



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

**MINI VINNIES**

*Spiritual Reflection Guides Year C, Terms 1-4*

# Introduction

This Spiritual Reflection guide is a resource for teachers to share with students of Mini Vinnies groups or within a Religious Education class.

Each week of the liturgical year provides notes for teachers and handouts for students relating the week's scripture readings to the Mini Vinnies or Vincentian experience.

Each week can be used independently of each other.

We hope you find this Spiritual Reflection guide a useful resource.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW  
PO Box 5  
PETERSHAM NSW 2049

ABN: 46 472 591 335

Tel: (02) 9560 8666

Fax: (02) 9564 6044

Email: [vinnies@vinnies.org.au](mailto:vinnies@vinnies.org.au)

# *Our Patron, Founders and Inspiration*

## The Patron Saint of the Society - Vincent de Paul

The Patron Saint of the Society - Vincent de Paul

Date of birth - 24 April 1581

Place of birth - Pouy, France

Parentage - Peasants, worked on a farm

Death - 27 September 1660

Occupation - Priest and servant of the poor

Canonisation - 1737

Feast day - 27 September



Vincent was born poor and initially longed for a life of wealth.

He was also intelligent and became a priest to pave the way from need to nobility. On the journey, he underwent a difficult spiritual crisis that resulted in a desire to help the poor.

Exalted positions such as chaplain to the Queen's court and tutor to the wealthy de Gondi family were not fulfilling to him. The profit of an ecclesiastical career was abandoned for a parish and for work with the marginalised and forgotten.

Vincent instituted an order of priests (the Congregation of the Mission or Vincentians) whose mission it was to share Jesus' good news to the villages through preaching and service. With Louise de Marillac, he co-founded the Daughters of Charity.

Vincent pledged his life to the sick and insane, orphans and old people, beggars and the starving, prisoners and galley slaves. There was no form of poverty - physical, emotional or spiritual - which he did not try to alleviate.

Most of all, though, he was committed to the poor sinful men and women who did not know what great love God had for them.

# Our Patron, Founders and Inspiration

## The man behind the Society - Antoine Frederic Ozanam

Date of birth - 23 April 1813

Place of birth - Milan (French territory at this time)

Death - 8 September 1853

Parentage - Jean Antoine Ozanam, doctor and Marie Nantas, heiress to silk business

Canonisation as a saint - Beatified in 1997

Occupation - Lawyer and Professor of Letters, husband and father



In Paris on 23 April 1833, a group of six university students met with a middle-aged journalist, Emmanuel Bailly, in his office, to form a group to be called the Conference of Charity.

The leader of the group of students was Frederic Ozanam, who was driven by a deep desire to find a way to help build the faith of his peers. Their purpose was simple: as a small group of friends, they would become servants of the poor in Paris just as Jesus Christ had been servant to the people of his time.

Frederic must have mentioned at that first meeting that only recently, while speaking in defence of the Church in some fiery debates at the university, he was challenged by a young socialist with the demanding words, "What are you doing for the poor now? Show us your works!"

Frederic realised that talk alone would never give full witness to the truth. He acted on this immediately - that same night he and some friends pooled what money they had and bought firewood for a poor family.

He continued leading the group with the help of Sr Rosalie Rendu, who assisted them to meet the poor in Paris.

Their efforts grew and developed. Others were moved by their example to commit themselves to serving the poor. The Society grew with a firm practical commitment to providing charity with justice to any person in need.

They chose to call their group the Society of St Vincent de Paul, based upon the exemplary charitable life led by St Vincent de Paul.

Frederic's life was very active, but not solely based in the Society he founded. In 1839 he completed his thesis on Dante, which led to his appointment as lecturer of foreign literature as well as law at the University of Lyon. He considered joining the Dominican order, but instead chose to marry Amelie Soulacroix in June 1841.

Frederic's health had always been poor. Under the strain of considerable literary work (including many calls for social justice), he continued lecturing and service to the poor through the Society, his health finally gave out. He died in 1853, aged 40.

# Our Patron, Founders and Inspiration

The woman with experience - Sr Rosalie Rendu

Date of birth - 9 September 1787

Place of birth - Comfort, France

Parentage - Successful business

Occupation - Daughter of Charity

Death - 7 February 1856

Canonisation as a saint - Beatified in 2003

As a novice, Sr Rosalie was a sensitive and nervous person. She would have initially seemed an unlikely woman to spend 50 years of her life helping Paris's most impoverished.

When, in 1803, she arrived in one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Paris, she was horrified by the poverty caused as a result of the civil revolution. She and her sisters distributed relief in the form of clothing, food and linen, and ran a school for children. She also used her energy to pressure the authorities and to involve others in her work.

Through Rosalie's assistance, Frederic and his companions made their first contact with the poor. Because Rosalie's good work had made her a recognised household name, the new group gained an instant respect which they would not have had otherwise.

Rosalie was a very important guide for Frederic and his friends and was a living example of how we should put our faith into action

"Love is the first gift we give the poor"



# Our Patron, Founders and Inspiration

## The woman behind the Saint - Louise de Marillac

Date of birth - 12 August 1591

Place of birth - Auvergne, France

Parentage - nobility, but illegitimate

Occupation - Wife and mother, founder of the Daughters of Charity

Canonisation as a saint - 1934

Death - 15 March, 1660



Louise was a wealthy widow who became a close friend and confidante of Vincent. She founded with him the Daughters of Charity.

During Louise's marriage, and especially after the death of her husband, Louise found herself with spare time which she dedicated to helping abandoned children on the streets.

She graduated to visiting the sick men of the chain gangs in their prison hospice (a truly horrible place) and started a house nearby where a number of women cooked food for those who visited the prisoners daily to take with them.

Throughout the country, centres staffed by wives of people in the village were set up to serve the poor. Louise pushed for every village to have its own clinic, school, nurse and teacher.

The women who came to do these jobs made up the Daughters of Charity. It was a revolutionary order of sisters who left their convents to work on the streets and in the homes of the poor. At the time, this was a truly scandalous thing to do.

Louise worked with untiring devotion fostering in her sisters respect for the individual, friendliness, devotion, no condescension, but just unlimited patience and compassion.



# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Materials needed for the activity  
Coloured Paper  
Pens/Textas

## Teacher's Notes

You may wish to use the following opening prayer:

### Opening Prayer

Lord,

Teach us how to love like your son, Jesus, loved. Teach us to love selflessly, to love honestly, to love unconditionally and to love in all that we do. Amen

God is love. We are called to be people of love.

Love is the most important gift we can give another person.

Sr Rosalie Rendu gave Frederic Ozanam, the founder of the St Vincent de Paul Society, a piece of advice when he started helping the poor in Paris. This advice in many ways forms the backbone of the work the Society does today. The advice was: "Be kind and love—for love is your first gift to the poor. They'll appreciate your kindness and your love more than all else you can bring them."

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Brothers and Sisters:

*Love is Kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud or rude.*

*Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do.*

*Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil.*

*Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting.*

*Love never fails!*

*When we were children, we thought and reasoned as children do.*

*But when we grew up, we quit our childish ways.*

*Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face.*

*We don't know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us.*

*For now there is faith, hope and love.*

*But of those three, the greatest is love.*

**Corinthians 13: 4-8a, 11-13**

Some things to think about...

- God is love. We are called to be people of love.
- What are some of the things this reading says love is?
- What are some of the things this reading says love isn't?
- What are some ways we can be more loving people?

## Activity

- Rewrite the first paragraph of this reading (down to "Love never fails!") on a piece of paper, inserting your name wherever it says the word "Love" Eg John is kind and patient...
- Choose one of the sentences you have written and write a list of all the ways you can be/do what it says. Eg For the sentence: "John is kind and patient..." John would write a list of the ways that he can show kindness and patience in his life with his family, friends, at school etc .



# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Materials needed for the activity  
Pieces of coloured cardboard  
String  
Textas and pencils  
Sticky tape

## Teacher's Notes

Jesus invites himself aboard Simon Peter's boat where he could sit down and be seen and heard from the shore. Having taught the crowd Jesus asks Simon Peter to take the boat out for a catch. Peter is probably tired and most likely looking for a place to rest! Instead he is asked to carry out what he sees as a fruitless task. However, he complies with the request and the miracle occurs.

Peter, immediately regretting that he doubted, says, "Leave me Lord for I am a sinner".

Jesus shows compassion and invites Peter to join in his work. James and John are then inspired to follow Peter. The action of the Apostles is surely an act of faith as they leave everything to follow Jesus!

(St Vincent de Paul Society Spiritual Reflection Guides: January to March 2007)

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*When Jesus had finished speaking he told Simon, "Row the boat out into the deep water and let your nets down to catch some fish."*

*"Master," Simon answered, "We have worked hard all night long and have not caught a thing. But if you tell me to, I will let the nets down."*

*They did it and caught so many fish that their nets began ripping apart. Then they signaled for their partners on the other boat to come and help them. The men came, and together they filled the two boats so full that they both began to sink.*

*When Simon Peter saw this happen, he kneeled down in front of Jesus and said,*

*"Lord, don't come near me! I am a sinner."*

*Peter and everyone with him were completely surprised at all the fish they had caught. His partners James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were surprised too.*

*Jesus told Simon, "Don't Be afraid! From now on you will bring in people instead of fish." the men pulled their boats up on the shore. Then they left everything and went with Jesus.*

**Luke 5:1-11**

Some things to think about...

- Simon showed trust in Jesus, following Jesus' instructions and letting down the nets even after having caught nothing all night.
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said: "From now on you will bring in people instead of fish"?
- The men left everything they had to follow Jesus-do you think this would have been an easy thing to do? Would you do the same?

## Activity

- Draw a picture of a boat on some cardboard and cut it out.
- Tape some string to the sides of the boat so it looks like a fishing line hanging over the side.
- Draw the shape of a fish on some separate pieces of cardboard and cut them out.
- On each fish write one thing you can do to bring people to Jesus.
- Attach your fish to the ends of the pieces of string on the boat.
- Display the boats around the classroom.

# 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Materials needed for the activity  
“Sister Act 2” Soundtrack or DVD with “Joyful Joyful” on it.

## Teacher's Notes

The Beatitudes are a very well known passage from the Gospel. They speak of the hope and joy and happiness that can be found in the midst of sadness, grief and suffering. This really is the fundamental Gospel message - that new life can come from death, that Christ makes all things new.

This grief brings up the concept of suffering and how we know whether God is with us through suffering. Why does God let wars continue or let children die of cancer or bush fires burn homes down?

# 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Jesus and his apostles went down from the mountain and came to some flat, level ground. Many other disciples were there to meet him. Large crowds of people from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon were there too.*

*Jesus looked at his disciples and said: "God will bless you people who are poor. His kingdom belongs to you! God will bless you hungry people. You will have plenty to eat! God will bless you people who are crying. You will laugh*

*God will bless you when others hate you and won't have anything to do with you. God will bless you when people insult you and say cruel things about you, all because you are a follower of the Son of Man! Long ago your own people did the same things to the prophets.*

*So when this happens to you, be happy and jump for joy! You will have a great reward in heaven."*

**Luke 6:17, 20-23**

Some things to think about...

- What does having faith mean to me?
- When is a time in my life that I have suffered? How did you feel better?
- How can we be joyful in the midst of sadness?

## Activity

- Listen to or watch the song "Joyful Joyful" from the Sister Act 2 movie
- With your class each learn a different section and get someone who is good at rapping to learn the rap part
- Arrange to visit a nursing home near your school and perform the song for them. You could also perform it at the Grandparents Day at your school.
- Before you give the performance have a representative from your class who is good at public speaking explain what the song means and how they are able to be joyful even though life isn't always happy.

# 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Materials needed for the activity  
Pens  
Paper.

## Teacher's Notes

This week's Gospel is quite stern and seems to ask almost too much of us – love our enemies? How is that possible? Jesus is the best example of loving those who despised him. He took everything the soldiers could throw at him and didn't once look angry, let alone fight back. The Gospel also speaks about giving without wanting something in return. An important lesson for the children to learn from this Gospel is that we give each other little gifts all the time. We all do little things for others that brighten their days far more than a wonderful Christmas or Birthday present ever could. Invite the children to think specifically about people they know and what they seem to enjoy receiving from them (be it a hug a conversation or a flower from the garden).

## 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.*

*"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."*

**Luke 6:27-37**

Some things to think about...

- Is there someone in your class or in your family that you have trouble getting along with?
- Do you think you will be able to follow Jesus' instruction and love them even when they are being mean to you?
- Think about the last person you gave a gift to? You probably remembered a Christmas or Birthday gift you've given someone.
- Now think again. You have given people many gifts without even noticing. This could have been through your smile, your patience, or a joke. When you gave these gifts you weren't looking for something in return – this is the best type of giving.

