



# Guide for creating

# Youth Conferences at

# Universities



**Council General International**  
**International Committee for Youth, Children and Adolescents**  
[www.ssvpglobal.org](http://www.ssvpglobal.org)



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# Message from the General President

**Dear Young Friends!**

**Dear College Students!**

**Dear members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP)!**

I am pleased to present this important material, produced by the International Youth Committee of the Council General International of the SSVP.

This guide for the creation of Youth Conferences at Universities, offers a great opportunity for us to consider the origins of our institution.

Our Founders were young people who met while they were studying at university, and there started several movements of Conferences (small debating groups addressing different themes) that finally resulted in the creation of this wonderful Network of Charity present today in more than 152 territories worldwide, our beloved Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Seven Young people, six of them university students, gave life to a great dream, embracing the world in a network of charity, defending the Church and promoting human dignity through the practice of Social Justice.

May many young university students be inspired by our Vincentian Charism and be able to join this great network of friends, the SSVP.



**Renato Lima de Oliveira**  
16th General President of the SSVP







# Message from the President of the SSVP International Youth Committee

**Dear Friends,**

Encouraged by our President General, brother Renato Lima de Oliveira, our International Youth Committee has worked to develop a practical, dynamic and direct guide for the creation, formation and the subsequent foundation of SSVP Vincentian Conferences with University students.

The origins of SSVP, with our founders, lie back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when our co-founder Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam was a student at the famous University of Sorbonne in France. He helped to found the SSVP when he was only 20 years old, along with 6 other young friends, and he was also later a full professor at this same University. From there many young students went on to join Vincentian conferences.

We know that the environment of a University goes beyond the theoretical formation of a course or subject. It must be a broad academic space for the debate of ideas, and the generation of knowledge, and it should contribute to and facilitate people becoming aware of their role as transformers and builders of a society to preserve justice, and the common good.

In this context, we want to introduce the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) to university students as a practical means to put into practice what they learn in theory in classrooms, and offer it as a form of help (charity) to those most in need, the poor, the socially vulnerable, those marginalized by society, giving them dignity in life, respect, and a knowledge of their rights and duties (social justice).

To conclude, I present the thoughts of 3 (three) General Presidents of SSVP who spoke and still speak, in their time, about the importance of forming Vincentian conferences in university and high school environments.

Read what **Adophe Baudon** (3rd General President from 1848 to 1886) says:

*“In some cities, especially those with many students, it is often regrettable that the Conferences, founded for the sake of youth and for the sake of charity, in the gentle bonds of religion, have so few young in their bosom, or none at all. Undoubtedly, Conferences created in colleges are safe nurseries for the SSVP, and it is useful to take advantage of this vigorous sap that they can bring us every year.”* (Circular Letter from the 3rd President-General, Adolphe Baudon, 1851).

Below, we can read what **Antonin Pagès** (4th General President from 1886 to 1903) said:





*“One cannot deny the happy influence exerted by the Conferences on the students who are part of them. Everyone agrees in acknowledging how precious an element is the SSVP in the great work of education, how much it contributes to the progress of the faith, to the safeguarding of customs, to formation of character and also to uprightness of judgment. These Conferences will still bear all the fruits that we are seeking. The improvement of a Vincentian in the practice of charity often depends on the success of his initiation and the care that he took in directing his first steps.”* (Circular Letter from the 4th President-General, Antonin Pagès, 1899).

And more recently, we can also read, in the same line of thought as his predecessors, **Renato Lima de Oliveira** (16th General President from 2016 to 2022):

*“Still on the theme of young people, I propose an idea to the Superior Councils: to found Vincentian Conferences in universities, colleges and schools. Initially, our work is facilitated in educational institutions that are maintained by Catholic congregations, the SSVP itself and the Vincentian Family. However, this action should also spread to non-Christian entities. I am sure that our founding fathers, who had the University of Sorbonne as an academic environment conducive to the founding of SSVP, would be very happy with this initiative, a kind of “back to the origins”. This is the appeal that the President General makes to all young Vincentians in the world: to take our organization to the university environment. As an idea, competitions could be promoted for students on the theme of Social Justice, debates on Social Doctrine with teachers, academic events, book presentations and other initiatives in the social field, such as serving street people and homeless people (without shelter).”* (Circular Letter from the 16th President-General, Renato Lima de Oliveira, 2020).

The International Committee of Young People, Children and Adolescents, of the International General Council of the SSVP, is ever ready to assist, collaborate and facilitate so that this initiative is put into practice in several schools and mainly in academia, in universities.

