

# **A Silence** FOR THE **Silenced**



# Imagine the Christian faith without a voice.

Imagine that you can never talk to others about your faith. You can never meet with other Christians to worship or learn or simply just talk. And owning a Bible, singing a hymn, praying out loud might lead to imprisonment or even death.

For Christians in many countries, this is daily reality. They follow Jesus, they trust Jesus, they love Jesus, but their voices have been silenced. They must keep their faith on mute.

*A Silence for the Silence* is a resource to help you stand alongside our silent brothers and sisters in solidarity and prayer. Although the need for secrecy affects Christians all over the world, this resource looks through the lens of secret Christians in Afghanistan, using their stories and experiences as the inspiration for a creative, reflective time of silent prayer.

**This outline contains three sections:**

**1. About this resource**

Describes the event and lists all the elements needed to put it on.

**2. A Silence for the Silenced: Leader's Guide**

A guide 'script' for those leading the event, including stories, links to videos, etc.

**3. Prayer station cards**

Printable 'cards' for each prayer station. Print these off and cut them up to accompany each station.



## SECTION 1

# About this resource

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### **What is *A Silence for the Silenced*?**

*A Silence for the Silenced* is a prayer event for hidden Christians.

It uses the idea of silence to reflect the way in which Christians around the world – and particularly in Afghanistan – have had their voices taken away from them. Millions of Christians must remain silent and hidden: and yet the remarkable thing is that, despite that, the church is growing and God is speaking.

We experience the same thing in silent prayer. Our silence makes room to hear God. Silence, paradoxically, is full of the sound of the Holy Spirit.

### **How do I use this?**

You can use or adapt this resource how you like.

It's designed for use as a stand-alone prayer event for churches or small groups. So, you can use it as part of your regular church prayer meeting.

Or, you could use it as a special, dedicated time of prayer for secret Christians in Afghanistan and around the world.

It would work especially well as a night-time vigil. There is something about silence and darkness that is particularly powerful. Obviously, prayer is powerful at any time of day, but some of the stations would work better at night.

### **What happens?**

The vigil is broken into three parts:

#### **Part 1: 'Losing Our Voice' (10-15 minutes)**

This section introduces the topic and gives the background information about Christians in Afghanistan. It includes an introductory video.

#### **Part 2: 'Stations of Silence' (30 minutes)**

A time of silent prayer, during which participants are invited to move around the venue and use the prayer stations to pray. Each station has an object and four cards: a Bible verse, a story, a challenge to 'imagine', and ways to pray.

#### **Part 3: 'Using our voice' (15 minutes)**

This is the time of re-gathering. It's a time to conclude our prayers, reflect on what we have experienced, and explore how we can use our voices and abilities to do more.

### **What do I need?**

#### **A venue**

Obviously, you can hold this in a church. But feel free to be creative! Many secret Christians meet at different venues, from homes to abandoned buildings. You could even do it outside, if you can make the technology work.

The key thing is that the venue should enable people to be silent, and that there should be enough space to move around between the stations and gather at the objects.

## Videos

During the event, it would be helpful to show the videos. There are links to the relevant videos in this resource.

## The stations

Each 'Station of Silence' has a **symbolic object** and a **set of four cards**. There are further instructions in the Leader's Guide section.

### The objects

Each object symbolises something that is affecting Christians in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

How you display these objects is up to you and depends on the space. You can put them on the floor, or arrange tables round the venue.

Make sure that people have enough room to gather around the stations and read the materials.

We have chosen these to be as easily obtainable as possible.

### The objects are:

- A suitcase – symbolising the plight of refugees
- A cross – symbolising the price secret Christians have to pay
- A school textbook and some paper or a notebook – symbolising the restrictions on education
- Some water and glasses – symbolising the physical needs of persecuted Christians.
- A padlock (with keys) – symbolising the oppressive restrictions all around them
- Some plain rings (like a wedding ring) – symbolising the danger facing Christian women and girls

- A picture of Jesus – symbolising the loss of visual culture, art and beauty
- Some nails – symbolising the persecutors.

