

2025 VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

SCHOOLS KIT



COST OF LIVING CRISIS

This Christmas Appeal, how will your school help provide food and essential items to those in our local community who continue to struggle with the cost-of-living crisis?

Letter to Schools 2

Case Study
and Statistics 3-5

How your school can
support the Vinnies
Christmas Appeal 6-7

Christmas Appeal Activities 8-13

**SHARE YOUR EFFORTS
BY TAGGING US!**

 @VinniesYouthNSW

 @NSWVinniesYouth



2025 VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL: INTRODUCTORY LETTER



Dear Teachers,

As the St Vincent de Paul Society gets ready to launch this year's Christmas Appeal, we are delighted to be able to share our 2025 Christmas Appeals School Kit with you. This kit is designed to assist you and your school community in facilitating this year's appeal.

This Christmas, as even more families experience hardship and face the risk of homelessness, we are finding more people reaching out to the Society for assistance than ever before. For several years, Australians have been grappling with high housing costs, increased grocery and utility bills, and financial pressures that show no sign of easing.

The support provided by the St Vincent de Paul Society plays a critical role in assisting those in need in our communities with hope and dignity. Every day, our dedicated members, volunteers and staff are working to support people doing it tough by providing food relief, clothing, bills or rental assistance, crisis accommodation and emotional support.

Inside this Christmas Appeal School Kit is a collection of resources to help your students learn about the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, social justice-based activities and ways your school can give this Christmas.

Your school community can help make a real difference to others this Christmas. The funds raised and donations collected through the Christmas Appeal allow the Society to respond to the growing demand for support and to ensure that the assistance reaches those who need it most.

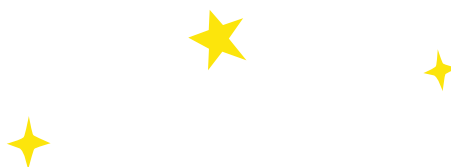


Make your gift of giving this Christmas be one of dignity and hope to the many Australians who are struggling at this time of year; help bring them comfort, joy and happiness across the holiday season.

Thank you for your compassion and generosity in supporting the vital work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Together we can bring hope and joy to Australians in need this Christmas.

On behalf of everyone at the Society, we wish you a joyful holiday season.

The Vinnies Youth Team





CASE STUDY:

Sarah and her husband were living a happy life with their three children when everything changed. After a serious car accident left her husband with brain damage and unable to work, Sarah became his carer while raising the kids. With high rent, medical bills, and the rising cost of food and electricity, the family soon struggled.

They moved in with grandparents, all five sharing one room, and later into disability housing. But just before Christmas, their tenancy was suddenly ended, leaving them homeless again. In her family's hour of need, Sarah turned to the St Vincent de Paul Society for support.

Claire, a volunteer of more than 20 years, stepped in to help with food, bills, clothing, and housing. Sarah explained, *"The level of compassion... it's really genuine. It's almost like having another family."* Every Christmas, Claire ensures the children have presents and a meal to share. *"The kids are excited, they feel loved,"* said Sarah.

Sadly, many families face similar struggles. More people than ever are asking for help because of high rent, food insecurity, and the rising cost of living. As Claire shared, *"New people that we are finding, people that we've never seen before."* The St Vincent de Paul Society ensures families like Sarah's have a safe home, meals on the table, and presents under the tree—giving children the joy of Christmas and parents the relief of knowing their family is cared for.

- Sarah's family's life changed very quickly after a car accident. Can you think of examples of other challenges that might suddenly change a family's life?
- How do you think Sarah's children might have felt when they lost their home just before Christmas? How might they have felt when Claire from Vinnies stepped in to help?
- Many families today struggle with things like rent, food, and bills. Why do you think it's important for communities and organisations like Vinnies to help?

COST OF LIVING STATISTICS



HOMELESSNESS NATIONAL STATISTICS

- **127,680 Australians** are estimated to be experiencing homelessness in 2025, this is an increase of 5,168 since census night 2021.
- **10.3% of people returned to homelessness** after achieving housing.

