



# Make Poverty a Priority

## A Young Vincentians Lenten Campaign 2024

### Leader's guide

#### Aim of resource:

- To provide children's Stations of the Cross for schools and parishes with a focus on the SVP and calls to action throughout Lent
- To provide agency for the children to identify those in power in their community to whom they can raise their voices and make poverty a priority

#### Elements of the resource to make:

- Stations of the Cross for primary-aged children on slides
- Printable visuals of the stations for use in the classroom or school hall
- 4 printable booklets for children to follow the stations
- 4 printable 'Call to action' worksheets
- Cut-outs to stick in booklets after completion
- SVP case studies
- Leader's guide

#### Using the resource:

This resource has been written for schools and parishes with Mini Vinnies' groups. However, it can easily be adapted for those schools without groups. It can be used as a whole school Stations of the Cross or divided across the four weeks of Lent in either a classroom setting, Mini Vinnies' meeting or whole school assembly. There is ample opportunity to unpack each station with the discussion questions as well as a call to action at the end of each set of stations. You also have access to SVP case studies for further discussion. Don't forget to distribute the 'I'm making poverty a priority' badges to stick at the end of each booklet. The stations can be printed out if you choose to display them around the hall or classroom. We'd love to hear about your campaign at [youngvincentians@svp.org.uk](mailto:youngvincentians@svp.org.uk)

#### Procedure:

##### Week 1:

##### Slide 1: Make Poverty a Priority

Introduce the Stations of the Cross to the children and explain that over the next 4 weeks, they are going to journey together with Jesus and the cross, looking at 3 stations each week. Before each session, select the children that will take on the role of leader for each station and those children who will open and close the session in prayer. This is a great chance for the children to take ownership of this Lenten journey.

**Slide 2:** Invite a child to read the introductory text.

**Slide 3:** This question posed to the children will help unpack the theme of the campaign 'Make Poverty a Priority' and ensure Poverty and Priority are defined easily. Ask the question first and give the children some time to share answers before sharing the meaning of 'poverty' and 'priority'.



St Vincent  
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

✉ [youngvincentians@svp.org.uk](mailto:youngvincentians@svp.org.uk)

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### **What does poverty mean?**

*Poverty means not having enough of the things you need to be happy, safe and well in your life. It's not just about not having money, but it might be hard for people to get food, clothes, things for school, or to have a safe place to call home. You might not have the same chances to do the things you want to do or be surrounded by people who are there to listen to you and to care for you. At the SVP, we always look to see who needs our help and we find practical ways to support them. This is the most important thing to us.*

*A priority is something that is very important and needs to come before other things. So when we say 'let's make poverty a priority', what we mean is making sure that all those things that are important for a good and happy life come before anything else and they are at the top of the list for those who have the power to make changes in our communities.*

**Slide 4:** Invite another child to open the session in prayer.

**Slide 5:** Draw the children's attention to their booklet which they will be using for this week. Explain that this week the theme is the Mini Vinnies' mission: See, Think, Do, which they will all be familiar with.

**Slide 6:** Station 1: Jesus is condemned to death. Invite the first child to lead on this slide before a moment of reflection.

**Slide 7:** Prayer- Invite another child to read this prayer before focusing on the discussion questions.

**Slide 8:** Spend a bit of time discussing the two questions. You could do this as one big group or have the children talk together in pairs/small groups.

**Example answer:** *Those who are homeless are often looked down on by the rest of society. Jesus tells us that we should treat others how we would like to be treated, so we could share this message with others and teach others a bit more about the reasons why people might become homeless. This will give people a better understanding and help change their view on homelessness to one that shows more love and kindness.*

Note: This would be a great stage to share the case study (Ticket to ride) with the children from the bank of case studies to show how the SVP support people in need in society, who might otherwise be overlooked.

**Slide 9:** Ask another child to read the scripture connected with their discussion. Ask the children the following questions to see how they could live out that scripture.  
*Who can we, as Mini Vinnies, speak up for if they are not being listened to by others? How can we protect those most in need?*

2.



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**Slides 10–18:** Repeat the structure for Stations 2 and 3, taking the time to reflect, discuss the questions and complete the booklet.

**Slide 19:** Invite another child to close this session in prayer before looking at the group's call to action for the week.

**Slide 20:** The first call to action that we invite the children to be part of is living out their mission of 'See, Thing, Do', using the theme in mind of seeing who has the power to influence change where it is needed. Read the first part of the worksheet together and discuss the questions to identify the worries that people might have in our community and where the children see different people who might be in need of support. Give them a moment to write these ideas on their worksheet. For their letter writing, you can provide the template of the Make Poverty a Priority sign.

