



St Vincent de Paul
Friend of the poor
Friend of the kind
Friend of God



Starter Kit

For new Mini Vinnies groups in
Primary schools and parishes

The aim of this document is to provide guidance and assistance to teachers, local SSVP members and school chaplains on how to set up a Mini Vinnies group in primary schools. Mini Vinnies is an integral part of the SSVP family.

Our Mission

“As members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, we seek to identify and combat all forms of poverty, by promoting social justice and actively working with those in need, acknowledging that, by freely giving of ourselves, we become more aware of the power of love in all our relationships”

Is Mini Vinnies a good fit for your school?

We believe that being a Mini Vinnie provides children with many opportunities for development and formation. As well as connecting children to the Catholic Church and faith, it is a cross curricular activity which enables children in achieving outcomes of the *Curriculum for Excellence*. We believe that being a Mini Vinnie assists children in outcomes in the following curricular areas;

- Health & Well-being
- Religious Education
- Social studies

Mini Vinnies has also proven to be complementary to the Pope Francis Faith Award. It is inclusive of all children attending Catholic schools.

The Mini Vinnies Starter Kit has been amended from the original Australian Mini Vinnies Starter Kit to be used in Scotland. Thanks go to Vinnies Australia for giving us permission to do so.

Contents . . .

About Mini Vinnies- “See, think, do”1

About Mini Vinnies

What does a Mini Vinnies group do?

‘See’- An Introduction to Social Justice.....2

What is Poverty and Social Exclusion?

Why is it important to learn about Poverty and Social Exclusion?

‘Think’- Formation.....3

‘Do’-Community Service.....3

Raising Money

Where does the money go?

Supporting people in the school community

Raising Awareness

Advocacy

How to form a Mini Vinnies group.....6

The First Meeting

Commissioning Ceremony

The Role of the Teacher

Meetings

Learning about the SSVP

What does the SSVP in Scotland do?.....11

About the Society of St Vincent de Paul.....12

The Saint behind the Society: St Vincent de Paul

The woman behind the Saint : St Louise de Marillac

The man behind the Society : Blessed Frederic Ozanam

A woman with experience : Blessed Rosalie Rendu

The beginnings of the Society

Resources.....19

Prayer Card

Mini Vinnies Promise for Commissioning Ceremony

Mini Vinnies meeting planner

(Additional resources available for download from ssvpscotland.com/ssvpyouth/mini-vinnies)



About Mini Vinnies...

Mini Vinnies is an SSVP group in a primary school who get together to help people in need within their school and local community.

Mini Vinnies introduces children to social justice issues, to the Society of Vincent de Paul and to living faith through action.

What does a Mini Vinnies group do?

It is about children helping people in need in the community and people meeting to talk, share ideas and concerns, to have fun and support each other. The SSVP model of **faith in action** is a great way to get children thinking and talking about their spirituality – connecting their beliefs and values with service activities and issues in their community can help to make their faith real, meaningful and relevant.

The actions of a Mini Vinnies group generally involve three components*:

‘See’ - Education and awareness. Becoming aware of some of the community’s social ills and knowing that although the world is beautiful, there are always ways to make it a bit better.

‘Think’ - Formation. This is a chance for Mini Vinnies to participate in spiritual activities, personal development and discussions, and to develop a real understanding of the world.

‘Do’ – Helping people in need. ‘Doing’ means helping people, either through your own projects, or supporting local SSVP projects. It is also for the children to do something about the issues that they have seen, thought about or discussed. We don’t want you to start with fundraising, focus on how the children can perhaps help in other ways.(fundraising may come further down the line.)

**Ideas for each category are included later in this guide*

'See'...An Introduction to Social Justice

A Mini Vinnies group may be the first opportunity for children to be exposed in a structured way to issues such as poverty and social justice. It is therefore important that this exposure be provided in a caring and empathic way.

Statistics and definitions do not always assist children in understanding problems facing other people. Mini Vinnies group leaders should consider communicating social ills in ways in which children can easily relate. Images and stories are often a helpful way of communicating a problem.

What is Poverty and Social Exclusion?

Nelson Mandela once said of poverty;

"Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom."

Poverty is often defined in two ways.

