

Continuing the Heart of Valentine – Loving the Persecuted Church

Instructions for Using this Prayer Guide with your Family

1. Pre-read the stories to make sure they are appropriate for your kids.
2. Locate the country on a map*.
 - a. Check out maps which identify countries based on their persecution level at www.persecution.com and www.opendoors.org/en-US/.
3. Give play-doh to one child to make something.
4. Read the real life persecution story to your family. These all took place in 2025-2026.
5. Another child answers if this was SMASH or SQUEEZE persecution by smashing or squeezing the play-doh.
 - a. **SMASH Persecution** = killing, beatings and torture, kidnapped, jail time, property being destroyed, etc. Christianity is illegal and the government actively persecutes you.
 - b. **SQUEEZE Persecution** = taxes and fines for Christians, rejection by family, friends, and neighbors, while not illegal the government/police often do not intervene when Christians are persecuted, laws, regulations, and community difficulties hinder you from living out your Christian faith, etc.
6. Discuss the situation, what you might do, and how you can pray for the Christians who are suffering. Sample questions and Bible verses are given as a help.
7. Pray for these people and situations.

On the *I-Commit-To-Pray* website your family can write a prayer to post online and learn more about the country/Christians you are praying for. For more prayer requests, go to icommittoprayer.com to read current reports and prayer guides.

Prayer Guide

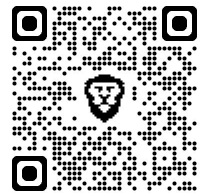
Iran – The Iranian government cut all forms of communication within the country due to the demonstrations going on there against the government. Most people in this country are Muslims but there are a small number that are Christians. A Pastor in this country had this request: “Pray that the Lord will protect these believers and that they will continue to live out their faith boldly; pray that we can regain contact so we can continue to encourage each other.”

- What type of persecution is this? *Squeeze*
- If you were a Christian in this country, how might you feel?
- What creative ways can you think of to connect with other believers in this situation?
- If you made contact with another believer what words, actions, or Bible verses might encourage them in the Lord?
- www.icommittoprayer.com/request/2934/kurdish-iranian-christians/



Ethiopia - A group of Christians celebrating Christmas were attacked by a Muslim mob. Many believers were stabbed and hospitalized. The attack occurred in a region where the rise of radical Islam has resulted in routine attacks against Christians. A believer in this area made this request: “Please pray for the speedy recovery of the wounded and encouragement of the believers proclaiming the gospel in that hostile area.”

- What type of persecution is this? *Smash*
- If you knew that you might get hurt for celebrating Jesus' birth, would you go to a Christmas eve service?
- What Bible verse might encourage you to be faithful to God in this situation? (Hint: 1 Peter 3:14)
- www.icommittoprayer.com/request/2933/ethiopian-christians/



Laos - A 14 yr old Christian girl named Pa Sia Tho was hurt by someone and when her parents reported it to the police the man who hurt her was ordered to pay a fine but he refused. Her family requested that justice be done but the village leader denied their request, stating that Christians did not have the right to demand legal justice. Pray for Pa Sia Tho and her parents to experience healing and encouragement as they continue to trust the Lord for His provision and care. Pray that those that did wrong would repent and that the court would act righteously and justly.

- What type of persecution is this? *Squeeze/Smash*
- If someone hurt you and they didn't get punished for it, how would you feel?
- What is supposed to be the purpose of government? (Hint: Romans 13:4) *They are supposed to punish evil and reward good but many governments do not follow God's direction which makes them unjust.*
- When we do not receive justice from people/government, who should we entrust ourselves to? (Hint: 1 Peter 4:19; Hebrews 10:30-31; Psalm 138:8)
- www.icommittoprayer.com/request/2932/pa-sia-tho-and-family/



Kazakhstan - A Pastor in this country said that the police showed his wife a fake video created by AI (artificial intelligence) to get her to distrust him and convince her to spy on him. The Pastor had this request: "I ask you to pray for me, my wife, our children and our ministry. We are going through one of the most difficult times, but we believe that Jesus is the Lord." (*This has also happened to Pastors in America to create false content to spread lies and hurt their reputation.*)

- What type of persecution is this? *Squeeze*
- Fake AI videos are very popular. How can you use discernment to discover truth?
- How should we respond when someone spreads lies about us that are not true? (Hint: Matthew 5:11-12)
- Read Acts 17:11 – What did these Jews do to make sure that what they were hearing was true? *Searched the Scripture. It is important that we do this also when we hear content or teaching from Pastors, teachers, sermons, podcasts, etc. (whether real or AI) so that we are not taken captive by lies.*
- www.icommittoprayer.com/request/2931/kazakh-pastor/



Pakistan – A mother was imprisoned for more than one and a half years for having a cross outside her home that she refused to take down. The cross angered the Muslim men in her community so that's why they took her to jail. She was kept from seeing her 3 year old son during that time. While she has been released, she still has to go to trial later on. Pray that the Lord will heal and strengthen her and her family and that all charges would be dropped.

- What type of persecution is this? *Smash*
- Think about how old you are now. Imagine if your mom or dad had to go to jail for 1 year and 6 months. How old would you be when they got out? How would you feel if you couldn't see your parents for that long?
- As a parent, what would you say to your children to prepare them for the reality that you might go to jail for standing for Christ?
- If you knew that having a cross outside your home, might send you to jail would you have one?
- If you were friends with this family, how might you encourage them while their mom was away or stand with this mom during this time?
- www.icommittoprayer.com/request/2928/pakistani-christian/



USA, Missouri – Pray for a church that was denied approval on renting a building for church services BECAUSE they are a church.

- What type of persecution is this? *Squeeze*
- If you were the Pastor, what would you do? *In this case, the Pastor contacted the Christian Law Association for legal help.*
- Read 2 Timothy 4:5. What should this church and Pastor's focus be?

USA, Vermont – Pray for a Christian family facing legal action for hosting community Bible studies in their home.

- What type of persecution is this? *Squeeze*
- If your family was hosting a Bible study and you received a letter telling you to stop doing so, what would you do?
- Or what if you were going to someone else's home? Would you continue to go? How might you encourage them and walk along side them in this SQUEEZE persecution?