Activity

- Draw a picture of the last time you received any type of gift from someone. Think about what this moment meant to you.
- Think of all the people in your family and the things they most like to receive from you. For some people this may be a hug, while for others it may be spending time with you or for others it may be a long chat. Write down a checklist of all these gifts and look out for opportunities to give them away!

# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Materials needed for the activity  
(this will vary depending on the inspiration of the children)  
Paddle pop sticks (to make photo frames)  
Paint  
Card board  
Textas  
Knitting needles and wool  
Glitter  
Glue

## Teacher's Notes

This week's Psalm speaks about the Lord being our refuge and protector. The notion of being safe and protected is one that many children associate with their home and their parents. By inviting children to think about the lives of other children who may no longer have a safe environment to live in, they will gain an insight into the suffering of others. This activity and topic may be sensitive for children who have experienced similar situations, please use your discretion as to whether or not it will be suitable for your class. Prior to the activity do some research about an appropriate refuge service for women and children. If you are unaware of one your local youth coordinator (whose contact details are listed at the back of this guide) will be able to connect you with an appropriate service.



# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Response: Be with me Lord, when I am in trouble*

Live under the protection

of God Most High

and stay in the shadow of God All – Powerful.

Then you will say to the Lord,

“You are my fortress,

my place of safety;

you are my God and I trust you.” R

No terrible disasters

will strike you or your home.

God will command his angels

to protect you wherever you go. R

## Psalm 91

Some things to think about...

- What is the place in the whole world where you feel the safest?
- Imagine if this place were destroyed. What would that mean to you?
- Many people who live in poverty have no safe place to take shelter in. For these people and for us when we feel everything is going wrong, we can take shelter in God. He is one refuge that can never be destroyed.
- For women and children who live in emergency refuges their homes may not be safe for them to live in anymore.

## Activity

- Thinking of the place in the world where you feel the safest, think about something you could make for a child living in a refuge. This may be a drawing for their wall, a specially made scarf, a picture frame or a card wishing them well, or a poem you could write for them. Remember that these things could never replace the feeling of being safe at home, but will make a small positive difference to their lives.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Materials needed for the activity  
Access to the internet  
Paper  
Pencils/paints)

### Teacher's Notes

*Jesus leads Peter, John & James to pray at the top of a mountain. Once at the top Jesus becomes transfigured and Elijah and Moses suddenly appear and talk with Jesus. A cloud overshadows them and proclaims "this is my beloved son, listen to him".*

- The Gospel of Luke is the third and the longest of the four canonical Gospels of the New Testament, which tell the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection
- The Transfiguration of Jesus is also told in the Gospel's of Matthew and Mark
- Transfiguration means a change or metamorphosis that glorifies and exalts
- This reading tells us that God wants us to listen to Jesus
- By helping people as part of your Mini vinnies group, you are showing God that you are listening to Jesus

Examples of websites for the students to look at

<http://www.canvaz.com/gallery/420.htm>

<http://gallery.euroweb.hu/html/b/bellini/giovanni/1480-89/>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Jesus took Peter, John and James with him and went up a mountain to pray. While he was praying, his face changed, and his clothes became shining white. Suddenly Moses and Elijah were there speaking with him. They appeared in heavenly glory and talked about all that Jesus' death in Jerusalem would mean.*

*Peter and the other two disciples had been sound asleep. All at once they woke up and saw how glorious Jesus was. They also saw the two men who were with him. Moses and Elijah were about to leave, when Peter said to Jesus "Master, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah". But Peter did not know what he was talking about.*

*While Peter was still speaking, a shadow from a cloud passed over them, and they were frightened as the cloud covered them. From the cloud a voice spoke, "This is my chosen Son. Listen to what he says!"*

*After the voice had spoken, Peter, John and James saw only Jesus. For some time they kept quiet and did not say anything about what they had seen.*

**Luke 9:28-36**

### Activity

- Look at some different paintings of the Transfiguration (e.g. by Raphael) on the internet
- Discuss some of the different interpretations by different artists
- Paint/draw your own interpretation of the transfiguration and explain it to your class.

### Some things to think about...

- Why do you think Peter wanted to make three shelters on top of the mountain?
- God tells Peter, John and James to listen to Jesus.
- How do you listen to Jesus in your life?

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper  
Pens

## Teacher's Notes

Read out or summarise to children:

How does God choose who will do his work? How does God choose his heroes? How would you choose?

- You might choose your person based on how heroic they are or the feats they've achieved. You might pick someone brave, or strong, or clever, someone with experience, with lots of friends, or possibly someone in a powerful position, like a king or president.
- But if you think about all the "bible heroes" that do big, awesome miracles and rescue thousands of people, it always seems to be just ordinary people who get picked - Moses was a farmer, not a famous or powerful person and he got chosen for the job of rescuing a country!
- When God first called Moses, he hid because he was scared of God. Later on, Moses actually said to God, "But why me?" He worries so much that he keeps on asking this over and over. Does this sound like a hero to you?
- God doesn't seem to mind using ordinary people; people who are scared or unsure. God says to Moses, "I will be with you". In other words, Chill out, if you just do what i tell you it will be fine. This is encouraging even if we are just ordinary people. God can still use us. God can still have special work that we can do. We don't need to be a big hero for God to use us, we just need to be willing when he calls.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*One day Moses was taking care of the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, who was the priest of Midian. Moses led the sheep along the edge of the desert to Sinai, the mountain of God. Suddenly the Lord's angel appeared to him from a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up. He said to himself, "This is strange! I'll go over and see why the bush is not burning up."*

*When the Lord saw Moses coming near the bush, he called out to him.*

*Moses answered, "Lord, here I am."*

*God replied, "Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals, because the ground where you are standing is holy. I am the God who was worshipped by your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

*Moses was too afraid to look at God, and he hid his face.*

*The Lord said, "I have seen how my people are suffering in Egypt, and I have heard them cry out to me because of those slave bosses. I am sorry for them, and so I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians. I will bring my people out of Egypt into a country where there is good land and plenty of milk and honey."*

**Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15**

Some things to think about...

- There is a difference between heroes from movies, stories or comics and heroes from the bible.

### Activity

- Pick your favourite hero from a cartoon or movie (e.g. Superman, Batman, Spiderman, the hulk)
- Draw a picture of them on a piece of paper, and then draw what you think Moses would be like, as just an ordinary guy.

What difference do you notice between the two?

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

Materials needed for the activity  
Pens  
Pencils

## Teacher's Notes

- God the Father gives us what we ask for as the Father did for his Son
- God rejoices when one of his children that was lost returns to him
- We are never too far from God to stop and ask for help
- In our work in Mini Vinnies we are looking after God's children who have lost their way
- By helping others we can show the lost and hurting people that God loves them

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

*Then Jesus told them this story:*

*“Once a man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, ‘Give me my share of the property.’ So the son divided his property between his two sons.*

*Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he wasted all his money in wild living. He had spent everything when a bad famine spread through the land. Soon he had nothing to eat...*

*Finally he came to his senses and said... ‘I will leave and go to my father...’*

*The younger son got up and started back to his father. But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him.*

*The son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son.’ But his father said to the servants, ‘...get the best calf and prepare it so we can celebrate. This son of mine was dead, but has now come back to life. He was lost and has now been found.’*

**Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32**

Some things to think about...

- We as God’s children should celebrate when a lost person is found
- In our work in Mini Vinnies we help lots of people who are lost and hurting because of things they have done and sometimes even things that others have done to them.
- If we show love and mercy to people who are hurting or lost they will be able to see Christ in us and it may cause them to come home like the son in the parable.
- God is like the Father in the story, kind and loving towards his children.

### Activity

- In groups of two or three think about something you can do to help someone who is lost or hurting.
- Draw a picture of the people in your group helping the person in need.
- Once you are finished each group can share with the class who they are helping and how they think they can help them.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

Materials needed for the activity  
Photocopies of the reading and discussion questions  
A copy of the Act of Contrition and maybe a guide to examining  
their conscience before confession  
A Priest

## Teachers Notes

- The prize St Paul is talking about is Heaven. Try to promote discussion about heaven, talk about how it is something that we should all try to achieve.
- How do we get into Heaven? By trying to be the best person we can. We do this by being kind and generous to everyone, trying to do the right thing all the time, and to observe God's teachings.
- The three penances for Lent are alms giving, fasting and prayer. These three things help us improve in (respectively) love of neighbour, love of self and love of God. Inform students that fasting isn't necessarily not eating a particular food for the period of Lent, but any form of self control – whether it's not watching a favourite TV show, or doing extra chores around the house to help our parents, or being extra nice to our siblings.
- We move on from our mistakes by going to confession – through this sacrament we are granted God's forgiveness, and are able to focus on improving ourselves and trying harder next time. We should all go to confession regularly, but especially before Easter and Christmas. Go over the Act of Contrition with students:

*Oh my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, but with your help and because you are so good I will not sin again. Amen.*

- Point out that when we make this Act of Contrition, we are saying sorry for what we did, and making a vow to not do it again, which is basically what St Paul was talking about in his letter.
- Try and arrange for the Parish Priest / School Chaplain to come in and provide confession for the students. If this isn't possible, encourage students to go with Mum and/or Dad before Easter.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

*Brothers and sisters:*

*I have not yet reached my goal, and I am not perfect. But Christ has taken hold of me. So I keep on running and struggling to take hold of the prize. My friends, I don't feel that I have already arrived. But I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead. I run toward the goal, so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven. This is the prize that God offers because of what Jesus Christ has done.*

**Philippians 3:12-14**

Some things to think about...

- Re-read this reading that we heard on Sunday at Mass.
- What is the prize St Paul is talking about, that he is trying to take hold of?
- How do we achieve this prize, how do we strive for perfection?
- In Lent, there are three things in particular that we should do that could help us get the prize that St Paul says God is offering us. What are they?
- St Paul said in his letter that he forgets what is behind him and focuses on what is ahead. Even though we try to be the best person we can be, we all do the wrong thing sometimes. How do we move on from our mistakes?

## Activity

- Think about what act you have been focussing on for the period of Lent. How did you go? Did you try really hard to make sure you did it regularly?
- Go around the group and if people are comfortable with sharing, they could tell everyone what it was they have been doing for Lent.
- If you didn't go too well, think about what you could do for next year – will you try harder at the same thing, or will you try something else?
- Think carefully about how you have behaved and acted over the last little while. Is there anything that you should confess, so that God can forgive you and you can move on to keep trying to be a better person?
- If going to confession isn't possible today, ask your Mum or Dad to take you one day before Easter.

# Palm Sunday

Materials needed for the activity  
Palm template (on next page)  
Scissors  
Glue Sticks or Paint.  
Green fun foam or cardboard (optional)

## Teacher's Notes

On Palm Sunday Christians celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem the week before his death and resurrection. The bible reveals that when Jesus entered Jerusalem the crowds greeted him by waving palm branches and by covering his path with palm branches and their cloaks. Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week.

