nicole was just three weeks old when her mum committed suicide. As Nicole grew up, raised by her aunt, she struggled because she felt different to other children.

Make time to reach out – by phone, email or message – to a family member.

**Day
11**

Nicole became homeless when she was 16. "I was living on the streets for three months," she explains. "I can't describe it. I didn't have my stuff with me, just one outfit. I was freezing, so numb. I couldn't feel any part of my body."

Donate 20p if you've enjoyed a warm bath or shower today.

£

**Day
12**

After a year without a safe, stable place to live, Nicole found Action for Children. She says: "I moved into New Horizons [an Action for Children housing service] in December 2017. Before, I felt lost. I was on drugs, drinking all the time, getting in trouble with the police. It finished when I moved in – the place has changed me."

Find time this week to donate to a food bank or start collecting food in your office or church.

**Day
13**

Nicole says: "I never felt I could call any place home. It means the world for me. It will only be my home for a short time, but I'll never forget it."

Donate 10p for every safe and happy place you've called home.

£

**Day
14**

Our Dorset Nightstop service offers emergency accommodation to young people. Last year, we helped nearly 2,000 young people into secure housing. Just £5 a month could pay for emergency overnight support for a young person.

Say a prayer for young people and families who are homeless.

**Day
15**

Take some time today to think about all the possessions you're thankful for.

Think about donating to a local family or children's centre during Lent.

**Day
16**

Young carers have to take on adult responsibilities far too early. We help young people who look after others across the UK.

Donate 20p if you've taken a break today.

£

**Day
17**

Our community short breaks give disabled children the opportunity to try something different, have fun and pick up new skills. They also give families a break from caring responsibilities.

Make time to help someone this week.

**Day
18**

Every child should feel safe, secure and cared for. 74% of children at risk of neglect experience an improvement in family life after getting support from our services.

Donate 20p if you've enjoyed an activity outside this week.

£

**Day
19**

Lyle was physically and emotionally abused by his parents. They punched and kicked him, and he'd often go days without food.

Pray for children whose families can't give them the care they need.

**Day
20**

Lyle says: "I wasn't always fed at home. My big sister would sneak food into her room for us most nights." When his parents threw his sister out, Lyle was left to fend for himself.

Donate 20p for a place that makes you feel welcome and safe.

£

**Day
21**

“My childhood didn’t exist,” Lyle explains. “I don’t have much to remember. I couldn’t leave the house, I wasn’t allowed to shower, I had lice... it was horrible.” Lyle was bullied at school and started to isolate himself in his room. At 14, he started drinking.

Take some time today to write down 10 things you’re grateful for.

**Day
22**

When Lyle left school, he found himself a job. But things were getting worse at home. Lyle says: “I loved my job. But when I got home, nothing had changed. I was the only one putting money in the house. And if I didn’t give them money for drugs, they would take it out on me. I knew I had to get out.”

Donate 10p for every job you’ve had.

£

**Day
23**

Action for Children found Lyle a safe place to live in supported accommodation. “They’ve reminded me that I am enough,” he explains. “They helped me recover from my alcohol problems. Without them, I don’t think I’d be alive.” Watch Lyle’s story on [YouTube](#).

Make time this week to do a good deed for someone.



**Day
24**

Poverty can have a devastating impact on children’s lives. Across the UK today, families have to make the awful choice between paying the rent or putting food on the table.

Donate 20p if you’ve had a hot meal today.

£

**Day
25**

Richie, a plumber from Devon, lost his partner just as the UK went into the first national lockdown. She died giving birth to their daughter. He suddenly found himself caring for two young children, while trying to manage his own grief. He says: “Although we did have support, because of coronavirus, it wasn’t what you’d get normally. You just couldn’t go out and do something or see someone.”

Pray that children, young people and families get the help they need, when they need it.

**Day
26**

The hospital put Richie in touch with Action for Children. “Camille, our support worker, was really understanding,” he says. “She was someone I could talk to and ask questions, and we built a bit of a bond. She sorted out funding so that my oldest, Finn, could do more hours at nursery. I also did a baby massage course with my daughter, Neve.”