Source: G Housing and homelessness - Report on Government Services 2025 - Productivity Commission

- **1 in 10 teens reported experiencing homelessness** in the past year, with almost 40,000 young people (aged 12-25) accessing homelessness services.
- 40% of people experiencing homelessness are **under the age of 24**.
- 31% of young people experiencing homelessness are **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders**.

Source: Foyer-Foundation_AnnualReport_2024.pdf

COST OF LIVING AND HOUSING STRESS

- **71% of low-income households** nationally are facing housing stress (spending over 30% income in housing)
- A survey found that 32% of low-income earners reported **missing paying their rent or mortgage on time** in the past year due to financial hardship.

Source: [Housing and Homelessness Report 2025 | The Salvation Army Australia](#)

SOCIAL HOUSING

- Nationally 223,959 households are on social housing waitlists, with **109,462 on the priority list**.
- To meet current and future demands, experts recommend **building 1 million new social and affordable houses** over the next 20 years.

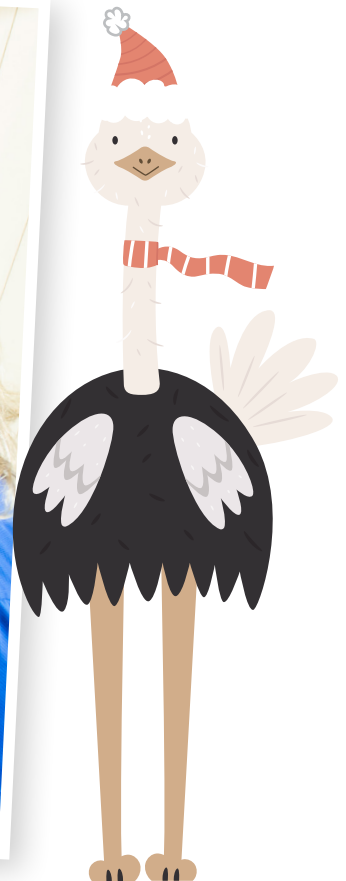
Source: [Mission Australia's response to the 2025 Report on Government Services - Housing and homelessness](#)

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS SUPPORT,
PLEASE CALL OUR HELPLINE ON 13 18 12.

FOOD INSECURITY

- **1 in 3 Australian households** (32%) are experiencing food insecurity.
- 2 million households are experiencing the most severe level of hardship, **regularly skipping meals or going entire days without food.**
- **69% of single-parent households are food insecure**, with 41% experiencing the severest form.

Source: [Foodbank Hunger Report: Two million households at breaking point - Food & Drink Business](#)



IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS SUPPORT,
PLEASE CALL OUR HELPLINE ON 13 18 12.

HOW TO GIVE

TO GIVE FINANCIALLY

Financial donations allow us the flexibility to direct funds where they are most needed. It also gives those we assist the sense of dignity and joy of choosing their own items, which many of us may take for granted. You can nominate a financial gift toward your local area or a particular Vinnies service if you wish.

To donate financially, you can either;

1) Create your own personalised online school fundraising page at: <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way>

or

2) Raise funds (offline), and then donate at our website: <https://donate.vinnies.org.au/donation-hub>

If you would like your donation to go to your local Conference or Service, please be sure to include the name of the Conference or Service when donating through the online portals.

3) Via direct deposit to:

Payee Name: St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

Street Address: 2C West Street, Lewisham

Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank

Branch: Leichhardt NSW

Account Name: SVdP Appeals

BSB: 062 193

Account Number: 1005 7471

Reference: 00-156

*Cheques can be written to "St Vincent de Paul Society NSW" and mailed to: PO Box 5, Petersham, NSW 2049.

Please send a Remittance Advice to remittances@vinnies.org.au and copy your Schools and Youth Engagement Officer

TO GIVE HAMPERS, FOOD, OR GIFTS

Your local Conference Members are doing good works in the community every week and are best placed to understand the needs of the people they serve.

Usually Conferences are excited to receive your hampers, although it may be preferable in some circumstances to give financially or using gift cards instead. Check in with your local Conference to find out!

Where do the hampers go?

Hampers are delivered to families in your community who have called upon Vinnies for a hand-up.

To uphold the dignity of those receiving the hamper, please ensure that all food items are not due to expire for at least 6 months. All items must be non-perishable and undamaged. Look out for packaged food with a Health Star Rating of 3.5 or above. The more stars, the better!

