

# National Secondary School Conference Guide







# Contents

Introduction.....	4
Our patron saints.....	5
About the St Vincent de Paul Society.....	6
Home visitation and Special Works .....	7
Starting a Secondary School Conference...8	
Step 1: See .....	9
Step 2: Think .....	11
Step 3: Do .....	23
Key dates and contact details.....	28
Appendix .....	30



# Introduction

The National Secondary School Conference Guide has been created as a resource to assist you in starting a Vinnies Conference at your school.

## Why start a Secondary School Conference?

There are many benefits of starting a Secondary School Conference. As a student, you have an amazing opportunity to:

- make a real difference to the lives of people in your community
- meet like-minded people wanting to make a difference in your community
- put your faith into action
- participate in fun activities
- be a role model for others
- develop leadership skills which will prepare you for life after Secondary School
- expand your comfort zone.

## What is a Secondary School Conference?

A Secondary School Conference is a group of passionate students who are making a difference in their community by working on social justice issues and putting their faith into action. A school conference typically has between six to fifteen members ranging from year 7 to year 12 and typically meet once or twice a fortnight. It is important to remember that although you have formed a Secondary School Conference, you can always seek the support from other students in your school to assist with events!

**Conference** is a French word meaning “coming together”. A Conference is a group of people who get together on a regular basis to meet and discuss ways to address particular needs in their community.



# History



## Blessed Frederic Ozanam

The St Vincent de Paul Society was started in 1833 by Frederic Ozanam, a 20 year old law student at the Sorbonne University. Responding to the great poverty in the Paris of his day, he and a group of friends began visiting the homes of the poor, bringing practical assistance of food and firewood, as well as something less tangible - empathy and love. Frederic and his friends began meeting regularly and formed the first conference. They decided to adopt the name of the St Vincent de Paul Society after the patron saint of charities.



## Saint Vincent de Paul

Born into a poor family, Saint Vincent de Paul became a priest at the age of 19. He led an interesting life. At a young age, he was captured by pirates and sold into slavery. During this time, it was claimed he witnessed the terrible conditions in which slaves were forced to live. Upon becoming free, he had the opportunity to preach to the wealthy, but instead focused on spreading the Good News to people who were sick, orphaned, elderly, starving or abandoned. He was canonised (declared a saint) in 1737 and named the universal patron of Catholic charities in 1885.



## Saint Louise de Marillac

With St Vincent de Paul, Louise started the Daughters of Charity (an order of nuns) in 1642. The Daughters of Charity were a revolutionary order of the poor. They helped abandoned children, people who were poor and sick, wounded soldiers, slaves, people who were mentally ill and the elderly. Today, there are over 20,000 Daughters of Charity, and they continue to help people in need. Louise is the patron saint of sick people, widows and orphans, and in 1960, Pope John XXIII proclaimed her the Patroness of Social Workers.



## Blessed Rosalie Rendu

Jeanne Marie Rendu grew up during the French Revolution in 1789. She faced some tough times at an early age when her father and baby sister died and was forced to help her mother care for her two younger sisters. Jeanne's mother sent her to boarding school soon after. It was here she discovered the Daughters of Charity and was given the name Rosalie. As a Daughter of Charity, she opened a pharmacy, a school, an orphanage, a home for the elderly and a youth club. She became the "good mother of all Gods" and worked closely with Blessed Frederic Ozanam to perform 'good works' of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

# About the St Vincent de Paul Society

## Our Mission

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

## Our Vision

The St Vincent de Paul Society aspires to be recognised as a caring Catholic charity offering 'a hand up' to people in need. We do this by respecting their dignity, sharing our hope and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.

## Our values

### Commitment

Loyalty in service to our mission, vision and values.

### Compassion

Welcoming and serving all with understanding and without judgement.

### Respect

Service to all regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or political opinions.

### Integrity

Promoting, maintaining and adhering to our mission, vision and values.

### Empathy

Establishing relationships based on respect, trust, friendship and perception.

### Advocacy

Working to transform the causes of poverty and challenging the causes of human injustice.

### Courage

Encouraging spiritual growth, welcoming innovation and giving hope for the future.



