



TO THE HEIGHTS

LIVING MISSION, JUBILEE AND BEYOND



St Vincent
de Paul Society
England and Wales
Turning Concern into Action

Week 3: Stopping to Listen

Gather

Create a focal point with the backpack, water (Week 1) and bread (Week 2). Add a sand timer for this week's theme of time. Let the children guess the theme, then flip the timer: *"Watch the sand fall. Our time belongs to God."* Invite them to settle, then pass the timer around and let each child thank God for a special moment from this week.

Connecting the Lenten Journey So Far

Week 1: We packed water – noticing people who feel alone.

Week 2: We packed bread – sharing what we have, like St Pier Giorgio Frassati.

Week 3: This week, we consider something different but just as important: Time and Attention

This helps us build real friendships and lift others up.

Opening Prayer (child-led from PowerPoint)

Things you'll need:

- Week 3: Stopping to Listen PowerPoint Slides
- Items for focal point: backpack, water, bread, sand timer
- Bible
- Sand timer printout (Appendix 1)
- Pens and pencils
- Colouring pencils/ Felt tips

Listen

Invite the children to focus on the picture and discuss the questions before sharing the story.

Share the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38–42) with the children:

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Respond

Martha is showing Jesus kind hospitality and this is important to make someone feel welcome but perhaps in this story Jesus is showing Martha that at this time it is more important to stop, listen and spend time with him. Martha can then give Jesus her full attention and be closer to him. Like Mary, we can choose to pause, listen, and give someone our full attention. This is how we help people feel less lonely.

Reflection question:

How could you make people in school or in your parish feel noticed and less alone?

Distractions like screens and rushing around can build walls between us. But when we stop to listen, like Mary, we break those walls down. Think about when you're on a walk or hike with family and friends. What a joy it is when you're in conversation with those who are walking beside you. Listening tells that person: "You matter." St Pier Giorgio Frassati showed that giving time and attention lifts others "to the heights." Mini Vinnies can follow his example by listening, sitting with someone who is alone, helping a younger child, talking to someone new, sharing a smile, offering encouragement, or showing kindness without rushing..

Call to Action

Listening Pairs: Put the children into pairs, giving them 5 minutes each to talk about something they enjoy doing or a happy memory they have. Encourage them to ask one question to show they are really listening. Debrief briefly as a whole group: How did it feel to be truly listened to? Fill in the worksheet to add to the Lenten display. Finish with the closing prayer.