

# Count Your Blessings

## A Lenten Activity For The Whole Family

Count Your blessings is a family based weekly activity for the season of Lent. On one occasion each week the family gathers for a period of fifteen minutes. The Lenten Trócaire box is placed in the centre and a box marked St. Vincent de Paul is placed nearby. A different household object

is chosen each week. Each week you count how many of the object you use and you tax the family for the use of that object. The money collected is put into the Trócaire box. Each week you will offer that particular object as a gift for your St. Vincent de Paul box. During Holy Week you are invited to bring the collected goods to your nearest branch of the St. Vincent de Paul and to bring your Trócaire box to your local Church.



### Week 1: Light Up The World

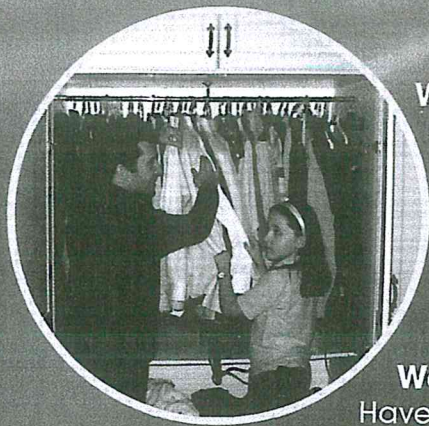
One evening this week, have everyone in the family count the number of lightbulbs you have burning. Determine a tax you will pay on each light that is on. Collect the money and place it in the Trócaire box. For example, if your family decided to pay a tax of five cents/pence for each burning lightbulb and ten lights are on, put 50 cents/pence in the Trócaire box. The gift for this week is lightbulbs. Put a package of lightbulbs in the St. Vincent de Paul box that you prepared.

### Week 2: Walk The Walk

Have everyone count how many pairs of shoes your family owns and charge yourselves a tax for each pair. Place that money in your Trócaire box. Collect any pairs of good shoes or shoes people have outgrown that you do not wear or are willing to give away and put them in your St. Vincent de Paul box. Explain to your family that sharing is a sacrifice. They are not to expect to go shopping to buy something new to replace what they have given away. Explain that this strategy can help the family to simplify their life and to be aware of their blessings.







### **Week 3: Clothe The Naked**

Count all the sweaters, pullovers and coats your family owns. Determine the tax you will pay on each one, collect the money, and place it in your Trócaire box. Have everyone in the family select one of their good sweaters, pullovers or coats and place it in the St. Vincent de Paul box.

### **Week 4: Rest Your Weary Head**

Have the family members go around the house and count all the pillows they find, even decorative pillows and those stored in wardrobes. As a family determine a tax for each pillow and place the appropriate money in your Trócaire box. Place two pillows in the St. Vincent de Paul box. If possible also include a gift of two new pillowcases.

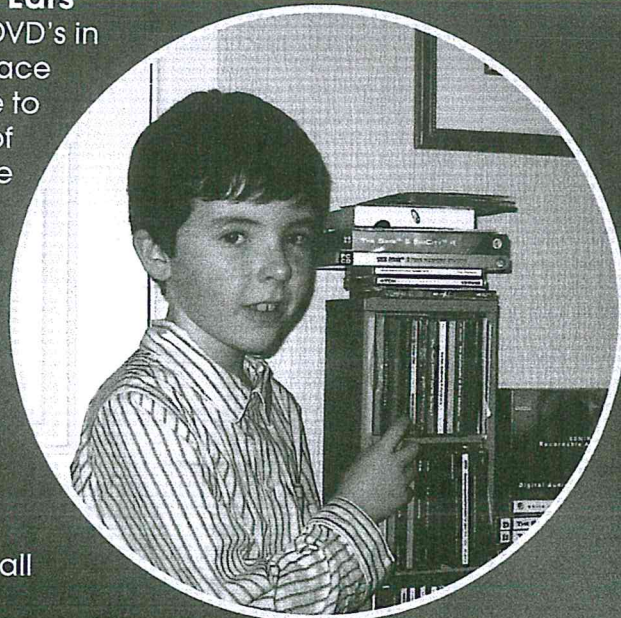


### **Week 5: For You Were Thirsty**

Gather the family in the kitchen and count the drinking glasses there. Then check other places in your home where drinking glasses may be stored or used, such as the cupboard or the bathroom. Determine a tax for each glass and place the appropriate amount in the Trócaire box. Find six nice matching glasses and place them in St. Vincent de Paul box.

### **Week 6: Listen Anyone Who Has Ears**

Have your family count the music CD's and DVD's in your house. Determine a tax for each and place that money in your Trócaire box. Choose one to put in St. Vincent de Paul box or make a gift of some blank CD's or DVD's. As a family choose a time to deliver your sharing box to your local branch of the St. Vincent de Paul.



### **During Holy Week**

Before you deliver your Trócaire box and St. Vincent de Paul box gather as a family around the box. Place a candle at the centre and take a moment to pray the following:

**Leader:** Gracious God, we thank you for the blessings you give us. Help us to be aware of all our gifts and grateful for all that you give us.

**Reader:** A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 25, verses 31 to 46.

**Leader:** As we prepare to share some of what we have with others we pray for those in our neighbourhood and in far away places who are hungry, sick, homeless, thirsty or badly treated. May we always be willing to do what we can to help those who are in need and may we grow to see your face in the faces of those who suffer most in our community and in our world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Produced by the Office of Pastoral Renewal and Family Ministry, Archdiocese of Armagh.

[www.parishandfamily.ie](http://www.parishandfamily.ie)

Based on Family Ideas for Ministry with Young Teens by Carole Goodwin, St. Mary's Press 2000.  
Used with the author's permission.