## Our Logo

The St Vincent de Paul Society logo was designed by Australian sculptor, Tom Bass. It represents the hand of Christ that blesses the cup, the hand of love that offers the cup and the hand of suffering that receives the cup.



**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
*good works*



The hand of Christ  
blesses the cup



The hand of love  
offers the cup



The hand of suffering  
receives the cup

# Home visitation and Special Works

Home visitation is the core work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Home visits are carried out in pairs, with conference members providing support to people experiencing hardships by offering them food vouchers, clothing or furniture.

More importantly, our members offer emotional guidance to allow people to take control of their lives and continue the tradition established by Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

Special Works are a professional facility, program or service run by the Society and that service a need which cannot be met within the normal scope of a conference.

## Examples of Special Works in your Vinnies community may include:

- Clothing and Furniture Depot
- Household Formation and Support
- Migrant and Refugee Support
- Overseas Partnership and Development
- School Support Program
- Social Justice Advocacy
- Vinnies Retail Centres
- Vinnies Youth Programs
- Mental Health Support Services
- Homelessness Support Services



*Clothing and furniture depot*



*Vinnies Shops*



*Vinnies Youth programs*



*School support programs*



# Starting a Secondary School Conference

The actions of a conference generally involve a three step process\*:

## See

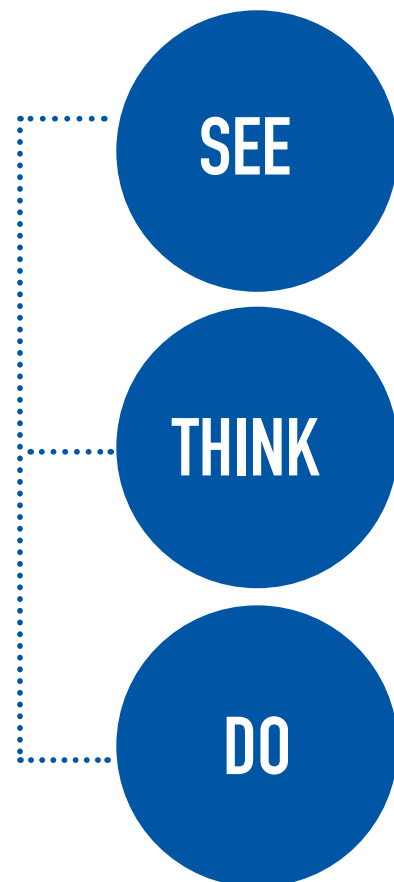
Make your conference aware of a social injustice.

## Think

Reflect on what can be done about this issue.

## Do

Put your faith into action by helping people experiencing this injustice.



*\*Joseph Cardijn was the founder of Young Christian Workers. He developed the "See Judge Act" method during his work with the YCW movement.*

*The "See Think Do" method outlined above has been derived from the "See Judge Act" method and we would like to acknowledge that the idea was based on Cardijn's method.*



# Step 1: See

To provide a **'hand up'** to those in need requires us to become aware of issues of social injustice. It is true that we cannot influence what we cannot see!

## Here are some simple steps to kick start your Secondary School Conference

- 1 Learn about social injustices in your community. A good place to start is to visit our website at [www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au) and go to ***Our Impact***
- 2 Another great idea is to research specific issues that spark your interest such as **homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, the stolen generation or housing affordability.**
- 3 Talk to your friends about what inspires them to **make a difference** and **share stories** you have witnessed or heard.
- 4 Make a list of all the people interested in your **conference.**
- 5 Talk to a teacher about starting a conference in your **school.**
- 6 Choose a teacher who has an interest in social justice, who has the time and who would be willing to support the group. A good person to talk to is your **Head of Religious Education.**
- 7 **Explain** why you want to start a Secondary School Conference (Hint: *The list of interested students will show the teacher that you have support*).
- 8 Contact your local **Vinnies Youth staff member** located at the back of this guide. They will be able to support you and your peers in setting up your conference.
- 9 **Seek approval** from your Principal or Head of Religious Education. Writing a letter or arranging to meet with the Principal during lunch is a great idea.



# Step 2: Think

This is an opportunity for your Secondary School Conference to come together once a fortnight to **'think'** about the social injustices in the world and how they might be alleviated.

