

## Christmas Appeal – Toys and Hampers

The St Vincent de Paul Society is very grateful for the support schools provide at Christmas. This is a time of great need in the community – especially for families. Parents try to stretch their resources further to give their children the best Christmas they can.

When they have the resources available, the St Vincent de Paul Society members like to give families in their area a special Christmas hamper with presents for the kids at Christmas time.

Supporting the Christmas Appeal is a wonderful way to get school students to think about how much they love Christmas and to appreciate all that they have, by thinking of others in need.

We can all ‘do something about it’ – to help those in need at Christmas

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**SEE** – Mary and Graham have full-time care of their 3 grandchildren since the childrens’ parents could no longer care for them. Both Mary and Graham rely on a pension from the government to support the kids. The St Vincent de Paul Society members visit every couple of months and the kids get to go on ‘Buddies Days’ to give Mary and Graham a break as they are getting quite old.

They are careful with their money but don’t have a lot left over. The grandkids have been writing their Christmas lists with their friends and talking about what they hope to get. Mary and Graham really feel the pressure at this time of the year to make ends meet. They worry that their grandchildren will feel left out and different from the other kids this Christmas.

The week before Christmas, two St Vincent de Paul Society members knock on their door and give the family a large Christmas Hamper. It has lots of lovely treats in it like a Christmas pudding, bon bons and mince pies. There are also a couple of wrapped presents for the kids to open on Christmas morning.

**THINK** – How does your family celebrate Christmas? What do you eat? Do you get presents? Does your family have any traditions for opening presents? Is Christmas a happy or a sad time for you?

Watch the video clip on the **VinniesAU** YouTube Channel – ‘Why does Eve donate to Vinnies?’ ([http://youtu.be/pQpFb\\_oZn0U](http://youtu.be/pQpFb_oZn0U))



**DO** - Here are some ideas for your school to help the Vinnies Christmas Appeal

## TOY APPEALS

Nobody understands kids like kids! This is why schools are such great supports for the Toy Appeal. The Toy Appeal collects new toys which will be given to families who are supported by the St Vincent de Paul Society.

- As tempting as it is, don't wrap your present. The St Vincent de Paul members know the children and unwrapped presents mean that they can choose a present that will match the child's interests eg, do they like reading or are they are sporty child?
- We only give new presents to families for the Christmas Appeal. The St Vincent de Paul Society still loves and welcomes pre-loved items, but we ask you to please take these to your local Vinnies Store instead. They will sell these items to help families in need throughout the year.
- Ask your local St Vincent de Paul Conference members for a list of all the children they are providing presents for (without the names – just their age and whether they are a boy or girl). Make a tag for each child and hang it from a Christmas tree in a public area. People can then take a tag and look for a present especially for that person.

## CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

The Christmas Hamper collection is a bit different from the regular Food Appeal that the St Vincent de Paul Society asks for help for. At Christmas, the members try to give food that is a treat for families (no baked beans this time! 😊). These are items that they would otherwise go without.

Your local conference might be able to give you the basic details of a family (identifying information removed) and each class might be given a family to make a hamper for. This adds a personal touch and helps students make the connection that it will go to a real family in need.

- Make a list of all the items for the hampers and allocate an item to a grade eg. Gr 3, mince pies.
- The Mini Vinnies / Social Justice group might be given the task of putting the hampers together.

**Items that are great in hampers include:**

Christmas Pudding and Fruit Cakes | Mince Pies | Bon Bons | Shortbread | Lollies and chocolate | Tinned Ham (spam) | Packets of Jelly | Tins of canned fruit | Fruit Juice | etc.

**IDEA** – Why not make hand-made cards to go with the presents and hampers. You can also make wrapping paper – it's a personalised touch for the members to wrap the presents in.