### The cards

To accompany each object on the stations, there are four 'cards' containing Bible verses, a story, written prayers and actions to help people pray.

You will find these at the end of this guide. You will need to print off the cards and cut them up.

## Thank you

Thank you for standing with our silenced brothers and sisters.

You do not have to do all the stations – choose as many as you like. And feel free to adapt this resource to suit your setting or tradition of worship. You might want to include some music at the beginning or end, for example.

However you choose to use it, we hope that this time of prayer will be powerful, moving and inspire supporters to continue holding up these courageous Christians in prayer and actions.



## SECTION 2

# Leader's Guide

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### **PART 1: LOSING OUR VOICE**

*(10-15 minutes)*

#### **1. Welcome people to the event**

*Begin by introducing the purpose of the event.*

All around the world, Christians are being silenced.

They follow Jesus, they trust Jesus, they love Jesus. But they cannot do so openly. They cannot talk freely about their faith. They are not allowed to meet together to worship, to learn, or even just talk. In many countries, owning a Bible, singing a hymn, praying out loud might lead to imprisonment or even death.

Their voices have been silenced. They keep their faith on mute.

Tonight, symbolically, we will also lose our voices. During this time of prayer, we will stand in solidarity with them. We will spend time together in silence, identifying with the way they have their voices silenced and their freedom taken away.

This is a silence for the silenced.

During the event, we will hear stories of Christians from Afghanistan, one of the hardest places in the world to be a Christian. Their testimony is a window into the world of secret Christians everywhere.

During the time of silence, you are invited to move among the various Stations of Silence – which offer different ways of praying for secret Christians in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

As we pray for others, let us also listen for to God and hear what the Father is saying to us.

Then we will gather together and think about how we can use our voices to speak up and support those who have been silenced.

#### **2. Story: Saad's testimony**

*Either the leader or another speaker reads these words from an Afghan Christian.*

*Please make clear that all names have been changed for security reasons.*

##### **The words of Saad**

A secret believer in Afghanistan recounts his experience of the night, in 2020, when the Taliban took back control.

“You cannot understand it like I do... I've lived in this as a little boy. Then 20 years ago, one night one man dared to believe freedom had come to stay, and he turned on his stereo. Then another. Then another. And then another.

Soon, the streets were filled with music and the sounds of laughter and singing were heard.

“The night the Taliban took control, I felt someone step into my memories and try to snuff them out. To speak fear to me.

“The lights went out. The party had started that night almost 20 years ago was snuffed out and the music replaced with screams, and gunshots, and even silence – a sound of nothingness.

“In another room, my wife went into labour and a baby girl was born. A baby girl to a Christian family on a fateful night as this!

“My father read Psalm 20 over my baby and my wife...”

### **Bible Reading: Psalm 20**

*Either the leader, or another, reads Psalm 20:1-5.*

“May the LORD answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

“May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion.

“May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings.

“May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.

“May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God.

“May the LORD grant all your requests.”

### **3. Video: Khada’s story**

Show ‘Khada’s Story’. [You can find it here.](#)



## **PART 2: STATIONS OF SILENCE**

*(30 minutes)*

### **Invitation**

Christians like Khada and her husband Ehsan pay a high price for their faith.

“As we choose the path of Christ,” she says, “we embrace the understanding that it is not without its trials. But with the hope and promises God gave us, we persevere and continue this journey.”

Life is hard, but Khada is not without hope. She’s part of a secret, underground community of believers who support each other in prayer and reading the Bible together.

And tonight we will join that family.

*Invite participants to enter silence together.*

*They are free to sit and pray where they are or move around and use the Stations of Silence.*

*Each station has an object, a story or information, a Bible passage, and a way of using our imaginations to pray.*

*Each reflects a different aspect of the way in which Secret Christians experience persecution.*

*How much time you allow for this is up to you. But do not be afraid of silence! Give people plenty of time to move around and to experience the different stations.*

### **The Stations of Silence**

#### **Station 1: The Suitcase**

*An empty suitcase. Put the prayer cards inside. This station is about the plight of refugees.*

#### **Station 2: The Schoolbook**

*Have a school or college textbook and also some plain exercise paper and a pencil – something you might use in school or college. This station is about restrictions on education. During the prayer time, participants are encouraged to write prayers in the notebook.*

### Station 3: The water

Put out a bottle or a jug of water and some glasses or paper cups. This symbolises the physical needs of secret Christians. During the prayer time, participants are encouraged to drink some water while they pray.

