



ENCOURAGE THE CHILDREN OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

WHY DO CHILDREN NEED ENCOURAGEMENT?

When life is hard, you need encouragement. You need to know you're not alone. Around 245 million Christians around the world are persecuted for their faith – and millions of them are children. They may be persecuted because they belong to a Christian family. Or they may be persecuted by their families, because they have chosen to move away from their family religion and become a Christian instead.

Either way, choosing to be a Christian can make life very lonely and painful at times so a message of hope can make all the difference.

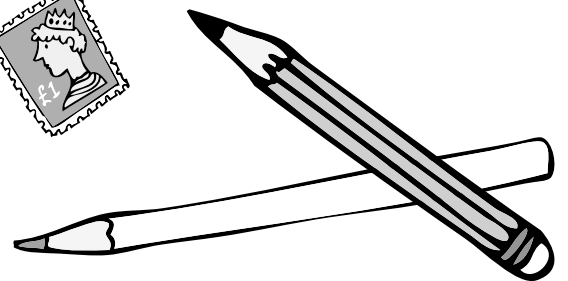
This letter-writing guide has been designed to help children send messages of encouragement to children who experience persecution. Thank you for being willing to support them in this way.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

However old you are, you can bring encouragement to a persecuted Christian child – or children – through drawings, photos, videos, audio recordings, cards, postcards – and yes, even letters!

Click **here** to find out who you can write to and what kind of messages you can send. Download the instructions for your chosen country and read them carefully.

Please stick to the instructions on that download. They're not all the same!



THANK YOU!

When a co-ordinated suicide bomb attack rocked the world of Christians attending their churches in Surabaya, Indonesia, thousands of Open Doors supporters wrote to three young children who were injured in the attack: Alvaro, Anita and Trinity. They and their families hugely appreciated the outpouring of love and encouragement.

"Thank you, my friends, for sending me the letters. I am very happy! Please continue to pray for me so that I can recover quickly and be handsome again!" – Alvaro

"[These letters are] so beautiful. We are very grateful, even though we can't mention all your names individually." – Anita's dad

Thank you! Responses like that are the best reason to send a message to other children experiencing persecution now.

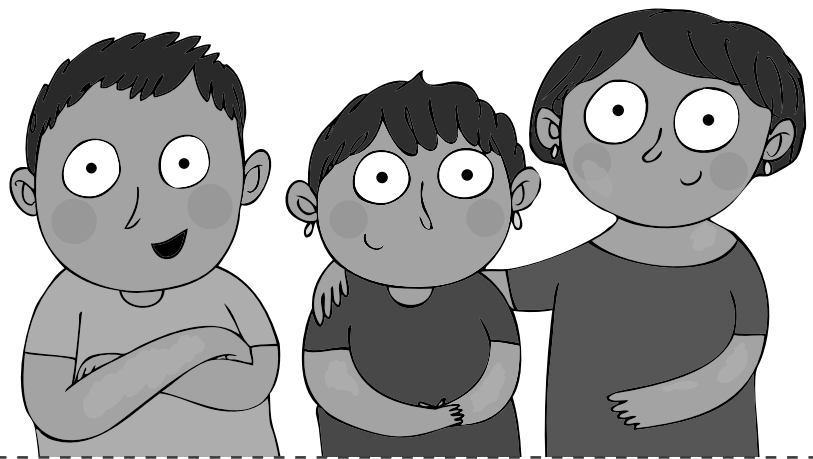
ALTHOUGH EACH CAMPAIGN IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT, THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT ARE ALWAYS IMPORTANT:

PLEASE DO...

- Make your message or drawing cheerful and encouraging.
- Sign your first name, if you wish.

PLEASE DON'T...

- Mention Open Doors anywhere.
- Include your surname or address.



DID YOU KNOW?

