

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**

DECEMBER: St Ambrose, St Lucy & St John of the Cross

The One Who Spoke Up, The One Who Shone & The One Who Stayed

7 December — St Ambrose
13 December — St Lucy
14 December — St John of the Cross

December is dark. Properly dark.
Dark when you get up. Dark when you get home.
And somewhere in between, people start asking how many days there are until Christmas.
And right there, in the middle of all that darkness, the Church gives us three brilliant people.
St Ambrose was a bishop in Milan over 1,600 years ago. He wasn't afraid to challenge rich and powerful people when he thought they had forgotten about the poor.
He looked around and noticed that some people had plenty while others had almost nothing.
And he basically said: "Hang on. That can't be right."
Because following Jesus isn't only about being kind. Sometimes it means asking why things aren't fair in the first place.
St Lucy was a young Christian woman living in Sicily around the year 300, when being Christian could be dangerous. She was killed because she refused to give up her faith.
Her name comes from the Latin word for light, and through the centuries she became a symbol of light shining in darkness.
And she reminds us that you don't need to be a massive spotlight to make a difference. A candle is tiny.
But put a candle in a dark room and everybody will notice. Maybe that's holiness? Not changing the whole world before teatime. Just bringing a little light to the bit of the world you're standing in.
And then there's St John of the Cross, a Spanish priest and poet from the 1500s.
John tried to change things in the Church and ended up rejected by some of his own people and even imprisoned.
So John knew something about darkness.
And he discovered something important: sometimes you can't fix things.
You can't always make someone's sadness disappear.
You can't always find the perfect words.
Sometimes all you can say is: "I'm here." And stay.
Maybe that's what December needs from us.

Ambrose says: Speak up. Lucy says: Shine. John says: Stay.

Reflection Questions:
Ambrose says "Speak up", Lucy says "Shine", and John says "Stay". Which one do you think our world needs most right now, and why?
Who might be experiencing a "dark corner" at the moment — in our school, community or wider world? What is one realistic thing we could do to bring a little light?
Optional personal challenge:
This week, where could you speak up, shine or simply stay?