Tip: One way to organise the hampers is to allocate families to different classrooms. Consider the needs of the family, and adjust the hamper accordingly.



CHRISTMAS HAMPER IDEAS

**HERE ARE SOME ITEMS YOU MIGHT CONSIDER
PUTTING INTO A FAMILY HAMPER.**



- Christmas pudding
- Long life custard
- Tea and coffee
- Spreads – jam, vegemite
- Long life milk
- Pancake mix
- Tinned vegetables
- Gravy mix
- Soup
- Long life juice
- Bonbons
- Christmas decorations
- Plum pudding
- Biscuits – sweet, savoury
- Christmas lollies
- Jelly
- Hot chocolate
- Cereal
- Shortbread
- Fruit cake
- Tinned fruit
- Pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Rice
- Packet of jelly
- Noodles

To uphold the dignity of those receiving our hampers, please ensure that the food items you donate are not due to expire for at least six months.

All items must be non-perishable and undamaged.



TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS



Here are some ideas to bring hope and joy to your classroom in the lead-up to Christmas!

Age group: suitable for both primary and secondary school students.

1

DAY 1: PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED

Send a prayer to those who need God's help this Christmas.

2

DAY 2: A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE OF HOPE

Write a Christmas card or message of hope for someone in need.

3

DAY 3: CHRISTMAS CHAIN OF HOPE

Create a paper chain decoration with messages of kindness for your class or Christmas hampers.

4

DAY 4: BE HOPEFUL

Draw or write what 'hope' means to you and display it in class.

5

DAY 5: SMILE

Smile at five people today to spread kindness.

6

DAY 6: DISCUSSION

Discuss in class: What does Christmas mean to you beyond presents?

7

DAY 7: SHOW GRATITUDE

Write down five things you are grateful for this week and display in class on a gratitude wall.

8

DAY 8: SPREAD KINDNESS

Perform a random act of kindness for someone without telling them it was you.

9

DAY 9: RAISE AWARENESS

Learn a fact about homelessness or poverty in Australia and share it with your class to help advocate for others.

10

DAY 10: CHRISTMAS CREATIVITY

Write a Christmas poem, prayer or wish for people doing it tough this Christmas.

11

DAY 11: CHECK IN ON OTHERS

Sit with someone new at recess or lunch and ask how their day is going.

12

DAY 12: CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Sing a Christmas song or carol together to finish the 12 days with joy!

WISH ON A CHRISTMAS STAR



Context: This activity encourages students to consider those who might be facing difficulties during Christmas, fostering empathy, compassion, and the spirit of giving. Through discussion and craft, students will make a wish on someone else's behalf.

Age Group: Suitable for lower and upper primary school students

Resources:

- Printed star stencil (teacher to provide)
- Strips of colourful paper (approx. 2–3 cm wide, A4 length)
- Craft supplies for decorating star (pencils, textas, paint, glitter etc)
- Scissors and Glue

Run Time: 25-30 minutes

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1. Class Discussion (10 mins):

Begin by talking about what Christmas means to different people. Then gently guide the class to think about how Christmas might feel for someone who is facing challenges — such as individuals without a home, having issues with their health, or experiencing financial difficulties.

Ask:

- Can you think of someone who might not find Christmas easy this year?
- What might be tricky for them?
- What do you think could help make their Christmas feel a little brighter?

2. Wish Reflection:

Ask students to quietly think of a Christmas wish they could make for someone in need—something that would help, comfort or show kindness.

3. Craft Activity (15-20 mins):

Give each student a printed star stencil. Students decorate the star creatively using craft materials, and then in the centre, they write “I wish...”. On one or more long coloured strips, students write a wish they have made on behalf of someone else (they can write more than one). Attach the strips to the bottom of the star to make a shooting star tail.

4. Display:

Create a wall or window display titled “Christmas Wishing Stars” to celebrate students’ generous thinking and the true meaning of Christmas.



REAL TALK: COST OF LIVING AND CHRISTMAS

Why This Matters: Christmas is usually a time of fun, food, and family – but for many Australians, it's also a time of stress. With rent, groceries, and bills going up, a lot of people are struggling to afford even the basics. Vinnies is here to help – and you can be part of that help too.

