MANY STORIES ONE LIGHT

"I thank you for the wonder of my being."
Psalm 139:14

The Psalm reminds us that each of us is wonderfully made by God. We are not accidents, and we do not need to be like anyone else to be valuable. God knows us completely, including the parts of ourselves we find difficult to understand or accept.

Every one of us has a different story, shaped by our experiences, relationships, interests and challenges. We each have gifts and qualities that make us who we are.

"Yours must be a work of love, of kindness; you must give of your talents and yourselves."
Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam reminds us that we are called to give of our talents and ourselves. This begins by recognising what we have to offer. Perhaps you are a good listener, a loyal friend, creative, brave, thoughtful or someone who makes others laugh.

God's light can shine through the ordinary things that make us who we are.

How do I reflect God's light?
Look into the mirror and think about the qualities God has given you. Using a marker, write directly on the mirror one way you reflect God's light in the world.



Take a moment to pray:

Loving God, thank you for my story and for creating me as I am. Help me to recognise the gifts you have given me and to use them to make a difference. Remind me that my life has value and that I have a light to share. Amen.

MANY STORIES ONE LIGHT

"Carry each other's burdens."
Galatians 6:2

St Paul's words encourage us to stand alongside one another, especially when life is difficult. Carrying someone's burden does not mean we have to solve every problem. Sometimes it means listening, offering friendship or helping someone find the support they need.

We see people every day without knowing their whole story. Someone who seems happy might be struggling. Someone who is quiet might feel lonely. We cannot always see the worries, challenges or experiences another person carries.

"I would like to embrace the whole world in a network of charity."
Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Ozanam dreamed of a network of charity that would reach across the world. That network begins with the way we treat the people immediately around us. When we take time to understand someone rather than making assumptions, we help create a community where people feel valued and supported.

Every person has a story worth listening to, even when we cannot see the whole picture.

Your response: Add to the light
Choose a strip of coloured tissue paper and stick it onto the outside of the glass jar. Each person adds another strip, gradually building up layers of colour.
As you add your strip, think about how much of another person's story you might not see. When you have added your strip, watch the light shine through the different colours and all of the different stories.



Take a moment to pray:

God of compassion, you know every story, including the ones that remain unspoken. Help me to listen with patience, to be slow to judge and to treat every person with dignity. Teach me to recognise that there is always more to someone's story than I can see. Amen.

MANY STORIES ONE LIGHT

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:5

At the beginning of John's Gospel, Jesus is described as the light that darkness cannot overcome. This reminds us that God's love remains present even when life feels difficult, uncertain or painful. Darkness is real, but it does not have the final word.

People in our communities may be facing loneliness, poverty, grief, exclusion or worries they find difficult to share. We cannot always see what someone is going through, and we cannot fix every situation. But we can offer friendship, listen without judgement, pray for others and help people find support.

"Love is inventive, even to infinity."

St Vincent de Paul

St Vincent de Paul's words remind us that there is always room to find new ways of putting love into action.
We may not be able to remove someone's darkness, but we can help them know they are not alone in it.

Your response: Switch on the light

Take a moment to think about people experiencing loneliness, poverty, grief or exclusion.
When you are ready, switch on the battery-operated tealight. As you do, pray silently for those people and reflect on how you could bring hope, friendship or support into someone's life.
Let the light remind you that even a small act of love can make a difference, and that we are all called to bring Christ's light into the world.



Take a moment to pray:

God of hope, be close to everyone experiencing darkness in their lives. Bring comfort to those who are lonely, strength to those who are struggling and friendship to those who feel forgotten. Help us to find new ways to bring your love and light into the world. Amen.

MANY STORIES ONE LIGHT

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others." 1 Peter 4:10

In this letter, Peter reminds Christians that the gifts they have received are not just for their own benefit. They are opportunities to serve others. We all have different abilities, personalities and experiences, and these can all be used to make a difference.

You do not need to be especially talented, have lots of money or do something extraordinary to help others. You might be good at listening, making people feel welcome, organising things, noticing when someone is struggling or speaking up when something is unfair.

"Let us love God but with the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brow."
St Vincent de Paul

St Vincent de Paul's words remind us that love is something we put into practice. Through Youth SVP, we are encouraged to turn concern into action by using what we have to respond to the needs around us.

The question is not whether we have something to offer, but how we can use what we have been given.

What light can you bring?
Choose a symbol of light from the pile and think about what you can offer to your school, parish or wider community. It might be a talent, a personal quality, your time or something practical you could do for others.
Write one thing you can offer on your chosen symbol, then add it to the shared display. As each person contributes, the display will bring together the different gifts we all have to offer.



Take a moment to pray:

God, thank you for the gifts you have given me. Help me not to underestimate what I can offer. Give me the courage to use my time, talents and energy to serve others and bring hope wherever I can. Amen.