

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Georgia**



**INVITATION TO SERVE
Information Packet**

2021

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August 4, 2021

Dear Vincentians,

One of the common themes among Conferences is the desire for more members. There are so many people who call St. Vincent de Paul for help that it is easy for a Conference to be overwhelmed by the demand.

The demanding workload is one of the reasons that drive Conferences to seek out new members. When a new member arrives, we may be tempted to hand them a pile of cases, but we must put their participation into context. There are three essential elements of the Society: 1) spirituality, 2) friendship, and 3) service. Regarding spirituality, each person is created in the image and likeness of God, so we should welcome each new member as an opportunity to see a unique reflection of God's love. Secondly, we all enjoy meeting new friends, and each new member is a potential friend. Finally, many hands make light work, so we can always welcome people to help with the work of service. In fact, by offering them an opportunity to serve, we are providing them a way to grow in their faith.

There are many ways to invite and welcome new members. The Conferences that appoint a "new member coordinator" seem to have the most success at attracting and retaining new members. If your Conference does not yet have a new member coordinator, Invitation to Serve may be the opportunity to appoint such a person. (This is a great role for a Vice President.)

Invitation to Serve is a simple yet thorough program to encourage people to join in the good work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The program requires a few small but significant actions by your Conference:

- Place announcements in your parish bulletin.
- Give a short presentation at each Mass one weekend.
- Provide information tables at each Mass on the weekends of the presentation.
- Conduct a one-hour orientation meeting during the week following the presentation.
- Involve the new candidates in Society activities as soon as possible.

This packet includes samples of timelines, bulletin announcements, scripts for the presentation, and a guide/agenda for the orientation meeting,

Invitation to Serve has proved effective locally and nationally in attracting, welcoming, and retaining new members. For the sake of our brothers and sisters in need, and for the spiritual growth of new members, please make the time and effort to use this program in your parish.

Yours in Christ,

Amanda Stricklin
Director of Vincentian Services
St. Vincent de Paul Georgia

For your convenience all "Invitation to Serve" materials are available in electronic form to facilitate necessary alterations, make multiple copies or adapt them to your specific needs, situations and circumstances.

Overview

Objectives:

- To invite and assist interested people to join our ministry of service to those in need
- To strengthen our Conferences with new members dedicated to the mission of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

How:

- By raising awareness of our work throughout the Archdiocese
- By requesting Pastoral support in our efforts to reach and interest people in our ministry to serve our brothers and sisters in need
- By providing publicity aids for every parish
- By providing a suggested talk from the pulpit by a local Vincentian
- By developing a prototype orientation process
- By holding regional Member Training Sessions
- By assisting Conference planning for the invitation week
- By developing and sharing basic approaches to retention of new members
- By focusing attention, having a plan and assisting in the process

When:

- Designated Council-wide campaign month (TBD), or as needed.

Timeline

Preparation

- Meet with your pastor to decide a date for the pulpit announcement
- Reserve a room at the parish for the orientation meeting
- Assign Vincentians to speak at each Mass on the weekend of ____, following the three weeks of Bulletin announcements.
- Assign Vincentians to plan the orientation meeting on ____, the week after speakers are heard at Mass

Promotion

- Submit Parish Bulletin announcement number 1 for weekend of ____.
- Submit Parish Bulletin announcement number 2 for weekend of ____.
- Submit Parish Bulletin announcement number 3 for weekend of ____.

Pulpit weekend

- A Vincentian will speak from the pulpit at each Mass
- Information tables will be set up outside after Mass
- Sign -up sheets will be available with date and time of orientation meeting during the following week

Follow up

- Call the people who signed up and invite them to the Orientation Meeting
- Conduct orientation meeting held
- Discuss with new members their interests and abilities
- Involve new members in Vincentian activities, home visits and MORE...

Keys to Success

For the Presentation:

- Give the presentation from the pulpit.
- Follow the script of the presentation.
- Do not substitute a Priest to give a talk or make an “announcement” of the Invitation to Serve.
- Do not try to substitute an article in the parish bulletin, a table at a “Ministry Fair” or any other method (unless necessary).