# Palm Sunday

*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."*

*This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:*

*"Say to the Daughter of Zion,  
See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

*The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,*

*"Hosanna to the Son of David!"*

*"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

*"Hosanna in the highest!"*

*When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"*

*The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."*

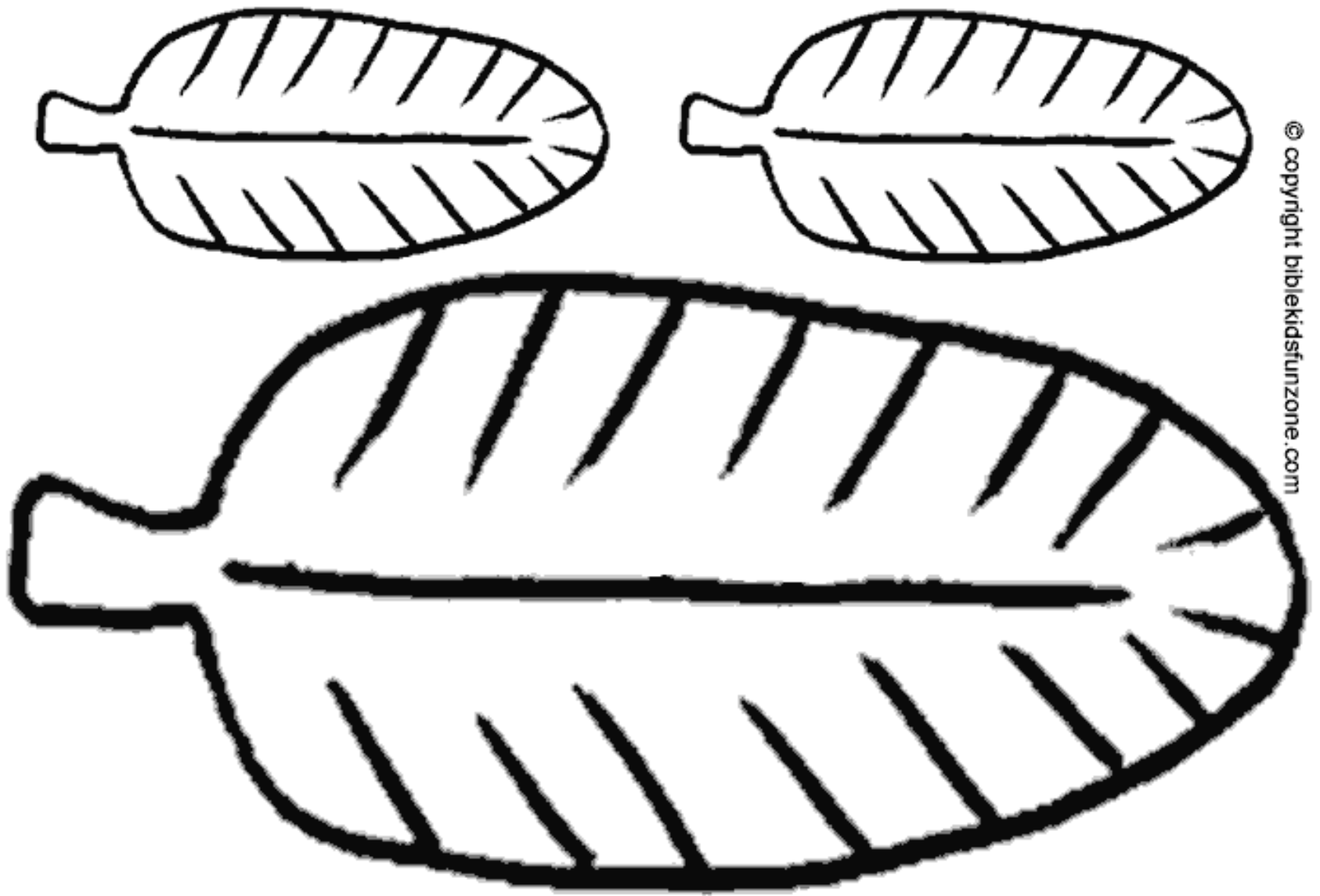
**Matthew 21: 1- 11**

Some things to think about...

- How does Jesus feel about the crowd saying "Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord?"
- How did the crowd feel seeing Jesus on the donkey?
- Why did some of the people in the crowd take off their cloaks and lay them on the ground?
- How can you begin your journey like Jesus?

## Activity

- Use template to make a palm (see next page)
- Display words:  
"Blessed is he who comes in the names of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"
- Role play the gospel passage – using the palms that you made
- Music Suggestion – the Donkey song by Ken Cope
- Suggested website for additional resources - [http://kingskidstuff.home.att.net/palm\\_sunday.htm#Childrens%20Activities](http://kingskidstuff.home.att.net/palm_sunday.htm#Childrens%20Activities)



© copyright biblekidsfunzone.com



St Vincent de Paul Society  
good works

# Easter Sunday

Materials needed for the activity  
Butterfly template  
Textas / Crayons / Pencils  
Scissors  
Glitter- sparkles(optional)

## Teacher's Notes

- The feast of the Resurrection of Jesus is the greatest feast of the church year. The Gospel is the Gospel news of Jesus Christ!
- You may wish to use the following prayer:

### Prayer

Dear Lord,

We give you thanks today for new life, for what seems to have died can be transformed and emerge a new creature. We thank you for raising Jesus from the dead and for giving Him new life and through Him giving us the same. We thank you God for overcoming sin and death.

Amen

# Easter Sunday

*On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " Then they remembered his words.*

*When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.*

**Luke 24: 1- 12**

Some things to think about...

- I wonder how the women felt as they went into the empty tomb?
- I wonder why John waited for Peter before going into the tomb? Wasn't that a great thing to do?
- What kinds of thoughts must have been running through their heads as they saw the linen just lying there?
- I wonder if some of the things that Jesus had told them were now making sense to them.

## Activity

- Make butterflies of differing sizes
- Colour them brightly
- Write Easter words on them eg Alleluia, Joy, Faith and Life



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

Materials needed for the activity  
Crayons, textas, pencils

## Teacher's Notes

- The Church is celebrating the important events of life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The concepts of faith and belief come into question when Thomas refuses to believe that Jesus has risen from the dead unless he sees him in the flesh.
- The Nicene Creed was developed by the Nicene Council which was held 325 to settle a dispute about the beliefs of the Church. It was revised in further councils, but the fundamentals remain the same and it is recited in the celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday. The activity today is a Closed Passage exercise with the Nicene Creed. Below is the word bank for the passage. The passage follows the next page.
- The Closed Passage exercise is ©2006 Laura Grace. For additional colouring and word activities related to the Catholic faith, visit [www.CatholicMom.com](http://www.CatholicMom.com). Feel free to share this activity with your family or students, but please consider a donation to support our mission of celebrating our Catholic Faith. For more information contact [Lisa@catholicmom.com](mailto:Lisa@catholicmom.com)

Word bank: You can give these to the children on a sheet or write these words on the board.

- |             |                |              |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| • Baptism   | • Resurrection | • World      |
| • Seated    | • Holy         | • Earth      |
| • Glory     | • Spirit       | • Son        |
| • Heaven    | • Judge        | • Seen       |
| • Father    | • Scriptures   | • Being      |
| • Crucified | • Prophets     | • Lord       |
| • Catholic  | • Dead         | • Giver      |
| • Light     | • Forgiveness  | • Buried     |
| • Made      | • Virgin       | • Worshipped |
| • Salvation | • Mary         | • Sins       |
| • Glorified | • One          | • Living     |
| • Kingdom   | • Apostolic    |              |

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

*Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

*Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"*

*But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."*

*A week later his disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

*Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"*

*Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

*Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Some things to think about...

- The Church shares in the Resurrection and life of Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What does the gift of the Holy Spirit mean to the Church?
- What do we believe in when we say the Nicene Creed?
- How / where do we see Jesus in our lives everyday?

### Activity

- Discuss the Gospel reading and retell the story in your own words.
- Think about what having faith means to you. Why do you think Thomas needed to see Jesus before he could believe?
- Write down some "I believe statements" for example "I believe in Jesus who died to save us." Or "I believe that my parents love me very very much." Or "I believe that being kind to others is very important." Use the statements to create a wall mural.
- Nicene Creed is a long statement outlining the beliefs of Catholics. See if you can fill in the blanks on the activity sheet on the next page.

**John 20:19 – 31**

## Nicene Creed

We believe in \_\_\_\_\_ God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, of all that is \_\_\_\_\_ and unseen.

We believe in one \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus Christ, the only \_\_\_\_\_ of God, eternally begotten of the \_\_\_\_\_, God from God, \_\_\_\_\_ from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in \_\_\_\_\_ with the Father.

Through him all things were \_\_\_\_\_. For us men and for our \_\_\_\_\_ he came down from heaven:

By the power of the \_\_\_\_\_ he was born of the \_\_\_\_\_, and became man.

For our sake he was \_\_\_\_\_ under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was \_\_\_\_\_. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the \_\_\_\_\_; he ascended into heaven and is \_\_\_\_\_ at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ and the dead, and his \_\_\_\_\_ will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the \_\_\_\_\_ of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. He has spoken through the \_\_\_\_\_. We believe in one holy \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Church. We acknowledge one \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. We look for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_, and the life of the \_\_\_\_\_ to come. Amen.

©2006 Laura Grace. For additional coloring and word activities related to the Catholic faith, visit [www.CatholicMom.com](http://www.CatholicMom.com). Feel free to share this activity with your family or students, but please consider a donation to support our mission of celebrating our Catholic Faith. For more information contact [Lisa@catholicmom.com](mailto:Lisa@catholicmom.com)



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

# 3rd Sunday of Easter

Materials needed for the activity:  
Interview questions for the reporter (see below)  
Students to role play the reporter, John the beloved disciple, Simon Peter and Jesus

## Teacher's Notes

This Gospel reading gives a further account of Jesus' appearance to the disciples after His resurrection. In the reading, the risen Jesus appears to the disciples, though they do not recognise Him, and tells them to cast their nets into the sea after a whole night of unproductive fishing. They catch 153 fish and it is then that they recognise Jesus and He invites them to have breakfast with Him.

Two main themes are central in this Gospel reading:

### 1. Trust in Jesus and He will provide

The Gospel does not tell us why the disciples are back in Galilee. They seem to have been sitting around, unsure of what to do, until Peter decides to go fishing and the others come along. Some see this act as aimless activity undertaken in desperation or even abandoning Jesus' commission to be fishers of men and returning to their former familiar life. Others think they went fishing simply because they needed to eat. The latter is probably true enough, but there is a sense that Peter and the others are doing what is right in their own eyes.

That night they catch nothing. They have done what they thought was the right thing, but experience utter failure. When they obey Jesus' direction to cast their net they cannot even get the net into the boat because there are so many fish in it. This prepares them to learn one of the central lessons of discipleship; without Jesus they can do nothing. Jesus had taught this lesson before, for never in the Gospels do the disciples catch a fish without Jesus' help. The primary point seems to be reliance on Jesus that He will provide and take care of all our needs even when the future looks bleak. Our labour will be fruitful if we depend on Jesus.

### 2. Jesus calls us to serve

Jesus has breakfast ready for the disciples, another sign of his provision like the catch they have just taken. After inviting them to come and eat, He himself comes to the fire. He took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This description echoes His action at the feeding of the five thousand and provides the climax of this story. It answers their unasked question 'Who are you?' as He is recognised in this breaking of the bread. The master who commands them also serves them.

Previously, Mary had recognised Jesus when he called her name, and the disciples had recognised him through his wounds. Now he is recognised through his service and the abundance that comes through trust in Him. Jesus has met His disciples at a point of failure and revealed Himself as the one who cares for them, serves them and in whom they can trust.

## 3rd Sunday of Easter

*After this, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way. Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We also will come with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?" They answered him, "No." So he said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something." So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish.*

*So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish. When they climbed out on shore, they saw charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of 153 large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn.*

*Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast." And none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they realised it was the Lord. Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.*

**John 21:1-14**

Some things to think about...

- The disciples fished all night and caught nothing. Why were they so fortunate in catching fish the following morning? What does this tell us about our efforts to fulfil our goals?
- At first, the disciples did not recognise Jesus on the shore. What made them recognise Him afterwards? Jesus continues to appear to us today. Have there been times when we have failed to recognise Jesus? When? How can we recognise Him today?

Activity

- Your teacher will pick one student to be a reporter who will interview different characters in the Gospel reading.
- They will also choose students to be Jesus, Simon Peter and John (the disciple Jesus loved) who will answer the reporter's questions. The interviewer begins by setting the scene and giving a brief description of the Gospel story which has just happened. The reporter then asks the following questions to each character who answer in their own way. (please find the interview questions on the next page)

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

## Activity: Interview Questions

### Interview questions for John

- Thanks for coming on the show John. I understand that you went out fishing last night and caught nothing. What made you try again in the morning?
- Why couldn't you recognise Jesus on the shore? What made you recognise him afterwards? Rumour has it that you're Jesus' favourite disciple.
- Why didn't you swim out to Jesus like Simon Peter then? What was it like to see Jesus again after he had risen from the dead? Were you shocked? Amazed? Scared?

### Interview questions for Simon Peter

- So Simon Peter, what made you decide to go fishing last night?
- How did you feel when you caught no fish? Jesus has appeared to you before today. Why didn't you recognise Him on the shore? What made you jump into the water to meet Jesus?
- Why didn't you stay and help the other disciples bring in the big haul of fish? 153 fish seems like a lot. What will you do with all the extra fish? So is Jesus a good cook?

### Interview questions for Jesus

- So Jesus, how does it feel to be the first person to rise from the dead?
- How did you do it? Did anyone help you?
- How did you know there would be fish on the other side of the boat? Lucky guess??
- Were you upset that the disciples didn't recognise you at first?
- What made you cook breakfast for the disciples who didn't even recognise you?
- Where and when do you think you'll appear next?

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Materials needed for the activity  
Pens  
textas, crayons

## Teacher's Notes

In this passage Jesus is speaking to the Jews who have asked him to tell them if he is the Christ. Jesus says to them that he has already told them but they have not believed him. He goes on to say that they are not his sheep or follows as they do not believe. If they were his followers they would believe him when he tells them who he is.

