



WALK WITH THEM INDIA

WALK GUIDE

"SO MANY TIMES, PEOPLE SHARE WITH US THAT THEY'RE ALMOST ON THE VERGE OF GIVING UP THEIR FAITH. BUT YOUR SUPPORT HAS STRENGTHENED THEM AND BROUGHT THEM INTO A NEW, STRENGTHENED RELATIONSHIP AGAIN WITH GOD."

Heena (name changed), Open Doors local partner in India

Thank you for coming on a journey to raise money and awareness for your brothers and sisters in India who are facing two severe crises: persecution and the pandemic. Your fundraising efforts will make a direct and discernible difference to the lives of many vulnerable Indian believers, and remind them that they do not walk alone.

Before proceeding any further, please read *Walk With Them India – Getting Started* ([you can download it here](#)) which provides guidance on registering for the activity and tips on planning and promoting your walk.

To enable you to feel even closer to your persecuted family in India, we've put together an interactive walking guide comprising four stopping points where you can get to know different Christians from the country. Each of their stories is followed by questions for reflection, an activity, and prayer points. Depending on the instruction and what you find easiest, these can be completed whilst resting or walking.

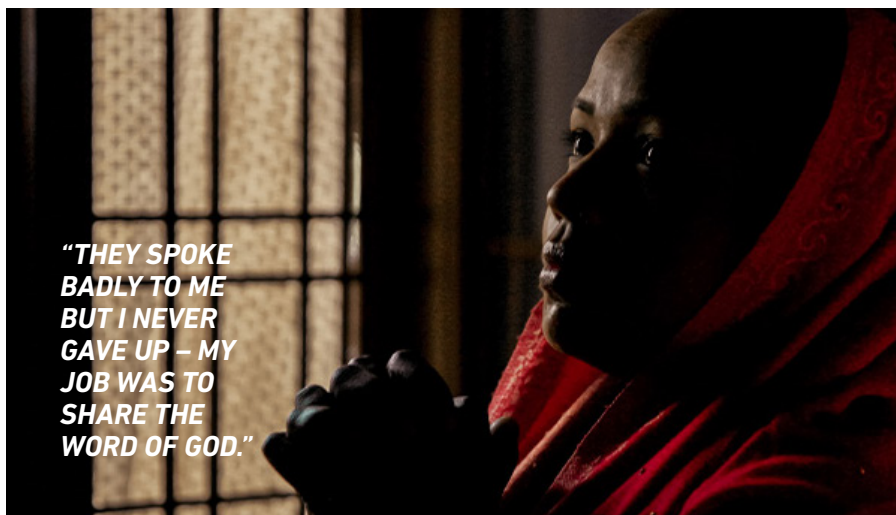
It's up to you how you set up these **Stop and get to know...** points. Depending on your distance, you might like to stop off, say, every four miles to look at a story. Or you might want to link it to particular landmarks on your route. Alternatively, if you're spreading your walk over a few days or weeks, you might want to focus on a different story each time you venture out. The choice is yours!

To make the most of these stories, make sure you have the following packed before you venture out:

- Bible (physical or digital)
- Pen and paper
- Camera / phone
- Money to buy a small gift

And don't forget to stock up with other essentials you might need (e.g. food, water, map/route plan, hat, sun cream).

All names featured below have been changed for security reasons.



1 STOP AND GET TO KNOW VINITA

Vinita (pictured) and her husband have faced constant harassment from their community ever since becoming Christians. "I tried to share the gospel to many, but they did not listen," Vinita shares. "They spoke badly to me but I never gave up – my job was to share the Word of God."

One day, Vinita and her sister, Isha, were attacked by her neighbours. They went to the police station, only to discover that the neighbours had bribed officials and accused Vinita and Isha of attacking them.

To provide support, Vinita's pastor and his family were visiting them when Hindu extremists barged in. They were all beaten and, as often happens to Christians in India, refused treatment at hospital by staff who were under pressure from the attackers.



REFLECT

Police are meant to protect, and hospitals are meant to care. Imagine going to both, having been the subject of a horrific and unprovoked attack, and being greeted with accusation and rejection – just because of your faith.

Spend a few moments thinking about how you'd react to this. How safe would you feel in the village, town or city that you call home? Who could you call on to help? Who could you trust?



ACT

Amazingly, Vinita has forgiven her attackers. "When Jesus left this world, He said, 'Father, these people do not know what they are doing. Forgive them.' From this verse, I learn to forgive my enemies."

Get out your Bible and turn (or tap!) to **Luke 23:32-34**. Read the passage aloud and spend time, whilst walking or stopping off somewhere, memorising it. As you do this, meditate on the words and how they powerfully speak of God's love for everyone, including those who oppose His work.



PRAY

- That those who attacked Vinita and the others will be brought to justice
- For the protection of Vinita's family and for all threats to stop
- That God will use the witness of Vinita's family to draw others to revelations of Jesus' love and power, including those who attacked her.



Image is illustrative

2 STOP AND GET TO KNOW AARTI

Aarti gave her life to Jesus a few years ago, along with the rest of her family. Despite strong pressure from villagers to convert back to Hinduism, the family bravely stood firm.

But tragedy was not far around the corner. Within a short space of time, Aarti lost her husband and two sons. The grief for Aarti – and her daughter and four grandchildren – was immense. And this on top of ongoing hostility from villagers. “With continuous taunts, struggles and opposition, life was a misery,” she recalls.

When Covid-19 reared its head, and the family were denied government aid because of their faith, things seemed to go from bad to worse. But it’s here that you came alongside Aarti and her family, providing vital food aid.