It's now time to think about those in society we class as having power to influence and make a difference to the lives of others. See what ideas the children come up with. They might already be familiar with writing to local MPs, which could be one option, but don't forget that we all have the power to make change for the better, so one action could be raising awareness through assemblies. Some other examples you might like to talk through with the children could be:

- Find out from **local supermarkets** what happens to stock that is not sold. Do they have any connections with foodbanks or charities that help provide food for those in need. If not, why not? Could this be a change that's needed?
- Are there any **celebrities** that the children have heard of who could use their voice to speak up on issues that the children have identified? Why not write a group message to that person to express your concerns and see how they could make a difference?
- Are there any issues that the children can raise with the **council or the local MP**? Why not write a letter or email about a concern they have about an issue in the community?
- Are there any concerns at school that you could raise with **the Headteacher**?





## Week 2: Stations 4-6: Encounter

Follow the same format as Week 1 by nominating children to lead on reading the opening and closing prayers, text for Stations 4-6, scripture quotes and reflections. Ensure that children have the next booklet for this week and see if they can remember the stations they have already seen on their journey. Explain the theme of week is 'Encounter' and see what the children's understanding is of that word.

Definition of 'Encounter': to meet someone unexpectedly (Cambridge dictionary).

Jesus invites us this week to explore the encounters he has with others along his journey with the cross. We also know that those who are part of the SVP, just like you as Mini Vinnies, encounter different people in need every day.

The call to action this week gives the children the opportunity to take a deeper look at the Corporal Works of Mercy, which are charitable actions for the common good and basic human welfare, found in the teachings of Jesus. You might want to share the scripture from Matthew 25:34-40 regarding where these actions are found to give some context.

In groups, give the children time to come up with some ideas for how to live out each action. You could give them the following answers to start them off:

- **Give food to the hungry**- Plan a food drive to collect items for the local foodbank.
- **Give drink to the thirsty**- Donate small bottles of water to school and create messages to stick on the bottles. These could be given out at sports day in the summer or to staff and volunteers working in the schools/parish
- **Clothe the naked**- Have a clear-out of clothes you've grown out of and donate them to charity or do a clothes swap shop at school or in the parish
- **Shelter the homeless**- Find out what items your local homeless shelter might need and see how you could gather those at school or in the parish
- **Visit the sick**- Find out from your parish newsletter the names of the people on the sick list and create cards for them. These could be handed in to the parish priest to share with those on the list
- **Visit the imprisoned**- You could look at this work of mercy in a different way to think about how to help those who who might feel lonely, isolated or imprisoned in their own home for many reasons. How could you reach out to those people as a group to show you care?
- **Bury the dead**- Write a prayer for those who have recently died in the parish or family and friends you might know

Note: You may like to explore another one of the SVP case studies after this session to show the children how SVP members are living out these Corporal Works of Mercy.





### **Week 3: Stations 7-9: Dignity**

Follow the same format as Week 1 and 2 by nominating children to lead on reading the opening and closing prayers, text for Stations 7-9, scripture quotes and reflections. Ensure that children have the next booklet for this week and see if they can remember the stations from the previous week. Explain the theme of week is 'Dignity' and see what the children's understanding is of that word.

Definition of 'Dignity': showing kindness and respect but never making a person feel different, or less than others.

*As we journey with Jesus this week, we see how cruelly he was treated, losing all dignity, especially when stripped of his clothes and insulted by soldiers. In contrast, we know those who support others in need through the SVP, like yourselves, show great kindness to others and make them feel special, just like God knows they are.*

*We are all special in God's eyes and we are made in his image and likeness. God is in each and every one of us and we are called to make sure we recognise that and treat everyone in the same way we would like to be treated. It's important that we share this message with people so that everyone makes that a priority in their lives too.*

The children can create posters to display in assembly to share this message and share a story from the SVP on how we make sure we treat everyone with dignity.

Note: Once again you may like to explore another one of the SVP case studies after this session to show the children how SVP members protect people's dignity while supporting them in their time of need.

### **Week 4: Stations 10-12: Transformation and Hope**

Follow the same format as Week 1, 2 and 3 by nominating children to lead on reading the opening and closing prayers, text for Stations 10-12, scripture quotes and reflections. Ensure that children have the next booklet for this week and see if they can remember the stations from the previous week. Explain the theme of week is 'Transformation and Hope' and see what the children's understanding is of this theme.

Transformation: a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved.

Hope: something good that you want to happen in the future. (Cambridge dictionary)





We are on the final part of the journey to Jesus' death on the Cross, but this journey leads us to a place of transformation and hope that death is not the end. You can share the following with the children:

*In preparation for the 2025 jubilee year, Pilgrims of Hope, Pope Francis calls us to a Year of Prayer this year (2024). As Mini Vinnies, we are already on a journey of hope, which we bring to all those we support at the SVP. Pope Francis asks you to "stay close, in particular to your friends who may be smiling on the outside but are weeping within, for lack of hope" and the best way we can do that is through prayer.*

*Using your template, think of all those who don't have enough of the things they need to be happy, safe and well in life, and write a prayer of hope for those people. Create a display at school, like the example provided in this guide, to show the journey we are on with Christ, the hope we bring others and the cross at the centre of it all, which is the most important symbol of our faith.*

Note: Explore the SVP case studies after this session to show the children how SVP members are transforming lives and bringing hope to those most in need.