We pray that Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati and Blessed Antoine-Frederic Ozanam, both young university students, through their intercession with God, may inspire us with wisdom and discernment to carry forward everywhere this great network of charity and friends that is the SSVP.

### **Willian Dimas da Silva Alves**

President of the SSVP International Youth Committee

Vice President for Youth, Children and Adolescents of the Council General International





# Introduction

The Youth Conference Guide has been created as a resource to assist you in starting a Youth Conference at your university.

## Why start a Youth Conference?

There are many benefits of starting a Youth 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;
- expand your comfort zone.

## Why a Conference at the University?

Our founders were young university students. SSVP was born through conferences (of various themes) formed within universities and which spread throughout the community.

We understand that young people at the university are open to new horizons, and that their search for knowledge and innovation combines with aspects such as solidarity, social justice, organized charity, fraternity.

And a conference formed by young university students, will be a group of students, who will make a difference in their communities, working on social justice issues and putting their faith into action.

**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



## 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 canonized (declared a saint) in 1737 and named the universal patron of Catholic charities in 1885.



## Blessed Antoine-Frederic Ozanam

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul was founded in Paris (France) in 1833 by Antoine-Frederic Ozanam, a 20-year-old law student at Sorbonne University along with 6 other young people.

Responding to the great poverty in the Paris of his time, he and a group of friends began to visit the homes of the poor, bringing practical assistance with food and firewood, as well as something less tangible - empathy and love. Frederic and his friends began to meet regularly and formed the first conference. They decided to adopt the name Society of Saint Vincent de Paul



## 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 be 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 worked closely with Blessed Frederic Ozanam to perform 'good works of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

# 7 Founders of the SSVP



**Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam** (1813-1853) was born in Milan (now a city in Italy), which belonged to the French empire at that time. While still a child, at the age of three, he moved with his family to Lyon. His parents were examples of charity and service to the poor. Frederick entered high school in 1822 for his secondary studies. A brilliant student and an insatiable reader, he spoke several languages by the age of 17. In 1831, he arrived in Paris to study law at the Sorbonne. In a short time, he became a regular in intellectual circles and began to collaborate with newspapers and magazines. He took part in the History Conferences and was one of the founders of the Charity Conference, in 1833. Doctor in Law (1836) and then in Letters (1839), Ozanam started a brilliant university career that would lead him, in 1844, to become the holder of the chair of Foreign Literature at the Sorbonne University and to live his deep vocation to teaching. In 1841, he married Amélie Soulacroix. The couple had only one daughter: Marie Joséphine. His health was always weak, and he almost died as a child. He died of kidney disease, which began to affect him in 1846. Ozanam was received in audience by several popes and is considered one of the precursors of the Social Doctrine of the Church. He was beatified in 1997, and since then the General Council has been working steadfastly for his canonization, gathering testimonies of miracles in various nations. Frederick Ozanam died on the night of September 8, 1853, in Marseille, surrounded by his loved ones, after a long and painful agony.



**Emmanuel-Joseph Bailly de Surcy** (1794-1861) was born into a family very devoted to St. Vincent de Paul. He even attended the Vincentian seminary, receiving education in theology and philosophy. At the age of 25, he went to Paris and decided on a vocation as a layman. In 1819, he opened his first hostel for young people from the countryside who came to study in the capital. He was the founder of the Conferences of History, and there he met several of the future founders of the SSVP. In 1821, Bailly opened his second hostel. On July 20, 1830, he married Marie-Apolline-Sidonie Vrayet de Surcy. They had six children (of whom two became nuns, two priests, and two remained single), but had no grandchildren. Bailly offered the editorial office of the newspaper "La Tribune Catholique" for the first meetings of the SSVP. He was the first president of the Conference of Charity and, in 1839, the first President General. In 1844, he resigned this post, but remained active in the Council General until almost the end of his life. After Ozanam's death, a dispute arose about who had been the founder of the SSVP, and Bailly declared that it was necessary to "abandon the controversy", affirming that the foundation was collegiate. Emmanuel Bailly added "de Surcy" to his last name, in honor of his wife's family.