Brother Andrew, Open Doors founder, began his work in 1955 smuggling Bibles into the former Soviet Republic. Find out more about his story in the Secret Smuggler booklet and DVD. There's also a downloadable Secret Smuggler session plan – including games, activities, and stories from Central Asia – on the 'Resources for Families' pages at www.opendoorsuk.org

FIND OUT MORE

For more information about the most dangerous places to live as a Christian, order the World Watch List Top 50 with its enclosed family-friendly World Watch Map.



www.opendoorsuk.org

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 **Open Doors**

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN IN...

CENTRAL ASIA



WHY DO CHILDREN IN CENTRAL ASIA NEED ENCOURAGEMENT?

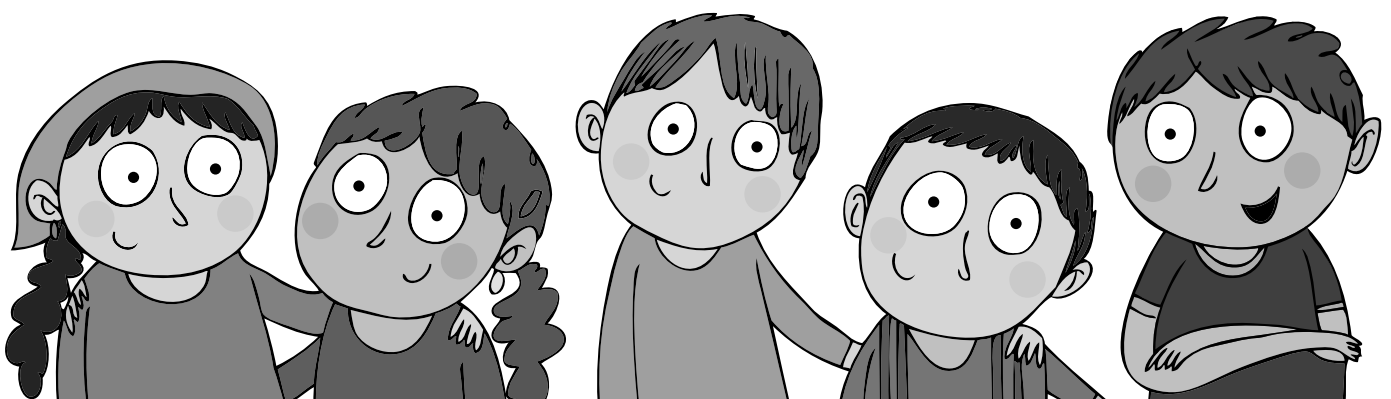
Children in Christian families in Central Asia grow up knowing that their parents might be arrested or imprisoned at any time for their faith. They need encouragement.

Most of the countries in this region prohibit the teaching of religion to children so, in partnership with local Christians, Open Doors organises secret children's camps. That way, they can learn about Jesus in a fun and safe environment.

Sometimes, children from Muslim families can be found there, too. At one camp, there were a number of Muslim children. But, to the surprise

