

Ethiopian farmer Donnay Yirpok walking to her farm with her daughter Gurbash.

Advent and Christmas 2026

Kids' Talk

Record Breakers

Suitable for use during a church service or as a Sunday School lesson.

You'll need:

- A Guinness World Records Book from any year or a photo of the Book.
- A blanket or sheet, preferably blue.
- A Christmas stocking or a pillowcase (optional).
- 20 plastic balls, for example those used in a children's ball pit (optional). You can also use plastic shatterproof baubles if you are in a space without hard floors.

You can use our slides to accompany your talk. Download them at **caid.ie/ChristmasResources.**

I'm going to show you a book that was a popular gift for children at Christmas in the past. Maybe some you still ask for this book as a present? Or maybe your grown-ups have a copy? It's called the Guiness World Records Book. Have you heard of it? Each year this book collects together all the amazing and often very strange records that people from every country of the world have achieved.

christian aid

I've been having a look at some of the records connected to Christmas. Did you know that the most lights ever hung on a Christmas tree was 194,672?! And the largest ever Christmas stocking was made by a group of volunteers in Italy to raise money for charity. It was more than 51 metres long! Would you believe that in 2023 Andre Ortolf from Germany managed to put on a full elf costume in just over 24 seconds? Do you think you could do it faster?

Optional activity: There's one record I think we could practice right now. Ashwin Kumar from India is the world record holder for the most baubles thrown into a Christmas stocking in 30 seconds by someone under 16. He managed 17 baubles. Shall we see how many we can get in? *Invite the children to throw the baubles or balls into the stocking or pillowcase whilst timing them.*

The Guiness World Records Book celebrates extraordinary and often funny achievements. But now I want to think together about some other records that are being broken this year. We've had record breaking weather. The hottest ever summer on record in the UK. And the whole world is feeling the effects of what may be a record breaking El Niño: a rise in the temperature of the surface of the sea that can lead to droughts in some places and floods and storms in others.

Christian Aid is asking us to think about one place in particular that is facing a huge challenge. In the Dasenech *[dass-a-netch]* region in Southern Ethiopia communities get their food from their own farms. They practice something called 'flood-retreat cultivation'. To help us understand what that is I'm going to need this blanket and some volunteers!

Encourage the children and young people to come forward and stand to one side. Ask them to hold the edges of the blanket so that it is stretched out. Tell the children that when you say 'go!' they are to shake the blanket up and down and move into the centre of the space. When you say 'stop!' they are to hold the blanket still and move back to the side.

The River Omo used to flood in a predictable pattern. Go! *(The children and young people move)*. The waters rose and covered the land nearby for a while, then the water receded. Stop! *(The 'water' calms and the children move back)*. When the floods receded, the water left the land full of moisture and nutrients. This made the land a good place to grow crops. And because the floods were predictable, farmers like Donnay and her neighbours knew when to plant their seeds and when to harvest their crops.

But now Donnay's community is seeing record breaking unpredictable floods. Go! Stop! Go! Stop! Go! Stop! *(The children and young people run back and forth. After this they can put the blanket down)*. This is fun as a game but in real life these unpredictable floods are dangerous and frightening.

Imagine if you had to grow your food somewhere that could flood with no warning. This is what happened to Donnay. Her home, her food, her crops and her cows were washed away in one night.

'The flood was sudden and devastating,' Donnay says, 'We escaped with our children, without any belongings.' Life has been very tough for Donnay and her community since this happened. Without their crops, Donnay's whole family was hungry.

When we hear this story and think about some of the other record breaking disasters in the news, we may feel like there's not much we can do. But if we look at what the Bible says we find that there's something that is bigger and more powerful than even these disasters: Jesus' love for us. We hear from Paul in one of the letters he wrote that we need to try 'to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ'. Doesn't that sound like a record breaking love?

At Christmas we celebrate the arrival of this world-transforming love. We hear the start of Jesus' story: how he was born to live out God's love for us. When he grew up Jesus told his followers that he wanted them to love each other with the same love that he had for them. In other words, we're all invited to show this wide, long, high, deep, transforming, extraordinary, exciting love to each other. And God is with us to help us do that.

So, you may not have a page in the Guiness World Records Book but if you're a follower of Jesus you are a record breaker whenever you show God's love in the things you do and say.

Christian Aid are working with their partner Agri Service Ethiopia to help Donnay and her community recover from the floods. They provide seeds, tools and training in new farming techniques to families who have lost everything. They help farmers adapt to the unpredictable floods and farm in places that they haven't grown crops before. Donnay says, 'Our children are now able to get enough food. The support we received has improved our living conditions.' One way we could show our record breaking love this Christmas is by supporting Christian Aid's Christmas appeal and by praying for Donnay, her family and her community.

Finish with a prayer.