



# Design a welcoming space

## Leader's guide

### Aim of the session:

To encourage children to think critically about the importance of creating inclusive, welcoming spaces for all people, particularly those who are marginalised or in need.

### Materials Needed:

- Large sheets of paper or poster boards
- Markers, coloured pencils, crayons
- Stickers or magazines (for collage making)
- Glue and scissors
- Example photos of community spaces (shelters, community centres, parks, etc.)

### Instructions:

#### 1. Introduction (10 minutes):

- Begin by explaining the concept of a “welcoming space” and why it is important for everyone, especially those who may be going through tough times. Discuss how places can feel different depending on how they are designed and how this can impact people’s feelings of safety, comfort, and belonging.
- The mission of the St. Vincent de Paul Society is to help those experiencing poverty or homelessness by providing support and creating spaces that help people feel cared for, seen, and respected.

#### 2. Discussion (10 minutes):

- Ask the children to think about places they visit that make them feel welcome. What makes those places special? Is it the people? The colours? The furniture? The activities? Write down their responses.



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de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

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- Lead a brief discussion on how spaces can make people feel included or excluded. For example, how would someone going through tough times feel if they walked into a space that wasn't welcoming? How might a more welcoming space impact their life?

### 3. Designing a Welcoming Space (25 minutes):

- Tell the children that they will be designing a "welcoming space" for people who may need support, just like the St. Vincent de Paul Society creates for people in their community.
- Give each child (or group) a large piece of paper, and explain that their task is to design a space that makes everyone feel safe, respected, and included. They can use drawings, magazines, stickers, and other materials to create their space.
- Encourage them to think about elements such as:
  - Comfortable seating
  - Warm colours and lighting
  - A space for socializing or activities
  - Helpful signage (e.g. where to find food, bathrooms, or people to talk to)
  - Symbols of support and care
  - Ways to make people feel seen and valued
- Remind them that they can create a space for all types of people, no matter their age, background, or life situation.

### 4. Sharing and Reflection (15 minutes):

- Once the designs are complete, invite the children to share their spaces with the group. Ask them to explain why they chose certain elements for their designs and how they think their space would make someone feel.



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- Lead a group discussion on the importance of kindness, inclusion, and social justice. Emphasise how small actions, like making someone feel welcome, can create positive change in the world.
5. Closing (5 minutes):
- Conclude by reminding the children that everyone deserves to feel welcome, and that it is important to think about how they can create spaces that support others in their own communities.

### **Reflection Questions for the Group:**

- What do you think it means to be welcoming to others, especially those who might not have the same resources or support?
- How can we make sure that everyone feels like they belong, no matter their situation?
- Why do you think organisations like the St. Vincent de Paul Society are important for communities?

This activity helps children understand the importance of social justice in creating spaces where everyone feels included and valued, while also connecting them with real-world examples of organisations like the St. Vincent de Paul Society.



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