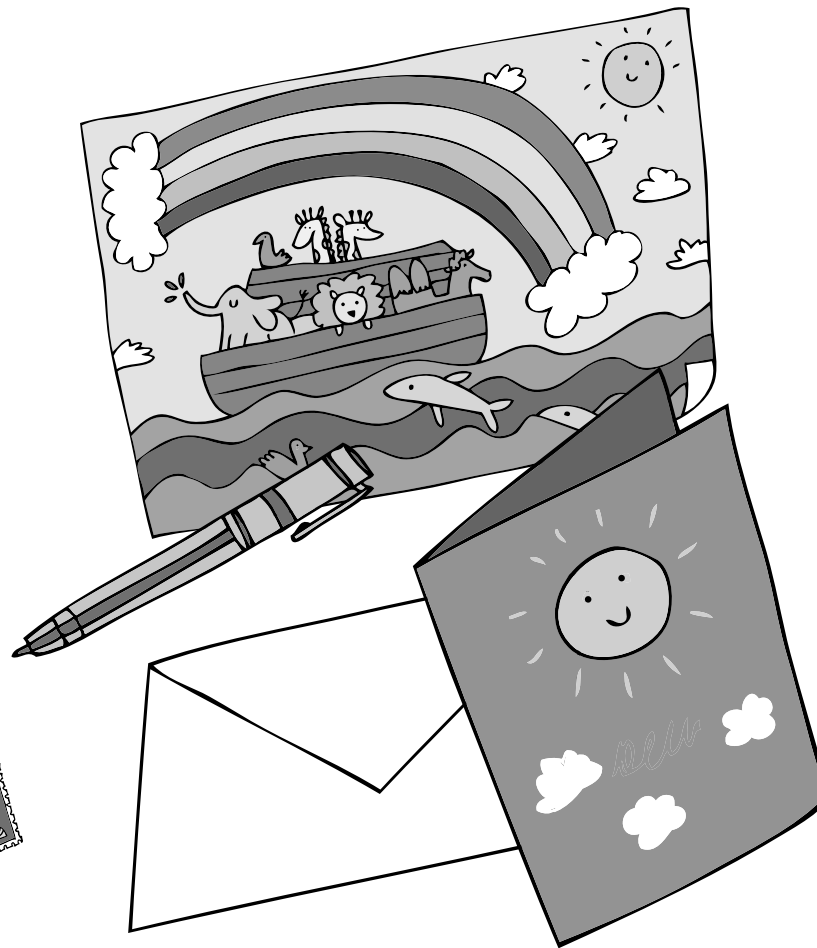
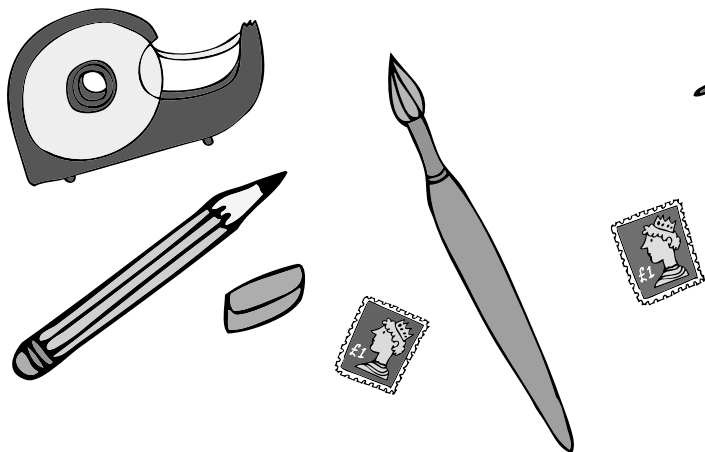
of everyone, at the end of the week, they all made a commitment to follow Christ – something that would have been very difficult to do in normal circumstances. Can you imagine what might have greeted them on their return? Young people like these run the risk of rejection from their families – and even abuse. They need encouragement, too.

That's why we've launched the Central Asia Children's Drawing Campaign. It's a campaign for children in Central Asia to receive encouragement from children around the world.



SEND DRAWINGS TO CENTRAL ASIA

- ✓ Please send a drawing – no words please – to Christian children in Central Asia to encourage them to keep following Jesus.
- ✓ These pictures will then be safely shared with children and youth in Central Asia at their summer camps, Sunday services, or with families at training events – in a way that won't draw unwanted attention. It will remind children of the persecuted church that they are remembered by a worldwide family of faith, hope and love.



IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- ✗ No letters, please – drawings only.
- ✗ Do not mention Open Doors in the drawings.
- ✗ You can provide your first name, but don't add anything else – do not provide your address.
- ✗ Do not send money or make offers of help.

THANK YOU!

To find out more, order the World Watch List Top 50 with its enclosed family-friendly World Watch List Map.

PRAYER FOR CHILDREN IN CENTRAL ASIA

Lord God,

We pray for children in places where it's against the law to learn about Jesus.

Protect them and help them to feel confident in You, because You are in charge.
Amen.

Please send all of your drawings together in one envelope to: **PO Box 6, Witney, Oxon, OX29 6WG** and we'll do the rest. *Please note this campaign will end on 31 December 2020.*

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN IN...



WHY DO CHILDREN IN COLOMBIA NEED ENCOURAGEMENT?