### Station 4: The padlock

A padlock, with chains and keys. Or you could use a padlock with a numbered code. Make sure there are keys to the padlock and that the code can be put in. This symbolises the repression and lockdown which secret Christians face every day. During the prayer time, participants are encouraged to unlock the padlock as they pray.

### Station 5: The ring

Some cheap, plain rings in different sizes. This station is about the danger to women and girls of forced marriage. During the prayer time, participants are encouraged to put on a ring as they pray.

### Station 6: The cross

A simple wooden cross. It needs to be something that people can reach out and touch, or even small enough for people to hold. This station is all about the willingness of secret Christians to carry their cross, and the price they might have to pay. As they pray, participants will literally, physically hold onto the cross in some way.

### Station 7: The nails

A pile of ordinary nails of different types and sizes. Also some tape and some Blu-tack. This station is about forgiveness – about praying for the persecutors. During the prayer time, participants take two nails and form them into a cross using the tape, then they stick the cross into the Blu-tack so it can stand.

### Station 8: The picture

A painting or piece of art depicting Christ, and a cloth to cover it. It can be a picture, or a photo of a sculpture – the only condition is that it should be a piece of beautiful art, because this station is all about the Taliban's clampdown on images, on beauty. As they pray, people will pull the cloth back to uncover the painting, and then re-cover it.

## PART 3: USING YOUR VOICE

(15 minutes)

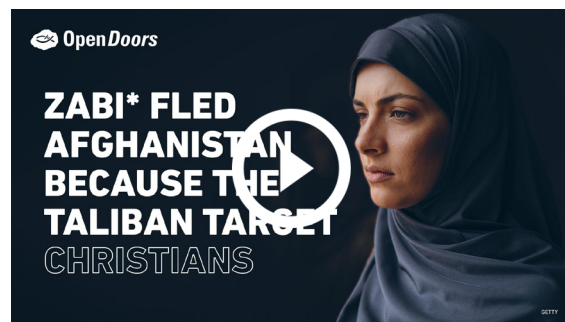
### Re-gathering

When everyone has had the opportunity to engage with the stations, gather them all back together.

You could play a song at this point, or some Afghan music. Break the silence gently.

### Video: Zabi's story

Show Zabi's story. [You can find it here.](#)



### Saad's story

Share these words:

At the beginning of the evening, we heard from Saad, a secret Christian in Afghanistan, whose wife Fatimah gave birth to a baby daughter on the night the Taliban invaded.

He said: "The birth of our baby girl is a sign that God has not given up on our country.

"We need to know you are strong... We feel alone. We cannot speak of our God, but you can.

"So, speak to Him and ask Him to empower you and us to fight this era of destructiveness and bring His kingdom by being like Him."

### Bible reading

Let us hear the rest of Psalm 20 – words that were read over Saad and Fatimah's daughter that night.

*Either the leader, or another, reads Psalm 20:6-9.*

## Challenge

“Now this I know: The LORD gives victory to his anointed.

“He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand.

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

“They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.

“LORD, give victory to the king! Answer us when we call!”

## Response

*Invite people to feed back on their experience during the time of silence.*

Was there any story which particularly resonated with them?

Was there any activity or object which made a strong connection?

What kinds of things did they pray?

Was there anything which they felt God was saying to them?

