



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action



INTRODUCTION TO SETTING UP YOUTH SVP AND SVP B-ATTITUDE

Welcome to the Vincentian Family!

The SVP was started by a university student, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, when he was 19 years old, studying law at the University of the Sorbonne. We are dedicated to enabling young people to maintain the youthful vision of the Society's Founder and empowering young people to live a life of Vincentian charity.

Young Vincentians Apostolates

There are 4 youth apostolates within the Saint Vincent de Paul Society England and Wales for children, adolescents, teenagers, and young adults.

Mini Vinnies serves primary school children, ages 7-11 year olds;

Youth SVP serves adolescents and teenagers aged 11-14;

B-Attitude serves those aged 14-18;

SVP Young Adults including SVP 1833 open to those age 18-35.

We provide excellent high quality physical and digital resources, activity ideas, social media, and bespoke website microsites which support and empower young people, develop their leadership skills, enable them to undertake voluntary work in their local communities, develop their faith and spirituality, and develop practical acts of charity in the parish or the school where the groups (called conferences) exist.

We promote the wellbeing of all children and youth through our involvement in wider government policy campaigns as well as through our apostolates.

If you are a youth leader, Chaplain, SVP adult conference member, parent or teacher/retired and interested in starting a Youth SVP or B-Attitude conference in your local school or parish, just follow this simple guide. All activities are supervised by responsible adults and are appropriate to the specific age groups.



Step-by-Step Guide

1. Contact the SVP National Office Young Vincentians Team by email on youngvincentians@svp.org.uk. The team will support you, guide you through the process of setting up a youth conference and commit you and your plans to ongoing prayer.
2. You will be allocated a Young Vincentians Development Officer (YVDO) from your regional SVP Central Council (CC) to help you with organisation, set up and resources. They will be able to answer any questions you may have and will be an ongoing valuable support.
3. Identify someone within the school (1 person) or parish (1+ persons) to act as the adult supervisor (called a Vincentian Coordinator [VC]) to set up the youth conference, take part in free training, encourage and guide the young members. This could be you, someone else, or you may decide to share the role between a small adult team.

All VCs must hold valid, up to date, Enhanced DBS' and complete our free online SVP Safeguarding training. If you do not have an up to date or Enhanced DBS you can apply for one digitally through the SVP Safeguarding department. You, any other coordinators and the YVDO will meet in real life or digitally, to prepare your plan.

4. Get the support of the Headteacher/Parish Priest. Your YVDO will help you make contact with the nearest adult SVP conference to your school or parish. The adult conference will be a great help and support for you in your practical volunteering.

5. Identify your preferred target group – possibly a school year (running within RE or PHSE classes), a chaplaincy group, pre/post Confirmation group, a lunchtime or after-school group. Within a parish, talk to the young people, introduce the idea, use our parish bulletin inserts (or write your own), use our website/social media inserts and promotional videos and gather interested parties and their parents' details. If you have an existing youth group, ask if they would like to also become a youth SVP conference and once a month focus their youth night on social action.

6. With the YVDO, start planning possible charitable volunteering activities for your new Conference. Have the activities researched, ready to start as soon as your Conference begins. This will save time and maintain momentum for the young people.

7. Arrange a date and time for your YVDO to give a presentation to the potential group members. If you are giving a parish presentation, your YVDO will present the general SVP information and you will present the parish specifics. This could be done after a Mass, Liturgy or assembly.

8. As soon as possible after the presentation (ideally the next day in school, the next youth night/week for parishes) hold the first meeting for the interested young people. At this stage, hand out membership forms, discuss and if possible elect Officers. Youth conferences as with all SVP conferences are led by the members, thus the young people themselves take on the roles of President, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Officer.

9. Send in your application for new conference form to the Head Office SVP Youth Team and request your start up pack. You will be sent your start up pack with everything you need for your first Conference meeting. Please note, if money is an issue, please liaise with your YVDO who will contact the Central Council or your nearest Adult SVP conference and find funds for this. Do not let lack of money be an obstacle to starting a youth conference.

10. Arrange with your Parish Priest or school to hold a Commissioning Ceremony. You will have this in your start up pack but please feel free to be creative. Your YVDO will support and help you with this and will invite the local adult SVP conference President to the ceremony. In the ceremony your new members will be commissioned, receive their prayer books and certificates.

11. Hold your first youth conference meeting. Lead this meeting using the Vincentian prayer books, be creative with your spiritual reflection, hand out the merchandise, start the youth on planning their first work of charity. Finish the meeting with the Vincentian prayer from the prayer book. From this point on the President will lead meetings but will have seen you model how to do this well.

12. Keep up the links between your youth conference and your adult conference & YVDO for ongoing support and advice.

Keep the Youth Team updated on any activities and events we can share with our wider membership through our quarterly magazine Vincentian Concern as well as our website microsities. We will guide you through image permission forms for any photos you share.

Ideas for planned charitable volunteering include:

- Having food collections (for example for a local food bank)
- Presenting at assemblies issues of poverty, climate change and other local community and national issues
- Making and sending Christmas cards or/and 'get well cards'
- Carol singing in residential homes
- Reading at Mass in their Parish
- Hosting tea parties for local parishioners who may be lonely
- Running a bingo evening once a year for local lonely parishioners
- Pilgrimage walks/hikes
- Visiting the sick in hospitals to talk to patients
- Collaborate on one of the projects that the local Adult SVP Conference are engaging in
- Many more ideas are on the website microsities.



<https://www.svp.org.uk/mini-vinnies>



<https://www.svp.org.uk/youth-svp>



<https://www.svp.org.uk/b-attitude>



<https://www.svp.org.uk/svpyoungadults>



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