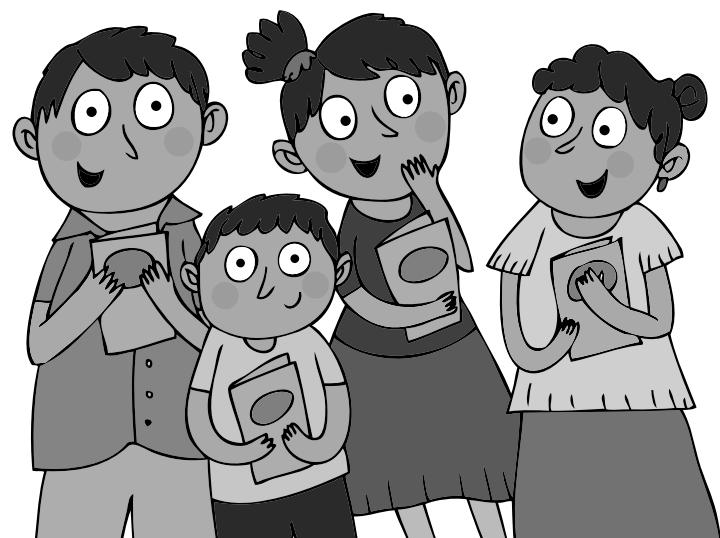
There are two main reasons.

Firstly, in certain areas (marked in red on the map), there are gangs and groups that want power. They are against the government and army. They try to get children to join their gangs. Christian children are targeted because they appear more compliant. These children are part of Christian families and churches, but they need to feel safe – and strong enough – to say no to the gangs. They need to be encouraged to keep following Jesus.

Secondly, in Colombia, there are over 100 different indigenous people groups. They are the people who have lived there the longest, mostly around the north or south of the coast, or in the south east corner of the country. Christians in these groups suffer because their indigenous leaders don't want them to follow Jesus. They may be bullied, treated violently, told to leave, or put in prison. The children in these Christian families need encouragement, too.

PRAYER FOR CHILDREN IN COLOMBIA

Good Shepherd, you know and love all your children in Colombia. Please make them strong and keep them safe. Amen.

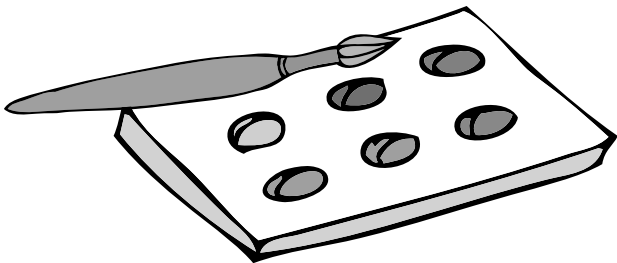


SEND CARDS OR DRAWINGS TO COLOMBIA

For the Colombia Encouragement Campaign, you can send cards or drawings to encourage children of the persecuted church.

Think about what it means to be a child of God, who loves you and protects you. Then create a message of hope for Christian children in Colombia – so that they are encouraged to keep following Jesus.

- ✓ For Christian children, in areas shown in red on the map, send a card or postcard with a drawing and short message. Write in simple English, or use the suggested Spanish phrases in this download.
- ✓ For Christian children in indigenous groups, who love drawings, send your most beautiful drawing – with no words, please.



HOW'S YOUR SPANISH?

Querido niño,
Tú no estás solo. Dios te ama.
Oramos para que Jesús te guarde
de todo mal y peligro.

Dear child,
You are not alone. God loves you.
We pray that Jesus will keep you
from all evil and danger.

Querida hermanita,
No olvides que Jesús siempre está contigo y te ama.

Dear little sister,
Do not forget that Jesus is always
with you and loves you.

Amado hermanito,
Cristo te ama y no se ha olvidado de ti. Él está
contigo en los momentos más difíciles.

Beloved brother,
Christ loves you and has not forgotten you.
He is with you in the most difficult times.

Muchas bendiciones.

