

SHREWSBURY DIOCESE News

Turning Concern into Action

Issue 14 | Autumn 2021



Thank You For All That You Do!

It is wonderful to once again be able to share in this newsletter examples of the incredible works that our Mini Vinnies are doing during these unusual times.

Thank you to them and our Vincentian Coordinators who guide and facilitate their creative ideas, helping our Mini Vinnies put their faith into action by SEEing, THINKing, and DOing.

Thank you for all that you do!

Your Shrewsbury SVP Young Vincentian Development Team,

Janet, Marjorie, Mike, Bernadette & Colette

Pope Francis to Young People:
**God loves you;
the Church needs you**

He says, "Dear young people my joyful hope is to see you keep running the race before you, outstripping all those who are slow or afraid!

And when you arrive where we have not yet reached, have the patience to wait for us."



St Vincent's Altrincham Acts of Kindness

The Mini Vinnies at St Vincent's Primary School in Altrincham have been very busy since the start of the school year. There are 35 Mini Vinnies ranging from Year 1 to Year 6 who have all been democratically elected by their classmates as representatives who are dedicated to help the community, fundraise for charity, and spread kindness.

In September, they started a campaign in the school community to collect clothing and toiletries for the Afghan refugees in Manchester, there was an enormous response; dozens of bags and boxes were dropped off in carloads to the various drop-off points around South Manchester. As well as collecting the contributions, the Mini Vinnies discussed the importance of helping refugees during their first meeting. These busy Mini Vinnies helped with the marvellous Macmillan Coffee morning – collecting contributions from around the school and helping set up and sell coffee and cake to raise funds for this invaluable charity.

October arrived, so to honour the month of the Rosary, they sold beautiful, large, wooden rosary beads across the school, to raise vital funds to support the 'Marist Mission' in The Gambia. The Sisters at the moment are helping refugees and their families - £12 feeds a family for one week.

Harvest Festival is such an important time in the Mini Vinnie calendar. They helped to collect the school's donations to celebrate this important time of year and helped to load up cars with an abundance of food, toiletries and drinks for those in need. This was all delivered to local foodbanks to serve



the community, including Cornerstones Homeless Charity.

This half term, the St Vincent's Mini Vinnies have hit the ground running - selling poppies and other accessories for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal – this is always a very successful event, and the children learn so much about why it is important to support and commemorate our armed forces.

Following the Poppy Appeal, they are joining with their school's Sports' Council to make Christmas cards for the 'Be a Santa to a Senior' initiative. This is in conjunction with the Altrincham 'Home Instead' Charity and involves making Christmas cards for the elderly community to spread kindness, care and to show that they are not forgotten.

The St Vincent's of Altrincham Mini Vinnies have had a fantastic start to the new school year and have many more exciting projects ahead of them.





A Legacy to St Alban's Macclesfield

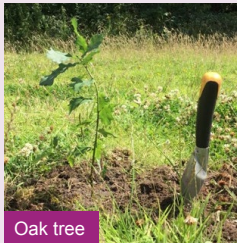
Written by Mini Vinnies 2020-21

Our first meeting together was on 30th January 2020, when we were in Year 5. After electing a President, Secretary and Treasurer, we were involved with activities like making badges for ourselves and decorating baskets for the Parish SVP Annual Tea Party. However, it all came to an end because of Covid-19. We were unable to meet up again but tried in our own ways to be 'helping hands' at home and in school. On 28th June 2021, we resumed our meetings!

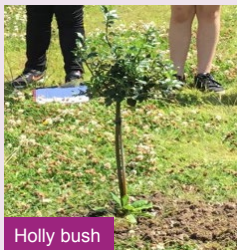
We were now nearly at the end of Year 6. We discussed how we were feeling and the impact that the pandemic had had on us and the world.

We wanted to leave St Alban's a reminder of our group in the hope that it could continue after we had left. We came up with the idea of planting two trees, an oak, and a holly bush, which are the names of our year group classes.