### **Useful quotes from Pope Francis to put on your display:**

Pope Francis 2023

" Jesus, from his resurrection, our lives take on light. With him, we see everything in a new light."

" Stay close in particular to your friends who may be smiling on the outside but are weeping within, for lack of hope."

Pope Francis February 2022

" We must fan the flame of hope that has been given to us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. "

### **Ideas for your display:**

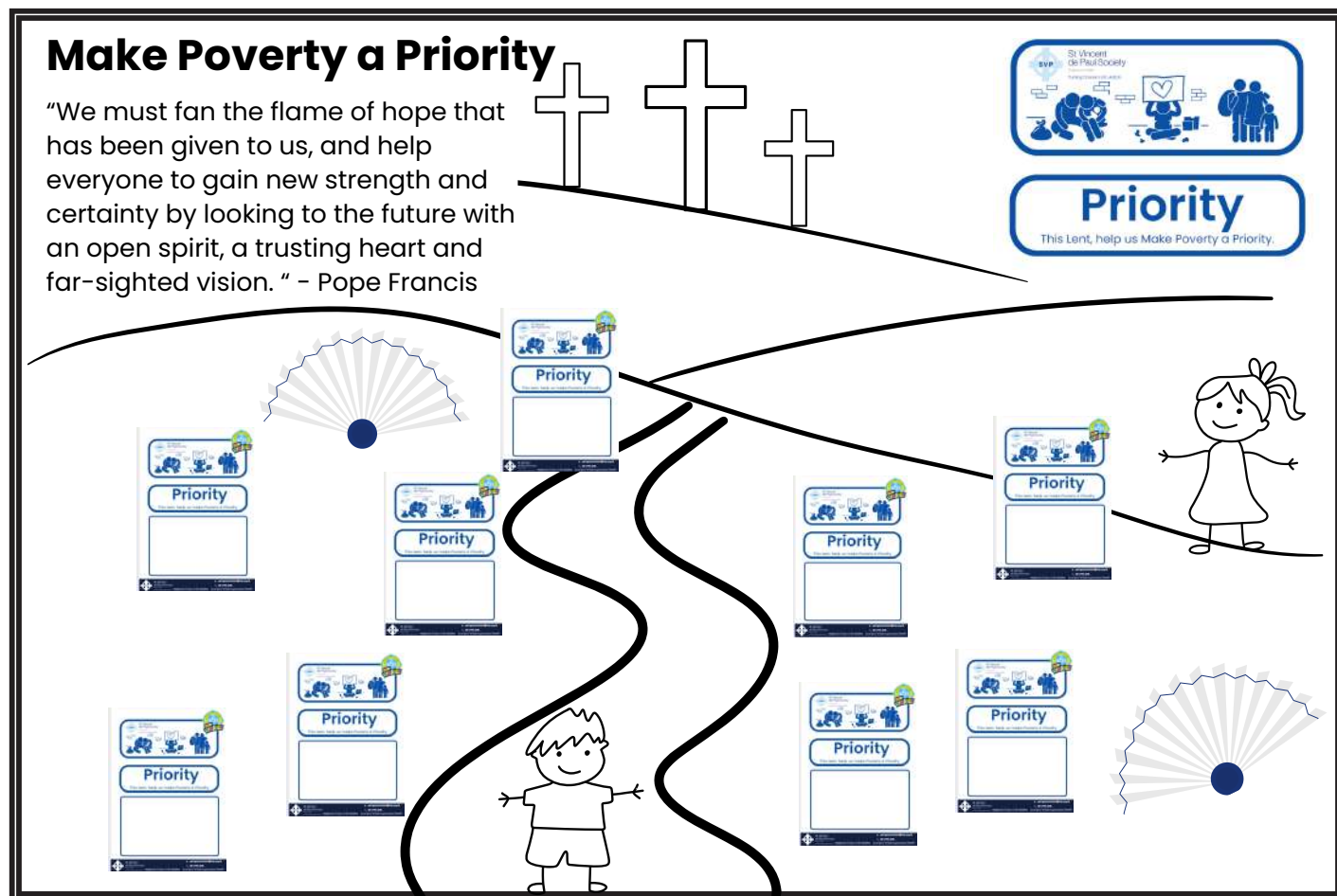
Fans of Hope (children can make these and decorate with words of hope for others)

Prayer of Hope (on the Make Poverty a Priority sign)





## Example display for school/parish



Thank you for taking part in the  
Young Vincentians Lenten campaign 2024