Many blessings.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- ✓ Greetings cards, children's artwork and postcards are best.
- ✓ Keep your message short and positive.
- ✓ Print clearly, whether in Spanish or English.
- ✓ Include an encouraging verse from the Bible (you can find Spanish translations of the Bible at biblegateway.com).
- ✓ Show sensitivity. Please don't dwell on the difficulties of their situation or share about the blessings of your own life.

THANK YOU!



Ready to return your drawings, cards or letters? Send to us at: **PO Box 6, Witney, Oxon, OX29 6WG** and we'll do the rest. *Please note this campaign will end on 31 December 2020.*

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN IN...



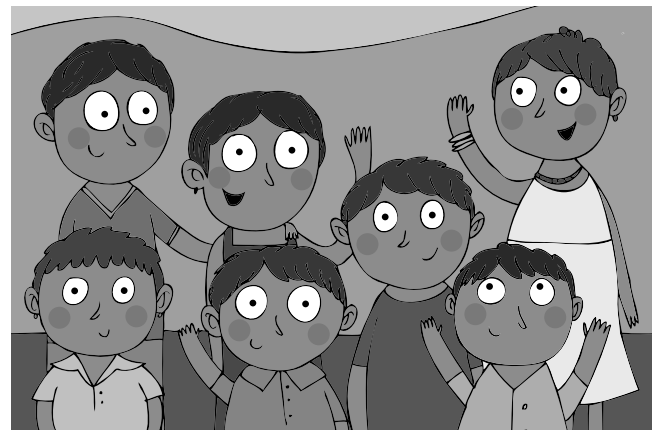
WHY DO CHILDREN IN INDIA NEED ENCOURAGEMENT?

Christian families in India have faced increased bullying and violence in recent times. This is because there is a strong feeling in the country, and from the government, that all Indians should be Hindu. Sometimes, Christian homes are attacked, or believers may be thrown out of their villages. If they're not forced to leave their village, they may be denied access to water, education or government rations, because of their faith. When it's this difficult to be a Christian, you need encouragement.

Children who are not from Christian families, also need encouragement. They might hear about Jesus through their friends. But when it is discovered that they are attending church activities, their families start to object. "Christianity is considered a detestable religion in our village," one young boy said. He started to attend church secretly but when his mother found out, he was told off and beaten many times. This is not uncommon.

PRAYER FOR CHILDREN IN INDIA

Lord Jesus, please look after your children in India and make them strong. Look after their families so they have everything they need. Amen.



SEND DIGITAL MESSAGES TO INDIA

The India Digital Encouragement Campaign is a campaign for children in India to receive messages from children around the world so that they are encouraged to keep following Jesus.

Any message you send will have to be sent electronically to Open Doors, either by email to this email address: **messagestoindia@opendoorsuk.org**, or via our website. Here are some suggestions for what you could send:

- a photo of an object or image with a Bible verse
- a photo of a hand-drawn self-portrait of a child
- a short video with captions or audio message
- a short audio message, e.g. children talking or singing

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Keep messages as simple and as personal as possible. Explain why you feel for people suffering for their faith in India. For instance, if you know what it's like to be sad or worried, share how God has helped you at these times. Or take an idea from a Bible story or verse that means something to you.

NO FACES PLEASE!

To avoid problems with permissions, please don't film children's faces. Instead, you could photograph children's drawings of themselves or take photos that don't disclose faces, e.g., hands praying, heads from behind. Alternatively, hold up a sign with a message e.g., 'We're praying for you.' Or use beautiful images of scenery, animals or objects. Be as creative as you can!



PLEASE DON'T...

- Please don't send physical drawings or messages as we won't be able to send them.
- For security reasons, please don't send photos or videos that include children's faces.
- Please don't use pre-recorded music as this will infringe copyright and performing rights laws.
- Please don't direct your messages towards any individual you have read about in Open Doors communications. Your message may be shared with different children in different settings, e.g., at events or meetings where persecuted Christians are gathered together.

MOST IMPORTANT...