Write down five things that have made you happy today. Donate 10p for each one.

£

**Day
27**

Richie is now getting the support he, and his children, need. “Sometimes it can feel hard taking help,” he explains. “You feel like you need to do it yourself. But I’d say to anyone, 100%, take whatever you can.”

Donate 20p in honour of a person who helped you when you needed them.

£

**Day
28**

A gift in your will could transform a child’s life. Imagine that. Big or small, your gift could help us give vulnerable children a brighter future. To find out more, head to: actionforchildren.org.uk/future

**Day
29**

Today is World Water Day. But for many of the families we work with, heating and hot water is something they can’t always afford.

Donate 10p for every cup of tea you have today.

£

**Day
30**

Kelly had a difficult childhood. Aged 10, she was caring for her three siblings. She also experienced emotional and physical abuse. When Kelly had her own children, she was determined to give her little girls the happy childhood she’d missed out on.

Pray for people who don’t have a safe and stable home.

**Day
31**

Kelly put herself under a lot of pressure and her mental health started to suffer. And when her husband, Darren, was diagnosed with a degenerative spine condition – and she found out she had multiple sclerosis – the family’s world turned upside down.

Have a chat with a friend or colleague to find out how they’re feeling.

**Day
32**

We helped Kelly and Darren to get back on their feet. By offering non-judgmental advice and practical support, we boosted Kelly's confidence. "We're going to give them as normal a childhood as possible," says Kelly. "It's thanks to Action for Children that we're able to do that."

Donate 20p if someone has helped you this week.

£

**Day
33**

It can be hard to know where to turn for help. Our Parent Talk website offers families down-to-earth advice, expert information, and the chance to chat live to our parenting coaches.

Pray for people who don't have family or friends to turn to.

**Day
34**

Small change can make a big difference. Home collection boxes raise about £500,000 every year. Let us know if you'd like an Action for Children small change box for your home or church.

Call 0300 123 2112 to order a collection box or donate 20p if you already have one.

£

**Day
35**

At our warm and welcoming children's centres, parents can get together and find the support they need.

Donate 20p if you're planning a family reunion this Easter.

£

**Day
40**

We've been a vital lifeline for vulnerable children for more than 150 years. And you've been by our side every step of the way. We're incredibly grateful for everything you do.

So today we simply want to say thank you.



**Day
36**

Raeah noticed her son, Joseph, had a speech delay when he was two. "Joseph was saying a few words," she explains. "But all of a sudden he stopped."

Say a prayer for people who are finding things difficult.

**Day
37**

Joseph was referred to Action for Children. "His speech wasn't getting any better and I needed help," says Raeah. "We came to Birmingham Children's Centre, which was when he was diagnosed with autism."

Donate 20p for every problem you've solved today.

£

**Day
38**

Joseph started going to 'play and stay' sessions during the holidays. "Joseph loves coming to the centre," explains Raeah. "All the staff know him by name. It's amazing how they remember every child that walks through these doors."

Tell someone that you appreciate them.

**Day
39**

Today is World Autism Awareness Day. Autism affects everyone differently, so recognising the symptoms isn't always easy. More than 40% of people with autism have an anxiety disorder.

Donate 20p if you have felt anxious this week.

£

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Total amount raised:

Count Your Blessings £

We value your support and we promise to respect your privacy and keep your details safe in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Your data will not be given or sold to any third party and only kept and used for the purposes of Action for Children's work.

You can change the way we keep in contact at any time by simply emailing ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk or calling **0300 123 2112**.

I am happy for Action for Children to contact me via:

Phone Email SMS Mail

At the end of Lent, please give the money you collect to the person who gave you this sheet or send a cheque made payable to Action for Children to:

**Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard,
Ascot Road, Watford, WD18 8AG**

Please include this return slip.

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Gift Aid declaration

I would like Action for Children to claim Gift Aid on any donations I have made within the last four years, this donation and all donations I make in the future until further notice. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that Action for Children will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