Through spiritual reflection, engaging discussions, prayer and debate, you and your peers can reflect on how to help people facing hardships by aspiring to live the gospel message of Christ.

You will also need to **'think'** about how the Secondary School Conference will operate in order to achieve your Vinnies goals.

## Think about...Setting up a Secondary School Conference electronic file

As a guide, the file could have the following:

### Agendas

The agenda is a plan for how each meeting is to run and what you will be discussing. It is a good idea to email the agenda before the meeting so members are aware of what will be discussed and can add any items that have been left out.

### Minutes

The minutes are a record of the members attending, important points, ideas and comments made during each meeting.

### Contacts

This is a record of member contact details as well as the contact information for other people the group may work with, such as a Vinnies Youth staff member.

### Correspondence

This is where you keep all the emails received by the local conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society and other external people.

### Activities

This section is where you keep all your ideas and information from the group's activities. It may include what activities you have run, what happened, any problems and changes that need to be made before the next activity.

### History

The history section is where you can store information about your Secondary School Conference such as stories, photos or media about past events.

### Reflection

The reflection section is where you can keep your prayers or spiritual readings. It may include Bible readings, song lyrics, poems, stories – anything that conference members collect which offers inspiration. The Vinnies Youth Reflections Handbook is a great resource if you need ideas for reflections.

### Accounts

Keep track of all your collections and donations in this section.

### Miscellaneous

For all those extra bits that do not have a home.

This electronic file is the best way to stay organised and can easily be shared by **Dropbox** or **email**.

# Agenda

See page 32

## Vinnies School Conference Agenda

Conference:	St Mary's Conference
Meeting date:	5 February 2016

### Agenda item 1:

- Welcome and introductions or get to know you games

### Agenda item 2:

- Introduction to the St Vincent de Paul Society and Vinnies Youth school conference.

### Agenda item 3:

- Office Bearer job descriptions and election of Office Bearers.

### General business:

- Thank you to everyone for coming.
- Photo of Vinnies students at first meeting.

### Past action items:

N/A

### Office Bearer's reports:

N/A



St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

## Think about...

### Organising the first meeting

- Arrange a time, date and room for your meeting. Try to avoid changing this once the conference is set up to ensure continuity.
- Inform the Vinnies Youth staff member of the meeting details so that a representative of the St Vincent de Paul Society can attend.
- Advertise the details throughout the school at assemblies, in the daily notices and on posters throughout the school.
- Plan the agenda of the first meeting. Use the agenda sheet attached to this kit as a template (see page 32). Make sure you have an opening prayer and reflection ready and a clear list of agenda items.
- Give copies of the office bearers' role descriptions to interested students to read through before the meeting.



## Think about... Running the meeting

- Start the meeting on time.
- Say the opening prayer together.
- Take a moment to go through reflection as a group.
- In the first couple of meetings you may choose to play 'get to know you' games (icebreakers). You can also choose to run icebreakers when you have new members join the conference.
- Take an attendance of all conference members and record in the minutes (see minutes template on Page 34).
- Type up the minutes as the meeting progresses to save time. This task is usually assigned to the Secretary.
- Have a positive attitude and be respectful of other members' contributions.
- Stick to the agenda, talk through each agenda item as they come up. This will help the conference stay on track within the allocated meeting time.
- Make sure action items that have been completed are marked off the action sheet. Also use this to record action item progress and time lines of when they are due. This will help the conference ensure smooth planning and organisation is in place (see the action sheet template on Page 31).
- If necessary, decide on new action items and add them to the action sheet.
- Provide time for questions or new ideas but save chit-chat until after the meeting.
- Say the closing prayer together.
- Close meeting. Once the meeting has finished the minutes will be finalised and sent to all the members to confirm who attended, what was covered and any new ideas or questions raised.

The best time to run your Secondary School Conference meeting is **once a fortnight during lunch**. As time is limited, keep your meetings short and sharp but remember to still have fun!

