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/youth-svp**

Leaders Guide

A Light of my own



God did not create one kind of person, one type of work, or one way of being. He created a human family where each of us is called to reflect His love and become a light for others.
Many Stories, One Light celebrates the diversity of people, experiences, gifts, and vocations that make up our communities, united by a shared commitment to putting faith into action.

You will need

- *Clean, empty glass jars with lids, collected from home or bought cheaply- alternatively, clear plastic cups*
- *Battery-operated tealights (recommended, especially when using plastic cups)*
- *Tissue paper, permanent/acrylic markers, paints, ribbons, string, stickers and other decorations*
- *Glue suitable for your chosen materials*
- *A table or space to bring all the finished lights together*

Tip: Ask young people to bring a jar from home if they can, but have some spares available so everyone can take part.

What makes me me?

Every person has their own story. We are shaped by our families, friendships, interests, experiences, culture, gifts, hopes and challenges. No two stories are exactly the same, and every person has something valuable to bring.
Invite the group to think about:

- What makes me who I am?
- What people, places or experiences have shaped my story?
- What gifts or qualities do I bring to my community?
- What gives me hope or helps me feel close to God?

Create your own light

Give each person a jar or clear plastic cup to decorate. Explain that their lantern will be a symbol of themselves and their story. Encourage them to use colours, patterns, words, symbols and images to represent the things that make them who they are. For example:

- People: family, friends or people who inspire them.
- Interests: music, sport, art or things they love doing.
- Gifts: kindness, courage, humour, listening or creativity.
- Experiences: important memories, challenges they have overcome or things they have learnt.
- Faith and hope: symbols of their faith, favourite words or things that help them recognise God's presence in their lives.

They could include a word or phrase that sums up their story, or simply express themselves through colour and design. Remind the group that there is no right or wrong way to decorate their lantern. Every design will be different because every story is different.

Many stories, one light

Once everyone has finished, invite the group to bring their lanterns together and arrange them as one display.
Place a battery-operated tealight inside each upturned glass jar, with the jar resting securely on its lid, or place the light inside each plastic cup. Switch on the lights and dim the room if possible.
Take a moment to look at the display. Each lantern is different, reflecting a different person and a different story. Yet together, they create one beautiful display of light.
Explain that this is the heart of Many Stories, One Light. God creates each of us uniquely, with our own gifts, experiences and stories. We do not have to be the same to belong together. When we bring who we are and what we have to the world, we can reflect God's love in different ways.

Closing prayer

Lord God,
Thank you for making each of us unique, with our own stories, gifts and experiences.
Help us to recognise your light within ourselves and to see it in the people around us. Teach us to celebrate our differences, to listen to one another and to use what we have been given to bring hope to others.
May we remember that, although our stories are different, we are united in your love. Together, may we be a light in our schools, parishes and communities.
Amen.

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