

St Vincent de Paul Society
England and Wales

Recruitment and Development (or Training)
August 2006

The work is directed mainly at new members or prospective members. However, everyone can benefit by learning more about their Society and improving their visiting skills. The following are descriptions of the various resources that are available. There are trained members in almost every Central Council who are skilled in delivering these modules to existing members or prospective members.

There are also two weekend courses, one to train members to acquire these delivery skills and another to recently appointed or potential District Council Presidents to do their jobs more effectively. These courses are run on demand, subject to having a sufficient number of people attending to make the courses economically viable.

Recruitment and Development Resources

The Induction Pack consisting of a set of 4 modules –
The Society, Poverty, Visitation and The Conference
with an accompanying video recording.

An Information Module,
for presentations to parish groups and other similar gatherings.

Video recordings including –
The life of St Vincent de Paul
The life of Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Conference Officers Modules –
President, Secretary and Treasurer

Enquiries for further information or help with recruitment and development can be obtained by contacting the National Office.

Conference Officers Modules



Descriptions of the Modules

The Induction Pack and Information Module

There are five modules. Modules 1 to 4 form the Induction Pack. A module takes the form of a talk supported by slides and there is the opportunity for discussion. One module involves about one evening meeting or alternatively several could be arranged for a Saturday morning. They are intended to be presented by trained members of the Society.

The modules are described briefly as follows.

Module 1. The Society The Society's origin through the initiative of Frederic Ozanam and his friends, is described. It is explained why the Society is called after St Vincent de Paul, even though it was founded 173 years after St Vincent de Paul's death. The Society's growth and statistics are briefly related.

Module 2. Poverty It is attempted to define poverty today and bring members' attention to aspects of poverty that did not exist in previous times. Consequences of poverty and the Society's response to overcome it are developed. This is a valuable module which affords members an occasion to evaluate poverty and its relevance in our time.

Module 3. Visitation Visiting those in need is the most common activity of the Society and thus it is important that visiting is done properly. Good practice is the theme and again inspiration is drawn from the initiative of Frederic and his friends. The aims of visiting are listed and the Vincentian vocation is emphasized.

Module 4. The Conference The Conference officers and their functions are outlined. The Conference meeting is described, including when it meets, its format and priorities it must decide. Members are reminded not to be judgmental about the people they help.

Module 5. Information Some parts of this module overlap with the more particular modules previously mentioned. It is probably the best module to be presented to potential members. It gives the origins of the Society and its application world-wide. It summarizes why and what the Society offers, the work it does and how it raises funds. Twinnage is described and different types of poverty are defined. The need for confidentiality is plainly stated. Commitment and how to get involved are detailed.

Conference Officers Modules

These are modules intended for training Conference Officers. The usual format is to conduct a session over one day, say 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on a Saturday at a convenient venue. A suggestion is for 4 people, i.e. President, VP, Treasurer and Secretary from a Conference, to get into a car and come to the venue. There is an introduction of 'You and your Conference'. At appropriate times the officers split into specific groups. During the day there are sessions on Recruitment and Conference Review. Members are presented with a list of 15 common problems and asked to select their top three. Then concentration centres on the overall top three problems. Workshops are also conducted for officers to practise filling-in returns correctly.

Module 6. Conference President Module

After an introduction about leadership skills (task, team and individual problems) Presidents are guided through various aspects of their work dealing with such matters as organising visits, meeting format and spiritual development. The module recommends maintaining a visitation record (in the form of a matrix) and building-up a directory of useful contacts. Special reference is given to the process of renewal, endeavouring to maintain a spirit of freshness within the Conference, seeking new work and new recruits. There are sections analysing need, Conference characteristics and review, all useful to officers and Conference members alike.

Module 7. Conference Treasurer Module

This module has a large set of slides. These are necessary to describe thoroughly the responsibilities of managing funds, such as legal requirements, conditions determining the method of auditing, and priorities influencing where money may be donated. Tithes and centralised banking are other examples discussed in the module. The importance of carrying out a yearly analysis, say by spreadsheet, is advocated. There is also advice for members who would make suitable treasurers.

Module 8. Conference Secretary Module

The function of the Secretary is defined. The value of keeping correct and concise minutes is highlighted. Keeping a diary of forthcoming, relevant events and writing up reports and keeping records is mentioned. As with the President's module, a visitation matrix and directory of useful contacts are discussed. The importance of providing returns to National Office is stressed and, as in other modules, the value of analysis of the previous year is highly recommended.



Trainers Meetings

Members in Session at Hinsley Hall, Leeds



Typical SVP 'Training the Trainers' Weekend

(Friday evening to Sunday lunch)

Friday evening

Dinner

Opening prayers

Listening Practice

Communication Skills

Saturday morning (including break)

Breakfast

Briefing for individual presentations

Preparation by individuals

Individual presentations and self-criticism

Lunch

Saturday afternoon (including break)

Introduction to the Induction Programme

Video on visiting

Preparation of presentation by small groups

Vigil Mass

Dinner

Saturday evening

Group presentations

Social

Sunday morning (including break)

Breakfast

Continue Group Presentations

Trainers' Action Plans

Recruitment issues

Plenary Session

Closing Prayers

Lunch



Typical SVP DC Presidents' Training Weekend

(Friday evening to Sunday lunch)

Friday evening

Dinner

Opening prayers
Listening Practice
Leadership Skills

Saturday morning (including break)

Breakfast

Training Material Developments

Lunch

Saturday afternoon (including break)

Shops Policy
Visiting Conferences
Vincentian Friendship
Spirituality and Commissioning
Action Plans

Vigil Mass

Dinner

Saturday evening

Running a DC meeting

Social

Sunday morning (including break)

Breakfast

Twinnage & Treasurer Returns
Health & Safety
Examples of Action Plans
Open Forum
Closing Prayers

Lunch