For the Orientation Meeting:

- Hold the orientation meeting the same week as the talk.
- Do not substitute a regular Conference meeting for the orientation meeting.
- Encourage attendance at the orientation meeting with phone calls prior to the meeting and assignment of Vincentians to each potential member.
- Be prepared to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities immediately after the orientation.
- Hold education classes for new members regarding various aspects of Conference activities, e.g., local resources, food pantry, home visits, etc.

What to Expect

Following the Invitation to Serve prototype yields proven results.

- The initial use of the program (in a different Council) was by 35 Conferences.
- Of the 22 Conferences that followed the program they received an average of 26 sign ups per Conference and 9 new members per Conference. The other 13 Conferences not following it averaged 2 sign ups per Conference.
- The average for the 22 Conferences above was 6 to 8 sign ups per Mass.
- Of the sign ups, 65% attended the Orientation Meeting.
- Of those at the Orientation meeting, 55% attended the Member Training Sessions.
- Of those at the Orientation meeting, at least 45% became members.

Suggestions for Announcements in Parish Bulletins

First Week: _____

Are you looking for ways to experience God? It may be easier than you think. Members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society invite you to experience God through serving those in need. Christ said, "What you do for the least of my brothers and sisters you do for me". Mark your calendars for an Information Night on (day/date/time) for people interested in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Second Week: _____

Are you a naturally caring, compassionate and giving person? Were you blessed with parents and other role models in life from whom you learned that the joy of living is giving?

If you answered YES to either of the above questions join us for an Information Night on (day/date/time) for people interested in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Third Week: _____

You are invited to serve individuals and families in need in our local area. On the weekend of (month/days), a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society will speak at each Mass to personally invite you to assist those in our area in need of food, clothing, rent assistance, utility assistance and other necessities. Christ said, "What you do for the least of my brothers and sisters you do for me". We welcome you to join us in seeking out and serving Christ in those who "knock on our door." Come join us next _____ (day and date) at _____ (time) in the _____ (location) to learn more. Please RSVP to _____ (phone number and e-mail).

Sample Talk from Pulpit

Tips: Relax. Speak, slowly and clearly into the microphone

GOOD (MORNING/AFTERNOON/EVENING)

MY NAME IS _____ AND I AM A MEMBER OF THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CONFERENCE (HERE) AT _____ CATHOLIC CHURCH.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL IS A CATHOLIC LAY ORGANIZATION THAT HELPS THOSE IN NEED. WE ARE NOT A SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY. WE ARE A PERSON TO PERSON CATHOLIC MINISTRY THAT SEES THE FACE OF CHRIST IN THE FACES OF THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING. WE ARE IN MORE THAN 65 PARISHES IN THE ATLANTA ARCHDIOCESE, IN EVERY STATE IN THE NATION AND IN 132 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD.

JESUS SAID, "THE POOR WILL BE WITH US ALWAYS". THEY ARE FOUND NOT ONLY IN THE INNER CITY, BUT THEY ARE ALSO IN CUMMING, DALTON, PEACHTREE CITY AND ANY OTHER PLACE YOU COULD NAME - INCLUDING RIGHT HERE IN _____ (parish name). THEY ARE FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS ON LIMITED INCOME WHO ARE HAVING PROBLEMS PAYING THEIR RENT, WATER, OR ELECTRICITY BILLS AND MAY NOT EVEN HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY FOOD FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

WHERE THERE IS POVERTY AND PEOPLE IN NEED YOU WILL FIND THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY.

BECAUSE WE HAVE PEOPLE IN OUR PARISH AREA WHO ARE IN NEED AND COULD USE A HELPING HAND, WE HAVE A ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CONFERENCE HERE. WE ARE A SMALL GROUP OF DEDICATED PEOPLE WHO COULD USE YOUR HELP.

I AM HERE TODAY TO INVITE YOU TO SERVE WITH ST. VINCENT DE PAUL HERE AT _____ (parish name) AND PUT YOUR CATHOLIC FAITH INTO ACTION BY SERVING THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED.

THERE ARE MANY GENEROUS PEOPLE WHO HELP BY GIVING DONATIONS. WE CERTAINLY NEED MONEY TO RESPOND TO THE CRY OF THE POOR - AND WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT - BUT WHAT WE ALSO NEED IS THE GIFT OF YOUR TIME.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO VISIT, AS PART OF A TEAM, THE HOMES OF THOSE IN NEED, TO BRING THEM FOOD, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR SOMETIMES SIMPLY TO LISTEN.