So, with the support of a donation and our local SVP conference, the two trees were purchased.



Oak tree



Holly bush

The beautiful ceremony was held on Monday 19th July, where we presented school with an Oak tree and a Holly bush.

Many thanks to all who have helped us on our Mini Vinnies journey.

We have also put together a book, entitled 'The Mini Vinnies Story,' full of lovely memories and thank you messages from our time at St Alban's. We hope the next Mini Vinnies group will continue this!

Mass to Celebrate the Feast of St Vincent de Paul



On Monday 27th September, at the invitation of Ms Simmons, Deputy Headteacher at St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary, representatives from the Shrewsbury Young Vincentian Development Team attended a feast day Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Baguley.

During the Mass pupils from St Anthony's, St Elizabeth's and Sacred Heart Primary schools were commissioned as Mini Vinnies.

It was a truly inspiring experience as pupils recited their Mini Vinnie pledge, and received their badges blessed by Rev Fr Owen Gallagher. Thank you, Fr Owen, for your welcome and encouragement.

The children were a credit to their schools and wonderful role models for the Mini Vinnie programme and the Vincentian spirit.

Thank you to all the Mini Vinnies, VCs, and staff for their invitation and welcome. Also, thank you to Mr Glynn, Deputy Headteacher at St Anthony's for providing the wonderful photographs for this newsletter.



St Anthony's Mini Vinnies

St Clare's Chester Ready and Willing

Mini Vinnies from St Clare's enthusiastically joined the SVP sponsored two and a half mile walk through Westminster Park and surrounding areas in Chester. They were delighted to be invited to take part and rose to the challenge! Six members of staff and a group of parents went along to support the event also. The school are very grateful for the support some of their families have received from the Society and wanted to do their bit to help raise funds to promote current projects.

This year the Mini Vinnies will be leading on a range of initiatives in school. On Monday 4th October, the whole school gathered, with parents and parishioners in church, to celebrate the feast of St Francis of Assisi and to also give thanks for the Harvest. The school community were extremely generous in donating tins, packets, and jars of food to the local foodbank.

All pupils in St Clare's have reflected on their responsibility to take care of our wonderful world and they used illustrations to portray their concern. They are promoting this important message around the whole school community.



Sponsored walk

St Vincent's Knutsford A Helping Hand



The Mini Vinnies at St Vincent's school, Knutsford have done an amazing job reaching out to help those in their community.

The group approached their teacher, Mrs Holland, to ask if they could organise a 'Reverse Advent Calendar' to support the Mid-Cheshire foodbank. They wrote to the parents themselves asking each child to bring in an item of food each day but, in true St Vincent's style, the children went above and beyond the call of duty as most brought in not just one item but a bag full of food each day!

The Mini Vinnies decided that, as so much had been donated it would be sensible to split the food between the foodbank and The Welcome Centre in Knutsford.

St Joseph's Winsford Involve the Whole School



Mini Vinnies at St Joseph's have made an amazing start to the academic year.

They decided to run a Foodbank Poster competition to raise awareness of an important local charity.

Prizes were given to EYFS, Year 1 and 2, Year 3 and 4, Year 5 and 6.

They have enjoyed picking their winners. All posters are displayed around the school so that families are reminded that donations are welcome.

The Mini Vinnies are also keen to show acts of kindness throughout the school and plan to take part in gardening and art tasks. They also organised a colouring competition over half term.



SS John Fisher & Thomas More Wythenshawe Planning Ahead

Mini Vinnies at SS John Fisher & Thomas More are already busy and eagerly planning how they can help others.

In preparation for their "Pledge" celebration assembly fourteen members created "promise" artwork.



The children report that they are loving their meetings. They have already set up an interactive Mini Vinnie notice and display board on the main corridor in school so that children across the school can contribute in one way or another.

Also, since September these Mini Vinnies have organised and led school charity incentives across the school.