Believe: to have confidence in the truth, the existence, or the reliability of something, although without absolute proof that one is right in doing so

Follow: to accept as a guide or leader and accept the authority of or give allegiance to

These two words or actions are important aspects of our faith. If we believe in Jesus we should follow his good example and do what he did.

While on earth Jesus helped all different types of people in need; children, women, men, rich and poor.

As Vincentians and Mini Vinnies we serve people in our community that are in need like Jesus did. You may want to talk about the different groups or types of people that are in need in your community and how your Mini Vinnies Group can serve them.

There are many different people that have gone before that have done their part to make a difference in the lives of other people. Discuss with your group some of these people and what they did to make a difference.



## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

*My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand.*

*The Father and I are one."*

**John 10: 27—30**

Some things to think about...

- We as followers of Jesus hear his voice. When have you heard his voice? Why is it important to follow or obey his voice?
- Jesus gives us eternal life with God in heaven. This is the greatest gift we could ever be given. What are some other things we can be thankful for?
- 'No one can take them out of my hand'... If we belong to God no matter what happens we will not be taken from him.

### Activity

In the box below draw a picture of yourself following Jesus. Around the picture write ways you can follow Jesus today.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Materials needed for the activity  
Pre cut hearts and doves  
Textas, crayons and pain  
Blue-tac or double sided tape

## Teacher's Notes

- Jesus says that we are to love one another as he has loved us. It is important that we understand how much Jesus loves us so that out of that love we are able to love others.
- Discuss the difference between conditional love and the unconditional love of Jesus.
- Sometimes we as humans find it hard to love people when they are mean to us, or treat us badly, or reject us.
- We need to love all people as Jesus loves them.
- The word for the Love of God in Greek is the same as the word for Charity. When we as Mini Vinnies show charity to people in need we are loving them as Jesus loves all of us.
- There are many ways that we can show love to the people around us on a daily basis. Sometimes just a smile or a hug can make all the difference.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

*When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

**John 13: 31—35**

Some things to think about...

- In what ways can I display love and peace at home/school as well as, in my local community?
- What is Love? What is Peace?
- How might being both peaceful and loving to one another help to bring about justice in my community?

## Activity

- Collect a cut out dove and/or heart shape
- On your heart / dove write an action that you will do that will foster both love and peace within your school environment
- The doves and hearts can then be placed around your classroom/ school notice board for others to view.

# 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Materials needed for the activity  
Workbooks  
Pencils, pens and textas  
Whiteboard

## Teacher's Notes

- The Gospel of John is characterised by large themes, often illustrated with specific events and collected sayings from the 'Jesus' traditions.
- John often circles back over the same material more than once to reinforce important points.
- The term 'love' when used in the New Testament, is more of a deliberate action going far beyond emotion. As the term 'love' gets used in so many different contexts in our contemporary society, it might be a good idea to let the students know and understand the context that it is being used in here.
- Basically there are three interwoven themes in these verses:
  1. Love
  2. Faithfulness in keeping Jesus' word
  3. The real presence of God
- This reading tells us that those who truly love God will keep the commandments of God, and that God's presence will abide with those who love God and one another.

# 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

*Jesus answered and said to him, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me. "I have told you this while I am still with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.'*

**John 14: 23—29**

## Activity

- Choose three things/people that you love. Then write these things in your book and underneath write down some ways that you show your love for these things/people
- You can show your love of God by following the commandments.
- With your class brainstorm different ways that you can follow the commandments and write these onto the board e.g. to "love one another" you could assist your fellow students as a member of Mini Vinnies.

## Some thing to think about

- Discuss the meaning of the word 'love' with your class. Can this word mean different things? Is it possible to 'Love Pizza' and 'Love Your Parents' at the same time?

# 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Materials needed for the activity  
Pieces of paper  
Pencils and Textas  
Bibles

## Teacher's Notes

- Throughout Jesus' ministry, many Jews and even some of his disciples seemed to think that his mission was to take over the world; to "restore" Israel the nation to its place of power over all neighbouring lands. But Jesus was constantly changing their views of what exactly the "Kingdom of God" was all about.
- Jesus presents an idea of the "Kingdom of God" based on unity and inclusion. He suggests the Kingdom of God is where people care for the least amongst them, look after the sick and visit the lonely.
- As a Mini Vinnies group, we are called to be Jesus' witnesses to the world.

# 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

*When they had gathered together they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He answered them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight.*

**Acts 1:6-9**

## Activity

- Draw a picture of Jesus rising up to heaven through the clouds, and the disciples heading off to be Jesus' witnesses to the world!

Some things to think about...

- The disciples were asking Jesus to make Israel (their country) the most powerful on earth.
- Jesus tells them that God has his own plan.
- Jesus says go to ALL countries of the world (not just Israel) and spread the Gospel message!

# Pentecost Sunday

Materials needed for the activity  
Scissors  
Pens  
String  
Tape

## Teacher's Notes

- Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit after Jesus had ascended to heaven
- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity with God, the Father, and Jesus.
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, right judgement, courage, knowledge, reverence, and awe.
- The fruits of the Holy Spirit are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity. These become part of our life if we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us.



# Pentecost Sunday

*When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.*

*Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travellers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."*

**Acts 2:1-11**

Some things to think about...

- Think about the gifts of the Holy Spirit- wisdom, understanding, right judgement, courage, knowledge, reverence and awe
- What does having each of these gifts mean?
- Do some research about these gifts if you are not sure what they mean.

## Activity

- Choose a gift of the Holy Spirit that you would like to have and write it on the flame, cut it out and hang it up in your classroom.

# Trinity Sunday

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper  
Pencils/pens

## Teacher's Notes

- Give an example of something that we usually find hard to deal with, or ask students to share times when they've thought that things are really tough.
- Remind students of the Footprints story, about the man walking along the beach with God— when he looks back he could see that every time in his life when it was really difficult there was only one set of footprints. When he asked God why he left him at the times he needed Him the most, God replied that he hadn't left the man at all—it was the most difficult times of his life that God had carried him, and that's why he could only see one set of footprints.
- That's how it is with us— we just need to have faith that God will carry us through the difficult times, and remember that we can ask Him for help when we need it.
- Members of the St Vincent De Paul Society get the opportunity to serve people during such times, as they come to Vinnies for assistance

# Trinity Sunday

*Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. But that is not all we can boast about; we can boast about our sufferings. These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us.*

**Romans 5:1-5**

Some things to think about...

- This reading helps us to accept the times we find things really hard, and when we think that life is unfair.
- By suffering, we become better people because we learn patience and perseverance, two qualities that everyone needs to get through life and to get things done.
- When we find things really tough, we should ask the Holy Spirit to help us, because the Holy Spirit brings gifts to help people, and one of those gifts is love. If we love God, we can offer our sufferings to Him, and they will no longer be too much for us to handle.
- God is actually three persons – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus showed us how to live our lives, the Holy Spirit helps us to do this by giving us gifts, and God the Father is our father, who looks after us and who we answer to.
- Every time we make the sign of the cross, we are actually making a statement that we believe in God, and that we believe that God is three persons. That in itself can be a prayer, if you can't think of anything else to say to God

## Activity

- Come up with your own short prayer to keep and to pray when things get difficult in your life. It could be to the Holy Spirit, asking for help with what you're going through. Or maybe to God the Father, offering up your sufferings to Him, which makes it all worthwhile.
- Write it down on a piece of paper and keep it somewhere safe, so that you can say it whenever you feel like you're struggling.
- If people feel comfortable to share, go around the group and hear what everyone has written.
- Design your own trinity symbol, representing the three separate persons, joining together to make one God, thinking about each one as you do

# The Body & Blood of Christ

Materials needed for the activity  
Pencils/pens  
Story to read to children

## Teacher's Notes

- One answer to the question “why would God have changed the bread and wine into His body and blood?”, is that He loves us so much, and is prepared to do anything for us, that He made the ultimate sacrifice, the sacrifice of Himself.
- A sacrifice is when you give up something, or don't do something that you would like to do, in order to benefit someone else.
- We all make some sacrifices, especially for people we love. Usually, people who are prepared to make sacrifices are called generous, whilst those who don't are called selfish.
- Ask students if they know about the things the Church does to remind us of the preciousness and holiness of the Eucharist (ie Benediction and Eucharistic Adoration).

# The Body & Blood of Christ

*This is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you: that on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, and thanked God for it and broke it, and he said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me.' In the same way he took the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me.' Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death.*

**Corinthians 11:23-26**

Some things to think about...

- This is one of the hardest things that we as Catholics have to believe. But it is also one of the most wonderful parts of our faith.
- Jesus, at the Last Supper, really changed the bread and wine into His Body and Blood. But the physical appearance didn't change. The disciples who were there were still eating what appeared to be bread and wine. But the substance of it had changed. So every time we go to Mass, the same thing happens – we are given what appears to be flat white bread, but the substance of it is much more important; it is actually Jesus Christ, Himself.
- Why would He have done this? Why would Jesus have changed the bread and wine at the Last Supper into his body and blood? What does it actually mean?
- What is a sacrifice?
- When you love someone, you want to do as much for them as you can. Think of a time when you have had to give up something for someone you love, like your family or a friend.

## Activity

- Can you think of miracles that God has performed? (think of stories about Jesus from the bible)
- If God can perform all these miracles, is it really so hard to believe that He can perform this one?
- Think of a way of explaining this to someone who missed this talk, and convince them that it's true.
- Brainstorm some ideas that show how we, as a Mini Vinnies group, make sacrifices for others

# 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
A bowl that will withstand flame  
Matches  
Pieces of paper  
Pens

## Teacher's Notes

- The woman who anointed Jesus' feet had been forgiven many sins and so felt great love for him
- We all commit sins and God will forgive us if we ask him
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a good way for us to ask for God's forgiveness
- We are also called to forgive others when they hurt us
- Burn the prayers to show that all have been forgiven and that the sin no longer exists

## 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon, I have something to say to you."  
"Tell me, teacher," he said.*

*"Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven." He said to him, "You have judged rightly."*

**Luke 7:40-43**

### Activity

- Write a prayer asking for forgiveness and place it in the bowl provided (your teacher will then burn the prayers to show that you have been forgiven)

Some things to think about...

- Jesus forgives us for our sins
- He also asks us to forgive others who hurt us
- If Jesus forgives someone for a lot of sins then they will be very grateful

# Birth of John the Baptist

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper  
pens/textas  
or a board and markers

## Teacher's Notes

- The three birthdays celebrated in the Church year have one thing in common – all three people were born free of Original Sin. The day we celebrate Mary's birthday on is called the Immaculate Conception. This refers to the fact that Mary was conceived and born without original sin. Jesus, being God, was also born without original sin, but that can be expected. The other birthday we celebrate, John the Baptist, is the other miracle – he also, was born without original sin.
- In the Old Testament a prophet was someone who used to spread God's message and teach the people about Him. They were also able to predict things that were yet to happen. John the Baptist had a specific job – he had to teach people how to repent for their sins and be forgiven. In other words, to be baptised and to try and be a better person.
- We can all be prophets (teach people the message of God) by the way we act. If we are a good example, and live our lives the way God wants us to, we are teaching those around us through actions, rather than words. Ideas can be for school or at home.
- Examples include:
  - Respecting teachers and obeying instructions
  - Being nice to other kids, especially ones who might get teased at school, or who might not have many friends
  - Being respectful and well-behaved when we're at a school Mass.
  - Being helpful at home, and doing chores for Mum and Dad when we'd rather watch TV or play.



# Birth of John the Baptist

*The time came for Elizabeth to have her child, and she gave birth to a son; and when her neighbours and relations heard that the Lord had shown her so great a kindness, they shared her joy.*

*Now on the eighth day when they came to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother spoke up. 'No,' she said 'he is to be called John.' They said to her 'But no one in your family has that name', and made signs to his father to find out what he wanted him called. The father asked for a writing tablet and wrote 'His name is John.' And they were all astonished. At that instant his power of speech returned and he spoke and praised God. All their neighbours were filled with awe and the whole affair was talked about throughout the hill country of Judaea. All those who heard of it treasured it in their hearts. 'What will this child turn out to be?' they wondered. And indeed the hand of the Lord was with him. The child grew up and his spirit matured. And he lived out in the wilderness until the day he appeared openly to Israel.*

**Luke 1:57-66**

Some things to think about...

- Out of all the feast days in the Church year, only three of them are celebrating the birth of someone: the birth of Jesus Christ, which is Christmas Day; the birth of Mary, known as the Immaculate Conception; and this one, the birth of John the Baptist.
- What would they all have in common? (Hint: it has something to do with the name of the day we celebrate Mary's birthday)
- John the Baptist was a prophet. What was the job of a prophet and in particular, the job of John the Baptist?
- We in Mini Vinnies can be prophets, too. We can spread the message of Christianity by leading a good example in how we act and live our lives.
- What's a way we can lead by example?

