



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

YOUTH SESSION





LEADERS GUIDE

Session Outline:

This session helps to introduce the St Vincent de Paul society to the young people in a fun, interactive and competitive way.

Session Objective:

To understand some of the back story of the St Vincent de Paul society and to have some fun breaking the ice at the beginning of the session.

What you will need:

- The leaders guide
- Power point **QUIZ**
- To divide the group into teams of between 4 & 6
- A piece of paper or a wipeable board for each team
- A pen for each team

Introduction to the Leader:

- This session helps to introduce the St Vincent de Paul society to the young people in a fun, interactive and competitive way. Use it as an icebreaker at the beginning of your session to warm everyone up.
- Ahead of starting make sure you have a prize for the winning team and make sure they know their is a prize for the winners.
- If you have laminated sheets they can share their answer after each question.
- Once all answers have been revealed by the teams below are parts of the SVP story to draw out in each question.
- **TOP TIP:** by listening carefully it may help them in future questions!

SLIDE 1



What does SVP stand for?



What do you think they do?



Who are the SVP?

- SVP – Stands for **St Vincent de Paul Society**. A group that are inspired to put their faith into action in the communities they live in.
- What they do? – some of the answers that get a point.

Work with the poor
Foodbanks
Children's Camps
Charity Shops

Debt advisors
Furniture

Refugee and Asylum seeker support
Visiting and befriending





SLIDE 2



Frédéric Ozanam the founder of the SVP went out and left some on the doorstep of a family who needed it.



Who are the SVP?



- Frédéric was a student in France in the 1800's.
- He originally started a society that was all about debating ideas.
- It was only when he was challenged by someone in the group about what this group was doing for the world that he felt the call to become more active in his faith.
- His first act of charity was to leave FIREWOOD on the doorstep of a family in need.
- Nowadays the SVP do support people a lot more with food and money. But in 1833 Paris firewood meant you could heat your home and cook a warm meal.
- For a bonus point: When Frédéric took the firewood did he knock on the door and have a chat with the family, walk straight in because he was so excited to help them or knock, drop and run?
- The answer: Frédéric legged it. But when he got home he felt an unrest and so he went back and met the family. This has become a huge part of the SVP charism - they don't just drop charity but befriend and accompany the people they help.

SLIDE 3



I would like to embrace the whole world in a network of
- Frédéric Ozanam



Who are the SVP?



- The answer is **Charity**.
- If you put love you can have 1/2 a point because the word embrace is important.
- The SVP have a saying that you don't just bring the food hamper but you bring the tablecloth. It's about putting love and care into every action.
- Frédéric's dream, has been realised. One student has inspired a worldwide organisation. You can now find on every continent and in most countries in the world members of the SVP.



SLIDE 4

St Vincent de Paul Society
Empowering Vincentians
Turning Concern into Action

Worldwide there are over Vincentians & The St Vincent de Paul Society is nearly years old.

200 700,000 50
500,000 5,000 1,000

Who are the SVP?

- Worldwide there are over **700,000** Vincentians.
- The society is nearly **200** years old (formed in 1833).
- Its an amazing network of charity.
- This is what St Vincent was all about. Organising charity so that charity is effective and reaches the most people. This is why St Vincent is the patron Saint of the Society - because he is the father of organising.
- This also means that in pretty much every country in the world the SVP can reach out and help - even in hard to reach areas or at times when things are hard like in the pandemic or places at war.

SLIDE 5

St Vincent de Paul Society
Empowering Vincentians
Turning Concern into Action

St Vincent said:
Go to the, there you will find

WORLD CHURCH JOY POOR GOD

Who are the SVP?

- Go to **POOR**, there you will find **GOD**.
- St Vincent totally believed as a priest that God could be found in the Church but he wanted to challenge the perception that the Church is where we box our faith.
- Living in a secular society where we live amongst people of different faiths and none there are only a couple of key moments in the year where our Christian faith comes to the forefront for everyone; Christmas and Easter. At these moments the world is given an image of Jesus as a refugee child, poor, homeless and born to a teenage mother and on the cross at Easter as a prisoner, persecuted and frightened. They are moments that resonate with our world. They are the moments when our God allowed himself to experience our human suffering, poor and weak. These are the images of God SVP members are inspired to walk alongside.