THERE ARE ALSO OTHER WAYS TO SERVE, SUCH AS PARTICIPATING IN A CLOTHING DRIVE, WORKING IN A FOOD PANTRY, VOLUNTEERING IN OUR THRIFT STORES OR TEACHING A CLASS. THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU WISH TO GIVE IS COMPLETELY UP TO YOU -ONE HOUR A WEEK OR ONE HOUR A MONTH. YOU TELL US HOW MUCH TIME YOU WISH TO GIVE IN RETURN FOR ALL OF GOD'S BLESSINGS IN YOUR LIFE. THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE LIMITED ONLY BY YOUR DESIRE TO BECOME INVOLVED.

WE ARE GOING TO HAVE MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON _____(DAY AND DATE) AT _____(TIME) RIGHT HERE IN THE _____(MEETING LOCATION). WE'LL GIVE YOU DETAILS ABOUT WHAT WE DO, HOW WE DO IT, AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE.

WE WILL ALSO BE AT A TABLE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH AFTER MASS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING OR LEARNING MORE ABOUT US, PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME, PHONE NUMBER AND E-MAIL ADDRESS ON OUR SIGN UP SHEET AT THE TABLE. IF YOU DON'T SIGN THE SHEET TODAY YOU ARE STILL WELCOME TO ATTEND THE MEETING ON _____(DAY AND DATE) AT _____(TIME) IN THE _____(LOCATION).

THINK ABOUT IT. LET YOUR HEART RESPOND TO CHRIST'S WORDS, "WHAT YOU DO FOR THE LEAST OF MINE YOU DO FOR ME". IT IS NOT ME WHO NEEDS YOUR HELP, IT IS CHRIST WHO IS ASKING YOU TO HELP. IT IS CHRIST'S CHILDREN WHO ARE IN NEED AND IT IS CHRIST WHO IS INVITING YOU TO SERVE.

THANK YOU FATHER _____ FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT AND YOUR COMPASSION FOR THOSE IN NEED.
(TO PARISHIONERS) THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR TIME AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND ALL THOSE IN YOUR CARE.

Sample Talk from Pulpit (Spanish)
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Buenos Días! Me llamo _____ y soy miembro de la Conferencia de San Vincete de Paúl, aqui en la parroquia de _____.

San Vicente de Paúl es una sociedad Católica de laicos que trabaja para ayudar a los pobres y necesitados. No somos una agencia de servicios sociales. Formamos un ministerio que trabaja con personas individuales y tratamos de ver el rostro de JesuCristo en cada persona que sufre. Trabajamos en la mayoría de las parroquias de esta Diócesis; trabajamos en todos los estados de este país, y en 132 países en el mundo.

“Los pobres estarán con nosotros siempre”!-----Se hallan los pobres en el centro de cada ciudad, y estan también en _____(otro ciudad), _____(otro ciudad), _____(otro ciudad), y en cualquier otro lugar. Son familias y individuales que tienen recursos limitados y problemas cuando tratan de pagar sus cuentas de renta, agua, y electricidad. A veces, no tienen dinero para comprar comida para los niños.

Donde hay pobreza y personas necesitadas, trabaja San Vincente de Paúl. Hay gente pobre que necesita asistencia en esta area, y por eso nuestra conferencia de San Vicente de Paúl se mantiene muy ocupada en esta parroquia de _____. Somos un grupo pequeño de personas dedicadas, pero necesitamos la asistencia de otros, como ustedes.

Hoy vengo aquí **para invitarle a usted para participar y servir** con los otros miembros de San Vincente de Paúl. Les queremos ofrecer una oportunidad de **poner en práctica** la fe Católica, para servir a los que más necesitan nuestra ayuda.

Hay muchas personas que contribuyen fondos, los que necesitamos mucho, pero necesitamos especialmente **el tiempo** y la asistencia de personas como ustedes.