## Activity

- As a group, come up with some ideas for all of the Mini Vinnies members to put into practice – ways of leading by example. One suggestion could be how we treat other kids at school, for example, being nice to people who we don't normally hang out with, or who might get teased at school.
- Brainstorm some ideas on butcher's paper or the board, and get each person to pick one. Put a deadline on it, and get people to report back on how they went at the next Mini Vinnies meeting.

# 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper  
Pens

## Teacher's Notes

In the second reading this week St Paul is urging the faithful at Galatia to remain faithful to their true calling as Christians. He is imploring them to remember that they are free and as such they live in the freedom of the Spirit. What does it mean to be free? This is different for each person, but normally evokes images of peace, no pressures and the ability to do what one likes. What does living in the freedom of the Spirit mean? It means living according to the one simple law of loving your neighbour as yourself.

# 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.*

*So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

**Galatians 5: 13-18**

Some things to think about...

- St Paul talks about being free, but using our freedom to serve one another in love.
- What does serving one another in love mean to you?
- What do you think that the people in Galatia (who the letter was written to by St Paul) felt when they read the letter? Do you think they thought that serving one another in love sounded difficult?

## Activity

- Think up 5 things you could do to serve someone in love. These 5 things might be something you wouldn't normally volunteer to do like:
  - Hanging the washing on the line for Dad,
  - playing with your little brother or sister when they are cranky and Mum is really tired
  - sitting with someone in class who has no friends
  - forgiving someone who has hurt you
  - telling the truth about something even though it might get you in trouble

Think of 5 of your own, you can use a couple of the examples if you can't think of 5!

**FIVE WAYS I WILL SERVE IN LOVE:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper  
Pens

## Teacher's Notes

In this week's Gospel the key message is about mission and being sent forth. There is a secondary message of hospitality also in the passage. It is interesting to reflect on how we would welcome the stranger in our lives. This doesn't necessarily mean how we would welcome a stranger turning up on our door step – but in any situation where we are called to respond with hospitality, generosity and kindness to those who we do not know. Would the stranger be shaking the dust of our suburb off their feet or would they be lovingly welcomed?

## 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.*

*"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.'*

**Luke 10: 1 – 11**

Some things to think about...

- Who is the stranger in your life? (This could be a new child in your class, or a new child living next door, it could also be a cousin or relative who you don't know well.)
- How do we treat strangers? How would you like to be treated if you were a stranger?
- In your Mini Vinnies group how do you welcome people who are struggling to fit into your school community?

### Activity

- Think about a time in your life when you haven't welcomed the stranger.
- Draw a picture of this moment. Now draw a picture of what would have happened if you had welcomed the stranger.

# 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Students to role play the story

## Teacher's Notes

- This week's Gospel reading is the well known Good Samaritan parable. In this parable, Jesus is asked "Who is my neighbour?" and he sends us a clear message that it is through helping the stranger who has been injured and left for dead that we become a neighbour in Christ. We don't do it through the practice of rituals or through belief, but rather by reaching out to the needy, the outcast, the vulnerable. Being a neighbour to someone is not limited to family relations or proximity. It is showing the love of God to all who are in need, whoever they may be and wherever they may be. True 'neighbourliness' and love is put into action.
- The choice of a priest and a Levite as the first two men who pass by the robbed victim is revealing because both are men of the Book, closely related to temple life, to the belief and faith of Jesus' time. The priest was highly respected and in the upper classes of society. Priests were supposed to be ritually clean, and models of the law. There would be immediate shame and embarrassment suffered should he touch the unclean stranger on the street. Furthermore, in addition to the humiliation involved, the process of restoring ritual purity was time consuming and costly. Similarly, the Levite is also a man of the Book, who was of a lower social class and served as an assistant to the priests in the temple.
- The choice of the Samaritan, on the other hand, completely contrasts with the first 2 men. The Samaritan was not of the Book, not part of Temple life, not part of the Jewish society at all. He was quite literally a heathen—he does not believe what Jesus does, has not learned what Jesus has, and does not worship as Jesus does. In fact the Samaritan was an outsider, an outcast and one who was hated by the Jews. But he is chosen by Jesus for this parable precisely because of these qualities.
- In the story, the priest and the Levite walk by the fallen stranger, refusing to help him. It's possible that they were afraid to help the stranger, as the Jericho road is a dangerous road. It's a winding, meandering road, conducive for ambushing. In the days of Jesus it came to be known as the Bloody Pass. It's possible that the priest and the Levite looked over that man on the ground and wondered if the robbers were still around. It's possible that they felt that the man was merely faking he had been robbed and hurt, in order to lure them over there for quick and easy seizure. Jesus does not give their reasons.
- The Samaritan, on the other hand, stops to help the fallen stranger, spending his own money without repayment, using his own time to make arrangements. By declaring the Samaritan a neighbour, Jesus shows us that it is his act of compassion and generosity which promote him to that level, and nothing else. The faith and ritual cleanliness of the priest and Levite is not enough to make them 'neighbour' in Jesus' eyes. He has elevated someone considered NOT of the faith to the status of neighbour, while specifically chastising people of the faith for not behaving in a faithful manner.

# 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test Jesus and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.*

*But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'*

*Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbour to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

**Luke 10: 25-37**

Some things to think about...

- The priest and the Levite were well respected men in Jesus' time and in positions of authority. Why do you think they did not stop to help the injured man?
- The Samaritan was considered an outcast by the Jews and hated by them, yet he stopped to help the injured man. Why do you think Jesus chose the Samaritan, a person hated by the Jews, to be the hero of his story?
- Jesus does not say who the injured man is, what position he has in society or what nationality he is. The man could be any person. So, who does Jesus say is our neighbour?
- What does it mean to be someone's neighbour?

## Activity

- Imagine the Good Samaritan story taking place in modern day times—perhaps in your local community or in your school.
- Identify:
  - Who would be the Priest?
  - Who would be the Levite?
  - Who would be the injured man?
  - Who would be the Good Samaritan?
  - Would the Good Samaritan take the injured man to the inn or somewhere else?
- Role play the Good Samaritan in modern day times.

# 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Candles  
Prayer cloths  
Quiet music

## Teacher's notes

As Christians we are called to Love God and Love people. The story of Mary and Martha shows the two different sides of this:

- Mary—Who sits at Jesus' feet and listens to him speak
- Martha—Who is rushing around working and serving

Our time spent in reflection and prayer allows us to be more focused and achieve more to help people when we are out in the world helping people. As Christians we are called to do both of these.

Our service of the poor and disadvantaged in our community is when we are like Martha.

Our time when we sit and reflect and get into the presence of God is like Mary in this story. A balance of both will enable us to live a fulfilling life.



# 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*As they continued their journey he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary (who) sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."*

**Luke 10:38-42**

## Some things to think about...

- When you look at the story of Mary and Martha which do you feel most like?
  - Mary—who sits at Jesus' feet and listens to him speak
  - Martha—who is rushing around working and serving
- As Christians we are called to do both of these. Our service of the poor and disadvantaged in our community is when we are like Martha.
- Our time when we sit and reflect and get into the presence of God is like Mary in this story.
- A balance of both will enable us to live a fulfilling life.

## Activity

In our work as Mini Vinnies we are often similar to Martha as we serve our community. However, we need to be careful that we spend time getting into the presence of God and spend time praying.

Step 1: Create an atmosphere of prayer in the room, light some candles, lay out some prayer cloths and play some quiet background music

Step 2: Spend about 5 minutes writing a prayer silently or saying a prayer. You can pray for the people in your family, your friends, anyone who is sick that you know, the people that your Mini Vinnies group assists or for any dreams or fears you have at the moment. Ask God to be with you in everything you do, so that your life may be a constant prayer to him.

Step 3: When the quiet time is over share your prayer with the rest of your group if you feel comfortable.

# 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Hand template

## Teacher's notes

- In this scripture the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. After telling them how to pray Jesus begins to speak to the disciples about persistence. He uses a story to help us understand what he means.
- In the story he talks about a man who needs some assistance but his friend is comfortable and settled and does not want to be inconvenienced by his friend. However the friend really needs help so he continues to ask for the man's help. Because of his persistence the man receives what he needs.
- When we serve the poor we are being Gods hands and feet in the world. Sometimes we may find ourselves in the situation of being the voice for the poor. It may feel like people are very comfortable in their world and do not want to be disturbed but if we keep persisting they will realise the urgency and the need.

# 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*He was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test." And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,' and he says in reply from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.' I tell you, if he does not get up to give him the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence. "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the holy Spirit to those who ask him?"*

**Luke 11: 1 – 13**

Some things to think about...

- When we are unsure of things we can ask Jesus to teach us just like the disciples did.
- In our work as Mini Vinnies we may come across people that need help but we are not sure how we can help them. If we ask Jesus to show us how to help in this situation we will be able to do what is best for the person.
- Sometimes when we are working to help people we may not see a change straight away but if we have patience and persistence it will make a difference.
- By helping people as Mini Vinnies we are able to be God's hands and God's Feet.

## Activity

- Collect a cut out hand and write down something you know that one of your family members needs or has asked for. This needs to be something you can give or provide yourself, for example a hug when they are sad, some help with the dishes etc.
- Try to do the things that you have written down for your family member. After the week is over discuss the response of the people who you have assisted.



# 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Pens  
Paper

## Teacher's Notes

- Vincent de Paul tried to make his actions reflect God's presence in his life. Vincent was sometimes described by colleagues as being harsh and sharp, something that he always sought to change through prayer and effort.
- “ During one intense period of prayer, Vincent threw himself on God's mercy, recognising at last that only God's power could calm his harshness and ease his sharp mood swings. At the same time, he acknowledged that the process of conversion would also involve a large dose of self-discipline.

Many years later, Vincent recounted this crucial moment:

“I turned to God and earnestly begged him to convert this irritable and forbidding trait of mine. I also asked for a kind and amiable spirit. And with the grace of Our Lord, by giving a little attention to checking the hot-blooded impulses of my personality, I have been at least partly cured of my gloomy disposition” (Louise Abelly, The Life of Vincent de Paul).

# 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

*Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

*When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory. Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator.*

**Colossians 3:1-5, 9-10**

Some things to think about...

- This week's bible readings talk about "old selves", (earthly selves) and "new selves" - (heavenly selves)
- The bible encourages Christians to put on "new selves", to try to live their lives as a window into God's own character!

## Activity

- In the boxes below:
- In the top box, write a list of words to describe our "old self" - evil things that we should do our best to avoid. Things like being greedy or being mean to others.
- In the bottom box write a list of words to describe our "new self" - good things that we should try to do as much as possible to reflect our life with God. Things like being nice to others and forgiving others.
- Think about how you "put on your new self" by acting in a Godly way this week!

Old Self
New Self

# 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Pens  
Paper

- This reading is all about faith
- The best examples of persevering faith can be seen in the stories of the Saints, but can also be seen in the story of Abraham which is outlined in this passage
- Basically this reading is saying that if one has true faith, then he/she will also have the endurance to stand firm in his/her faith. Those who have faith are confident and assured that God will accomplish everything that he has promised
- Faith involves three things: Assurance, Conviction & Approval.
  - Consider the opposites. The opposite of assurance is doubt. The opposite of conviction is uncertainty. And the opposite of approval is disapproval. If you want to have in your life: doubt, uncertainty and disapproval, no faith in God is required for those results. Do nothing in response to God; ignore the gospel, and you will have doubt, uncertainty and disapproval in your life.
  - On the other hand, if you want assurance, conviction and approval, you must have faith in God. Most people want assurance, conviction and approval, yet they are not willing to find these results by the activity of faith in God. We should associate these things with faith and seek them..

# 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Faith is the realisation of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. Because of it the ancients were well attested.*

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise; for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and maker is God. By faith he received power to generate, even though he was past the normal age--and Sarah herself was sterile--for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy. So it was that there came forth from one man, himself as good as dead, descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore. All these died in faith. They did not receive what had been promised but saw it and greeted it from afar and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth, for those who speak thus show that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land from which they had come, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better homeland, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name." He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol.*

**Hebrews 11:1-2 & 8-19**

## Something to think about

1. Have a discussion with your Mini Vinnies group about 'faith' and what it means. Think of examples of things that you 'have faith' in.
2. Discuss the term 'faith in God'. What does "faith in God" mean to you? Think about examples of how you can show your faith in God.

## Activity

- Write the word 'FAITH' vertically, down the side of a page. Using each letter from this word, write 5 sentences on ways that you can show your faith in God

e.g. Follow the 10 commandments, Always forgive others, Involve myself in mini vinnies etc...