*The challenge is to decide how we are going to use our voice.*

### **Some ways to respond:**

- *You could invite people to subscribe to Open Doors emails, which will give them regular prayer updates, not just about Afghanistan, but about many other countries where Christians are silenced*
- *They could order a copy of the Open Doors World Watch List Top 50*
- *They can donate or raise funds to support the work of Open Doors, helping Christians in places like Afghanistan, where each believer supports one another:*

*“Brothers and sisters who have more to share help each other,” says Khada. “This is the strong faith that Jesus gave us, so that we can support each other and remove hardships among our brothers and sisters.”*

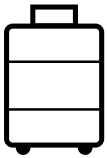
- *They could set up a regular Open Doors prayer group.*



# Prayer station cards

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*Print out these cards and cut them up to accompany your prayer stations.*



## Station 1

### THE SUITCASE

#### Imagine...

...having to leave your home and your job, taking with you only what you could carry

...not knowing where you might end up, where to find help, how to survive.

Imagine leaving everything behind.

- Pray for the refugees, for those who are seeking to support them and that church communities will receive the refugees with warmth and care.
- As you pray, think about what you would take with you if you were in this situation. How would it feel? How would you want to be treated?



## Station 1

### THE SUITCASE

#### Story

Many Afghans fled the country altogether and are now refugees in neighbouring countries.

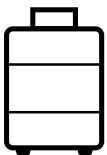
Aysha is an Open Doors partner serving Afghan refugees. She says:

“Refugees – especially women – are emotionally broken, very stressed and often crying as they have lost their homes, and because of the situation in their country.

“Pray that we can share the gospel with them and bring them to local churches.”

For many Christians, the refugee and displacement camps are not safe at all. For example, Christians among the Muslim-majority Rohingya, who fled from Myanmar, can encounter persecution from other refugees because of their faith.

So many displaced Christians must still keep their faith hidden.



## Station 1

### THE SUITCASE

#### Bible verse

“Make up your mind,” Moab says.

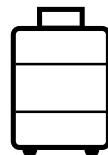
“Render a decision.

Make your shadow like night –  
at high noon.

Hide the fugitives,

do not betray the refugees.”

ISAIAH 16:3



## Station 1

### THE SUITCASE

#### A prayer for refugees

*Father God,*

*We pray for those who must flee their homes because of their faith.*

*Comfort those who have left everything behind.*

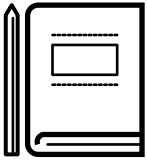
*Strengthen and equip them as they build new lives in unfamiliar countries and difficult conditions, whether for a short or long time.*

*Draw near to them, and show them the richness of Your mercy and love.*

*Remind them that Your earthly family had to flee persecution, and You know what they suffer.*

*Empower us to show love to these refugees, in whatever way we can.*

*Amen*



## Station 2

### THE SCHOOL BOOK

#### Imagine...

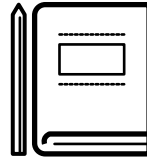
...not being able to return to your school or college because you are a woman

...not being allowed to be a doctor, lawyer, teacher – not even being allowed out of the house

...having to sign up to fight for a cause which is not yours.

Imagine having your future silenced.

- What is it you hope to do in the future? Perhaps you – or your children or relatives – are studying at school or college. Imagine all that was taken away...
- In the notebook, write down your own prayer for the children of Afghanistan. How would you like to see them flourish?



## Station 2

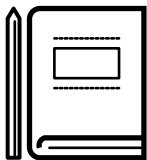
### THE SCHOOL BOOK

#### Story

The Taliban notoriously treat women harshly and prevent them from going to school. Only boys can go to school. All the girls' schools have been shut.

“The children are our hope,” said a local Open Doors partner. “Now they are at a loss, they have no schooling, and their future is unknown. Pray that they will know Jesus growing up... Pray for opportunities for them to continue with their education.”

Around the world, the children of persecuted believers face many difficulties. Where they are known to be Christian, they can be denied schooling or discriminated against in the classroom. Where they or their family are secret believers, there is always a danger that an unguarded comment or a surprise question will give everything away.



## Station 2

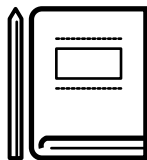
### THE SCHOOL BOOK

#### Bible verse

“May the LORD cause you to flourish, both you and your children.

