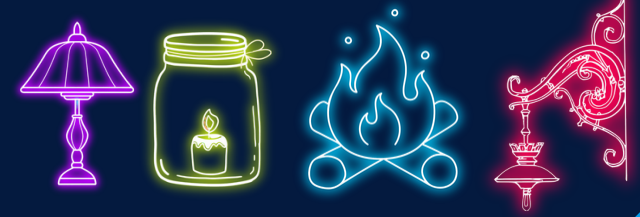


MANY STORIES ONE LIGHT



This resource has been produced by the St Vincent de Paul Society. The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is a Catholic international volunteer organisation whose members work with anyone in need in their local community – the homeless, the elderly, prisoners, struggling families, people who are sick and lonely. Young people are an important part of the Vincentian family. We are all called to be like Jesus by helping people, becoming their friend and working with others to make a difference. Find out more and view our school resources by visiting svp.org.uk/mini-vinnies

Leader's Guide

Beginning the Year Together- Celebration of the Word

Aim of session:

To celebrate the start of a new academic year, recognise the gifts God has given us, and look forward to sharing those gifts with those in need around us.

What you will need:

- Beginning the Year Together- Celebration of the Word Presentation Slides
- Light pledge templates
- Light sources to create a focal point, such as torches, LED candles, a table lamp, a lantern, or string lights. If possible, provide a suitable place where these can be set up and kept throughout the year for future use
- Bible, cross, candle and Bible for prayer space

Welcome and Gathering Activity

Set up your prayer space displaying a candle, cross and Bible. You might like to include something connected to your Mini Vinnies too, like the prayer book or Mini Vinnies Pledge, along with your choice of light sources.

Slide 2: Ask the children to take a quiet look at the candle.

What does its light make you think of?

Invite them to write one word or idea on a Post-it note and place it beside the candle. If you have a large group, ask the children to keep their Post-it in front of them as we will be looking back on it at the end of the celebration.

Slide 3: Opening Prayer

Led by leader or a child in the group.

*Lord,
Thank you for bringing us together today.
Open our hearts and minds so that we may hear your message and discover how we can use our gifts to serve others with kindness and love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Slide 4: Introduce the symbol of light

Show the children the pictures of different types of lights.

Questions:

- What do these lights help people to do?
- When might we need them?
- How are they different?

Then make the link:

Slide 5: *None of these lights does exactly the same job, but every one is important. People are like that too. God gives each of us different gifts, but together we share one light- the Light of Christ.*

Listen

Slide 6: St Peter reminds us that the gifts God gives us are not only for ourselves. We are called to share them with others.

Before reading:

As we listen to this reading, think about this question:

How can I use my gifts to be a light for others?

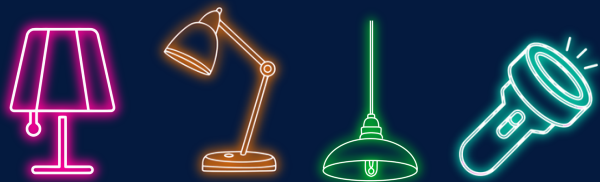
Slide 7: Reading:
1 Peter 4:10–11

The leader or a child could read this. For younger children, you may wish to use a different translation of the scripture. If using the English Standard Version, you may need to explain the word 'oracle' (someone who knows a lot about a subject and can give good advice – Cambridge Dictionary).

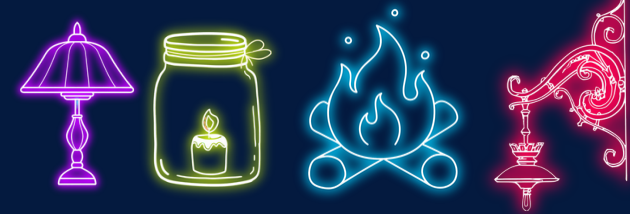
Slide 8: Reflection questions:

- What words stood out to you?
- What gifts has God given people?
- How can our gifts become light for someone else?





MANY STORIES ONE LIGHT



Respond

Slides 9–15: This year at the SVP, we are thinking about the theme Many Stories, One Light. Every bulb on a string of lights is different.

Some shine brightly.
Some glow gently.
Some are noticed straight away.
Others are only seen when we look more closely.
Each one is special. Together they light up the world around them.
God does not ask us all to do the same thing. He asks us to use the gifts we have been given.
When we share our gifts, God's light becomes brighter in our schools, parishes, communities and the world.

Slide 16–17: Many Stories, One Light: Rosalie Rendu– Love in Action

Our theme this year gives us the opportunity to shine a light on the many inspiring women and men who have gone before us. Their stories are wonderful examples of what it means to share God's love with others. We invite you to share this short extract about Blessed Rosalie Rendu, a member of our Vincentian family, as one of the many inspiring stories that reflect this theme.

Blessed Rosalie Rendu was a Daughter of Charity who dedicated her life to helping people who were poor and in need in Paris. She guided the young Frédéric Ozanam and his friends as they began the SVP, showing them how to put their faith into action through kindness, friendship and love.

Quote: Be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor. They will appreciate your kindness and your love more than all else you bring them. – Blessed Rosalie Rendu

Discuss the questions together, reflecting on the story of Rosalie Rendu.

Slide 18: Activity

Invite the children to create their own individual light. Write a promise showing how you will use your gifts to help others this year. You can then join these lights to form a display for the school or parish, or as a decoration for your Mini Vinnies commissioning ceremony. Also give them a moment to reflect back on the question from the beginning and their response on their Post-it. How would they answer that question now?

Send Forth

Slide 19–20: Close your Celebration of the Word in prayer and final mission statement. You might like to use this part of the celebration to commission your new group of Mini Vinnies or re-commission those continuing their mission.

We'd love to see photos of your children's promises for the year displayed on their chain of lights. Please do send them to us at youngvincentians@svp.org.uk. We'd be delighted to celebrate and share the wonderful ways your Mini Vinnies are shining their light in their school or parish.



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

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