### Prayer for the Society spirit

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

### Closing Prayer

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

# Vinnies School Conference

## Minutes

Minutes  
See page 34

Meeting date:	17 March 2016
Meeting commenced at:	12.55pm
Present:	Sally, Justin, Fiona, Trent, Claire and Miss Jones
Apologies	Jennifer

Opening prayers led by:	Fiona	
Reflection:	Title	<i>Who will speak if you don't?</i>
	Author	Mauty Haugen

**Agenda item 1:**  
Easter egg raffle. Justin suggested a display in the library with photos of past Vinnies Youth Buddies Days, to show people where the money was going to. All members supported this idea.

**Agenda item 2:**  
Commissioning ceremony. Miss Jones confirmed permission has been given to hold the assembly on 26 April. Will be discussed in more detail at next meeting.

**Agenda item 3:**  
None

**General business:**  
Fiona, Trent and Claire attended Buddies Day training at St Vincent de Paul Society head office on the weekend.

**Action items:**  
Harry - baskets; Justin - contact Vinnies Youth for photos from Buddies Day, everyone - read through commissioning ceremony template and be ready with ideas.

**Office Bearer's reports:**  
Treasurer Trent reported \$121 in account. Target for raffle is \$60. Secretary Claire copy of Vinnies Youth newsletter in file.

Closing prayer led by:	Sally
Next meeting date, time and location:	24 March, 12.55pm, Room 3
Meeting closed at:	1.23pm

## Think about...

### Becoming an Office Bearer

Office bearers are members of the Secondary School Conference who hold positions of leadership.

Taking on the role of an office bearer is a great way to develop life skills that will help you post-Secondary School while spending quality time with friends and working towards making a difference in your community. If you are a member of the conference and are willing to take on some responsibility, then you are eligible to be an Office Bearer.

You don't have to be a particular age or year group to get involved. It is also recommended that Office Bearers are rotated every year to provide other members the opportunity to give it their best in a new role. Office Bearers can also take the opportunity to mentor younger conference members so when the time comes they feel ready to step into an Office Bearer role continuing the good works of the conference into the future.

#### Office Bearers include:

##### President

The President is the leader of the conference and is responsible for its smooth running. The President should act like the captain of the team, encouraging all members to contribute to the best of their ability.

#### A good President:

- is passionate about social justice and the St Vincent de Paul Society
- creates a welcoming environment in the conference
- encourages unity in the group
- encourages participation by all
- makes sure the meetings are organised and interesting
- does NOT have all the answers, but draws on the strengths of all members
- keeps in touch with your Vinnies Youth staff member.

#### Duties:

- plans the agenda for each meeting with the secretary
- runs the meeting
- helps to resolve conference related issues or concerns
- organises activities to help members get to know each other (ice-breakers)
- talks with the Bailly (teacher) and/or other school staff as necessary
- follows up with members who have missed meetings
- delegates; encourage members to accept action items that are suited to their skills and talents
- sends a brief written report to the local St Vincent de Paul Society council or local Vinnies Youth staff member.



## Vice President

The Vice President is supportive of the President and takes on the role of President if they are ever absent from the conference meeting.

### A good Vice President:

- inspires others to join the conference
- supports the President in their duties
- is creative and generates new ideas
- inspires others to join the conference.

### Duties:

- runs meetings when the President is unavailable
- recruits new members to the conference (see page 25 for tips)
- ensures the good works of the group are followed up and actions are carried out
- organises the visits of guest speakers
- makes guest speakers feel welcome and show appreciation for their support
- coordinates the advertising of conference activities in school
- organises training of members.

## Secretary

The Secretary keeps the records of the conference and acts as an ambassador; communicating the good works with the wider community.

### A good Secretary:

- is organised and efficient
- is a good writer
- is aware of upcoming events
- is able to remind the group of decisions and activities needing following up
- feels comfortable getting in touch with and talking to new members.

### Duties:

- works with the President to plan the agenda for each meeting
- keeps minutes at each meeting (see sample minutes on page 15)
- makes sure the electronic Secondary School Conference file is current and organised
- prints off the necessary documents from the conference file for each meeting
- sends the minutes to every member after the meeting
- writes letters on behalf of the conference and makes sure all members are aware of upcoming events
- records the contact details of all conference members and sends a copy to the local Vinnies Youth staff member.

## Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for all the money raised and distributed by the conference.