**François Lallier** (1814-1886) was born in the region of Burgundy. He took part in the History Conference and, soon afterwards, in the foundation of the SSVP. It was Lallier who proposed the admission of new members to the Conference. But the admission of a new person divided the group. After much persuasion, the eighth member (Gustave Colas de la Noue) was admitted to the Conference in September 1833. He studied law at the Sorbonne. He was married on April 22, 1839 to Henriette Deporte. He was, according to Amélie Ozanam, the dearest of her husband's friends. Ozanam chose him in 1845 to be the godfather of Marie Joséphine. A competent lawyer, then a judge, François Lallier was known for his cultured use of language and was privileged to draft the first Rule in 1835. In 1837, he was appointed Secretary General of the Society, in charge of writing circulars and letters. Lallier was a major player in the expansion of the Conferences to other nations. He founded many Conferences. In addition, he had an active interest in archaeology, in Sens. One of Lallier's most outstanding works, was the booklet "The Origins of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, according to the Memories of its First Members" which he wrote in 1879, at the request of the 3rd President General, Adolphe Baudon, . He met with the founders who were still living at the time (Le Taillandier, Lamache and Devaux) to draw up this work, which was published in 1882.



**Paul Lamache** (1810-1892) was the longest-lived founder. He was born in a village called Saint-Pierre-Eglise in Normandy in northern France, about 350 km from Paris. His father was a physician and was also mayor of his home town. He moved to Paris to study law at the Sorbonne, as did Ozanam and the other founders. In 1832, Lamache met Ozanam and joined him at the "History Conference," where he took an active part in the debates. He wrote many articles for different magazines and other media of the time, being very active in the debate of ideas. He was the first Catholic writer to declare himself against slavery. Upon finishing his legal studies, Lamache married Henriette d'Humbersin in 1844, and they had five children. Lamache was also a scholar in the field of education and took an active part in the campaigns to promote the teaching profession and for quality education, defending religious teaching in schools. He was rector and teacher in three cities (Strasbourg, Bordeaux, and Grenoble). He was part of the National Guard during the Revolution of 1848, as were Ozanam and the 3rd President General (Adolphe Baudon), as well as many other members of the Society. Lamache was awarded the "Cross of the Legion of Honor," as were his sister Rosalie Rendu, Lallier, and Ozanam. Lamache died at the age of 82 in Grenoble (Switzerland).

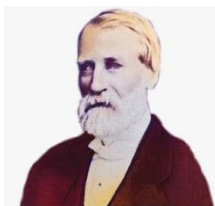


**Pierre-Emmanuel-Félix Clavé** (1811-1853) was, of the seven founders, the least known. He was born in the Province of Hautes-Pyrénées, although some sources indicate that he was born in Toulouse. He moved to Paris in 1831, when he met Ozanam and Bailly de Surcy. During this time, he fell in love with a Parisian girl who could not reciprocate the romance because she considered Clavé of a lower social class than hers. This rejection in love caused him great heartache. He was also a member of the History Conferences. As the first Conferences developed, Clavé became president of the St. Philip du Roule Conference in Paris. He was a man of letters and of the law. He published several works, including a collection of poetry and a book on Pope Pius IX. He worked in Algeria and Mexico. He married Marie-Louise Sorg in 1847. He had no children. His name was unfairly involved in a legal case, being the target of blackmail and false accusations, strongly affecting his

reputation. Because of the arbitrary treatment he suffered, his mental health was impaired, which contributed to his early death at the age of 42. During his final years, Clavé's wife, in view of his weakened mental health, was forced to admit him to a rehabilitation clinic in the Pyrenees for the treatment of his nervous problems. After he was cured, he became an employee of the clinic.



**Jules-François-Louis Devaux** (1811-1880) was born in Colombières. The son of a physician, Jules Devaux first studied in Caen. At the age of 20, he went to Paris to study medicine at the Sorbonne. He first met Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam there. In 1833, Devaux was one of the seven founders of the Charity Conference. He was chosen to be the first treasurer of the Conference, and would also be the first treasurer of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It was he who put the group in contact with Sister Rosalie Rendu (FC), who immediately approved their intentions and showed them practical ways to help people in need. Having completed his medical studies, Jules Devaux left Paris in 1839 to settle in Normandy. He practised medicine in Honfleur, but stopped working as a doctor when his mother died. He then traveled in Europe, especially in Germany, where he tried unsuccessfully to found a Vincentian Conference. Devaux lived in Munich and worked closely with Father Maret. He married Adèle Marie Louise Picard in 1849 in Paris and had two children, René and Louise. He died at the age of 69 in Paris.