May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

PSALM 115:14–15



## Station 2

### THE SCHOOL BOOK

#### A prayer for children

*Heavenly Father,*

*Thank You for the faith of children around the world who bravely follow You, despite suffering.*

*For girls in Afghanistan who are denied an education, may they find a way to learn in secret. And may the authorities recognise their rights to a future.*

*For the boys in danger of being recruited, please protect them from exploitation and deceit.*

*For the children now living in refugee camps, may they know Your presence and love.*

*May all these children be filled with courage and hope.*

*And may the dreams they have for their futures not be lost.*

*Amen.*



## Station 3

### THE WATER

#### Imagine...

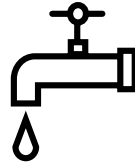
...not being able to turn on a tap and get fresh water

...not being able to light a fire or keep warm

...looking around you for something to sell – anything – just to feed your family.

Imagine feeling thirsty, hungry, cold...

- Imagine you had a chance to take a care package to an Afghan family. What would you put in it? What would they need?
- Pray that God will help Open Doors partners to provide food, water and medical aid to refugees and others in need. And that He will strengthen all our partners who are taking supplies to so many desperate people.



## Station 3

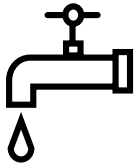
### THE WATER

#### Story

Many secret believers cannot survive inside their country. They flee. They become refugees. Open Doors partners are providing basic needs for hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Even for those who remain, basic supplies are often scarce. In North Korea, there are reports of widespread food shortages. And in Afghanistan, one of the biggest problems is malnutrition. Food shortages are hitting the whole country.

Afghan Christian, Saad, told Open Doors: “For us, everything has been taken away. There are the hungry who need food, the naked who need clothes, prisoners who need freedom, and the lost who need God’s arm.”



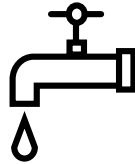
## Station 3

### THE WATER

#### Bible verse

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’”

MATTHEW 25:34–36



## Station 3

### THE WATER

#### A prayer for those in need of help

*Lord God,*

*We pray for any of Your followers who are feeling scared today.*

*Those who do not know where to turn.*

*Those who are running on empty, the exhausted and the scared.*

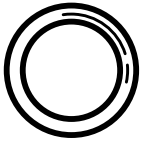
*Those who hunger and thirst, not just for food and water, but for compassion and kindness.*

*Please protect them and help them to find food, shelter and loving care.*

*And please help the helpers to make contact, to stay safe, to bring Your love to these desperate people.*

*And to remind them that they are not alone.*

*Amen.*



## Station 4

### THE RING

#### Imagine...

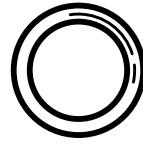
...being unable to leave the house – imprisoned in your home because of your faith

...or being scared to leave the house in case you never made it back home

...feeling powerless, hopeless, trapped.

Imagine being suffocated and silenced.

- Hold one of the rings. Slip it onto one of your fingers. Think about all the women and girls who are forced into marriages they do not want.
- Pray for women and girls in Afghanistan. Remove the ring and pray for their freedom and safety.



## Station 4

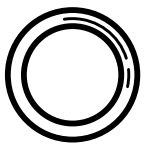
### THE RING

#### Story

The women and girls of the persecuted church are especially vulnerable, not only because of their beliefs, but also because many live in societies where women lack basic forms of protection.

“There is a complete cloak of silence around any kind of violation of a woman’s space and dignity,” a local source tells Open Doors.

In places like Afghanistan and Somalia, if a woman converts from Islam to Christianity and her family do not, she is likely to face house arrest, abuse, forced marriage or even an ‘honour’ killing. Many Christian girls around the world are kidnapped and forcibly married.



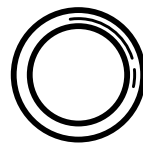
## Station 4

### THE RING

#### Bible verse

“The elders of Daughter Zion  
sit on the ground in silence;  
they have thrown dust on their heads  
and put on sackcloth;  
the young girls of Jerusalem  
have bowed their heads to the ground.”