# 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Two posters and discussion questions

## Teacher's notes

- How often do we argue with our friends, siblings and parents? We see teachers, nurses, doctors, politicians arguing for people's rights. But why?
- In this week's Gospel Jesus tells people that he is not here to bring peace but to create division.
- What would the world be like if people didn't talk about their problems? How would we know if we are doing the right thing? How would we know if people were having trouble or suffering?
- Change occurs through questioning, discussions, arguing and sometimes through conflict of opinion. People talked about Jesus and what he did, and people began to gather together to follow Jesus' teachings. They questioned what they believed, thus creating the Christian Church.
- Politicians are often in disagreement of the way the government should be run, how people should be paid and how to look after the environment. By questioning the way things are we may find a better way that helps more people.
- This is exactly what Frederic Ozanam and his friends did. They asked the question, 'Why is Social Justice (service to others) and the Church separate?' Frederic and his friends believed that they worked hand in hand. They were involved in some conflict and arguments, and in the end they created an organisation of Catholics that did Social Justice Works, combining their faith and serving the poor.
- So sometimes we need to argue and create conflict to draw people's attention to situations of injustice.



# 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*"I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!"*

*Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."*

**Luke: 12:49-53**

## Some things to think about...

- The Holy Spirit is often symbolised as a flame or fire of passion within us. We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit at baptism.
- Jesus has already been baptised by his cousin John the Baptist. The baptism that Jesus is referring to is his death, resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples at Pentecost.
- Often in our families we disagree or are divided about what TV show to watch or what food we like; this doesn't mean that we do not love each other. God granted us the gift of choice, the ability to think. God created each of us in our own unique way. If we were all the same would we fight, disagree or have original ideas?

## Activity – Agree or Disagree

- Make two posters. One "Agree" and the other "Disagree".
- Place posters at opposite ends of the classroom. You teacher will ask your class to gather in the centre of the room.
- Your teacher will read out a statement. If you agree with the statement then you should move towards the "Agree" sign. If you disagree with the statement then you should move towards the "Disagree" sign. If they neither agree nor disagree then you may choose to stay in the middle of the room.
- The teacher will read one statement at a time. The teacher may ask you to explain why you are standing where you are, to explain your choice.
- The teacher will also give you a chance to move position after you listen to a couple of people explaining their choices.
- Suggested discussion statements:
  - The School Canteen should provide healthy food.
  - Students should be allowed to wear casual clothes not the school uniform.
  - All Government Housing estates should be demolished and residents be placed in houses in a variety of different suburbs.
  - Nobody should have to pay tax.

# 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper  
Pencils & textas

## Teacher's Notes

- The Jews questioned Jesus about the Kingdom of God. He tells them that it is not only the Jews who will be admitted to the Kingdom and that some Jews will find themselves left out of the Kingdom if they do not follow Jesus' teachings.
- Jesus describes the entry to the Kingdom as a narrow gate that is difficult to enter
- We enter the Kingdom of God by doing what God wants us to do
- All people are welcome to enter the Kingdom of God if they want to follow Jesus' teachings.
- Being a child of God means being someone who brings love and peace into the world
- We can be a part of the Kingdom of God here and now by living as God wants us to
- The Kingdom of God can be described as God's intention for the world, and that intention is that we live in love with each other.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*He passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few people be saved?" he answered them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then here will you stand outside knocking and saying, "Lord, open the door for us." he will say in reply, "I do not know where you are from." And you will say, "We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets." Then he will say to you, "I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evil doers!" And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. And people will come from the east and the west and the north and the south and will recline at table in the Kingdom of God.*

*For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.*

**Luke 13:22-30**

Some things to think about...

- What will the Kingdom of God look like?
- How will you feel when you get to the Kingdom of God?
- Who will be in the Kingdom of God?

### Activity

- Answer the three questions below by drawing or writing.

# 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Pens  
Paper

## Teacher's Notes

- Being charitable to people in need is a big part of our lives, not just as Mini Vinnies members, but as human beings and particularly as Catholics.
- God has given us many examples of how to live our lives, and in particular how to behave towards other people. The 'least of his people' are those who are struggling for whatever reason, and those who may not be of a high social station. These are the people that God wants us to look after. By loving them, we love God.

# 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Response: God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.*

The just shall rejoice at the presence of God,

They shall exult and dance for joy.

O sing to the Lord, make music to his name;

Rejoice in the Lord, exult at his presence. R

Father of the orphan, defender of the widow,

Such is God in his holy place.

God gives the lonely a home to live in;

He leads the prisoners forth into freedom. R

You poured down, O God, a generous rain:

When your people were starved you gave them new life.

It was there that your people found a home,

Prepared in your goodness, O God, for the poor. R

## Psalm 67

Some things to think about...

- The people that God especially looks after are the people in need: those who are sick, those who are poor, and those who are lonely or abandoned. What does this tell us about how we should act towards people in need?
- Who are the people that Vinnies looks after?
- God is showing us how we should treat others in this psalm, so we should make sure we are always caring to those in need.

## Activity

- Jesus said, "I was in prison and you visited me, I was sick and you visited me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger (I was strange, I was different), and you welcomed me." He also said, "Whoever welcomes one of these little ones in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the Father".
- Come up with a list of people you know that you could do something for. It could be something really simple, and it could be your family.
- Write a sentence to remind yourself of what you aim to do and when, so that you can keep track. Eg, this week I will help Mum/Dad wash up after dinner. Or tomorrow at lunch time I will make sure someone who doesn't have many friends is included in our game.
- Say this prayer every day:

Dear Jesus, please help me to love you more, by loving the least of your people, the people in need. Amen.

# 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Large sheets of paper  
Pens and pencils

## Teacher's Notes

- The people Jesus was talking to in this passage were used to obeying and honouring their parents, so what he said must have been a shock.
- Jesus was emphasising that nothing should get in the way of following him
- A disciple is one who learns from a teacher
- A follower of Jesus must be ready to make a full commitment to Jesus
- We are a disciple when we treat those around us with care and respect.
- Sometimes being a disciple means making a sacrifice, it means putting others needs before our own eg helping Mum tidy the house rather than watching my favourite television show

## 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Great crowds were travelling with him, and he turned and addressed them, "If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, 'This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.' Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms. In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple."*

**Luke 14:25-33**

### Activity

- On a large piece of paper draw a large cross and cut it out. Then draw on the cross symbols of what you will give up in order to follow Jesus

Some things to think about...

- Jesus said we must hate our family to follow him, which sounds extreme, but what he meant was that nothing should come in between us and loving him.
- Jesus is asking us to love him in a way which sometimes may mean doing things we don't want to or giving things up that we like.

# 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper  
Pens

## Teacher's Notes

- These verses describe the finding of three different 'lost items', and the joy and celebration that resulted from them being found. The passage begins by stating that tax collectors and sinners were close to Jesus. This shows us that Jesus was an approachable man who didn't discriminate when he chose his friends.
- An important thing for the children to understand is that because God loves them, he will let them go their own way – he will not force his will onto anyone. God did not make us to be his robots. He could have made us so that we always do the things that he wants us to do. But God doesn't want our forced obedience, he wants us to love and worship him of our own free will. In the end it is up to each person whether they choose to enter into a relationship with God or not.



## 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Then he said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.*

**Luke 15:11-32**

Some things to think about and discuss:

- Jesus was not afraid to be seen 'hanging out' with the most disliked people. Why do you think that is?
- Can we learn something from this to apply to our Mini Vinnies work?
- In the third story, do you think that the son deserved the treatment that he got when he returned home? If you were the father, would you have been able to do the same?

# 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time (Continued)

## Activity

1. Your teacher will read the following story to you.

A young woman had been seeing a psychiatrist. The doctor had established that she was a wife and mother of three children, and he asked, "Which of your three children do you love the most?" She answered instantly, "I love all three of my children the same." He paused. The answer was almost too quick. He decided to probe a bit. "Come, now, you love all three of your children the same?" "Yes, that's right," she said, "I love all of them the same." He said, "Come off it, now! It is psychologically impossible for anyone to regard any three human beings exactly the same. If you're not willing to be honest, we'll have to end this session." With this the young woman broke down, cried a bit, and said, "All right, I do not love all three of my children the same. When one of my three children is sick, I love that child more. When one of my three is lost, I love that child more. When one of my children is confused or in pain, I love that child more. And when one of my children is bad—I don't mean naughty, I mean really bad—I love that child more." Then she added, "Except for those exceptions I do love all three of my children about the same."

2. Do you think this story has any similarities to the bible passage. Discuss with your class.
3. Write down three things in your book that you have learned from the bible reading and short story.

# 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Star template on paper (below)  
Scissors

## Teacher's notes

- In our work in Mini Vinnies we are stewards of the money and products that are given to us by people.
- The people that donate to us are trusting us to use their money to assist the poor and needy in our community.
- In this parable vs. 10 says 'The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones.'
- If we as Mini Vinnies use the small amount of money and goods we are given to help people in a trustworthy manner people will see that and they will trust us with more. Then the more we have the more we can help the poor and needy.
- This does not just apply for money and donations it is also the same for time, responsibility, resource and anything else.
- If we as Vincentians or a Mini Vinnies group can prove that we are trustworthy with little we will be given much.

## 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Then he also said to his disciples, "A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.' The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.' He called in his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?' He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.'*

*Then to another he said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.' And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

**Luke 16: 1 – 13**

Some things to think about...

- What things have you been put in charge of (Stewardship) in your family, school and friendship group?
- In what ways can you improve the way you look after things that have been put in your care?
- With our work as Mini Vinnies the money we raise and the items we collect are for the poor and needy in our community.
- We as Mini Vinnies are stewards over the money and goods for the people that we help.

### Activity

Step 1: Collect a star from your teacher and cut it out from the paper

Step 2: You will now look after this star for a certain period of time. You need to make sure that your star doesn't get scrunched up or ripped or wrinkled – take very good care of it!

Step 3: After the period of time is complete discuss with your class how you cared for your star to make sure it was not getting damaged.



# 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Cardboard  
Pencils  
Pens  
Envelopes

## Teacher's notes

The Psalm from this weekend's readings is a challenge to support those who are most vulnerable in our community. It calls us to be an advocate for the poor, the downtrodden and the blind. Living in Australia sometimes it can be hard to relate to the people referred to in the psalm. Explain to the children that these people live in our community and that we can reach out to them. The following examples may help the children to think about the people behind the labels of "poor, blind etc".

- Someone could be blind with fear, because of a mental illness that keeps them house bound.
- Someone could be a prisoner to an addiction to alcohol, drugs or gambling.
- Someone could be starving for company – they may be living alone and be desperately lonely and have no friends or family that come visit.

Before the lesson do some research around the services that are in your local area. There may be a shelter for homeless men, or a Day Centre for people living with a mental illness. There may also be a nursing home near by. Any of these services would gratefully receive the cards made by the children. If you have trouble identifying an appropriate service in your area, please get in touch with your local Youth Coordinator whose contact details are on the back page of this guide.

## 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Response: Praise the Lord my Soul*

The Maker of heaven and earth,  
the sea, and everything in them—  
The Lord, who remains faithful forever.

He upholds the cause of the oppressed  
and gives food to the hungry.  
The Lord sets prisoners free,

The Lord gives sight to the blind,  
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,  
The Lord loves the righteous.

The Lord watches over the alien  
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,  
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

The Lord reigns forever,  
your God, O Zion, for all generations.  
Praise the Lord.

**Psalm 145: 6 - 10**

Some things to think about...

- We live in Australia which is a very lucky Country. Despite the fact that the majority of people in Australia live comfortable lives, there are many people in Australia living in poverty and struggling to survive from day to day.
- Have you ever met some one who was blind or a prisoner or who was starving?
- In our day to day lives we do not come into contact with people who are blind, in prison or starving. This does not mean that there aren't people struggling in our communities.
- Someone could be blind with fear, because of a mental illness that keeps them house bound.
- Someone could be a prisoner to an addiction to alcohol, drugs or gambling.
- Someone could be starving for company – they may be living alone and be desperately lonely and have no friends or family that come visit.
- These are the blind, prisoners and starving that we can assist in our community.

### Activity

- Get into groups of 3 or 4.
- Your group will be assigned someone who is experiencing a time of suffering in their life.
- Make them a card – draw a picture of whatever you feel would brighten their day a little.
- Write a message in the card letting them know you care for them and that you hope things improve for them.
- Let them know that you will be praying for them.
- Give the completed card to your teacher and they will forward them on.