REFLECT

Imagine that you’re unable to find work and your family has not eaten for two days, when word arrives that food supplies have arrived for those in need. As you join a long queue, you begin to imagine the smiles on your children’s faces when you return with food to last you a few weeks.

Finally, your turn arrives and you hand over your ration card. “Why are you here?” comes the reply. You clarify your right to receive help. “You are a Christian. Get out of here.”

What would you do next? Would you feel able to go straight back home, knowing you’d arrive empty-handed? What would you tell your children?

Imagine a few days later getting a call from your pastor, saying that Open Doors local partners would be visiting to provide food.

How would you tell your children the good news? How would you all feel when the partners knocked on your door with food to last a few weeks?



ACT

“I thank the brothers for travelling this far and blessing us with groceries in our hour of need,” shares Aarti. Your support has already ensured food relief has reached over 126,000 believers in India during the pandemic – and continues to reach many thousands more.

Pop into a shop and buy a little something for someone, perhaps your neighbour or a friend, and drop it off during your walk. It could be an item you think they need, or simply a treat for them. When you hand it over, explain to the person or family what inspired the gift. Tell them about Aarti and the Open Doors local partners who visited her with groceries.

If you’re unable to find a shop on your walk, your gift could be a word of encouragement, or offering prayer. This is often what Open Doors partners do when visiting persecuted Christians with aid.



PRAY

- Ask the Lord to protect Open Doors local partners as they travel to visit persecuted Christians, and pray that God will speak encouragement to them as they travel
- That there will not be one Christian in India without food, shelter and clothing
- That those in authority will be overcome with compassion and gratitude for Christians in their communities.

DID YOU KNOW...

Every **£60** raised from your walk could give urgent Covid relief aid and help with medical costs to a victim of violence, or a believer who has lost their livelihood through the pandemic.



3 STOP AND GET TO KNOW TARA

Fifteen-year-old Tara (pictured) became a Christian after a friend invited her to church where, after receiving prayer, she was healed of an illness: "I found a peace that I had never known – everything in my life started to make sense."

But sadly, Tara's decision was met with intense opposition. "You are a shame to the family," her parents told her. "Our community detests us because you go to church. Either leave Jesus or forget the relationship you have with us."

Tara was ostracised in her own home. The house has 15 rooms. Tara was told to stay in her small room and not allowed to touch anything in the kitchen or speak to anyone. She had to build her own fireplace to cook food.



REFLECT

Open Doors local partners helped Tara attend a boarding school. However, due to Covid-19 she is back living with her family.

Imagine that you are walking back home, fearing the worst, given that the last time you were there you were ignored and rejected. Would you extend or slow your walk to delay the inevitable? What emotions would be rushing through your mind? How would you pray?



ACT

Tara was forbidden to talk with her family and other people in her community. "I am estranged in my own home," she says.

If you're walking as a group, spend a period of your walk not talking with each other. You might like to extend this by refraining from conversation for a time when you're back at home.

If you're walking alone, switch off your phone, or avoid (where possible) any interaction with other people.



PRAY

- That Tara will flourish in her faith and studies
- That Tara will once again be made to feel welcome in her home, and pray that God will use her to draw the rest of her family to a life-transforming knowledge of Jesus' love
- For God to strengthen, protect and encourage other young Christians like Tara who face persecution from their families.



Image is illustrative

**"WE THANK
THE LORD FOR
EVERYONE ALL
OVER THE WORLD
WHO IS PRAYING
FOR PEOPLE LIKE
US IN INDIA."**

4 STOP AND GET TO KNOW GAURAV

After refusing to stop sharing the gospel with others, despite threats, church leader Gaurav was falsely accused of using fraudulent means to convert people to Christianity. He and two of his friends were imprisoned for four months.

The three believers struggled for survival whilst they sought to clear their names. "I and my friends had no proper jobs," Gaurav shares. "We were viewed as criminals by our community and no one wanted to associate with us. I worked hard on the little farming land we had and sought some temporary jobs here and there."

It was three years until their innocence was proven. "Open Doors partners helped to cater to our needs and provided all the needed guidance in the court procedures. We thank the Lord for everyone all over the world who is praying for people like us in India."



REFLECT

Some Indian states have anti-conversion laws, designed to prevent involuntary religious conversions. The laws are vaguely worded, meaning they are often used to target Christians freely sharing their faith with others.

Imagine you're causing a stir in your local community by telling others about Jesus. A group approaches you and tells you to stop, otherwise you'll face violence or legal action. How would this affect your faith and witness?



ACT

The persecution of Christians in India like Gaurav is fuelled by anti-Christian propaganda which betrays the value and intentions of our Indian family.

Somewhere on your walk, take out a pen and a piece of card or paper, and write on it **#StandForTruthIndia**. Hold it up in front of you and take a selfie, or have someone take a photograph of you. Post it on social media and/or email it to family and friends, along with a few words about why you are taking on this fundraising challenge.



PRAY

- That the anti-conversion laws will be repealed, or that a deterrent will be put in place to prevent false accusations
- That God will open the eyes of people to see the role of Christians in Indian society
- That believers will be equipped and emboldened to counter false accusations.

DID YOU KNOW...

Every **£21** you raise could equip four people to train others in their legal rights and how to survive persecution.

Thank you for walking with your Indian family this summer. Your prayers and fundraising efforts are invaluable.

For more stories from India, and details on how you can further help believers through prayer, giving and speaking out, please visit opendoorsuk.org/standfortruthindia