



St Vincent  
de Paul Society  
England and Wales  
Turning Concern into Action

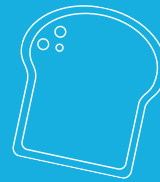
# WHAT WE HAVE, WE SHARE



A YOUNG VINCENTIAN LENTEN CAMPAIGN

"And God can give you more blessings than you need. Then you will always have plenty of everything. You will have enough to give to every good work."

2 Corinthians 9:8 ICB



## Leader's guide

### The need for action

The cost of living is rapidly increasing in the UK, affecting a huge number of people and communities. As food prices, gas and electric bills increase, and inflation soars, wages are not keeping pace with the inevitable rise in household expenditure, and, of course, it is the poorest in our communities who are hit hardest.

At the SVP, it is evident that those accessing our frontline services for support has doubled. Also, a number of our St Vincent's community centres have witnessed a rise in the number of people using our food banks at a time when food supplies are at the lowest they have ever been.

### Young Vincentians call to action

This year's Lenten campaign from Young Vincentians is entitled What we have, we share. This vital campaign addresses the problems arising out of the cost of living crisis and calls for our MPs to explain how they intend to tackle this situation. It also aims to encourage children to think about what they have to share with others, whether it's their time, gifts, talents or prayers. However small it might be, we all have something to share which would make a big difference to someone's life.

### What you will need:

- 'What we have, we share' presentation slides
- Post-it notes
- Jesus feeds the 5000 play script
- Fish template for prayers (1 per child)
- Bread letter template (1 per group, to be edited by children)
- Pens and colouring pencils

1.





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## Procedure

This session can be used as part of an assembly, in the classroom, or with the Mini Vinnies group during their meeting. Create a focal point on which you can place your candle, cross and Bible. Please ensure that your presentation slides are ready to go on the projector.

### Slide 1

Welcome to this SVP assembly/meeting/class session on What we have, we share.

### Slide 2

We gather today to listen to God's Word, pray for those in need, and offer God our gifts for him to use.

### Slide 3

Let's begin our session with our opening prayer. This can be read by the leader or a child.

Loving Father,

Thank you for bringing us together today. Help us to listen carefully to your Word and the message you have to help us spread love and kindness to those around us. Amen.





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## Slide 4

### God's blessings

This is a chance to get the children to think about the things they like doing and the things that they are good at. The purpose of this exercise is to show the children that each one of them has a gift, talent or interest that they could share with another person to make a difference to that person's life. If possible, get the children to write these things on a Post-it note and invite them to stick them on the board, reading what they have written. If this cannot be done in assembly, why not get the children to raise their hand and take a few examples?

## Slide 5

### Focusing on God's Word

Invite one of the children to read the scripture quote, and unpack this a little further with the children. Ask them to think about what the link could be between what they have just written on their Post-it notes and the piece of scripture. After you've taken a few answers, explain that we each have so much that we can share with others which would make a big difference to another person's life.

Share an example such as: 'I like creating cards'. A card given to an elderly parishioner might really brighten their day.

3.





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## Slide 6-7

### Guess the Bible story

This is a quick activity to see if the children can identify the Bible story, Jesus feeds the 5,000. Tell the children that this is a famous story from the Bible, but today you are going to watch a play based on this story looking through the eyes of the little child who gave Jesus his offering. Invite the group forward who will be performing the play. If this is being used in assembly, you might nominate your Mini Vinnies beforehand to be the ones to dramatize the story. The role of the little child can be played by a boy or a girl with the text adapted accordingly.

After the play, reflect for a few minutes on the little child's character. Ask the children the following questions:

- If you had been there with five loaves and two fish, how would you have felt about giving them to Jesus?
- How do you think the little child felt when they saw what Jesus had done with their small offering?
- Do you think everyone got enough to eat?

Yes, because there was more than enough, 12 baskets in fact. This brings us back to the scripture at the beginning of the session, that Jesus blesses us with more than what we need in order to share with others.

