This Lent, join us for 40 days to make life better for children across the UK.

Count Your Blessings 2017

Nearly 7,000 staff and volunteers operate over 600 local services, improving the lives of 390,000 babies, children, teenagers, parents and carers every year.

We can only do this with your support. Generous donations help in so many ways: from children with disabilities getting the equipment they need, to children who’ve suffered abuse getting therapeutic support, through to our local volunteers getting the training they need to do what’s right for children.

So if you’re up for a challenge, count your blessings for 40 days this Lent, and help us to take more action for children.

By doing what’s right, doing what’s needed, and doing what works for disadvantaged children across the UK.

By asking for, and earning, your support.
The Methodist Church is rightly proud of the work of Action for Children to serve disadvantaged children and their families across the UK. We believe that we are all children of God, and that every child has the right to know that they are safe and loved.

As we journey towards Easter, we remember that through Jesus Christ, God has blessed us immeasurably more than we could have asked for or imagined. I hope that many of us will take the opportunity during Lent to count our blessings, to give thanks, and to support the vital work of Action for Children however we are able.

The Reverend Canon Gareth Powell
Secretary of the Methodist Conference

**Turn fish and a few loaves into a delicious supper this Lent**

Some families face impossible choices like whether to pay the rent, turn on the heating or feed the children. Can you help by hosting a supper this Lent?

**Invite family and friends over for a Fish & Loaves Supper where they donate to Action for Children in return for a delicious meal.**

Posters and additional information are available online at actionforchildren.org.uk/countyourblessings

We hope you take part and enjoy your Fish & Loaves supper this Lent.

**40 day challenge: family support**

**Day 1.** Yesterday was pancake day. You’ve eaten your fill, so how many did you and your family eat this year? **Donate 10p for every pancake. £ ………………….**

**Day 2.** Most of us love a good pancake (or two), but balance our diet to stay healthy. We provide struggling families with practical advice on how to eat healthily on a budget. **Why not donate 10p for every different vegetable eaten today. £ ………………….**

**Day 3.** Hundreds of children and family centres up and down the country not only provide children with a safe place to play, they provide isolated parents with the early support they need to get on with being a great parent. **Donate 50p if you’re planning a family reunion this Lent. £ ………………….**

**Day 4.** It’s good to tweet, but why not count the birds today? With your support we’re helping parents balance online with offline activities: 101 ways for children to turn off their gadgets and enjoy real life. **Donate 10p for each different bird counted. £ ………………….**

**Day 5.** **Time to Reflect.** Take time to think about what family means to you. A child cannot choose his or her family, yet they play the most important role in a child’s life. Pray for those without family and for children whose families do not provide adequate levels of care and support.

**Time to count your blessings**

(by counting the pennies that turn into pounds) **£ ………………….**
Communication and language are an important part of child development for under fives. Let's get more children ready for life.

While reading with mum, I’m learning how to follow a story and talk about what happened.

www.actionforchildren.org.uk/fairbyfive
40 day challenge: fostering

**Day 11.** We believe all children deserve a safe place to call home. So why not count your blessings by counting all your children and grandchildren today? **Donate 50p per child. £ ..................**

**Day 12.** We’re good at giving foster children a stable home – avoiding multiple moves which are all too common. **Donate 50p for being there to support your friends and family this week. £ ..................**

**Day 13.** Finding new foster carers for a growing number of disadvantaged children is a constant activity. Once found, priceless – for the children we place. Could you give a child a loving home or recommend a friend? **Please visit actionforchildren.org.uk/fostering for more information.**

**Day 14.** From running the London Marathon to cycling in Ride London, call **0300 123 2112** if you’d like to take part and secure an Action for Children place at one of these events. **Donate 10p for every person you see running or cycling today. £ ..................**

**Day 15.** **Time to Reflect.** Today, take a moment to think about children who are not able to live with their own parents for whatever reason or who are orphaned, and how vulnerable they can be.

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**Time to count your blessings**
(by counting the pennies that turn into pounds) **£ ..................**
40 day challenge: youth support

**Day 16.** Youth homelessness is set to rise unless we do more to help. Byte Night is our annual sleep-out event to raise awareness and funds for children at risk of homelessness. **Donate 20p for every bed in your home (and if you have a spare bedroom, think about fostering). £ ..................**

**Day 17.** For a child turning 18 and leaving care, help with practical things, like how to manage money or secure a tenancy, are invaluable. **Donate 10p every time you use your credit or debit card today. £ ..................**

**Day 18.** Young carers, some as young as eight years old, take on adult responsibilities too early. We’re here to support them and their families, including giving them time off from caring to have some fun. **Donate 20p for every household chore you did today. £ ..................**

**Day 19.** Sometimes the old ways are the best ways – like home collection boxes providing up to £500,000 each year! Let us know if you would you like an Action for Children small change box for your home. **Please call 0300 123 2112 to order your collection box.**

**Day 20. Time to Reflect.** Think about young people around the country who through no fault of their own, are not equipped with sufficient skills, both emotionally and practically, to handle life as an adult.