1. **Absolute poverty**- when people do not have the basic necessities of life, that is, food, shelter and clothing.
2. **Relative poverty**- occurs when there is inequality in a community and is often measured using a 'poverty line'. Relative poverty is a concept most frequently used in developed countries like Scotland to define poverty.

Social exclusion occurs when members of the community cannot participate in key activities for whatever reason. This may mean they have restricted access to the economic resources and/ or services they require or they are effectively disengaged from many of the activities many community members would take for granted. Examples might include an inability to see a dentist or not being able to take the kids on holiday.

Why is it important to learn about Poverty and Social Exclusion?

It is important so that they are aware of the injustices in the world. Children who grow up with an awareness of other people's suffering and the reasons why, grow into more compassionate, giving adults. They also have greater understanding of the blessings in their lives.

‘Think’... formation

Thinking means forming a Mini Vinnies group and through that participating in spiritual activities, personal development and discussions, and to develop a real understanding of the world.

Thinking is a form of faith formation. It allows Mini Vinnies to develop their understanding of social justice issues in a personal way through reflection, discussion, expression and prayer.



Pictured: St Stephen's Primary School, Blairgowrie
Mini Vinnies pictured with local Conference members at their Commissioning Ceremony.
Photo Credit: Clare Carr-Cullen

Do'... community service

This is an opportunity for children to put all their learning (seeing) and formation (thinking) into action. It is important for members of Mini Vinnies groups to understand that they can make a difference in this world. To this end, 'doing' means that undertaking an achievable project will make a difference in the lives of the poor, isolated or marginalised in their local area.

It is important to understand that simply by setting up a Mini Vinnies group, the members are doing something tangible:

- They pray- at each meeting
- They learn- about the world around them and the SSVP
- They develop- into more socially aware and responsible adults

Sometimes it is easier to teach children a lesson when the good works and its effects are tangible. Measurable good works include:

- Visit a local nursing home and do the garden, play board games, sing etc.
- Hold appeals - food, clothing, toiletries, Easter eggs, winter woollies, gifts
- Fundraise for a local SSVP Conference or a particular service such as the Ozanam Centre
- Host a morning tea in the school for residents of a local nursing home
- Have a film afternoon for local older people
- Invite local people in for a school show or concert- Mini Vinnies would host visitors

If the children KNOW that they can effect real change, then it is all worth it, even if they have an effect on just one persons' life.

Raising Money

Fundraising should not be the main focus(or initial focus) of your group. It is important that the children focus on the people in their communities and what they need. Are there lots of older people who are lonely? Are there people who need the help of a food bank because they cannot afford to buy it?

Your Mini Vinnies group may decide to run a fundraiser if funds are needed to carry out a particular project, this is very much up to you and the group how you go about this. Your local SSVP Conference may also be in a position to help out either with a donation or to raise funds. There is no obligation on a group to raise money.

With any fundraiser, it is important to let people know where the funds will be going. People are more likely to support the fundraiser if they know exactly who they will be helping by making a donation. This also helps to raise awareness at the same time as raising funds.

Supporting people in the school community

You could raise money to help struggling families within the school. Even though the group would not know exactly who is being helped through such a program, (confidentiality is vital), they would know that they are giving vital support to a family within their immediate community. This money could help with school trips, uniforms, stationery etc.

Raising Awareness

Raising awareness of social justice issues is a very important part of the work of the SSVP, and Mini Vinnies can play a key role in this.

There are lots of ways for your Mini Vinnies group to stand up and speak out in your school community. The best way to start is education. Teach others about the injustices in our communities, once people know and care about an issue, they are more likely to stand up and speak out against it. Here are some examples;

- Hold school assemblies, let the whole school know about the injustice and educate them on the things that are happening and why they are unjust
- Create stalls or events that draw attention to the issues
- Make announcements over the school tannoy system
- Organise a week dedicated to an issue, with something happening each day (Monday- assembly, Tuesday-fundraiser, Wednesday- art show etc.)
- Be creative!

Advocacy

Once you have people caring about an issue the next step is to go and do something about it! Be advocates for social justice and take action against injustice. Examples of this are;

- Write letters- local councillors, government ministers, business leaders etc.
- Let your community know- deliver leaflets, hold stalls etc.