### A good Treasurer:

- is trustworthy
- is good with numbers
- works closely with the Bailly.

### Duties:

- develops a budget for events and monitors expenditures
- organises floats at fundraising activities
- updates the conference on the running balance of money during meetings
- arranges donations from the conference to the St Vincent de Paul Society
- keeps an electronic record of all petty cash used.

“

Vincentians should never forget that giving love, talents and time is more important than giving money.

Nevertheless, the Society uses money and property to help relieve the suffering of those in need. The Society's funds must be handled with the utmost care, prudence and generosity. Money must not be hoarded.

”

*The Rule, National Council of Australia, 7th edition, Canberra, 2012, page 22.*



## Vinnies School Conference Recording monies

Date	Details	Credit	Debit	Balance
6 February 2016	Opening balance			\$0.00
2 March 2016	Free dress day	\$210.55		\$210.55
10 March 2016	Purchase of candles for conference meetings		\$2.00	\$198.55
5 May 2016	Vinnies fashion parade	\$55		\$253.55
1 June 2016	Sleepout food items		\$22	\$231.55
4 June 2016	Sleepout appeal money	\$420.20		\$651.75
28 June 2016	Hot drink ingredients		\$9.75	\$642.00
2 July 2016	Hot drinks stall	\$65.00		\$707.00
4 July 2016	Donation to winter appeal		\$600	\$107.00
10 October 2016	Christmas baskets		\$24	\$83.00
16 October 2016	Anti-Poverty Week collection	\$72		\$155.00
23 October 2016	Buddies Day donation		\$100	\$55.00
5 November 2016	Christmas Appeal collection	\$424.00		\$479.00
10 November 2016	Christmas Appeal donation		\$450.00	\$29.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1246.75</b>	<b>\$1217.75</b>	<b>\$29.00</b>



## All Members

If you are not an Office Bearer, you still play an important role in doing 'good works' in your Secondary School Conference.

### All members share the following duties:

- raise awareness about social injustices with the conference
- suggest activities that will make a difference in your community
- take turns to choose a reflection for each meeting
- spread the word about the school conference, and encourage interested students to attend a meeting
- recruit new members to the conference.

## Bailly

Today we call the teacher who assists a school conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society the Bailly, in recognition of the wisdom and guidance they bring to the conference.

### A good Bailly:

- offers advice to the conference members
- does not run the meetings or events, rather empowers and supports the students
- has knowledge of/interest in social justice and the St Vincent de Paul Society
- has knowledge of school policies and procedures
- is passionate about the school conference
- listens well
- maintains a positive working relationship with Vinnies youth staff and local conference.



**Emmanuel Bailly was the mentor of the first conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society.**  
When establishing the Society, Frederic sought advice and guidance from Bailly as the more senior and experienced member in the conference.

### Duties:

- encourages the spiritual formation of the conference members
- attends meetings as an observer
- offers advice when called upon
- assists the President with resolving issues or concerns if required
- links the conference with the school administration
- builds and maintains a relationship with the Vinnies Youth staff member or local conference
- assists members with choosing and focusing on one activity at a time, which incorporates the social, service and spiritual aspects of the conference

## Spiritual Advisor

The Spiritual Advisor is someone who has experience in leading groups in spiritual reflections. This is usually the Bailly but can be a student or a religious education teacher.

### A good Spiritual Advisor:

- encourages students to run spiritual reflections at every meeting
- supports students in the development of their faith
- teaches others about the Vincentian spirituality and is willing to learn more about it themselves
- networks with other school Spiritual Advisors and shares resources.



## Commissioning Ceremony

A good way to launch your Secondary School Conference is with a commissioning ceremony.

At a commissioning ceremony, new members (including new Office Bearers) are officially inducted into your conference. Members may wish to write a pledge for what they hope to achieve and read it to the group. At the ceremony, it is recommended that someone speak about the St Vincent de Paul Society mission and vision, and congratulate the members for getting involved.

The purpose of a commissioning ceremony is that it is a public acknowledgement for the people involved in your conference and a 'sending forth' of the members of the conference to help others.

You may have a commissioning ceremony at the start of each year, to welcome members who have joined the conference and to launch the group's activities for another year.

