

Secondary School Conference

See Think Do

A background photograph showing a group of people sitting on a green lawn. In the foreground, the back of a young boy's head and shoulders is visible, wearing a blue shirt with a red patch. To the left, a woman in a blue shirt is partially visible, looking towards the right. The background is slightly blurred, showing more people and greenery.

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Starting a Secondary School Conference

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

See

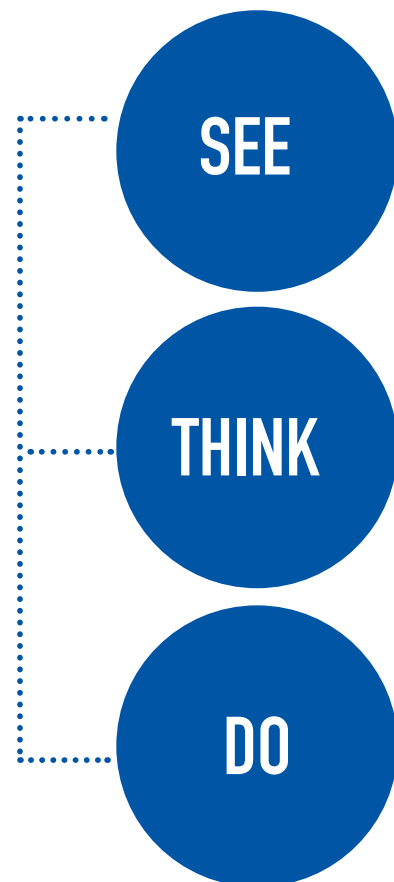
Make your conference aware of a social injustice.

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 **see** and 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 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 - your APRE, Campus Minister or Head of Mission is a good starting point.
- 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.** They will be able to support you and your peers in setting up your conference.
- 9 **Seek approval** from your Principal, APRE or Head of Mission. 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 to **think** about the social injustices in your community 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 and putting your faith in action.

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 email or on Google Drive.

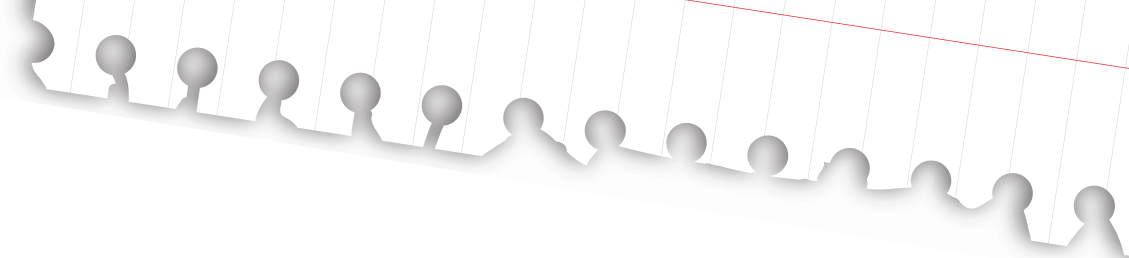
Step 3: Do

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 school community know about social justice topics and educate them on why they are unjust. Topics to consider are homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, bullying and 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 experiencing homelessness.**
- Hold a Vinnies School Sleepout during winter.**
These are a great way to get a 'snap shot' of what it is like to experience homelessness for a night while participating in some engaging and interactive 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 Conference or parish 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 let 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.

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.

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 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 database so that future members can learn from your successes and challenges!





St Vincent de Paul Society
good works