**Pierre-Auguste Le Taillandier** (1811-1886) was a native of Rouen (France), but his family moved to Paris where he was able to complete his studies. He joined Ozanam in the "History Conferences." In 1833, he was active in founding the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He gave religious instruction to the apprentices on home visits, and with prisoners. Le Taillandier was opposed to the first division of the Charity Conference as its membership, as he thought that their unity would come to an end, and is remembered for having wept during the debate on the matter in December 1835. In 1837, he went to Le Mans and then to his hometown of Rouen. Auguste was the first of the young founders to receive the sacrament of matrimony. He married Marie Baudry on August 7, 1838. The couple had four children, three girls and one boy. In Rouen, he was director of an insurance company and a hospital. There he founded a Conference in 1841 and became its president. He was very popular among his brothers of the Conference. As a sign of gratitude to him, the members of the St. Godard Conference presented him with a gift: a stained-glass window with his portrait. He received many titles of honor.





# About the Society of St Vincent de Paul

## Who we are

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is an international organization formed of lay Catholics, who seek personal and spiritual growth through service to those most in need. Present in **152 countries**, with **800,000 members** and **1,500,000 volunteers**. Every day, it **helps over 30 million people**. The SSVP is an associate member of **UNESCO** and a special adviser to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is also part of the **Global Catholic Climate Movement** and is aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) proposed by the United Nations in its **Agenda 2030**.

## Our mission

A **network of friends** who seek personal holiness through service to those in need and in defense of social justice.

## Our Vision

To be recognized as a global organization which promotes the **integral dignity** of people in need.

## Our Values

**Service - Spirituality - Humility - Charity - Empathy**

## Our Logo

The SSVP's official international logo depicts a fish (symbol of Jesus Christ and Christianity), within a blue circle, which symbolizes humanity. This logo figuratively conveys Ozanam's well-known quote: "Embrace the world in a network of charity"

The bow embodies the contemporary symbol of solidarity, and the motto represents the fruit of unity within our Society: "Serving in hope (Serviens in Spe)"



Strategies for creating university conferences



## Step 1)

The local SSVP council can establish a support group, formed by 3 young people already members of the SSVP (these will be the contacts, in other words, the bridge between the young university students and the SSVP)

## Step 2)

Seek support from those responsible for the University (a professor, dean, director) and introduce them to SSVP. Combine a possible extracurricular score for the young participants.

## Step 3)

Organize an exhibition, lecture, chat, or cultural presentation of the SSVP to university students (who we are, our mission, vision and values), with videos, photos and testimonies.

## Step 4)

Identify a practical outreach activity, involving the local community (visiting an asylum, day care, hospital, needy family, etc.)

## Step 5)

Identify young people interested in forming a group and who can meet once a week or once a fortnight for at least 1 hour.

## Step 6)

In these weekly meetings, acquire greater knowledge of the SSVP, its history, its mission. Determine how the local group will act.

## Step 7)

Take care that the group's activities do not hinder studies. The meetings can be at the university itself, helping the local community.





# STARTING A YOUTH CONFERENCE

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

## See ...

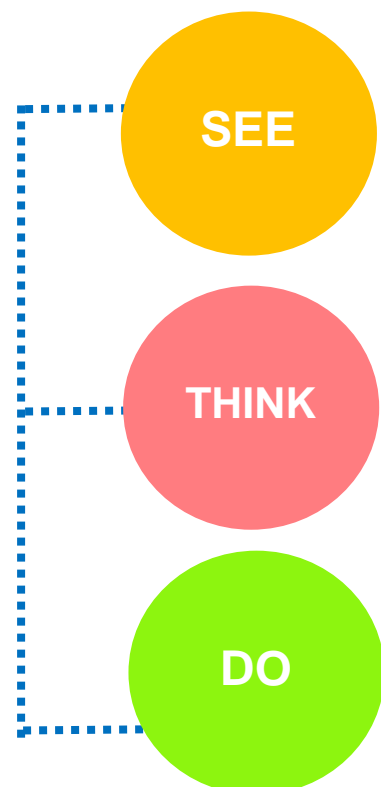
Make your conference aware of a social injustice (some person or family in some need of help).

## Think ...

Reflect on what can be done about this issue.

## Do ...

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





# Step 1: SEE

To give 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 guidelines for the formation and spirituality of the new group to be formed at the university.

Learn about **social injustices** in your community. A good place to start is to visit our website at [www.ssvpglobal.org](http://www.ssvpglobal.org).

Another great idea is to research specific issues that arouse your interest, such as **homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, the stolen generation or housing accessibility**.