Age Group: Suitable for secondary school students

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Street Survey – What Does Christmas Cost?

You're a youth journalist putting together a story for your school newsletter on the 'real cost of Christmas.' Interview three classmates or family members about how the cost of living has affected their holiday plans. Ask them the questions below and record their answers. You can keep it anonymous if they prefer.

Interview Questions:

1. What's one thing your family has had to cut back on this Christmas?
2. Do you think Christmas is too focused on money and gifts? Why or why not?
3. What would make Christmas feel more meaningful to you or your family?
4. Have you ever heard of the Vinnies Christmas Appeal prior to this? What do you know about it?

Your Report:

Summarise the most interesting things you heard in a short paragraph below. You can include quotes or general impressions.

Reflect:

1. What surprised you the most about what people said?
2. How can students like you support those doing it tough this Christmas?



SNOWBALL CHANCE OF LIFE ACTIVITY

Context: Sometimes, life doesn't go as planned. Unexpected events such as illness, loss of a job or even a natural disaster can turn someone's world upside down. While many of us feel safe and secure today, the reality is that for thousands of Australians, just one unforeseen challenge can push them towards homelessness.

This activity invites you to walk in someone else's shoes. To consider how quickly circumstances can change, and to reflect on how compassion, community, and support—like that offered by Vinnies—can make all the difference.

Age Group: for primary and secondary students

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

On a piece of paper, students are to write down three things that bring them joy at Christmas. This might include things such as *'spending time with family'*, *'sharing presents with one another'*, *'putting up the Christmas tree'*.

Next, ask them to scrunch up their piece of paper to make a *'snowball'*.

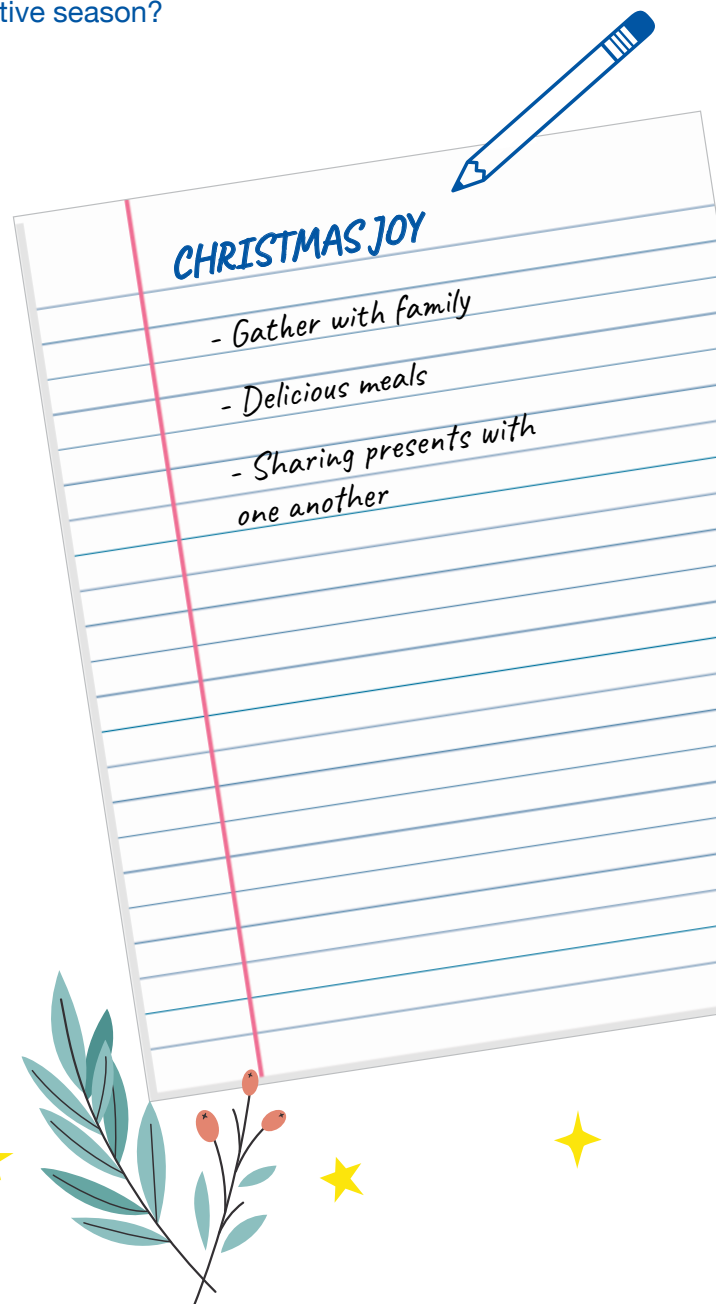
Place a bucket at one end of the room and instruct students that they need to throw their *'snowball'* into the bucket. Place a clear marker or tape where they need to stand to throw from.

