



**Society of St Vincent
de Paul Scotland
Junior Vinnies
Guidebook: S1-S3**



Contents

Foreword and SSVP Mission Statement	3
Junior Vinnies at your school	4
Junior Vinnie's Purpose	5
Faith in Action for Others	6
BGE Years	7
How to Begin	8
The First Meeting	9
Regular Meetings	10
Roles	11
The Group Adviser	12
Making Contacts and SSVP Knowledge	13
Having Fun	14
Service in the Community	15
Raising Funds	16
Supporting the local community	17
Raising Awareness	18
Junior Vinnies Meeting Planner	19
Meeting Prayers	20-22
Contact Us	24

Foreword

The aim of this guide is to provide guidance and assistance to teachers, SSVP members and priests on setting up a Junior Vinnies group in a school or parish. Junior Vinnies members are usually S1-S3.

SSVP Mission Statement

“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”

SSVP is a worldwide Christian community founded in Paris in 1833, by a group of young Catholics and one older person who provided them with support and guidance.

Junior Vinnies at your school

Establishing a Junior Vinnies conference provides our young people with opportunities for learning and growing in faith, as well as personally and socially. They work together to help anyone in need their area. Just like a parish SSVP Conference, these needs are addressed in what is considered a most appropriate way.

Junior Vinnies conferences promote the development and formation of their members. As well as developing their faith, it is a cross- curricular activity which enables young people to achieve outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence.

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

Junior Vinnies Purpose

Junior Vinnies groups operate in secondary schools or parishes. They are groups of young people, between S1-S3, who come together to help people in need within their school and local community. These groups follow on from Mini Vinnies in P4-P7 and precede Senior Vinnies in S4-S6.

The SSVP model of faith in action is a great way to help young people think and talk about their spirituality. Connecting their beliefs and values with service activities and issues in their community helps to make their faith real, meaningful, and relevant.



Faith in Action for Others

The actions of a Junior Vinnies group generally involve three components:

‘See’ - Education and awareness. Becoming aware that, in spite of some of a community’s social ills, there are always ways to make it a bit better.

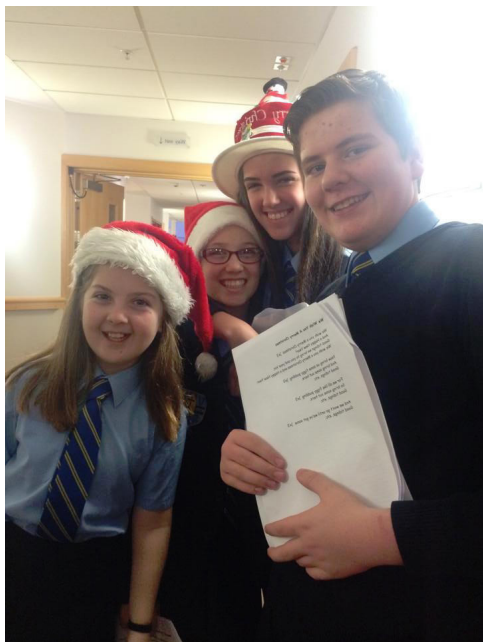
‘Think’ - Formation. This is a chance for Junior Vinnies members to participate in spiritual activities, personal development, and discussions, and to develop an understanding of the real world.

‘Do’ - Community service and fundraising. ‘Doing’ means actively supporting the SSVP in its good works, and for the young people to address the issues that they have seen, thought about or discussed and act on them.

BGE Years

Junior Vinnies are in the BGE stage of their education. This means that they can devote time all year round to aiding the needs of the school and local community. This is especially useful when the Junior Vinnies stop for exam preparation in December and May. This means the work of SSVP within the school can continue seamlessly.

Junior Vinnies play an important role in liaising with P7 Mini Vinnies before they arrive at secondary to tell them what Junior Vinnies do and what they can expect on the next stage of their Vincentian family journey.



How to Begin

The first step is to introduce the young people in your school S1-S3 to the idea of Junior Vinnies and find out if any of them are interested in forming a group.

You will need to find a teacher or school support staff member who is willing to help coordinate the group. Then arrange a time, date and room for the first meeting.

If you have a school bulletin, daily notices or a class notice board, advertise the meeting there to ensure that the young people know the details.

It can be helpful but not essential to invite a representative from SSVP to join you at the first meeting. It could be someone from your local Conference or the National Office.