**Time to count your blessings**
(by counting the pennies that turn into pounds) £ ..................
40 day challenge: neglect and abuse

**Day 21.** Child neglect – which covers things like a child being dirty, poorly clothed, unfed and generally uncared for – is the most prevalent form of child abuse in the UK (affects 1.5 million children which is like imagining one child in every street in the country). **Donate 50p for every winter coat you own and every hot meal you had today. £**

**Day 22.** Neglected children often spend very little time with their parents or carers. Some don’t even know when it’s their birthday. Prolonged neglect permanently damages a child which is why we all need to act early when we spot the signs. **Donate £1 if your birthday falls during Lent. £**

**Day 23.** Neglected children often don’t have any toys to play with or stimulus to help them develop like cared for children. **Donate £1 if you’ve owned a toy box. £**

**Day 24.** Thanks to all our supporters, we won our campaign to change the criminal law on child neglect which means we can now protect children from emotional abuse. **Thank you!**

**Day 25.** The best way to tackle neglect is to start with prevention. This means acting quickly before small problems become much bigger problems that escalate out of control. **Donate £1 if you’ve tackled a small problem today. £**

40 day challenge: child poverty

**Day 26.** Do something rewarding this Lent and consider leaving a gift in your Will for Action for Children. Your legacy could help us be there for disadvantaged children and young people. **To find out more please call us on 0300 123 2112 or email legacies@actionforchildren.org.uk**

**Day 27.** Children born into poverty are not necessarily neglected but they do miss out on opportunities. **Donate 10p for every year you enjoyed a family holiday. £**

**Day 28.** Poverty, including in-work poverty, is on the increase. 3.9 million children live in poverty in the UK, that’s an increase of 200,000 in just one year. **Donate 50p for every bank account you hold. £**

**Day 29.** Pay the rent, turn on the heating or feed the children? Impossible choices are being made every day and we all need to do more to support these struggling families. **Donate 10p for every item on your weekly shopping list. £**

**Day 30.** Time to Reflect. Take time to think about the millions of families struggling to put food on the table and heat their homes. More than half a million people had to rely on food banks to feed themselves and their families last year.

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**Time to count your blessings**
(by counting the pennies that turn into pounds) £
40 day challenge: disabled children

Day 31. This week we’re going to focus on support for disabled children, and how we help them to feel valued, safe and independent. **Donate 50p for every set of keys you own.** £

Day 32. Many of us love spending time outdoors or gardening. Sensory gardens for disabled children help enormously with their wellbeing but are costly to maintain. **Donate £1 if you’ve managed to spend time outdoors today.** £

Day 33. By tailoring individual care plans with personal goals that stretch each child, we can help them to gain greater independence and control in their lives. **Donate 50p for every trip outside your front door you’ve made today.** £

Day 34. Four out of ten disabled children live in poverty, with their family forced to deliver 24 hour care. This results in emotional distress and families feeling very isolated. **Donate 10p for every person you’ve spoken to today.** £

Day 35. Community short breaks work. Disabled children learn new skills and have fun away from pressures at home. Families get a breather and time to enjoy the normal stuff, like a trip to the cinema. **Donate 50p for every cinema trip you’ve enjoyed this year.** £

Time to count your blessings (by counting the pennies that turn into pounds) £
Thank you!

By counting your blessings this Lent you’re helping how Action for Children works to support disadvantaged children who most need our help across the UK.

You can give your donation to a local representative with this form, or send it with a cheque made payable to Action for Children, stating LENT2017 on the back: Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, Watford WD18 8AG.

Alternatively, you can donate online: actionforchildren.org.uk/countyourblessings

You can also boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

Charity Gift Aid Declaration

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ …………………… and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Action for Children.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details

Title   First Name or Initial(s)  
Surname
Full Home Address
Postcode   Date

Please notify the charity if you:

☐ want to cancel this declaration   ☐ change your name or home address
☐ no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code. We will use the information provided to keep you up to date with our work. If you prefer not to receive any form of communication or correspondence from Action for Children, please tick here ☐

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