



To the Heights at Harvest

Leader's guide

Aim of the session:

To help children give thanks for God's gift of harvest, be inspired by the example of St Pier Giorgio Frassati, and understand how small acts of sharing, like giving food to those in need, can be a step "To the Heights" in living out love in action.

Time: 30–60 minutes (Ideal for an assembly or a Mini Vinnies' meeting)

Materials Needed:

- *To the Heights at Harvest* PowerPoint slides
- LED candle (for prayer focus)
- Bible (for Gospel reading)
- Image of St Pier Giorgio Frassati (SVP poster)
- Basket/box for children's shoe pledges (symbolic offering)
- Pens/pencils/colouring pencils
- Shoe templates (printed on card or paper)
- Scissors (child-safe)
- Glue sticks or blu-tack (to make a display)
- Optional: coloured paper, stickers, tissue paper, string/wool (to decorate shoes)
- Large display board/wall space, with heading "Walking To the Heights in Love"

Call to Action – Harvest Food Collection

- Box, basket, or decorated container labelled "Harvest Food Collection"
- Poster/labels explaining the collection for others in school/parish to see
- List of suggested food items for donation (non-perishable: tins, pasta, rice, cereal, etc.)

Contact youngvincentians@svp.org.uk to find out if there is a Community Support Project near you which would accept your Harvest donations.

Step-by-step guide:

Gather together (5–10 minutes)

Welcome the children and explain the aim of this session. Begin with a moment of silence before opening in prayer.

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together today to celebrate all that we have, to remember where it comes from, and to learn how we can share it with others. Help us to follow in the footsteps of Your Son, Jesus, and of St Pier Giorgio Frassati, who showed us how to reach the heights by helping others and bringing people closer to You. Amen.

Icebreaker: Show the children a picture of a cloche (the silver dome used to cover food in restaurants).

Ask: *If you could surprise someone with your favourite food under this cloche, what would you choose to make and who would you surprise?*

Encourage them to think about someone who might really appreciate the gift- a friend, family member, neighbour, or someone in need.

Link it back to Harvest by expressing how happy the person would feel being surprised with that food. That's what harvest is all about, remembering that food is a gift from God, and that we can share it with others to bring joy and hope.



Listen (10–15 mins)

Bible Story: Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1–14)– This can be read by you or the children.

Emphasise how a small act of sharing (loaves and fish) became something great when offered with love.

Share with the children the following: *That little boy's small act of sharing became something amazing in Jesus' hands. And people through history have followed that same example, giving what they had to help others. Let's look at the story of someone who did just that...*

Story of Pier Giorgio Frassati

Share his story: *When Pier Giorgio was a boy, a poor mother came to his house with her little son. Pier Giorgio opened the door and saw that the boy had no shoes. Without thinking twice, he took off his own shoes and gave them to the boy.*

Highlight his motto "Verso l'Alto-To the Heights" meaning reaching higher by loving and helping others.

Connect the two stories: *Just like the boy with the loaves and fishes, Pier Giorgio shared what he had, even when it meant giving up something he really needed.*

Reflect (15–20 mins, includes Craft)

- What can I share with others from what I have?
- What small act of love could I do this harvest?

The children can reflect on these questions silently or in pairs.

Craft Activity: Harvest Sharing Shoes

- Provide cut-out shoe templates (boots/trainers), or have children draw around their own shoes onto card.
- On each shoe, they write or draw one way they can "walk in Pier Giorgio's footsteps" by sharing or helping others.
- Decorate with colours, patterns, or Bible verses (e.g., "Love one another" John 13:34).
- Create a display titled "Walking to the Heights in Love"-a path of shoes leading upward.

If there is time, invite the children to share what they have written on their shoe template.

Send Forth (5–10 mins)

Call to Action: Harvest Food Collection

- Invite the children to bring in items for the foodbank or parish SVP collection. Link to St. Pier Giorgio: *Just as St Pier Giorgio gave his shoes, we can give food to those in need.*
- Play some reflective music and invite the children to come up and place their 'shoe pledges' around the candle or in a basket.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, thank You for the harvest. Help us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and St Pier Giorgio, sharing what we have with love. May our food collection be a blessing to others. Amen.

Final send-off phrase (together): "Verso l'Alto – To the Heights!, St Pier Giorgio Frassati- pray for us!"