Necesitamos a voluntarios para visitar las casas de los necesitados, para llevarles comida, y a veces, ayuda financiera, y a veces, nada mas para sentarnos con ellos y poder escucharlos. San Vicente de Paúl ofrece otras oportunidades para voluntarios, por ejemplo: en los bancos de comida, en tiendas donde vendemos ropa, en los comedores donde alimentamos a la gente pobre, y muchas oportunidades mas donde usted puede ser un voluntario. Ustedes pueden decidir cuanto tiempo quieren trabajar ---- una hora o mas cada semana, o una hora o mas cada mes. Dios los premiara!.

Para más información, pueden preguntar a nuestros voluntarios despues de la Misa . Tendremos una reunión _____ para expliar lo que es necesario.

Ojalá y que puedan considerar este desafío y las palabras de JesuCristo: “Cuando lo hicieron con alguno de los más pequeños de estos mis hermanos, me lo hicieron a mí.” Yo no necsito su ayuda: **JesuCristo la necesita, porque los hijos de Cristo son necesitados, y Cristo nos invita a servir a estas personas.**

Después de la Misa, miembros y representantes de San Vicente de Paúl estaran en el salón detrás para explicar sus prequntas y aceptar nombres y números de teléfono de personas interesadas en ayudarnos. Muchas gracias por su atención. Que Dios los bendiga a ustedes y a sus familias!

Orientation Meeting Guide

Schedule meeting for an evening during the week immediately after the talk from the pulpit.

Hold the meeting at a parish facility and reserve the space and time well in advance.

Assign Vincentians to each prospective member to contact and bring to the meeting.

Have as many Vincentians there as possible.

Do not let the meeting last more than one hour.

Be available for anyone who wants to ask questions after the meeting.

Have several Vincentians take part of the meeting agenda.

Arrange the room in an informal conversational manner, e.g. semi-circle.

Discuss what our ministry is like and the different opportunities available to serve.

Do not lecture, allow open dialog with prospective members while not letting any one person take all of the time.

Do not try to tell everything you know about St Vincent de Paul.

Let them know they are welcome and we want them to help with our work.

Cover the obvious concerns of confidentiality, safety, how do I do this work, how will I know what to do, how do I decide who to help, how do I approach a stranger in their home and ask for personal information, etc. Let them know that all these points will be covered in new member training.

Ask them if they can make a home visit with a Vincentian in the next week or so.

Tell them about the member training that's been scheduled.

Ask for help for specific programs such as a Food Drive or the Hunger Walk that are scheduled for specific dates soon.

Have the Vincentian assigned to each prospective member call each attendee within two days of meeting. Listen and invite to next meeting of Conference.

*An orientation PowerPoint is available for use. If you do not have it, please contact Vincentian Services to obtain a copy.

Orientation Meeting Agenda

Opening prayer & Spiritual reading and reflection	10 min
Introduction of Vincentians	5 min
Introduction of Guests	5 min
History of St. Vincent de Paul Society (short)	5 min
Description of our work and how it is done	25 min
Home visits	
Working in pairs	
Confidentiality	
Special Projects	
Meeting times and duration	
SVdP, the bigger picture	
Conferences in 73 parishes	
All belong to Georgia Council	
National Council located in St. Louis	
International Council located in Paris	
The Society exists in over 133 countries	
Opportunities to serve other than being a caseworker	
Food Drives and Pantries	
Clothing Drives	
SVdP Stores	
Education & Training	
Mentoring	
Call to action	8 min
Ask for those willing to accompany a Vincentian on a home visit	
Ask for those interested in other opportunities	
Tell all when and where new member training and education is scheduled.	
Tell all when next conference meeting is and that they are WELCOME	
Closing Prayer	2 min
Refreshments and informal conversation	

Results Report Form

Please complete this form and return it to:

**SVdP Georgia Council Office
Attn: Amanda Stricklin
2050- C Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, GA 30341
Or by email at astricklin@svdpgeorgia.org**

Conference: _____

Number of Masses at which Invitation to Serve presentations were made _____

Date of weekend that presentations were made _____

Total number of people who signed up for an Orientation Meeting _____

Total number of people who signed up for an Orientation Meeting that attended _____

Date of Orientation Meeting _____

Do you have any suggestions that you feel would add value to the Invitation to Serve program?

What would you like to see done differently at next year's Invitation Serve?

What aspects of the program did you find of particular value?

Any additional comments?