In addition to this fantastic work, the Mini Vinnies are also currently leading the sale of Poppies in and around school to support the Royal British Legion.

Currently, the Mini Vinnies are organising a sponsored event for the local toy drive - which provides toy sacks for children in thousands of less fortunate families across the UK, who would not ordinarily be able to afford Christmas treats.

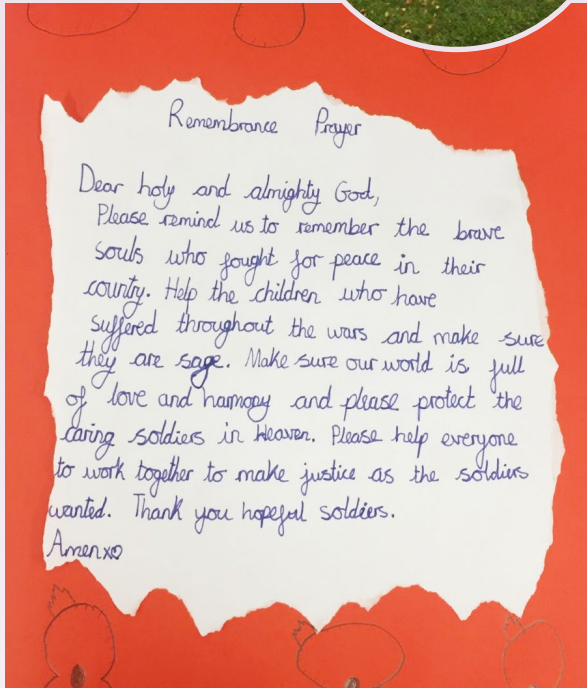


St Wilfrid's Northwich

Turning Concern into Action

Mini Vinnies took part in a prayerful Remembrance Service and the children created a poignant display.

Children in years 3 and 4 wrote this beautiful prayer.



St Mary's Middlewich

A Prayerful Event

Mini Vinnies at St Mary's Middlewich participated in a Marian Procession.

Their Headteacher and VC explained:

"Every child in every class had a posy of white flowers which they carried in their class procession around the field while Father Peter played a hymn to Our Lady until they arrived at our mini grotto.

Deacon Chris read from the New Testament, Deacon Tony led the children in a decade of the rosary and Father Peter delivered a short homily followed by a blessing. It was a beautiful, moving, and prayerful event."



The SVP Supports Prisoners, Ex-offenders, and their Families

For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.

Matthew 25: 35-36

Five of our Mini Vinnie Schools volunteered to be part of a pilot scheme this term. They recycled Christmas cards that were given to prisoners to allow them to send a card to their family, their fellow inmates, or others.

Working with Prisons
Supporting prisoners, ex-offenders and families

A small act of kindness that can mean a great deal to another person.

Thank you to Mini Vinnies and Coordinators at Sacred Heart Manchester, St Benedict's Handforth, St Bede's Weaverham, St Werburgh's and St Joseph's Birkenhead, for your time and kindness.

We pray for the success of this trial and hope that it grows over the next years.

If you would like more information on the SVP Working with Prisons 'Special Work,' please email one of the lead contacts or advisors:

President: Ian Kempzell **Email:** ian.kempzell11@gmail.com

Secretary: Kevin McKenna **Email:** kevin.mckenna70@ntlworld.com

Prison Visiting: Tony Blackburne **Email:** tonyblackburne@virginmedia.com

Spiritual Advisor: Fr Paul Shaw **Email:** werburgh465@btinternet.com

St Mary's Crewe

Help Families in Need

St Mary's Mini Vinnies have started their Autumn fundraising appeal.

The raffle prizes include a chocolate hamper, stationery hamper, sweets and a beautiful fluffy teddy. The raffle is in aid of Caritas and the money raised will help families in need within the Diocese.

They are also holding a non-uniform day on December 3rd to raise additional funds.



minivinnies.org.uk

SVPEnglandWales

SVPenglandandwales