



To the Heights: Leading with Love

A Celebration of the Word on Vincentian Leadership

Leader's guide

Aim: To reflect on Vincentian leadership and prepare for the SVP "To the Heights" challenge

Materials needed:

- PowerPoint slides
- Instrumental music
- Pledge cards

Introduction

Slide 1: Welcome the attendees and outline the reason why we're here today.

Slide 2: Prayer: *God our Father,*

Be with us today as we learn what it means to be a leader. Help us to believe in ourselves so that we can use our gifts and talents to make our world a better place. May we, as Mini Vinnies, be inspired to follow in Jesus' footsteps and lead by serving others in our community. Amen.

Vincentian leaders

Slide 3: Point to the pictures on screen and ask if anyone knows the names of these Vincentian leaders. Reveal their names on **Slide 4** (St Vincent de Paul and Bl Frédéric Ozanam) and explain: *We follow the example of these leaders, as well as many others who help us to live out the Vincentian values and turn our concern into action.*

Slide 5: Introduce Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati as a Vincentian leader:

He was a young SVP member who was passionate about his faith and caring for other people, especially the poor. He also loved mountain climbing! He often took his friends for hikes, having moments of prayer, Mass, and discussions about faith along the way.

Explain that Pier Giorgio Frassati's catchphrase was "Verso L'Alto" – "To the Heights".

This year, the SVP is thinking about how to go 'To the Heights', not by climbing a real mountain, but by growing in love, faith, and kindness like Pier Giorgio Frassati did. He wanted everyone to direct their life towards heaven and God's dreams. Throughout the year you will have the chance to show leadership through helping others, inspired by our SVP saints and by the teachings of Christ.

Scripture & Reflection

Slide 6: You may either read the whole story of Jesus washing his disciple's feet (John 13:1-17) or paraphrase the story, before reading the passage on the slide (Good News translation).

Slide 7: Invite the children to think about these questions in their heads or get them to discuss it in small groups before feedback altogether. You may add: *Jesus washing his disciples' feet was surprising to them because it was a task usually done by a servant. They were expecting a leader who wanted people to serve him, not one who served others.*



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Slide 8: *He taught us that leadership is about service, not power. As Mini Vinnies, you are leaders because you see what people need, plan together to think about how to help, and put your thoughts into action.*

Slide 9: Ask why Jesus didn't serve others by himself, but taught the disciples how to lead as well. Encourage answers about working as a team.

What would happen if, in this pyramid of people, someone from the bottom row left? It would fall down. In the SVP, we follow this example. We work together and support each other. In this way you can also be an example to others.

Leadership Pledge Activity

Slide 10: Read out the quote by Pope Leo XIV. Explain that now they are going to put what they have learned into action.

Slide 11: Hand out a pledge card to each person with this quote on it, and invite them to write one way they will lead with love this week/term. Examples: Welcome someone who's new or left out; take responsibility by helping at home or in class; speak up kindly when someone needs help; invite others to join a Mini Vinnies action.

(Play some instrumental music while the children are writing)

Slide 12: Tell the children to keep their pledge with them and share how they got on the next time they meet. Point to the post and say:

As a group you can also set some goals with your To the Heights poster, choosing small challenges of love and kindness to climb the mountain. Think about actions that will help lead others to do the same.

Call to action

Slide 13: Explain that this year the SVP is launching a challenge inspired by St Pier Giorgio Frassati called "To the Heights". Briefly explain the call to action using the information on the slide. The main aim of the challenge is to fundraise for the SVP by choosing a mountain and completing the distance or time it takes to reach the summit by being sponsored for an activity. Example: *If you chose Ben Nevis in Scotland, you could walk 1345m, spend 8 hours doing acts of service, or aim to raise £1345 through fundraising efforts.* (For more information, go to the To the Heights page: <https://act.svp.org.uk/page/173099/action/1>). Alternatively, this challenge could be acts of service too.

Slide 14: *Saint Pier Giorgio showed us that leadership can be joyful, brave, and full of love. As we go, let us remember that every small act of love is a step To the Heights.*

Closing prayer:

God our Father,

Thank you bringing us together today to learn what it means to be a leader. Let us remember that we can make a difference, and be leaders by serving others. May we be inspired to look up, reach out, and climb higher in faith and service.

Amen.



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