Before each student attempts to throw their *'snowball'*, they must select a *'life chances'* card to know where they will throw from –

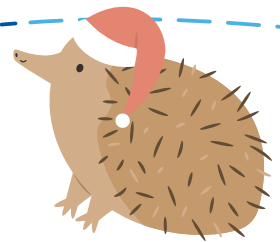
stepping forwards – or backwards – as determined by their card.

If a student's *'snowball'* reaches the bucket, they are granted their Christmas joy.

Reflect as a class on how people can end up experiencing disadvantage through no fault of their own and how this may impact them at Christmas. How can we as a community bring more joy to those who are struggling this festive season?



SNOWBALL CHANCE OF LIFE GAME



PRIMARY SCHOOL CARDS

Part-Time Job Cut Hours

Your shift at the café
was reduced.

STEP BACK 2 SPACES

School Supplies Cost More

You need a new laptop
for school.

STEP BACK 2 SPACES

Public Transport Fare Increase

Bus fares went up.

STEP BACK 1 SPACE

Family Budget Tight

Your family is struggling
to pay bills.

STEP BACK 3 SPACES

Phone Bill Trouble

You forgot to pay your
phone bill.

STEP BACK 1 SPACE

Family Eviction

Your family was evicted.

STEP BACK 5 SPACES

Couch Surfing

You're staying
with a friend.

STEP BACK 1 SPACE

No Quiet Place to Study

You don't have a stable
home to do homework.

STEP BACK 2 SPACES

Missed School Due to Housing

You missed school
while moving
between homes.

STEP BACK 1 SPACE

Living in a Car

Your family is living
in a car.

STEP BACK 4 SPACES

Youth Support Service

You accessed a youth
support Centre.

**STEP FORWARD
2 SPACES**

Scholarship Opportunity

You earned a
scholarship for
school supplies.

**STEP FORWARD
3 SPACES**

Safe Housing Found

You and your family
found temporary
housing.

**STEP FORWARD
3 SPACES**

Free School Meals

You received free
lunches at school.

**STEP FORWARD
1 SPACE**

SNOWBALL CHANCE OF LIFE GAME

SECONDARY SCHOOL CARDS

Unexpected Dental Bill

You require expensive dental surgery costing \$1500. Your insurance doesn't cover it.

STEP BACK 2 SPACES

Rent Increase

Your landlord raises the rent by \$100/month. Now more than 60% of your income goes towards rent. You weren't prepared.

STEP BACK 2 SPACES

Lost Your Job

The café you worked at closed down. You're now unemployed.

STEP BACK 3 SPACES

Unexpected Expense – Broken Phone

Your phone broke and you need it for school and job applications.

STEP BACK 1 SPACE

Financial Help

A family member offers you financial help. You accept the support.

MOVE FORWARD 1 SPACE

Eviction Notice

You missed two rent payments. You're being evicted.

STEP BACK 5 SPACES

Found a Part-Time Job

You got a weekend job at a local store.

STEP FORWARD 2 SPACES

Free Community Meal

A local charity offers free meals every Friday.

STEP FORWARD 1 SPACE

Youth Shelter Available

You found a safe place to stay temporarily.

STEP FORWARD 2 SPACES

Unexpected caring responsibilities

Your family member becomes physically ill. You now have become their full-time carer and have no time to focus on your studies.

STEP BACK 3 SPACES



VINNIES IS HERE TO HELP

SUPPORT HOTLINE: 13 18 12

WWW.VINNIES.ORG.AU



Vinnies
good works