4.





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## Slide 8-17

### Case study from St Vincent's community centre, Leeds

The recorded story comes from St Vincent's, Leeds, and the name of the beneficiary has been changed for confidentiality reasons. This story will aim to show the children how everyone at the centre was able to share something, from a friendly ear to resources and skills for supporting her. This story highlights the fact that all of these people undertake different roles at the centre, but in this instance stepped into other roles to offer the support they could. Reflect on this with the children after listening to the story.

"Louise\* is a 19-year-old pregnant young adult who had recently been moved from supported living to a one bedroom flat. She had no support, no family, little life experience, nothing other than a roof over her head. At St Vincent's, Leeds, she was introduced to Andrea, one of the debt advisers for an initial debt assessment. Quite by accident Louise shared with Andrea that she was and had been sleeping on a sofa for four months as that is all she had. As Andrea gently asked further questions, she was also able to find out that Louise also needed food, cooking facilities, bedding and people to support her in a kind and loving way.

With the help from different departments, Andrea was able to deliver, within 24 hours, a bed, bedding, food, connection and Christmas dinner as Louise would be alone for Christmas.





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The people from St Vincent's shared time, skills, knowledge and tools to help deliver and put together Louise's pre-loved bed from the furniture depot. The team were also able to send along a Christmas present for Louise as the centre often receives lots of donations to share with others at this time of year.

Caroline, the centre manager, was also able to pass on a knitted baby blanket, bonnet, booties and jacket, which were kindly donated by an SVP Conference member. It was this gift that truly touched Louise's heart.

While all this was going on, Basharat, a money support officer, had found Louise's local SVP Conference and contacted them to ask for further support for Louise.

Louise will continue to have support from St Vincent's, Leeds, she has already had a follow-up from Lenora at the centre and food support, delivered by the centre manager.

What's amazing about this story is that at St Vincent's in Leeds all of the people who helped Louise shared gifts that were quite different from the job role they had at the centre.

As Mini Vinnies, you all have gifts from God that you can share with those most in need. So let's remember, what we have, we share.





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## Slides 18–22

These slides contain prayers of intercession which nominated children can read.

## Slide 23

### Time to take action

If this is in an assembly, you may choose to tell the children about the SVP's call to action and then have them complete it in their classes. If this session is in the classroom or Mini Vinnies' meeting, it can be completed during the session.

Show the children the picture of a fish. On the fish, ask the children to write a prayer to God for those people who might be struggling during the cost of living crisis. These fish can be decorated and then displayed at school or taken home by the children.

The second task is to draw their attention to the letter that they are going to write as a group to their local MP. This could be displayed on a screen to read together. Encourage the children to insert what they would like to voice. You will find a separate guide from our Social Policy Department to assist you with organising a visit from an MP.





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A separate guide from our Social Policy Department will be available from Ash Wednesday (22nd February) to assist you organising a visit from your MP, but if you would like an SVP staff member to come and support the visit, please email [youngvincentians@svp.org.uk](mailto:youngvincentians@svp.org.uk), and we will ensure a member of our team comes to school.

## Slide 24

### How to write a prayer.

This slide can be shown while the children are writing their prayers on the picture of their fish. These prayers are for anyone in need at this time who are affected by the cost of living crisis. You might like to give a few examples of sentence endings, or get the children to give example sentences for others to hear. Don't forget to remind the children to decorate their fish for your colourful display.

## Slide 25

### Closing prayer

Bring the session to an end with one of the children finishing with the closing prayer.







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## Slide 26

### This Little Light of Mine

This is a great opportunity for the children to stand up and sing and move after all that concentration. We have chosen this song to remind the children that each one of them is a shining light, taking Jesus to everyone they meet in what they say and do. It's time to praise God through song.

**Thank you for supporting  
our *What we have, we  
share* campaign.**