Forming a Mini Vinnies group: how to start

1. Identify a staff members or members who would be willing to start up and run a Mini Vinnies group. Details of what that entails are later in this guide.
2. Get in touch with the SSVP. This would either be in your local area or if you are not sure of who that is, the SSVP national office who will point you in the right direction. The SSVP is one big family, so it is important that that we work together.
3. Meet with your local representative and discuss starting a Mini Vinnies group in your school. They will have great experience in the community and will be able to help out with what activities your group could be involved with or initiate. Decide which primaries you are going to target. We believe that a mixed group from P 4 to 7 is ideal, but that may not be the best for you. It is vital that children are not stopped from participating if they are not in the target primary, as we want to really capture their enthusiasm.
4. Introduce the children in your school to the idea of Mini Vinnies and find out if any of them are interested in forming a group. Explain to them exactly what would be involved and what commitment would be expected of them. You could spend a lesson learning a bit about the Society and how volunteers of all ages can help, or ask your local SSVP contact to come and speak to the pupils and answer any questions they have about how they can get involved.
5. Arrange a time, date and room for the first meeting – put up a poster and invite the children who are interested in Mini Vinnies to come along.* The meetings are important. They set Mini Vinnies apart from other volunteering and give the children a chance to pray together and learn about their faith.

*In many cases, large numbers of children are interested in becoming Mini Vinnies, so some schools ask the children to think about their reasons for wanting to become a Mini Vinnie and briefly interview them.

The first meeting

1. Open the meeting with a prayer and reflection – a sample of the Mini Vinnies prayers and a meeting planner are included in the resources section. A reflection can be a religious text, poem, song or any other resource that you think will inspire.
2. Allow the representative from SSVP to briefly address the group;
3. Decide as a group when, where and how often you will hold meetings (usually weekly, fortnightly at a minimum)
4. Discuss what activities and projects the group could undertake or look into. You may want to use 'Think, Pair, Share' for this to ensure that everyone's ideas are heard.
5. Discuss what roles will exist in the group and what would be required of people in those roles.
6. Close the meeting with a prayer and details of the next meeting.

Roles

You might decide to have particular leadership roles within your group. These could include:

- **President** – works closely with the coordinating staff member to look after the Mini Vinnies group, and may chair the meetings and help allocate work to different members of the group;
- **Vice President** – is supportive of the president, and may take on the leadership of meetings or activities when the president is absent;
- **Secretary** – takes notes of the meetings and keeps a record of projects and activities undertaken by the group;
- **Treasurer** – keeps track of money raised by the group;



A role for everyone

Everyone in the group has a vital role to play and the President should ensure that work is divided equally amongst the group.



St Athanasius Primary School, Carluke Mini Vinnies members at their Commissioning Ceremony

Commissioning Ceremony

Many schools launch their Mini Vinnies group with a commissioning ceremony at a school assembly, liturgy or parish Sunday Mass. At a commissioning ceremony, the pupils in the Mini Vinnies group are recognised for being part of the group and for wanting to help people.

Usually, the Mini Vinnies children are presented with a badge and certificate (available from SSVP National Office) by the head-teacher or a representative of SSVP. The Mini Vinnies group can also recite a promise – there is a promise in the resources section that you can use at the ceremony which you can use, otherwise they may wish to create their own which is special and unique to their Mini Vinnies group.

At the ceremony, someone from the SSVP can speak about the SSVP and congratulate the pupils for getting involved. You can then have a commissioning ceremony at the start of each year, to welcome pupils who have joined the group and to launch the group's activities for another school year.

The Role of the Teacher

Any staff member within the school can take on the role of coordinating the Mini Vinnies group – it does not necessarily have to be a class teacher. What is important is that the person is willing to commit some of their time to attending Mini Vinnies meetings and other events.

In a Mini Vinnies group, it should be the children that identify the needs in their community, come up with ideas of how to help and make decisions about fundraisers and service activities. The role of the staff member is to guide these discussions and assist the pupils to put their passion and ideas into action by keeping discussions within the realm of possibilities.