- Do not mention Open Doors in any messages.
- You can provide your first name, but don't add anything else – do not provide your address.
- Do not send money or make offers of help.
- Do not mention anything to do with the news, religion, politics or government of India.

Please send your encouragement messages, images, or recordings for India, digitally to: **messagestoindia@opendoorsuk.org**
THANK YOU!

Please note this campaign ends 31 December 2020

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN FROM...



WHY DO IRANIAN CHILDREN NEED ENCOURAGEMENT?

Imagine a young boy called Hami. His parents are Christians, but in secret. That's because in Iran, Christianity is seen as a Western influence and a threat. All ethnic Persians are expected to be Muslims. So to become a Christian or to share the gospel is a dangerous act – for which you could end up in prison. Hami's family belong to a small house church led by Pastor Milad where he teaches them about Jesus. But that means Pastor Milad is taking a risk. In fact, they are all taking a risk by meeting together.

One day, the family finds out that Pastor Milad has been arrested. Now what will happen? What should they do next? Stories like this are common in Iran, where it is dangerous to follow Jesus. That's why Iranian Christians need our prayers – and encouragement. Please pray for children like Hami and encourage children in your family or church to send pictures of hope. That way, they will know they are not forgotten.

PRAYER FOR IRANIAN CHILDREN

Lord Jesus, You love us and died so that everyone could be friends with God. Show Your love to Christian children in Iran, their families and church leaders by protecting them and helping them to trust in You. Amen.



HAMI'S STORY — THE FILM

Hami and Pastor Milad are characters created for a short film we've made to illustrate the problems for Christian children in Iran. They are not the real names of Christians who've had this experience. However, this story is based on the many true experiences of children, families and church leaders in Iran and is an accurate reflection of what can happen to Christians in house churches there.

You can find the film 'Hami's Story' together with a downloadable Children's Session Plan called 'Is Hami Free?' at www.opendoorsuk.org

SEND DIGITAL DRAWINGS FOR IRANIAN CHILDREN

This is a campaign for Iranian children to receive drawings from children around the world so that they are encouraged to keep following Jesus.

Return your drawings to Open Doors by email: drawingsforchildren@opendoorsuk.org. Please note that this campaign will end on 1 September 2020.

IDEAS FOR DRAWINGS

Ask children to think about what it means to be a child of God, who loves and protects them. Then create a picture that sends a message of hope to Iranian Christian children.

Here are some suggestions for what you can send:

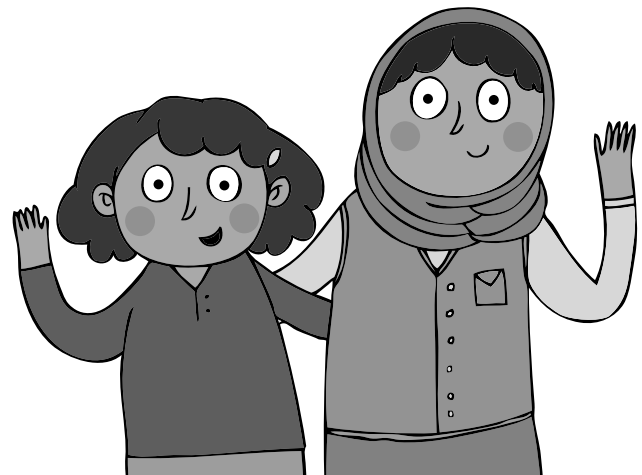
- A self-portrait
- A drawing inspired by a Bible story or verse (don't write the verse on the picture)
- An image of hope.



IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- Please don't send physical drawings as we won't be able to pass them on.
- Ask children to sign their pictures with their first name only.
- Don't write any messages.
- Don't mention Open Doors.
- Don't send any money or make offers of help.
- Pictures should be colourful, cheerful and positive.
- Please send your drawings digitally to drawingsforchildren@opendoorsuk.org

THANK YOU!



To find out more about Iran, or to order a World Watch Children's Map, or any other World Watch resource, please go to our website. **THANK YOU!**

Please note this campaign ends 31 December 2020