Your commissioning ceremony may take place at a parish Mass (if the conference is near a parish), during school assembly or simply in a classroom during lunch time.





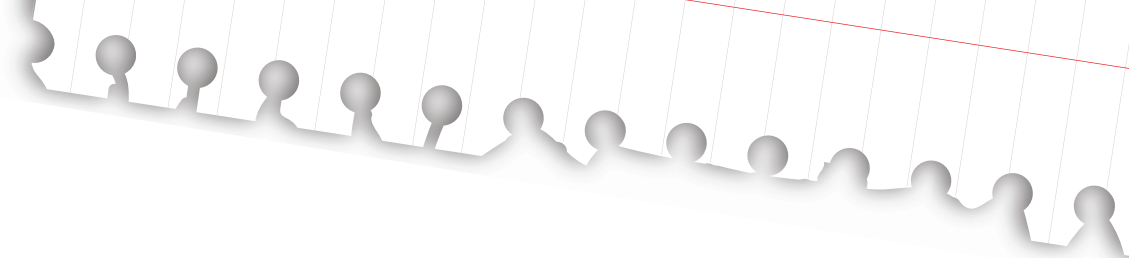
# Step 3: Do

This is your opportunity to put the **'Seeing'** and **'Thinking'** into action. **'Doing'** means undertaking a project that will make a difference in the lives of people who are facing challenging times.

In this way, you are following the vision of the St Vincent de Paul Society by providing a **'hand up'** to people in need, while encouraging them to take control of their own lives.

## Ideas for your Secondary School Conference

- Hold a social justice forum during lunch.  
*Let your community know about social justice topics and educate them on why they are unjust. Presenting at school assemblies or holding a lunch time role play is a fun and interactive way to draw a crowd. Topics to consider include the stolen generation, homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, bullying, asylum seekers and refugees.*
- Hold a parent-student trivia night at the school.
- Set up pop-up shops during winter and Christmas to collect much needed clothing for people who are homeless.
- Hold a Vinnies School Sleepout during winter.  
*These are a great way to get a 'snap shot' of what it is like to be homeless for a night while participating in some fun, educational activities.*
- Hold a Christmas Appeal to donate food hampers during the festive season.
- Host a back to school day to collect items like pencil cases, pens, pencils, books and back packs for children in your community who may need a hand up.
- Host a bake sale during lunch.  
*For extra support, ask your local parish if they are able to help out. Some creative ideas include: having a bake off competition or setting up gold coin donation jars for each social justice topic and letting students decide what topic they wish to donate towards.*
- Get involved with a soup van come winter time (state specific).
- Hold Mother's Day or Father's Day raffles.
- Set up 'home visitation' excursions to nursing homes.
- Organise a week dedicated to the cause with something happening each day.  
*Have a 'Refugee Week' with an assembly on the Monday, a fundraiser on the Tuesday, an art show on the Wednesday.*
- Make a fact sheet and put it in your schools newsletter.



## Fundraising

Although providing support for people experiencing hardships through ‘good works’ is one of the primary focuses of your conference, there will be times when you may need to raise money to cover the cost of your fundraising event. For example, Youth Programs often require fundraising to cover the cost of the day.

As with any fundraiser, it is important to let people know where the funds will be going (eg. supporting children in need, providing material support to struggling families in the local area, or feeding people who are without a home). People are more likely to support a fundraiser if they know exactly who they will be helping by making a donation. This helps you raise awareness for a social justice topic while you are raising funds for a good cause.

An important note to remember; if you are fundraising under the name and banner of Vinnies, all funds raised should go towards St Vincent de Paul Society projects.

### Steps to starting a fundraising event:

#### 1. Brainstorm

##### Where is there a need in my community?

If you are stuck for ideas, contact your local Vinnies Youth staff member.

Through the Vinnies Youth Staff member, you can get in contact with your local:

- St Vincent de Paul Society Conference
- St Vincent de Paul Society Regional President
- Parish
- Mental health and homelessness services in the area
- Vinnies Shops
- Vinnies services (which may include mental health, homelessness, outreach, education, migrants and refugees or housing depending on your location)

Or you can talk directly with your local:

- Parish Priest
- Government
- Special education schools
- Nursing Homes
- Hospitals
- Primary school Principals
- Hostels/Refuges

##### Choose the best idea that:

- is achievable given the number of members and the capabilities of each member;
- suits the talents, skills and resources of your group the best;
- will make a positive difference in your community and
- has a realistic timeline.