LAMENTATIONS 2:10



## Station 4

### THE RING

#### A prayer for women and girls

*Lord Jesus,*

*You are the God who created women in Your image and sees their true value. We praise You for the brave faith of persecuted Christian women around the world.*

*Draw near to women who are threatened, locked away or abused for their choice to follow You.*

*Make a way for girls to receive the education and training they need to thrive.*

*Bless the widows and the refugees and provide for all their needs.*

*Open the eyes of our persecuted sisters to see how precious they are in Your sight. May they hear You calling each of them by name; and may their courage and testimony draw many others to You.*

*Amen.*



## Station 5

### THE PADLOCK

#### Imagine...

...always looking over your shoulder to see if you were followed

...wondering who you could trust with the truth.

Imagine feeling permanently shackled and chained.

- Pray that believers would find ways to meet safely, away from prying eyes.
- As you pray, unlock the padlock as a silent 'Amen' to your prayer.



## Station 5

### THE PADLOCK

#### Story

Secret believers must live their life very cautiously. In Afghanistan, before the Taliban, believers could not pray openly, but they could meet and go elsewhere. But now the risks of meeting anywhere have become even greater.

Single women, especially, find it difficult as strict Islamic rule does not permit women to go out on their own.

Despite that, all around the world, secret believers find a way to break the shackles. Some meet in coffee shops and their prayers look like they are just chatting with each other. Others find remote places where they cannot be monitored.

In North Korea, believers sometimes just meet in woods or on the mountain side. They do not say anything. They silently pray with one another and then move on.



## Station 5

### THE PADLOCK

#### Bible verse

“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

“In God, whose word I praise – in God I trust and am not afraid.

“What can mere mortals do to me?

“All day long they twist my words; all their schemes are for my ruin.

“They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, hoping to take my life.”

PSALM 56:3–6



## Station 5

### THE PADLOCK

#### A prayer for those under surveillance

*Lord Jesus,*

*Give comfort and courage to all Your followers who fear being followed:*

*the watched and the whispered about,*

*the spied upon and the shadowed.*

*Refresh and renew those exhausted from the need for constant vigilance.*

*Protect all those who gather in secret, and those who, despite the risks, still try to share Your truth and love.*

*May they know the freedom that comes through Your truth, even though they are shackled in so many other ways.*

*Release them we pray.*

*Amen.*



## Station 6

### THE CROSS

#### Imagine...

...there was a list of Christians with your name on it

...that you could be arrested, imprisoned, even killed for doing what you are doing right now.

Imagine that following Jesus could cost you everything.

- As you pray, reach out and hold the cross. Or pick it up and hold it.
- What would you be prepared to pay for the freedom of following Christ?



## Station 6

### THE CROSS

#### Story

“They are conducting a door-to-door search to find us,” reported one Afghan Christian after the Taliban takeover. “If they find us, they will kill believers on the spot... Who knows when they will show up on our doorstep?”

Secret believers understand that there is a cost to following Jesus. In places like Eritrea and Iran, it could result in going to jail. In many cases it has led to death. And yet, still they think it a price worth paying.

“Some [Christians] have been killed. Some have been kidnapped, some have disappeared,” Saad wrote.

“This is where we are together: at the foot of the cross, where the full measure of love is known. If you love me – if you love Jesus – pray for us.”



## Station 6

### THE CROSS

#### Bible verse

‘Then [Jesus] called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.”’

MARK 8:34–35



## Station 6

### THE CROSS

#### A prayer for secret believers

*Lord God,*

*Be with all those who fear that their names are on a list,*

*who listen out for the knock on the door,*

*who must disguise the truth and watch their steps.*

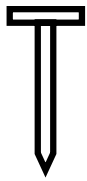
*Refresh and renew those exhausted from the need for constant vigilance.*

*Protect Your people from discovery and harm.*

*Give them wisdom to know who to trust.*

*Thank You for their faith and their courage and for their determination to keep following You, no matter the cost.*

*Amen.*



## Station 7

### THE NAIL

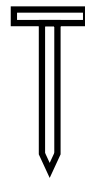
#### Imagine...

...Being betrayed by one of your closest friends

...Being on trial in a court case you know that you cannot win.

Imagine looking at people who hate you and knowing God loves them.

- As you pray, take two nails and form them into the shape of a cross, using the tape to join them together.
- Remember Jesus's love expressed from the cross to those who had killed Him.
- Take a small block of Blu-tack and stand your cross in it after praying.