Talk to your friends about what inspires them **to make a difference** and share stories you have witnessed or heard.

Make a list of all the **people interested** in your **conference**.

**Choose a teacher** who is interested in social justice, has time and is willing to support the group. A good person to talk to is your **head of religious education**.

Check with your local parish to see if there is an **SSVP conference or a local SSVP Council**.

If not, you **can request support via the SSVP General Council**, and we will check the Council nearest to you to support you.

Contact the local **Youth team member located** at the end of this guide. They will be able to **support you and your colleagues** in preparing for your conference

Get to know a little more about the **history of Ozanam and other founders**.

Get information from **your local parish about charitable activities** that can be practiced.

We suggest a **training period** of at least 4 months to learn about SSVP, about the founders, our work, how we organize, etc.

After this period, the local SSVP Council can be contacted for the **formal start of the conference**.

**We recommend the presence of existing SSVP members to monitor the training and for at least another 3 months with the new conference, to give support and guidance.**



## Step 2: THINK



This is an opportunity for your Youth Conference to meet once a week or fortnightly 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 **Youth Conference will operate** in order to achieve your goals.

Think about...Setting up a Conference computer directory. As a guide, the directory could contain 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.

### Correspondence

This is where you keep all the emails received by the local conference of the Society St Vincent de Paul 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 Youth, Children, Teenagers 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.

### Accounts

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

## Think about... Organizing 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 Youth staff member of the meeting details so that a representative of the Society St Vincent de Paul can attend.
- Advertise the details throughout the university at forums, in the daily notices and on posters throughout the university.
- Plan the agenda of the first meeting. 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

1. Start the meeting on time.
2. Say the opening prayer together.
3. Take a moment to go through reflection as a group.
4. 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.
5. Take an attendance register of all conference members and record in the minutes.
6. Type up the minutes as the meeting progresses to save time. This task is usually assigned to the Secretary.
7. Have a positive attitude and be respectful of other members' contributions.
8. 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.
9. Make sure action items that have been completed are marked off the action sheet. Also use this to record action item progress and timelines of when they are due. This will help the conference ensure smooth planning and organization is in place.
10. If necessary, decide on new action items and add them to the action sheet.
11. Provide time for questions or new ideas but save chit-chat until after the meeting.
12. Say the closing prayer together.
13. Close meeting. Once the meeting has finished the minutes will be finalized and sent to all the members to confirm who attended, what was covered, and any new ideas or questions raised.
14. The best time to organize your Youth, Children and Teen Conference meeting is once a week or fortnight during lunch (for example). Since time is limited, keep your meetings short and sharp, but remember to still have fun!





# Think about... Leadership positions



**Office bearers are members of the Youth Conference who hold positions of leadership.**

Taking on the role of a member of the conference board is a great way to develop life skills that will help you post university, 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 a member of the

conference board.

You don't have to be a particular age or year group to get involved. It is also recommended that membership of the conference board is rotated every year to provide other members with the opportunity to give of their best in a new role. Members of the conference board can also take the opportunity to mentor younger conference members so when the time comes, they feel ready to step up as a member of the conference board continuing the good works of the conference into the future.

## Members of the Conference Board 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 Society St Vincent de Paul
- creates a welcoming environment in the conference
  - encourages unity in the group
  - encourages participation by all
- makes sure the meetings are organized and interesting
- does NOT have all the answers, but draws on the strengths of all members

- keeps in touch with your Youth staff member.

#### Duties:

- plans the agenda for each meeting with the secretary
- runs the meeting
- helps to resolve conference related issues or concerns
- organizes activities to help members get to know each other (icebreakers)
- follows up with members who have missed meetings
- encourages members to accept action items that are suited to their skills and talents
- sends a brief written report to the local Society St Vincent de Paul council or local 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
- ensures the good works of the group are followed up and actions are carried out
- organizes the visits of guest speakers
- makes guest speakers feel welcome and show appreciation for their support
- coordinates the advertising of conference activities at universities
- organizes training of members.

- 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 Youth staff member

## 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 organized 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
- makes sure the Youth Conference computer directory is up to date and organized
- prints off the necessary documents from the conference file for each meeting or e-mails them to members





## 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 President.

### Duties:

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

## All Members

If you are not an Office Bearer, you still play an important role in doing 'good works' in your Youth, Children, Teenagers 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 university conference, and encourage interested students to attend a meeting
- recruit new members to the conference





## Spiritual Advisor

A Spiritual Adviser is someone with experience in leading spiritual reflection groups. It can be a student or teacher of religious education, or even a priest, deacon, seminarian, or nun.