Let us do whatever good lies at our hands.

Blessed Frederic Ozanam  
Founder of St Vincent de Paul Society





## 2. Event proposal

Write a proposal for the fundraising event. It should include what the event aims to achieve, suggested locations, suggested times and dates that fit in with the school calendar and a timetable.

Make sure when planning you consider potential obstacles that may arise and have a backup plan. For example, if you are planning an outdoor event, have you considered a wet weather plan?

## 3. Get permission

Present the proposal to your Baily, Principal or Religious Education Teacher.

## 4. Confirm details

Confirm the date and time of the event.

## 5. Contact a Vinnies Youth staff member

Send an email to your local Vinnies Youth staff member with the details of the event so that they can offer you support, information or useful resources.

## 6. Advertise

Advertise the event through posters, school newsletters and talking to groups within the school. If you make it clear what the event is for, it is more likely to be a success. Be careful when advertising outside school and on social media. Make sure you advertise appropriately and seek permission first if your event is private.

## 7. Action sheet prior to event

Write down everything that needs to be organised before the day and assign tasks to a specific person with a date for the task to be completed by. The action sheet template (Page 31) may be useful.

## 8. Assign tasks during event

Write down everything that needs to be done on the day and assign a specific person to each task based on their strengths, passions and abilities. Sharing the workload will help the event run smoothly and stress free.

## 9. Keep records

Keep records of all the details of your event on your schools database so that future members can use your great ideas.

## 10. Hold the event

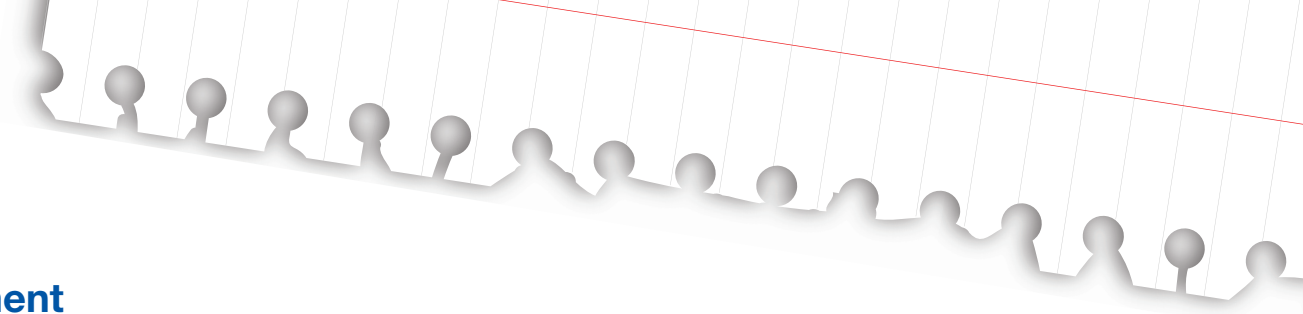
Hold an amazingly successful event that meets the aims set by all members.

## 11. After the event

After the event, organise a meeting to discuss how it went. Look at what went well, what you would do differently next time and how the event made you feel.

The secretary should make sure the minutes from this meeting are uploaded on your schools database so that future members can learn from your successes and challenges!





## Recruitment

Recruitment is finding new people to join your conference. Recruitment is important as it ensures that your group will continue to be successful, have fresh ideas and enough members to function once older members graduate and leave.

Consider having experienced members mentor new and younger members to create conference leaders for the future. A mix of students from all year levels is ideal to ensure the continuity of your conference.

### Make it...Personal

#### How to recruit a new member

Ask people directly to join your conference, everyone likes a chat and a personal invitation!

Target people who you think would make a valuable contribution to the conference. If someone is speaking to you about wanting to make a difference in the world, challenge them to put this passion into action by joining the conference.

You could also make invites and hand them out to students, inviting them to attend the next Vinnies meeting to see what it's like before joining.