## Station 7

### THE NAIL

#### Story

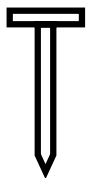
All persecution relies on persecutors.

In Afghanistan, it is the Taliban and militant Islamists who hunt down Christians.

In Iran, it is the Religious Police who might knock at the door where your church is secretly meeting.

In North Korea, it might be your neighbour who informs on you, or even your children's teacher.

In many parts of the world, it can be your own family.



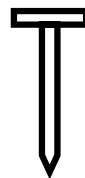
## Station 7

### THE NAIL

#### Bible verse

'Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.'

LUKE 23:32–34



## Station 7

### THE NAIL

#### A prayer for the persecutors

*Lord Jesus,*

*You told us to love our enemies,*

*So we pray for the persecutors: the bullies and the book-burners, the extremists with guns in their hands and hatred in their hearts.*

*May they meet You through the patience in suffering of their captives, and in the steadfast hope of those who face death.*

*May these people who deal in lies learn that the only real truth is in You.*

*Give them the opportunity to change their lives around, so that they become servants of your kingdom.*

*Amen.*





## Station 8

### THE PICTURE

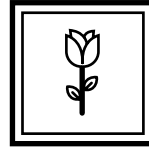
#### Imagine...

...no art, no music, no beauty

...not being able to make the art you love to make.

Imagine a world drained of joy, a world in monochrome.

- Pray that God's beauty will shine on secret believers, and that God's glory would break into the hearts of the Taliban.
- When you pray, uncover the picture. After you have prayed, cover the picture up with the cloth again. The beauty is still there, although it is hidden for a time.



## Station 8

### THE PICTURE

#### Story

Do you have any Christian art in your house? Or even a cross on the wall?

For secret believers, this would be impossible.

In North Korea, the picture on the wall is that of the Kim family, the leaders who are treated as gods. In Afghanistan, strict Islamic interpretations drain the colour from the world.

"Everything beautiful is considered 'infidel'," says Sharifullah. "The Taliban want their ideology reflected everywhere, and so all signs of colour, life and hope have been removed.

"They are killing the souls of our children by taking all that is beautiful away from them."



## Station 8

### THE PICTURE

#### Bible verse

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

"They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour."

ISAIAH 61:1–3



## Station 8

### THE PICTURE

#### A prayer for beauty and life

*Lord of all light,*

*Lord who fills creation with colour and life,  
restore the beauty to these broken, battered  
countries.*

*Bind up the broken-hearted,*

*bring joy and hope instead of mourning,*

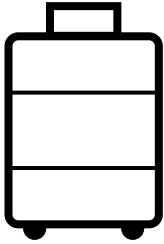
*praise and wonder instead of despair.*

*Release all those imprisoned in ideologies of  
death and darkness,*

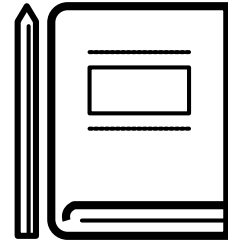
*so that they may dance to the music of Your  
beauty and love.*

*Amen.*

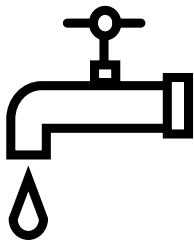
**Station 1**  
THE SUITCASE



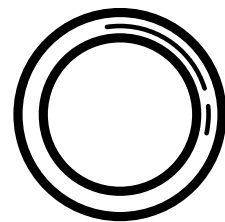
**Station 2**  
THE SCHOOL BOOK



**Station 3**  
THE WATER



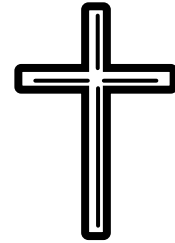
**Station 4**  
THE RING



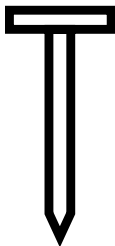
**Station 5**  
THE PADLOCK



**Station 6**  
THE CROSS



**Station 7**  
THE NAIL



**Station 8**  
THE PICTURE

