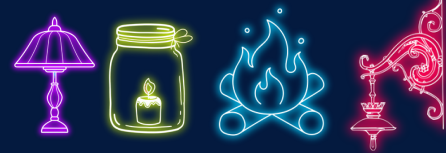




MANY STORIES ONE LIGHT



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

World Day of the Poor with the SVP
Turning Concern into Action
One Welcome at a Time

Aim of session:

To explore Pope Leo's message for the World Day of the Poor and reflect on how we, as Mini Vinnies, can put his message into action by helping everyone feel welcomed, included and valued in our school, parish and community.

What you will need:

- World Day of the Poor with the SVP Presentation Slides
- Items for focal point on theme of 'Belonging'
- Ideas for Welcome Table

Gather – We all belong

Slide 2: Leader's introduction:

Today we are going to think about what it means to make sure that everyone feels welcome, included and valued. We are going to hear a message from Pope Leo XIV about people who are poor, and discover how we, as Mini Vinnies, can help make our school, parish and community places where everyone feels they belong.

Give the children a few quiet minutes to focus on the prayer focal point and reflect on the theme of belonging. Play gentle, reflective music in the background. Invite each child to write their thoughts on the following questions on a Post-it note. Once everyone has finished, ask the children to add their notes to a shared display or welcome wall near the prayer focal point, creating a collective picture of what makes us feel welcome.

- How do you feel when someone makes you feel welcome?
- What can you do to help others feel welcome?

Share a few examples and highlight the fact that the most important thing we can give someone is our time, friendship and attention.

Slide 3: Opening Prayer

Invite a child to read the opening prayer.

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for making each of us special and loved.
Help us to make everyone feel welcome, included and cared for.
Teach us to be kind, to listen to others and to remember that everyone belongs. Amen.

Slide 4 & 5: Human Dignity

Everyone has dignity. Everyone matters. Everyone deserves to belong.

What does Human Dignity mean?

Human dignity means that every person is precious and valuable because we are made in the image of God. We are all loved by God and deserve kindness and respect. As we listen to Psalm 14:6, let's think about how we can help everyone feel welcome and valued.



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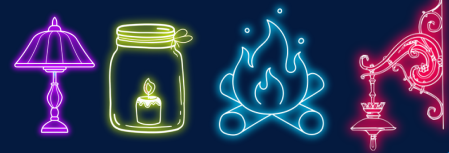
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Listen – The Lord is the refuge of the poor

Slide 6: “The Lord is the refuge of the poor.” – Psalm 14:6

Slide 7: Ask the children: *What do you think a refuge is?*

A refuge is a safe place where we feel welcomed, cared for and protected.

Slide 8: In June 2026, Pope Leo XIV shared a message inspired by this scripture ahead of the World Day of the Poor on 15 November.

He said:

“The poor of our day are the forgotten and the marginalised: robbed not only of bread, but also of a voice and a face.”

Definition of ‘marginalised’ for children: Being left out, treated unfairly or not given the same chances as other people.

Slide 9: Explain that being poor is not just about money or food. People can also feel lonely, forgotten or left out. Everyone is precious to God and deserves to feel valued, listened to and loved.

Slide 10: The Bible tells us that God is always there to comfort us and help us feel safe.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (Mt 11:28)

Slide 11: Pope Leo reminds us that we can turn to God for help and comfort, and we can be a refuge for others by showing kindness, offering friendship and helping people feel welcome.

Slide 12: Our Patron Saint, St Vincent de Paul said “Go to the poor, there you will find God”. This means that when we help and show love to people who are poor or in need, we are also showing love to God.

Catholic Social Teaching

Slide 13: The Church teaches us to pay special attention to people who are poor, vulnerable or left out. This is called the Preferential Option for the Poor.

It means noticing those who might be forgotten and asking ourselves:

- Who might be left out?
- Who needs our help?
- How can we help everyone feel valued and included?

Explain to the children that this does not mean some people matter more than others. Everyone is equally precious to God. It means taking extra care to make sure nobody is forgotten and everyone has what they need to live with dignity.

Slide 14: Let's think about an example.

Imagine a group of children are playing, but one child is always left out. What could we do to help?

Take a few suggestions from the children. Draw their answers back to Pope Leo's message: being a refuge is not just about giving someone something they need. It is also about listening, showing friendship and helping them know they matter and belong.

Slide 15–17: Share with the children that everyone has the ability to pass on kindness, without judgement.

“Make it a practice to judge persons and things in the most favourable light at all times and under all circumstances.”– St Vincent de Paul.



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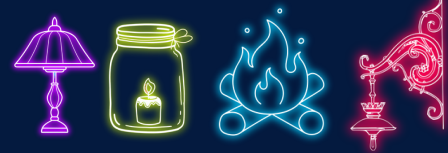
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Respond – How can we be a refuge to others?

Slide 18: Explain the following to the children: The St Vincent de Paul Society is a Catholic charity inspired by the love of Jesus. SVP members and volunteers work alongside people in their communities. They offer practical support, friendship and a listening ear.

They help people to know that they are not alone and that they matter. You are part of this and so are all these people...

Watch the video clip.

Slide 19: Reflect for a moment and get the children to think about answers to the following questions, inspired by those asked in Pope Leo's message for World Day of the Poor.

- Do I help others feel safe and loved?
- Am I thankful for what I have and willing to share?
- Do I notice people who are lonely or left out?
- Do I listen when someone needs to talk?
- Do I treat everyone as precious to God?
- Do I help make the world kinder and fairer?

Slide 20: Activity: A House of Welcome

Make a reminder of how we can be a refuge.
Each child creates a paper house with a heart-shaped door. Inside, they write or draw the actions they can take to help others feel seen, heard and valued.

Send Forth

A commitment and closing prayer

Bring the children together with their completed houses. Invite a few children to share how they will be a refuge to others this week.

Slide 21: Call to action: Could your Mini Vinnies create a 'Welcome Table' in your school or parish and dedicate some time to manning it at break times or after Mass? The objective is to have a welcoming space that people can come to and join in with some little activities. Explain to the Mini Vinnies that it's not about the activities themselves but the lovely conversations they can have with others while being around the table together.

Slides 22–23: Recap of what we've learnt today and Pope Leo's final message.

Slide 24: A final message from St Vincent's Southend on turning concern into action, one welcome at a time.

Slide 25: Closing prayer – Invite a child to close your meeting in prayer.

Ideas for your Welcome Table

- Conversation cards
- A puzzle
- A Kindness Jar
- A game anyone can join e.g. Uno, Dobble, Dominoes
- Colouring sheets
- A welcome wall poster to leave messages on



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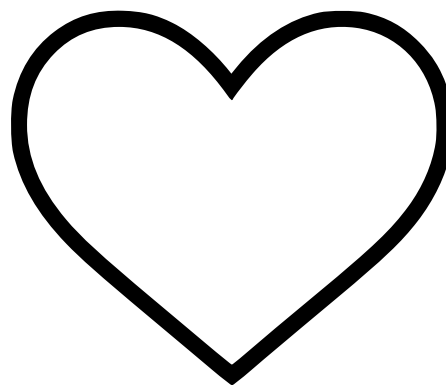


In the house, write or draw ways that people feel welcome.



EVERYONE BELONGS

A smile from
someone



I CAN BE A REFUGE FOR OTHERS BY...



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