The First Meeting

- Open the meeting with a prayer and reflection.
- Decide as a group when, where and how often you will hold meetings (usually weekly, fortnightly at a minimum).
- Discuss what activities and projects the group could undertake.
- Discuss what roles are needed in the group and what is required of people in those roles.
- Close the meeting with a prayer and details of the next meeting.

Regular Meetings

When your Junior Vinnies group is established, your meetings can follow a similar format to the first meeting.

You may, 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 them to persevere in their efforts to shape a more just society.



Roles

Everyone in the group has a vital role to play. You might decide to have particular leadership roles within your group. These could include:

- **President** – works closely with the coordinating staff member, chairs the meetings and helps to allocate work to 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 at meetings and keeps a record of projects and activities undertaken by the group.
- **Treasurer** – keeps track of money raised by the group.

The Group Adviser

Any staff member in the school can assume the role of coordinating the Junior Vinnies group: it does not have to be a teacher. What is important is that the person is willing to commit their time to attend Junior Vinnies meetings and projects.

The role of the staff member is to guide the pupils as they develop their ideas into action, by keeping discussions within the realm of possibility. The adviser will assess the feasibility of projects according to school rules and duty of care requirements.

For teachers, this work will provide an excellent CPD opportunity and a chance to engage in extra and cross curricular activity.



Make Contacts

It is important that others are aware of the fact that you are setting up a new group. They will be able to support and guide you through the process. Speak to the parish priest and SSVP Conference to let them know what you would like to do. Also contact the SSVP National Office, to let them know that you are setting up a group. They can register your group and provide contact details of local SSVP parish conferences.

SSVP Knowledge

It is important for a Junior Vinnies group to learn about the history and works of the St Vincent de Paul Society, both locally and on an international level. 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 in which the Conference helps local people.

Having Fun

A shared lunch or morning tea at the start or end of each term is a good way to celebrate the success of the group.

Some groups have also invited local SSVP members in to have a shared coffee morning or lunch, which has proven to be of great benefit. This fun and social element of Junior Vinnies makes it enjoyable and interesting.

It can also help them to establish friendships and support networks when they are new to the school. It is a helpful way of making like-minded friends who share the Vincentian values of kindness and compassion.



Good Works

Some suggestions of good works include:

- Visiting a local nursing home: helping in their garden, chatting to residents, singing.
- Holding appeals - food, clothing, toiletries, Easter eggs, winter woollies, gifts.
- Hosting a morning tea in the school for residents of a local nursing home.
- Helping out at soup kitchens or food banks, homeless shelters as appropriate.



Raising Funds

The main aim of Junior Vinnies groups is not to fundraise. The focus should be on providing support: a listening ear, time and kindness. However, there may be occasions when they need some funds. This may be due to a particular project that they want to organise. Please bear in mind that the SSVP is not a fundraising group for other charities.

Some fundraising Ideas:

- Raffles
- Guessing competitions
- Non uniform days
- Cake stalls
- Fun runs
- Bag packing

Supporting the School Community

Junior Vinnies could also 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 a fundamental requirement of all SSVP works) 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. The group advisor would liaise with senior management to organise a project such as this and it could work in conjunction with Senior Vinnies.



Raising Awareness

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

There are lots of ways for your Junior Vinnies group to speak out in your school community. They can 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:

- School assemblies- speak about current issues and why they are considered unjust.
- Create stalls, displays or events that draw attention to the issues.
- Write letters- local councillors, government ministers, business leaders etc.

Junior Vinnies Meeting Planner



Date of meeting: _____

- Opening Prayers
- Reflection
- What has been happening with the group?
(Write down any news from members or teachers)
- **See, Think, Do** – Who could you help?
Discuss ideas. Make plans
- Closing Players



OPENING PRAYERS

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

Leader: Come Holy Spirit, penetrate our hearts and kindle
within us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and new
life will be created.

Group: and the whole face of the earth will be renewed.
Our Father... Hail Mary...

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 in our SSVP family.

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.



Prayer for a Fruitful Meeting

Let us remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “When two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Short Silence).

Lord Jesus, help us through meeting together to deepen our Vincentian friendship and answer the call every Christian receives; to seek and find those who are forgotten, 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 the Holy Eucharist.

Leader: St Joseph, Patron of Families

Group: Pray for us

Leader: St Vincent de Paul

Group: Pray for us

Leader: (School patron saint)

Group: Pray for us

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

Amen.





Email: youth@ssvpscotland.com

Website: www.ssvpscotland.com



Youth SSVP Scotland



@youthSSVP

Youth Development Co-ordinator

Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Scotland) is a Company Limited
by Guarantee. Registered Company Number SC347803

Registered Charity SC006326