SLIDE 7



St Vincent de Paul Society
Helping others
Turning Concern into Action

Name the Parable?
How might this story link with the work of the SVP?

Young Vincentians

- The parable is the Good Samaritan.
- The links could be

Helping someone who was struggling.
The Samaritan was the least likely to help
(anyone can have a heart for charity)
Took them somewhere safe
Gave money and resources
Came back to check they were ok
(didn't wash his hands and walk away)

(There are many more - give points as you see fit)

Conclusion:

- Give the winning group their prize and thank the group for their participation.
- Young Vincentians often use Fruit Pastilles as a prize. The story below explains why...



'I was inspired to join the SVP, and to serve for a number of years, after two very rain soaked men, visited the hospital in the North East, that I was a patient in. I was in pain, and depressed, they made me laugh and gave me some fruit pastilles.

During lockdown, I got offers of help from the SVP and a beautiful, hand made card from the young "Vinnie's" at St Marie's school. I get a plant at Christmas from the SVP too. I can't express how much these actions have brightened my life and lifted my soul. Long may their good works continue.'



LEADERS NOTES

Session Outline:

In this session young people will have a taster of how Youth SVP groups run. Some may wish post confirmation to form or join a group in the local parish or school.

Session Objective:

- To understand that Faith is active and that discipleship is a call to create positive action in our world.
- To come up with an action that the group can do together.

What you will need:

- Leaders notes for the session
- Prayer cards
- Powerpoint **CONFIRMATION SEE-THINK-DO**
- To divide the young people into small groups of between 4 & 6
- Paper and pens for each group

Leader:

(Share the quote from Louise de Marillac on the PowerPoint - 'Hunt down poverty in order to give humanity its dignity')

St Louise de Marillac is one of the founders of the SVP. She was responsible for helping to set up the daughters of charity a group of Vincentian nuns. She said this quote...

In your small groups you have just 2 minutes to write down what you think the words **POVERTY** and **DIGNITY** mean.

The dictionary definitions are:

Poverty a lack of enough financial resources such that individuals, households, and entire communities don't have the means to manage or have the basic necessities for a good life

Dignity the state of being deserving, celebrated, or valued.

(Give 2 minutes for them to write as much as they can - then spend some time listening to some of their answers and exploring their thoughts- finish by sharing the dictionary definitions.)

In a different colour pen your groups now have just 3 minutes to think about different forms of poverty we might see in our local community





Part 1: SEE

The first thing SVP members do is look to see what the poverty and need is in the area local to them. They think about what is concerning them.

So that's what we are going to ask you to do. You now have 5 minutes to think about the area we live in. Think about where are their people who might need support and extra care? Where is the loneliness? Where are the local projects helping people already? Where are the problem areas? What is within a mile of where we are now?

(Give 5 minutes for the groups to put together a list of situations, groups of people etc - have a wander round and offer support and some ideas if they need it).



Part 2: THINK

The second thing SVP members do is to think about how Jesus inspires us to take action and help people. Then they think about the gifts and resources they have and come up with a plan to make a positive change in their local community. They appoint someone they call a president- this person is the leader and helps keep the group on task.

So that's the second part of your challenge. Firstly appoint a president or project manager for your small group. You now have 20 minutes to put together an idea for an action that you believe the Confirmation group could do to support a group in the local community. In 20 minutes each group will present their idea to the adult leaders who will be picking one action for the whole group to undertake.

We will give you a **sheet** to help guide you but its over to you.

- Remember to keep it within the realms of possibility,
- Give it a personal touch
- Make it significant for a person or group in the community.



After 20mins allow each group 3min to present their ideas. It would be great if one idea could then been taken forward either during the programme or post confirmation and made reality with the support of the adults but driven by the young people.