The teacher will need to help the group by looking into the feasibility of projects according to school rules and duty of care requirements. Such considerations should not be a barrier to any and every project that the group plans; all that is needed is for the staff member to spend some time looking into the school/council rules requirements and ensuring that the requisite processes are followed so the activities are safe.

This may involve organising permission slips, getting the head teachers approval or recruiting parents or teachers to assist with supervision. In Mini Vinnies, children can really have a say and make decisions about how they can help people in their community. The coordinating staff member should help make this happen, and should support the children in their individual and collective growth and formation in the process.

Meetings

When your Mini Vinnies group is established, your meetings can follow a similar format to the first meeting, although you don't need to invite an SSVP member to every meeting(if they can come, all the better!).

You may, however, invite guest speakers to address the group from time to time, perhaps once a term – a guest speaker might talk about a particular issue, which could influence the group's activities for the following term and inspire the children to continue in their efforts to shape a more just society.

Learning about the SSVP

It is important for a Mini Vinnies group to learn about the history and works of the St Vincent de Paul Society, both locally and on an international level. The children may want to read about the founders of the Society, or someone from the SSVP can give a presentation about how the Society began. A local Conference member could talk to the group about when and where the Conference meets, what the needs are in their Diocese and ways the Conference helps local people.

"Mini Vinnies made sure that others in our school are happy because we look out for people who are alone. I am a better person since joining Mini Vinnies." –Molly, age 10

Having Fun

As well as helping children to develop leadership skills, learn about issues in their community and discover their ability to make a difference in the world, Mini Vinnies can be a great way for young people to make new friends.

As well as providing time in meetings for children to talk and get to know each other better, it is good to have some social activities within your Mini Vinnies group. A shared lunch or morning tea at the start or end of each term is a good way to celebrate the good works the group has done and to give the children a good opportunity to get to know each other better, which will help them to work well as a team.

This fun, social element of Mini Vinnies makes it more enjoyable and interesting for the children involved. It can also help them to establish friendships and support networks that will be of great benefit to them as they leave primary school and perhaps get involved in a Youth SSVP group at their secondary school or out of school hours.



Mini Vinnies members from St Stephen's Primary School in Dalmeir, Clydebank with their foodbank collection. They are pictured with their Mini Vinnies group leader Mrs Diane Rafter.

Mini Vinnies notice board at St Rose of Lima Primary School, Glasgow. A great way to let the rest of the school community know what your group is up to!



What does the SSVP in Scotland do?



SSVP members are called to respond to the needs of the poor and marginalised. This means that SSVP conferences respond in the most appropriate manner for the situation. Although this work is not always appropriate for children, there are many ways that they can support the various works and projects.



The Saint behind the Society: St Vincent de Paul

“Always be quite simple and sincere and ask God to grant me those two virtues”

St. Vincent de Paul

1581-1660

Having been placed under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul by the founding members, members of the Society are inspired by his spirituality, manifest in his attitudes, his thoughts, his example and his words.

Vincent was born in Pouy, in the Landes of France in a little village now called Berceau de St Vincent (St Vincent's Cradle). He was the third of the six children of hardworking parents, and spent his younger years on the family farm tending the sheep. It was here that he acquired his love of quiet and recollection.

His intelligence won the admiration of the parish priest and caused his father to send him off to college, where he was an ardent student and soon conceived the idea of becoming a priest. He then set off to Toulouse for his studies for the priesthood: he was ordained in 1600, when he was just twenty years old. In 1610, after the assassination of Henry IV, he was granted the benefice of an abbey in the diocese of Saintes and could have made for himself an excellent career in the Church. However, after a serious spiritual crisis, he abdicated his rights over the abbey and decided to devote the rest of his life to the service of the poor.

In September, 1613, Vincent became the chaplain to the influential family of Philip Emmanuel de Gondi, landowner of large properties in the north of France. He exercised a great influence on the family, and his travels with them showed him the needs of a people starved spiritually and physically and served by an uneducated clergy. It was then that he realised that the evangelisation of rural France was a vital need, and this missionary passion remained with him for the rest of his life.