### A good Spiritual Advisor:

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



## Miscellaneous

**Commissioning Ceremony** A good way to launch your Youth, Children, Teenagers 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 Society St Vincent de Paul 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) 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 Society St Vincent de Paul by providing a 'hand up' to people in need, while encouraging them to take control of their own lives.

## Ideas for your University Youth 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.
- ✚ Set up pop-up shops during winter and Christmas to collect much needed clothing for people who are homeless.
- ✚ Hold a Christmas Appeal to donate food hampers during the festive season.
- ✚ Host a back-to-university/school day to collect items like pencil cases, pens, pencils, books and back packs for children/young people 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 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 (neighborhood specific).
- ✚ Hold Mother's Day or Father's Day raffles.
- ✚ Set up 'home visiting' trips to nursing homes.
- ✚ Organize 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, etc.



# 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** (e.g. 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 donating. 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 SSVP, all funds raised should go towards the Society St Vincent de Paul projects.**



# 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

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 meeting to see what it's like before joining.



## Make it....Public

Shout out about SSVP throughout your university. Make sure everyone knows when and where conference meetings are held. Every time you do an event, advertise it through every way possible (social media, email or university 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 some time out of your meeting to explain what SSVP is and what it is to be Vincentian and what your university 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 just for socializing. Youth Conferences are a great way for students from different year levels to mix together.





# Home visiting and Special Works

**Home visiting is the core work of the Society St Vincent de Paul.** Home visits are carried out in pairs, with conference members providing support to people experiencing hardship 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, delivering support which cannot be met within the normal scope of a conference.

**Examples of Special Works in 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
- Youth Programs
- Mental Health Support Services
- Homelessness Support Services



*Helps the local community*



*School support programs*



*Environmental protection actions*



*Christmas party with needy children*

# Youth at SSVP in the World

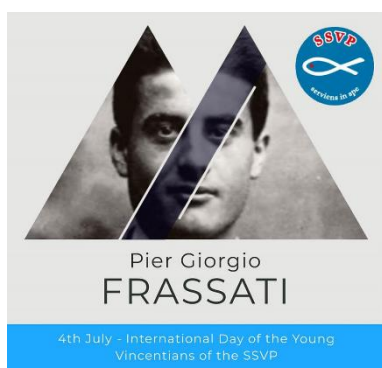
Vincentian Youth are present in all 152 countries where the SSVP is present.

In addition to participating in the weekly / biweekly meeting of the Conference, they are also organized in **Youth Committees**, to address the issues of youth in their territories.



The 4th of July is a very special date!!

On this date the **SSVP International Vincentian Youth Day** is celebrated. It is also the day of the Liturgical Feast of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, considered a patron of the young Vincentians.



## Ongoing projects at the International Youth Committee

International **Friends** Network;

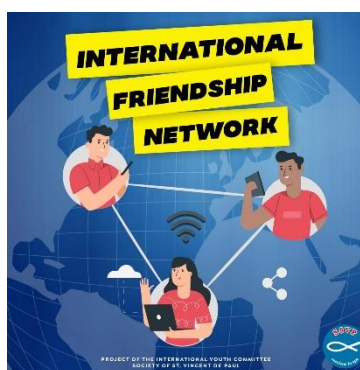
Vincentian Youth **Exchange**;

Organization and participation in events like **WYD with Pope Francis**;

Care for the **Common Home and the Environment**;

**International Meeting** of Youth of the Vincentian Family;

Encouraging the work of the **Children and Adolescents Conferences**







# Key contacts For International Youth Committee

If your **National, Central or even local Council** has any questions, about how to start this Project, **please contact us.**

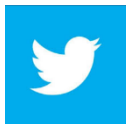
If you are a **young university student** and have heard about the possibility of starting something brilliant on your campus, with your other friends, **contact us.**

If you are a **professor, director or dean of any university** and want to implement the work of an SSVP Conference as an integral part of the extracurricular activities in your course, **contact us for more information.**

**For all those interested** in more information, contact us



[www.ssvpglobal.org](http://www.ssvpglobal.org)



[@SSVP\\_CGI](https://twitter.com/SSVP_CGI)



[cgi.ivp-youth@ssvpglobal.org](mailto:cgi.ivp-youth@ssvpglobal.org)



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**Council General International**  
**International Committee for Youth, Children and Adolescents**  
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**2021**