# 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
White paper with Flame templates drawn on  
Red orange and yellow cellophane, glitter, wrapping paper and  
cardboard  
Glue  
Scissors  
Pencils and textas

## Teacher's notes

The second reading this week is about encouragement! St Paul writes to Timothy reminding him that he has received the Holy Spirit and that through the Holy Spirit many things which make us timid can be overcome. Encourage the children and assure them that it is OK and quite normal to feel overwhelmed, scared, or timid about certain things in our lives. It is our response to these feelings which is important. If we let the fear overtake us then it has won, however if we acknowledge the fear and then keep trying then we can accomplish things we didn't think we could!



## 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.*

**2 Timothy 1: 6 – 8, 13 - 14**

Some things to think about...

- What are you scared of?
- Do you feel timid in certain situations or with certain people?
- What seems like it is too big a hurdle to jump over?
- The Holy Spirit can guide us with love and self discipline so we are not scared or timid to speak up or do something which would otherwise be overwhelming!
- With the assistance of the Holy Spirit the things which scare us or make us timid get completely covered up!

### Activity

- Cut out a flame from a sheet of paper. In the middle of the flame write down the things or people you thought about that make you timid or scared.
- Once you have written all those things in the middle of the fire, colour over them with flames in orange, red and yellow. Cover them up entirely with your flames
- You may even be able to stick on some flame coloured red cellophane, glitter or card board. Make your flame look as fiery as you can!

# 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Papers and pens  
10 lollipops

## Teacher's Notes

This week's Gospel reading is sometimes known as the "Thankful Leper" in which only one of the ten lepers who were healed came back to thank Jesus. It is important to understand the context of this parable:

### *Lepers*

- Although the passage refers to 'virulent skin disease', it was most likely leprosy. Leprosy in Biblical times was a terrible thing. Once a person caught it, it was considered incurable and those diagnosed with leprosy were cast out from society. They were forced to live in caves, completely isolated from the village. They depended on family members or those in the village to have pity on them and bring them food.
- The loathing directed at lepers was not merely fear of the disease. Leprosy made a person ritually unclean. To touch a leper defiled a Jew almost as much as touching a dead person. In a sense, leprosy was a sign of God's disfavour.

### *Priests*

- The significance of Jesus' instruction to go to the priests, is that only priests, according to Jewish law, can declare a person healed of leprosy, clean and fit to re-enter society.

### *Samaritan*

- The surprise in this healing is that the only thankful leper is a Samaritan, a non-Jew. In Jesus' time, the Samaritan was an outsider, who was hated by the Jews, and yet he is chosen by Jesus as the 'hero' in this parable.

Some lessons to be learned from this parable:

- One central lesson of this story is that the healing occurred as they acted on Jesus' words. Jesus said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests," implying that they were healed. But it was as the lepers were going away that they were cleansed. If they had done a quick physical check to see if they were healed before heading off to the priests they never would have started. Had they disbelieved Jesus and laughed at his command, they wouldn't have been healed. The healing took place AFTER they obeyed. They believed Jesus, had faith, and received their healing as a result. Faith is exhibited in what we actually DO.
- All ten lepers realise they are healed, but only one comes all the way back to Jesus, praising God for his mercy in healing him. Notice the thankful leper's response. He throws himself at Jesus' feet as a sign of utter humility. A clear lesson is that Jesus values gratitude. Jesus is clearly angry at the ungratefulness of the nine lepers who didn't return. The message is that we should have a grateful heart and count our blessings. To be filled with thanksgiving is to recognise and give praise to God for the many gifts that fill our lives.

## 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Now it happened that on the way to Jerusalem he was travelling in the borderlands of Samaria and Galilee. As he entered one of the villages, ten men suffering from a virulent skin-disease came to meet him. They stood some way off and called to him, 'Jesus! Master! Take pity on us.' When he saw them he said, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.'*

*Now as they were going away they were cleansed.*

*Finding himself cured, one of them turned back praising God at the top of his voice and threw himself prostrate at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan.*

*This led Jesus to say, 'Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner.'*

*And he said to the man, 'Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.'*

**Luke 17:11-19**

Some things to think about...

- Your teacher will explain to you the importance of the different characters in the story. The lepers, Priests, Samaritan
- At what time did the lepers realise they had been healed?
- Why do you think they were healed?
- Why do you think 9 of them did not come back to thank Jesus?
- The Samaritan was considered an outcast by the Jews and hated by them, yet he came back to thank Jesus—a Jew. Why do you think Jesus chose the Samaritan, a person hated by the Jews, to be the hero of His story?
- What lessons does this story have for us?

### Activity

- Your teacher will explain that you have 10 lollipops which they would like to give away for free and they will select 10 students to collect them.
- Watch the people collecting the lolly pops from the teacher. What did they say to them?
- Think about all the things you have to be thankful for. Then list the gifts (both material and non-material) that God has given you for which you are grateful.
- What can you do to express your thanks to God?

# 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper and pens

## Teacher's Notes

- Frederick Ozanam was a great campaigner for the rights of the marginalised in society. He did a great deal of writing and lobbying for the rights of unskilled workers, galley slaves, the elderly and people with mental illness.
- Today, as members of the St Vincent de Paul Society, we must be concerned with people's rights, justice and causes of poverty at the same time as treating the symptoms of poverty.
- We must also be careful never to take away the rights of the people we help. We should fight for their rights, and do our best to stop other groups taking away their rights, such as big institutions, government policy etc.

## 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Then he told them a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart.*

*'There was a judge in a certain town,' he said, 'who had neither fear of God nor respect for anyone.*

*In the same town there was also a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, "I want justice from you against my enemy!"*

*For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, "Even though I have neither fear of God nor respect for any human person, I must give this widow her just rights since she keeps pestering me, or she will come and slap me in the face."*

*And the Lord said, 'You notice what the unjust judge has to say?*

*Now, will not God see justice done to His elect if they keep calling to Him day and night even though He still delays to help them?*

*I promise you, He will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of man comes, will He find any faith on earth?'*

**Luke 18: 1–8**

### Activity

- For each group/person write down some of the questions you think Jesus would have challenged them with e.g. 'Why should I respect my enemies?'
- Write your own 3-5 Commandments about how we should respect the rights of others in our school community and Mini Vinnies group

### Some things to think about

- Think of three groups in our society who abuse the rights of others and ignore their natural justice.

# 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper and pens  
Or whiteboard and markers

## Teacher's Notes

- Ask the students if they know anyone (they could be famous) who thinks a lot of themselves. Ask what they like/dislike about that person.
- Remind students of the story about Jesus washing the disciples' feet, and how He told everyone that he came 'not to be served, but to serve'. That's the attitude that we should have, and should guide how we act towards other people. Go over the Vinnies mission statement – it talks about our service to the poor. We serve those in need.
- There is a story about Mother Teresa: her order had a visiting dignitary who wanted to help. When she was asked to do some chores, she complained about doing some jobs, like cleaning the toilets. Mother Teresa responded by going and doing the job herself. The visitor saw that if someone as special as Mother Teresa could do a job that gross, then she certainly could.
- If the students struggle with the brainstorming activity, provide some prompts:
  - Having a big ego: telling people all the time how good you are at certain things; not doing jobs because you think they are gross, or below you; always putting your hand up to do things and not letting other people have a go; not talking to or being nice to some people because you think they are different, or not as popular as you and your friends.
  - Having self-respect: Being humble doesn't mean you put yourself down all the time, or don't respect yourself – but you don't brag about your achievements, and you do things for other people when you might not want to, as long as it's the right thing to do. Ask God for help, and go regularly to confession, and you'll know that you're doing the right thing.



Mother Teresa cradling an armless baby orphan at her order's orphanage in Calcutta, India, 1978

# 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else, 'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust and adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get." The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'*

**Luke 18: 9-14**

## Activity

- Generally, in our society, people who big note themselves, or talk themselves up, are considered to be not very nice. As Mini Vinnies members, we should make a real effort to be generous and not selfish. We should try to do things for God.
- On a big piece of paper or on the board, brainstorm some examples of the two different characteristics: having self-respect, and having a big ego. Compare the two lists. Which list would be an example of a better person?
- Think of someone who you might not like very much. Are you nice to them? Do you make them feel appreciated or loved? Make a conscious effort to be nicer to that person, and you will be doing what God wants us all to do.

## Some things to think about...

- Paying tithes on everything was sort of like paying a tax, or paying a percentage of what you had to help support the church.
- A 'grasping' person is one who is greedy, and not generous with what they have.
- Exalted means raised up, held in high esteem, dignified.

# 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper and pens or pencils

## Teacher's Notes

- This reading is about conversion
- Conversion could be described as a profound change in one's belief system, as well as one's lifestyle – a change of heart that results in a change of living
- In this passage Zacchaeus, who is a wealthy tax collector, decides that he wants to meet with Jesus, and subsequently gives half of his property to the poor, and says that he will pay back anyone whom he has cheated fourfold
- St Vincent de Paul Conferences have a 'secret collection' at their meetings where members can give a share of their money to the poor and disadvantaged



## 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*He entered Jericho and was going through the town and suddenly a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man.*

*He kept trying to see which Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd;*

*so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way.*

*When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today.'*

*And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully.*

*They all complained when they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house,' they said.*

*But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.'*

*And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham;*

*for the Son of man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'*

**Luke 19: 1–10**

Some thing to think about...

- Why did Zacchaeus seek out Jesus, especially considering that he is described as a 'senior tax collector'?
- Do you think Jesus should have called Zacchaeus down from the tree and gone to his house?
- Do you think the other people who saw this were entitled to complain that Jesus "has gone to stay at a sinner's house"?
- Do you think Jesus forgave Zacchaeus for his sins? Why or why not?

### Activity

1. Draw a picture of Zacchaeus one week before he met Jesus. Read back through the passage for any hints on what he may look like (e.g. he was short, he was wealthy etc...)
2. Write different things about Zacchaeus before he met Jesus around the page. You will need to imagine what it would be like to be Zacchaeus. You might write things that you picked up from the passage like "He would have cheated people out of their money" and they also might write things based on speculation e.g. "He did not have many friends".
3. Draw a picture of Zacchaeus on another page one week AFTER he met Jesus. What would he look like now? In what ways would he be different?
4. Write different things about Zacchaeus after he met Jesus. They might write things such as "He helps lots of people".
5. Finally, as a whole class, discuss whether the 'before meeting Jesus' Zacchaeus was happier, or whether the 'after meeting Jesus' Zacchaeus was happier.

# 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Paper and pens or pencils

## Teacher's Notes

- St Paul had tremendous influence on the early Christian church and the shaping of modern Christian faith
- St Paul wrote letters to the early Christians to encourage them to continue to live good lives based on the gospel
- St Paul believed that Jesus loved all people and forgave our sins

## 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing that you do and say. Finally dear brothers and sisters, we ask you to pray for us. Pray that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honoured wherever it goes, just as when it came to you.*

*Pray too, that we will be rescued from wicked and evil people, for not everyone is a believer. But the Lord is faithful; He will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.*

*And we are confident in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we commanded you. May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes from Christ.*

### 2 Thessalonians 2:16—3:5

Some things to think about...

- St Paul was a great apostle and preacher
- He was encouraging the early Christians to follow Christ and do good.