After a while he felt his service with the de Gondi family too much of a luxury, and so once again became a parish priest, this time in the parish of Chaillon-les-Dombes a village morally abandoned, with a deserted church, disinherited poor and a Protestant richer class. Together with a curate, his care of the parish made it flourish and it was here that he founded a Society of Charity to serve the poor.

But the de Gondi family missed him, and he was forced unwillingly to return to Paris to their service. At this point de Gondi appointed him as chaplain to the galley slaves, and with his customary energy he began to improve their appalling physical and moral condition. He insisted on the value of witness throughout all his works.

1625 was a vital year to him, for during it he founded the Congregation of the Mission (the Lazarists or Vincentians), and began a partnership of charity with Louise de Marillac.

Soon the "Dames de la Charite" had been set up, at first with a group of well-bred ladies: under Louise de Marillac they soon became Vincent's hands for work and his witnesses in the love of Christ. In 1633, to ensure their permanence, they were officially consecrated as the Daughters of Charity, vowing their entire lives to those who suffered. Up to his eightieth year he remained active and the work continued to expand. He died in September 1660, worn out from a life of unbelievable activity of mind and body. In 1729 he was beatified and his canonisation followed in 1737.

In 1833 Frederic Ozanam was to place the Society he had founded under the patronage of St Vincent de Paul, and in 1885 Pope Leo XIII proclaimed St Vincent the patron of all works of charity. His feast is now celebrated on the anniversary of his death, September 27th. St Vincent de Paul played what can only be described as a providential role in the history of France and, through his works, in the history of the world.



Mini Vinnies members from across Glasgow met in June 2017 for 'Mini Vinnies Assemble'; an event which marked the 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian charism.



The Woman behind the Saint: St Louise de Marillac

1591-1660

Louise did not know her mother and was raised by her father. From the time she was a small child, she was taken to the Dominican sisters, who gave her a good education. Later, she went on to further education at a residence for young girls in Paris. Her education was much better than that of most children her age, and Louise became one of the best-educated women of her time.

Louise had a desire to join a religious order, but she was not allowed to join. She married Antoine Le Gras, Secretary to the Queen Mother, in 1611. According to Louise, Antoine was a good and pious man. Throughout their marriage, Louise travelled a lot and socialised with the royalty and aristocracy of France. Louise and Antoine had a son, Michael, and lived together happily for many years. Antoine, however, became sick, and he died in 1625.

After her husband died, Louise met and became friends with Vincent de Paul. Despite the fact that she had come from a background of wealth, and knew many rich people, she was just as comfortable around poor people. Louise dedicated her time to helping abandoned children on the streets. She also visited sick men in the prison hospital (which was a horrible place) and established a house near the hospital where, each day, many women would cook food that visitors would then take to the prisoners.

Throughout France, women set up centres to serve the poor. Louise pushed for every village to have its own clinic, school, nurse and teacher. With Vincent, Louise started the Daughters of Charity in 1642. The Daughters of Charity were a revolutionary order of sisters, because they actually left the convents to work on the streets and in the homes of the poor. They helped abandoned children, people who were poor and sick, wounded soldiers, slaves, people who were mentally ill and the elderly. Today, there are over 20,000 Daughters of Charity, and they continue to help people in need.

Louise is the patron saint of sick people, widows and orphans, and in 1960, Pope John XXIII proclaimed her the Patroness of Social Workers.



The Man behind the Society: Blessed Frederic Ozanam 1813 -1853

Frederic's family was an upper middle class Catholic family – his father was a doctor and his mother was an heiress. He was the fifth born of 14 children, but he was one of only four to survive early childhood, with 10 of his siblings dying from disease at a young age.

Frederic was a very intelligent young man and decided to study Law at Sorbonne University. People at Sorbonne were very anti-Christian, and there were not many other Catholic students. Many students – and even teachers – at the university attacked the religious beliefs of Frederic and his fellow Christians, claiming that the Church had become irrelevant and was not doing anything to help the many poor and suffering people of France. Frederic, who was seen as a natural leader of his fellow Catholic students, decided to take action, and he started a Conference of Charity with a few other students.