### Make it...Public

Shout out about Vinnies throughout your school. Make sure everyone knows when and where Vinnies meetings are held. Every time you do an event or a Vinnies activity, advertise it through every way possible (assemblies, newsletter notices, school email or school website.)

### Make it...Friendly

Welcome all members and visitors to your conference meetings. For new students, make sure to introduce them and especially welcome them. Take time from your meeting to explain what Vinnies is and what your school conference does.

You could use ice breakers (games that aim to 'break the ice' and make people familiar with each other). You could even plan a meeting that is socialising for the whole time. Vinnies Conferences are a great way for students from different year levels to mix together.

This can be hard at first but it is a good idea to spend time making sure all feel comfortable together, especially for younger students who may look up to year 11 and 12 students as role models.



**The Society is open to all those who seek to live their faith loving and committing themselves to their neighbour in need.**

*The Rule, National Council of Australia, 7th edition, Canberra, 2012, article 3.1*



## Appreciation

Do not forget to thank everyone who has helped your Conference throughout the year; especially your Baily. They have given many hours of their time. It is only fitting that you say a BIG thank you for their work. It is recommended that the President sets aside one of the conferences for an appreciation day in Term 2 or Term 3.

### Ideas for showing your appreciation

- 1 Present the people who helped with thank you cards.
- 2 Give the teacher flowers or a small gift.
- 3 Organise a lunch time celebration for all conference members to reflect on the year and celebrate all the achievements of the conference.
- 4 Invite teachers who helped throughout the year including your Principal and Assistant Principal to a thank you morning tea and publically acknowledge their support throughout the year.
- 5 Write a thank you notice in your schools weekly newsletter.
- 6 Share photos with the Baily of previous Vinnies events they supported.

**After big events arrange a time to speak at assembly to thank your school for their support and acknowledge key people who made the event possible. If you fundraised, you could also update your peers on how much you raised in total with their help.**





# Key dates and contact details

## 2023 dates for your Calendar

### Feast days

**7 February:** Blessed Rosalie Rendu

**9 May:** Saint Louise de Marillac

**9 September:** Blessed Frederic Ozanam

**27 September:** Saint Vincent de Paul

### Social justice related

**20 February:** World Day of Social Justice

**8 March:** International Women's Day

**21 March:** Harmony Day

**13 - 22 April:** National Youth Week

**27 May - 3 June:** Reconciliation Week

**20 June:** World Refugee Day & World Refugee Week

**July (first Sunday):** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday

**2 - 9 July:** NAIDOC Week

**6 - 13 August:** Homelessness Prevention Week

**4 August:** National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

**21 September:** International Day of Peace

**September (last Sunday):** Social Justice Sunday

**10 October:** World Mental Health Day

**17 October:** International Day for eradication of poverty

**15 - 21 October:** Anti-Poverty Day & Anti-Poverty Week

**18 - 26 November:** Social Inclusion week

**10 December:** Human Rights Day

## Key contacts for your local Vinnies Youth Department

### Canberra Goulburn Archdiocese

youth@svdp-cg.org.au

### New South Wales

youth@vinnies.org.au

### Northern Territory

youth@svdpnt.org.au

### Queensland

youth@svdpqld.org.au

### South Australia

youth@svdpsa.org.au

### Tasmania

youth@stvinnies.org.au

### Victoria

schools@svdp-vic.org.au

### Western Australia

youth@svdpwa.org.au

Your local Vinnies Youth department can connect your Secondary School Conference with the local Vinnies Conference to offer support and assistance with your social justice projects.



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# Appendix



# Vinnies School Conference

## Agenda

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Conference:

Meeting date:

Agenda item 1:

Agenda item 2:

Agenda item 3:

General business:

Past action items:

Office Bearer's reports:







# Vinnies School Conference

## Minutes

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Meeting date:	
Meeting commenced at:	
Present:	
Apologies	

Opening prayers led by:		
Reflection:	Title	
	Author	

Agenda item 1:

Agenda item 2:

Agenda item 3:

General business:

Action items:

Office Bearer's reports:

Closing prayer led by:	
Next meeting date, time and location:	
Meeting closed at:	







St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*