



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

OVERVIEW





Vincentian Coordinators Guide: See – Think – Do

Welcome:

We are so delighted that you have chosen to become part of the Vincentian family. With over 700,000 members worldwide we are a huge network of people united in one mission: to provide practical support and fellowship in a spirit of justice, whilst tackling the causes of poverty. As you set up your group you will find support at both a national and local level through the Young Vincentian team, local volunteers, SVP members and an ever-growing network of school and parish Vincentian coordinators who gather regularly online to share ideas and resources. Finally, a word of thanks for your support and generosity. Time is precious, and this programme only works with the care and accompaniment of you, the coordinator. No matter how little or how much you have to offer your contribution as a group will have a profound impact on the young people you accompany and the individuals and groups you choose to support.

What is a Youth SVP Conference?

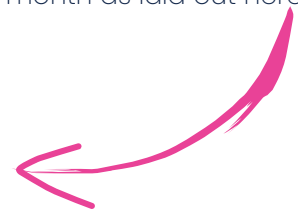
Youth SVP members use their voices and abilities to engage in their communities and take part in social action. Through voluntary work, Youth SVP members not only make a positive difference, but learn new skills, build lasting friendships and develop their faith. A youth conference typically has between six to fifteen members ranging from year 7 to year 13 and typically meet once or twice a fortnight. It is important to remember that although there is a formed Youth SVP conference, you can always seek the support from other young people, in school or in the parish, to assist with events!



The process:

The 3 point process of the youth conference: See, Think, Do is the framework for your meetings, whether you meet weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Those meeting weekly or for shorter amounts of time may choose to do the process over a month as laid out here.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
See	Think	Do	Reflect



Those meeting for a longer period of time – but less frequently – may do all three steps within one meeting. Make the meetings work for your unique circumstances. The key is that as a group you pray, talk and act, and that the young people take responsibility as soon as they are able for the meetings that happen.



To provide effective help to those in need requires us to become aware of social injustices. It is true that we cannot influence what we cannot see!



Mapping

Mapping is a great way to help a group begin to see the need in their own local community, e.g. a school or wider area. By simply taking a large map of the local area and using post-it notes young people can begin to notice where people might be needing support. By highlighting issues that young people see we have starting points for areas of concern where young people can begin to take action.

Sharing with one another & 3 Point Contact

This exercise starts in the group with them reflecting on the following questions:

- I've joined the Youth SVP because...
- My inspirations are? People, Quotes etc
- What are the things that concern you the most?
- What are the things people in your community are most concerned about?

After a time of sharing and making note of these things, the young people are invited to go away and ask 3 people in the community, of varying ages, the same questions. The answers are brought back, and the group can begin to see where the need in the community might be eg. Litter, homelessness, mental health. [Click here for the resource sheet.](#)

Local adult SVP Conference

When young people join the SVP they become part of a huge family network. Our adult conferences and community support projects will often involve undertaking work in the local area. Inviting a local group in to share how they could collaborate on a project is a great way to build that sense of Vincentian belonging. For more information on what might be happening in your local SVP conferences email Youngvincentians@svp.org.uk



Through spiritual reflection, engaging discussions and prayer, young people have space to reflect on how to help people facing hardships by aspiring to live the gospel message of Christ.

Prayer & Reflection:

The THINK part of the journey gives space for group members to practice turning faith and the teachings of Jesus into practical help on how to face and respond to our lived experiences. This time is to discuss and share thoughts. At its most basic level, it is offering genuine time to accompany young people, journeying alongside them, listening to their concerns and helping them to achieve real, tangible and positive changes in their local and wider communities. In turn, we know that this type of accompaniment leads to discernment - where young people can discern their place in the world and the mark they want to leave.

This time to reflect on the Gospel and example of Jesus is key for the Vincentian family. We believe deeply that our responsibility is to preach the Gospel through our words and work. The moment of reflection in the meeting is a great opportunity for members to develop and share something that is important to them. A reflection could be a story, film clip or a piece of music, with questions for reflection and an end message.

On the following page you will find helpful SVP prayers. Click on the links to open the various stories and reflections. Members should be encouraged to look out for and find their own inspirational stories and reflections to share too.

Click on the titles

Umbrella Reflection

Everybody Reflection

Blessed are those

Soap maker Story

Stain Glass Reflection





SVP Prayers

Prayer for the Society spirit

Lord Jesus, we share in the faith and courage of our founders, especially Blessed Frederic Ozanam, Blessed Rosalie Rendu, Gerald Ward and Charles O'Neill. May their spirit be renewed in the Society of today. May we be open to the needs of those suffering poverty and injustice, remaining receptive to the grace of the Holy Spirit. We pray that we build a sense of community wherever our members are gathered. Amen.

Vincentian Family Prayer

Lord Jesus, you who decided to become poor, give us eyes and a heart directed towards the poor. Help us to recognise You in them, in their hunger, their loneliness and their misfortune. Ignite unity, simplicity, humility and the fire of love that burned in St Vincent de Paul. Strengthen us, so that we will remember you and serve you by serving the poor. May we one day be united with you in Your kingdom. Amen.

Opening Prayer (Option 1)

Help us through meeting together to deepen our Vincentian friendship and bear witness to your compassionate and tender love, so that our hearts beat with the heartbeat of those living in poverty, and so that we come to see poverty through their eyes. May we be a voice for the voiceless, speaking out with courage and charity. Amen.

Opening Prayer (Option 2)

Loving God, Give us strength. Make us kind and patient, loving and understanding. Give us the words and willingness to challenge injustice and wrong when we encounter it. Send us out this week, fired with your love, to work for you in the world and help us to be more caring in our families, at work and at leisure, for love alone gives eternal worth to what we do. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we pray that we may always be aware of our friends in need, and that we approach them with respect and compassion, always recognising their dignity. Please help them with their innermost needs as we do our best to walk alongside them. May we all become a living sign of Your love. We ask for Your help and guidance as we attempt to walk in the footsteps of Blessed Frederic Ozanam. Amen.

To order prayer books for your group [click here](#) to go to the SVP online shop





The SVP is a family built on action. Small acts of love which give glimpses to the world of God's amazing love. Turning our concern into action is key to Vincentian spirituality.

Activities

The key to our Vincentian ministry is befriending – in all our work we look for ways to come alongside people. Our young people have a wealth of ideas and as members they decide on their own focus with the support and guidance of the Vincentian Coordinator. Some of the acts of charity young people are involved in around England and Wales include (but are not limited to):

Youth SVP

- Collecting items that local charities need
- Helping with children's liturgy on Sundays
- Helping in a local parish by welcoming people to Mass
- Volunteering in a local SVP shop or SVP support project
- Collaborating with local adult SVP activities
- Fundraising and collaborating with local projects
- Pilgrimage walks/hikes/events
- Learning support in a local primary school (literacy, numeracy, IT, sports)
- Visiting care homes
- Podcasts
- Creating safe spaces in school
- Supporting staff
- Running and Donating to Foodbanks
- School clothing banks
- Knitting squares for Dementia blankets
- Doing local parishioners gardens.
- Organising community get togethers
- Meeting with MP's
- Summer Sleep Out
- Supporting Refugees