Guided by a middle-aged journalist named Emmanuel Bailly, the Conference members were driven by a deep desire to build their faith, and they decided to go out and become servants of the poor, just as Jesus Christ had done. The group followed the example of St Vincent – the French saint who had done so much work to help the poor 200 years earlier – and named their Conference 'the Society of St Vincent de Paul'. The group was also inspired by a young Daughter of Charity, Rosalie Rendu, and the young men worked closely with her to help the poor people of Paris.

As well as becoming a lawyer, Frederic was also a teacher and a scholar. He wrote many essays and journal articles on a whole range of subjects, and was appointed Lecturer in Foreign Literature at the University of Lyon. Much of Frederic's work was based on his passion for social justice, and he argued for better social conditions, higher moral standards and the restoration of the Catholic faith in France.

On 23rd June 1841, Frederic married a woman named Amelie Soulacroix, who in 1845 gave birth to their daughter Marie. Frederic was a sick man his whole life, and was forced to resign from his job in 1852. He died in September 1853, at the age of 40.



Woman with Experience: Blessed Rosalie Rendu

1786 -1856

Jeanne Marie Rendu (later called Sister Rosalie Rendu) was the oldest of four girls in her family. Her parents were simple-living but well respected people who lived in the mountains. When Jeanne was only three years old, the French Revolution broke out in France. At this time, many faithful priests were forced to flee because people wanted to hurt them, and the Rendu family home became a refuge for many of these priests.

Following the death of her father and baby sister, Jeanne helped her mother to look after the family. Jeanne's mother sent her to a boarding school so she could get a good education. During her two years there, Jeanne would walk around the town, and one day she discovered a hospital where the Daughters of Charity cared for the sick. Her mother gave her permission to spend some time at the hospital, and Jeanne soon felt called by God to become a Daughter of Charity.

When she was nearly 17 years old, Jeanne entered the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity and received the name Rosalie. She took vows to serve God and the poor, and spent over 50 years living out those vows. She opened a free clinic, a pharmacy, a school, an orphanage, a childcare centre, a home for the elderly and a youth club for young workers. She became known as the "good mother of all", and helped Frederic Ozanam and his friends to do good works, which is how the St Vincent de Paul Society started.

As well as assisting the poor in the streets and in their homes, Sister Rosalie showed great courage and leadership during the bloody uprisings that took place in France in 1830 and 1848. During the battles, Sister Rosalie would climb up on the barricades – risking her life – to help wounded soldiers, regardless of which side they were fighting on.

Although her health was always fragile, Sister Rosalie never rested; she preferred to keep serving the poor, and managed to overcome fatigue and illness. Eventually, however, her huge workload – combined with her age and increased frailty – broke her resistance, and she became progressively blind during the last two years of her life.

The Beginnings of the Society

Frederic Ozanam was a devoted Catholic, but he was in the minority at Sorbonne University, where he studied law. Because of the strong anti-Christian sentiment within the University, many Catholic students would not openly admit to their faith. A professor named Jouffrey argued that Christianity was irrational, and that it was the enemy of scientific inquiry and human liberty. Frederic wrote two letters to the professor to disprove the professor's arguments. He wrote a third letter, which was signed by nine other students. Jouffrey was forced to read the letter in public and promise to never again attack the religious beliefs of students.

Following this incident, Frederic was seen as a natural leader of the Catholic students at the University. He was driven by a deep desire to find a way to help build the faith of his peers. One day, Frederic was challenged by a group of Socialist students who went by the name of Saint Simonians. The students argued that:

“Christianity is now outworn and defunct. It may have been useful in the past, but what use is it today? Show us your works, and then we might believe!”

These claims troubled Frederic greatly, and drove him to start a ‘Conference of Charity’ with a few friends. The group consisted of:

Frederic Ozanam, aged 19
Joseph Emmanuel Bailly, 42
Francoise Lallier, 20
Paul Lemanche, 23
Felix Clave, 22
Auguste Le Tallandier, 22
Jules Devaux, 22



Under the guidance of Bailly, who was the founder of an influential Catholic newspaper, the students met weekly – starting in May 1833 – and committed themselves to helping the poor people of Paris.

Inspired and assisted by Sister Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, the students visited poor people in their homes, bringing food and other necessities. Frederic had a strong belief that this method of serving the poor was much better than what he called “ostentatious philanthropy” (the bold, flashy giving of money without paying much attention to the people who were actually in need of the help).