### Activity

- Write a letter that you think St Paul would write to your Mini Vinnies group to encourage you.
- The letter could be titled “St Paul’s Letter to the Mini Vincentians”

# 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

Materials needed for the activity  
Pens

## Teacher's Notes

- This reading teaches us that events do not make up the big picture, events happen within the big picture.
- In this Gospel, Jesus shows this contrast between negative events and the positive big picture.
- Jesus predicts the temple will be destroyed, international wars, earthquakes, plagues etc. etc. - but the flip side of this is God's protection. Jesus protects His disciples. That protection will overcome all the odds, even death. All we need is patient endurance. That's the big picture

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

*And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be terrified, for this is something that must happen first, but the end will not come at once.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines in various places; there will be terrifying events and great signs from heaven. But before all this happens, you will be seized and persecuted; you will be handed over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and brought before kings and governors for the sake of my name and that will be your opportunity to bear witness.*

*Make up your minds not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated universally on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your perseverance will win you your lives.*

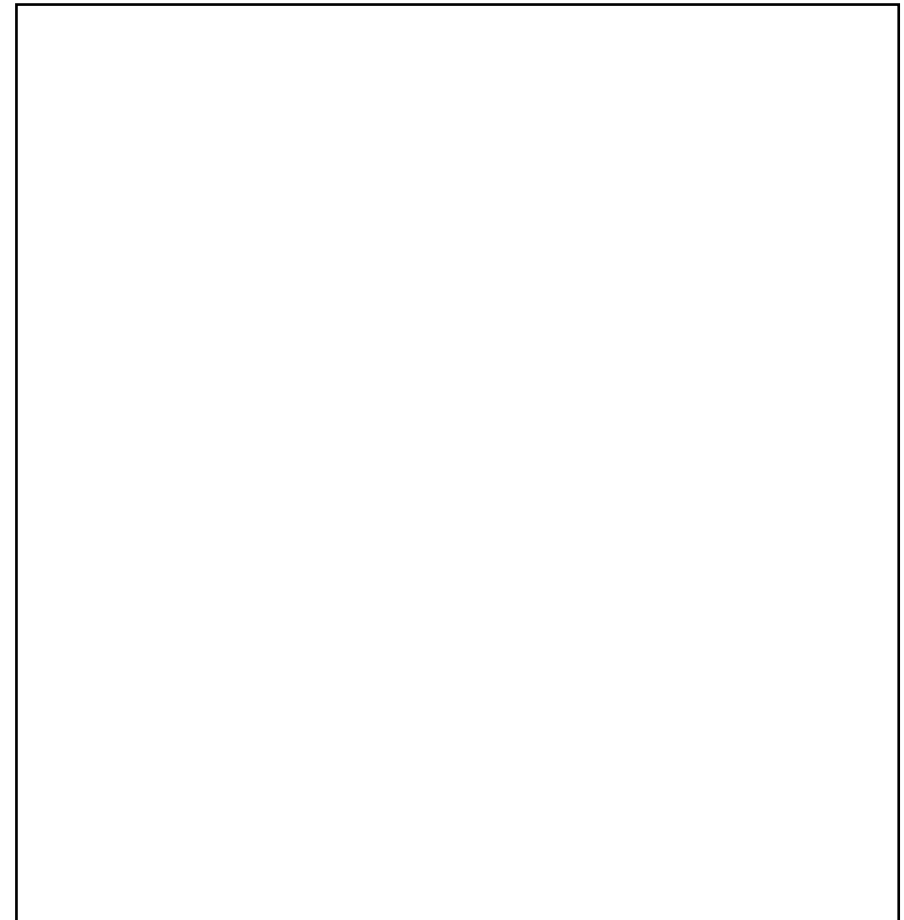
**Luke 21: 9-18**

Some things to think about...

- Jesus talks about catastrophes and horrible events, but he also encourages believers to realise that these events are not the whole story
- Although bad things will happen, God is there to comfort and protect us
- All we need is patience to endure

### Activity

- Draw a picture of a group of disciples, with bad things happening to them. Remember they are safe because of God's protection.



# Christ the King

Materials needed for the activity  
Pen and paper

## Teacher's Notes

In this week's reading, the Apostle Paul is writing to the Church in Colosse. Paul is sharing with the church the faithfulness of Christ and how he died so that we may have life in Him. These thoughts on Jesus are very important and are the foundations for our faith in Him. In the busyness of life we sometimes forget to be thankful for what God has given us and that we are able to help others. This scripture is a friendly reminder to the church in Colosse and us today to remember how much Christ loved us and what He endured for us.

This scripture talks about the many things Christ has done for us:

- He saved us
- He rescued us from darkness and brought us into light
- He has redeemed us
- He has forgiven our sins
- He created the world, everything and everyone in it
- He holds all things together and is the head of the church.
- He made peace in heaven and on earth

All by enduring death on the cross.

In our work as Vincentians we need to remember that Christ not only did these things for us but did them for every person that we assist and serve. And in helping these people we are able to show Christ love for them through our actions and deeds.

# Christ the King

*Giving thanks with joy to the Father who has made you able to share the lot of God's holy people and with them to inherit the light. Because that is what he has done.*

*It is He who has rescued us from the ruling force of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son that he loves, and in Him we enjoy our freedom, the forgiveness of sin.*

*He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers—all things were created through Him and for Him.*

*He exists before all things and in Him all things hold together, and He is the Head of the Body, that is, the Church.*

*He is the Beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he should be supreme in every way; because God wanted all fullness to be found in Him and through Him to reconcile all things to Him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, by making peace through his death on the cross.*

## Colossians 1: 12 – 20

Some things to think about...

As a class or small group discuss the following:

1. Good things that God has done to bless you and people around you.
2. Good things that you can do to help and assist others that are having a hard time.
3. In what ways we can as a class show God's love to others.



## Activity

- Individually write a prayer of thanks to God for all the good things he has done for you and for the opportunity you have to help others.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

# 1st Sunday of Advent

## Teacher's Notes

- The following activity may be traumatic or distressing for children who come from a refugee background. Please use your discretion to determine whether this activity is suitable for the children in your class. If it is not, please supplement with an alternate activity.
- In this week's Gospel we begin our journey of preparation for Jesus' coming at Christmas, but also his second coming when we meet him in heaven. Are we ready to see Jesus and prepared to follow his teachings? Do we have everything we need to face the challenges ahead of us?
- How can we prepare ourselves for when Jesus comes?
- This activity aims to help students relate to the challenges that refugees face and the courage they must possess to escape persecution and maybe even death. We live each day often without thinking about how fortunate we are.

### Materials needed for the activity

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| • Back pack        | • Pens                 |
| • Torch            | • Map                  |
| • Batteries        | • Water container      |
| • Grandma's ring   | • Matches              |
| • Cans of food     | • Mobile phone         |
| • Swiss army knife | • Blanket and clothing |

### Envelopes containing the following scenarios:

- EVENTS: road block, storm, arrive at a refugee camp etc
- ADVANTAGES: you speak two languages, find a stray horse.
- ACCIDENTS: you are arrested; you lose your back pack, etc
- You may choose to create your own.

Give the students a starting time and then hand out the envelopes at random intervals to different students in each of the groups. Encourage groups to discuss what each of them would do as they face the challenges in the envelopes.



# 1st Sunday of Advent

*As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into The Ark, and they suspected nothing till the flood came and swept them all away. This is what it will be like when the Son of man comes. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

**Matthew: 24:37-39, 42-44**

## Some things to think about...

Jesus often referred to a master or householder in his parables, this is because there were many people who were poor, slaves or worked for a master.

Jesus used parables to make the scriptures relevant to peoples' everyday lives.

In Jesus' time there was no email, telephones, postal service or homing pigeons, so it was difficult to predict when a person would arrive home from a long journey. So servants would have to be prepared at all hours for the arrival of their master. This is what Jesus is asking of us to be prepared when He comes, that could be today, tomorrow or next week.

## Activity - A refugee's journey

Refugees are people who are forced to leave their home, community, school, possessions and family because it is no longer safe for them to live there. Many refugees have to leave without much time to pack or prepare for the journey that they have to take.

- On the floor at the front of your classroom your teacher will place symbols of pens, torch, map, batteries, water container, grandma's ring, matches, cans of food, mobile phone, swiss army knife, blanket and clothing.
- Your teacher will then ask you to write down six of these items that you would pack into your backpack.
- Your teacher will break you into 4 groups. Your group will then begin a refugee family's journey, to survive the journey you will need to use what your group have chosen in your backpacks.
- Your teacher will place a series of events, advantages and accidents that your group will face along the journey in envelopes that they will give to you as your group journeys on.
- Your teacher will give you a timeframe for your journey.
- Be creative with the things in your backpack. How will they help you to get through the situations that you come across. For example; to get through the road block you can bribe the soldiers with grandma's ring (if you have it).

# 2nd Sunday of Advent

Materials needed for the activity  
Pens and paper

## Teacher's notes

- The St Vincent de Paul Society is a bit different from a lot of other charities, in that we are recognised by the Catholic Church as a lay Catholic organisation. All Vinnies members are following Jesus' example of caring for the poor, and focusing on living a life caring for others. That is what motivates them to offer their time and their skills.
- Vinnies members care for the poor primarily to deepen their faith, to gain a clearer understanding of the Gospel, of grace and of Christ's love for the world.

## 2nd Sunday of Advent

*And all these things which were written so long ago were written so that we, learning perseverance and the encouragement which the scriptures give, should have hope.*

*May the God of perseverance and encouragement give you all the same purpose, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that you may together give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one heart.*

*Accept one another, then, for the sake of God's glory, as Christ accepted you.*

*I tell you that Christ's work was to serve the circumcised, fulfilling the truthfulness of God by carrying out the promises made to the fathers, and His work was also for the Gentiles, so that they should give glory to God for his faithful love; as scripture says: For this I shall praise you among the nations and sing praise to your name.*

**Romans 15: 4 – 9**

Some things to think about...

- The reading tells us to accept one another for the sake of God's glory. Have you ever thought that accepting someone or being friendly to someone could affect God's glory?
- As Mini Vinnies members you are ambassador's of Jesus so the way you treat others reflects on Jesus- and does affect his glory!!

Activity

- Write a list of things that you could share with those who are less fortunate in our community.
- Write a prayer that you can use in a school liturgy remembering those less fortunate in our school community

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Materials needed for the activity  
Pink, purple and green pencils  
Photocopy of student's page

## Teacher's Notes

Baptism comes from the Greek word 'bapto' which means to wash, or immerse. Hence, it signifies the sacramental washing by which the soul is cleansed from sin at the same time that water is poured upon the body.

The next question brings up the discussion of suffering, and why we have it in our lives. Make sure that students understand what is meant by suffering.

Ask students if they have ever gone through something that has been really tough to handle – maybe they lost someone they loved, maybe they were really sick for a long time. Maybe a time when they didn't get to do something they really wanted to do and it was upsetting.

Explain that Helen Keller went through her whole life without being able to see and hear, and that she overcame these difficulties and learnt to communicate through sign-language and braille.

Suffering makes us stronger people. Maybe this was why John the Baptist wore uncomfortable clothes and ate simple food...

Explain that there are many different types of suffering, and that the people that the St Vincent de Paul Society help are all going through some form of suffering. Members of the St Vincent de Paul Society and Mini Vinnies are all helping to ease their suffering.

Ask students to think of other stories they've heard that involve someone suffering. Remind them of Mary, Jesus' mother, seeing her son treated the way Jesus was, and then seeing Him crucified.

Was Mary's ability to endure her son's death a story of the past, or does it speak to each of our lives today? All of us suffer and witness suffering. Each of us can decide to imitate Mary in our own lives, by reaching out in love and compassion to assist and comfort others who are suffering. At times this can be relatively easy, such as simply spending time with a friend who is suffering with a problem and may need someone to listen. At other times the witnessing of suffering may require much greater effort, such as when a loved one is dying from a painful illness. When our suffering is most intense, we can remember Mary in The Passion. Yes, it can be hard, and at times we may feel as Mary did that we can't go on. Yet Mary teaches us that through our love for others, rooted in our love for God and faith in the resurrection and power of God's grace, we have the strength and courage to persevere through any suffering the world presents.

Remind students that there are 3 purple candles, and one pink one. Explain that purple represents suffering (like in Lent, when we do penances) and that pink represents hope and rejoicing – we are hopeful about the coming of Christ, and happy about what it means.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

*In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said:*

*A voice cries in the wilderness:  
Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight.*

*This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

**Matthew 3: 1-11**

Some things to think about...

- Baptism is the first sacrament we receive as Catholics. What does it mean?
- When we are baptised, water is poured over our heads, and the priest makes the sign of the cross, saying that he baptises us in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This signifies that we are receiving a new spiritual life, and becoming part of God's family.
- Why would John the Baptist have worn uncomfortable clothes and eaten not very nice food?
- Helen Keller once said, "The world is full of suffering, but it is also full of overcoming it. Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved."
- We as members of Mini Vinnies, and the wider St Vincent de Paul Society family, are involved in the part of the world that is overcoming suffering. And not only are we helping people who are suffering, we're becoming better people because of it.

Activity

- We are in the third week of Advent. When colouring in the following picture, think about what the different colours of the candles mean. Last Sunday at Mass, Father lit the second purple candle. We have one more purple candle. Why is the fourth one pink, or rose coloured? To help prepare for Christmas, we should try doing something that we don't enjoy very much, like help wash the dishes or help clean the house, and make that time for Jesus. The best birthday present we could give Him is to spend time with Him.

## References

The Children's Lectionary Catholic Book Publishing Co. New York, 1993

El-hage, L, A Man for Our Times: the story of Frederic Ozanam, Mulgrave, 1999

National Council of Australia St Vincent de Paul Society, The Rule—Fifth Edition, Australia, August 2005

Reflections on the Life of Blessed Frederic Ozanam

St Vincent de Paul Society The Manual Sydney: 1991

St Vincent de Paul Society Ozanam and Us: 25 Spiritual Readings Victoria: 1995

St Vincent de Paul Society, Spiritual Reflection Guides October—December 2006

Tohill, Angela, Passion for Justice: a social justice teaching resource, Victoria: 2004

[www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au)