The Conference adopted the name “The Society of St Vincent de Paul” because they were inspired by Saint Vincent, who had devoted himself to helping the poor people of France about 200 years earlier. Sister Rosalie taught Frederic and his friends to see the face of God in the poor people who they visited. In this way, the Conference members recognised the importance of providing company and friendship as well as material assistance to people in need – those they visited were not just physically poor, but emotionally and spiritually poor as well.

Frederic came to realise that, in serving the poor, charity was not enough, and he began calling for social reform and justice for the working classes. The Society of St Vincent de Paul began to focus not just on helping people through their immediate poverty, but also on the changing laws and structures that continued to create poverty and disadvantage. Frederic said:

“You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis: you must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim of a long term improvement.”

As the student members of the Conference completed their studies, they started up Conferences in other provinces of France. Within two years of the first Conference meeting, there were over 100 members of the Society. Soon, the Society spread beyond the borders of France, and there was a Conference in Rome, Italy, by 1842. The SSVP started in Scotland in 1845 in St Patrick's Church, Cowgate, Edinburgh.

By the time of Frederic's death in 1853, the Society was thriving in France and had spread throughout the world, fulfilling Frederic's desire to “embrace the whole world in a network of charity”. Today, the Society of St Vincent de Paul is present in 150 countries, with 49,500 Conferences and over 950,000 members.

Mini Vinnies Prayer Card



Opening Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Holy Spirit, please enter our hearts and start the fire of Your love, and the world will be changed.

Vincentian Family Prayer

Lord Jesus, you made yourself poor, so help us give our hearts to the poor and help us to see God in their eyes. Help us to see that they are just like you; hungry, lonely and going through hard times.

Please help the family of St Vincent de Paul to not be boastful, to live simply and to be united. Help us to have the fire of love that burned in St Vincent de Paul.

Make us strong so that we can serve You by serving the poor.

Amen

Prayer for a successful meeting

Let us remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "When two or three come together in my name, there I am in the middle of them"
(Short Silence)

Lord Jesus, help us through meeting together to deepen our Mini Vinnies friendship and help us to find those who are forgotten and to bring your love to the suffering or deprived. Help us to be generous with our time, our possessions and ourselves, so that we may grow perfect in Your love and learn to share Your sacrifice for others in God.

V. St Joseph patron of families, pray for us

V. St Vincent de Paul pray for us

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Closing Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Think of anyone that you would like to offer a prayer for. They might be sick, having a bad time or you just think that a prayer might help them.

Everyone can say the names of these people.

**Hail Mary, full of Grace. The Lord is with Thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Mini Vinnies Promise

As a member of Mini Vinnies, I promise to make a difference in my world by:

- ❖ *Caring for, respecting and loving myself;*
- ❖ *Strengthening my friendship with Jesus by praying each day and talking to others about him;*
- ❖ *Caring for others in my school and local community by befriending those who are alone, needy or in trouble;*
- ❖ *Contributing to the happiness of my family by my willing help, respect, consideration, joy and kindness;*
- ❖ *Caring for, appreciating and enjoying God's creation, the environment;*
- ❖ *Treating others the way I would like them to treat me.*

I will...

***Enjoy being me,
Using my talents,
Reaching out to others and
Respecting the dignity of others***

Mini Vinnies Meeting Planner



Group name: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Names of people at the meeting

- Mini Vinnies Opening Prayers
- Reflection
- What has been happening with the group? Write down any news from Mini Vinnies or teachers

- Plans – what is planned next. If no plans, discuss ideas

- Closing Prayers



Contact Us:

Email: youth@ssvpScotland.com

Telephone: 0141 226 8833

Website: www.ssvpscotland.com

Follow us on Social Media:



ssvp.youth.scotland



Youth SSVP



@youthSSVP



Society of St.Vincent de Paul Scotland

Youth Development Co-ordinator (July 2019)

Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Scotland) is a Company Limited by Guarantee

Registered Company Number SC347803 Registered Charity SC006326

Tel. No: 0141 226 8833 Email: youth@ssvpScotland.com Web: www.ssvpScotland.com