

# **siLENT**

## **FROM MILLION MINUTES**

### **PRIMARY SCHOOL RESOURCE PACK**

**This pack is for anyone who wants to make siLENT from Million Minutes happen in their primary school!**



Paschal Uche  
welcoming Pope  
Benedict on behalf  
of the young  
people of the  
United Kingdom



**PASCHAL UCHE**

**Million Minutes Champion**

“Million Minutes seems to really strike at the core of current issues for young people in the Church and the community. It engages the social dimension through fundraising and in addition is an opportunity for silence and real reflection on the beauty of God through it.

“People should sponsor if they feel passionate about making a difference to young people and the community in general. I strongly believe that raising funds will enhance the ability of the Church to serve young people to become future saints and servants of God.”



Million Minutes is all about silence and giving, so what better time to get involved in Million Minutes than Lent?!

# WHAT IS MILLION MINUTES?

Million Minutes is a really simple idea! If 695 people stay silent for the equivalent of 24 hours we'll have a million minutes of silence. If each person gets sponsored a pound a minute, we'd have a million pounds to help disadvantaged young people who have no voice: who are shut out, stereotyped or scapegoated by society today.

We think Lent is a great time for communities to come together and join the silence, so we've created these special resources to help you do just that.

But rather than give up chocolate or sweets through Lent, we're asking participants to stay silent and to think about giving up something which fills their lives with noise: computer games, TV, or maybe even the internet.

Will you get involved, and help others in your school to do the same? Not only will your sponsorship help those young people for which silence isn't a choice, those without a voice who are ignored and cast out of society, but it will allow time for the 30 minutes of silence, reflection and prayer in your day.

You can share the silence with an entire class or school and spread the 24 hours of silence over all of Lent. Just half an hour a day during Lent (and an hour on Good Friday and Holy Saturday) adds up to a whole day.

“The sole reason for man’s unhappiness is that he doesn’t know how to sit quietly in his room”

**Blaise Pascal**  
Scientist, Mathematician  
and Christian  
Apologetic



Download the poster set and much more from the resources page at [millionminutes.org](http://millionminutes.org)



“We need to notice the effect that time online has on your performance and relationships.”

**Stuart Crabb, Head of learning and development at Facebook**

## HOW WILL IT WORK?

51% of children aged 8-11 play games online, and the average time for this age group to be on computer games is 9 hours 48 minutes a week. Only 3% of children aged 5-7 use the internet at home, but 28% of 8-11 year olds use it at home, and the amount social media is used within this is on the rise.

We’re asking older young people to give things up - like Facebook and mobile phones - but this may not be appropriate for the younger age group. But there are two main ways you can get your primary school involved:

### IDEA 1: THE 1 MINUTER

One way for primary students to get involved is by completing 24 hours of silence as a whole class throughout Lent. If each member of the class stays still, silent and attentive for **1 minute** every day from Ash Wednesday (in school and at home) then by Easter Sunday you will have completed about 24 hours of silence together!

1 minute can easily be built into the school day, and an experience of meditative prayer each day can have benefits beyond just the prayer life of the school. We’ve even got a tick, or sticker, chart available at the end of this resource so everyone can keep up with their silence!

If your students do want to do more, and you want to give them a greater challenge, ask them to think about how much time they watch TV, and if they’d go with less of that in their day.

### IDEA 2: SPONSOR AN ADULT

Another way to get involved is to have one or more **staff take on the silence** on behalf of the whole school! Whether it’s a large or small group of staff taking on the silence, you can get the whole community involved! You could even invite parents to participate. Giving regular updates in assemblies will help everyone to be included.

### OTHER IDEAS:

You could go further, and build silence into the whole of Lent by having sponsored lunches, silent meditations, or technology-free lessons.

Other ideas that you could take up are replacing all, or part, of regular prayer times with silence. Once students are guided through this a few times it can be very fruitful, in fact a diocese in Australia now suggests meditative prayer for all year groups in its schools!

## WHAT TO GIVE UP?

Technology and modern entertainment are great, but now and then they can get the better of us. If we're not careful we can end up persistently checking to see if anyone has got in touch, or maybe just start using our game console or phone when we're supposed to be listening to people around us. Sometimes we don't often let ourselves be still and quiet, don't give ourselves the normal time to reflect. Did you know one in five people even use their mobile phone while in the bathroom!? This time for reflection is so important to our lives, our relationship with others, and our relationship with God.

Everyone is different, so the best thing for you and those in your school to give up depends on how much time is spent on different things. Have a conversation with the staff and students and see if there's something obvious that would work well.

## YOUNG PEOPLE CHANGING THE WORLD ONE STEP AT A TIME

Million Minutes wants to support organisations, groups and individuals who will work to enable young people to do things that change our world, inspired by the principles in Catholic social teaching. Maybe you know about an existing project or a new idea that could use our support. Start thinking about how you might continue to support young people in finding their role in society. Meanwhile, check out details of the projects we're already supporting in this guide and on the website. We're supporting 4 key projects that show our belief in the power of young people and which help young people to transform their own lives and the world around them.



# GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR FUNDRAISING

Silence is only half the story. If we're really going to change young people's lives we've got to raise serious amounts of cash, too.

So we've made it super easy for you and your participants. Frankly it's as easy as 1-2-3!

- 1 Help everyone realise the importance of fundraising.** We want to give grants to local groups, help young people out of homelessness, train young people in leadership, and much, much more. But it all costs money, so setting a target (a pound a minute, please!) will be really useful – both individually and as a class/school!
- 2 Get online!** First sign up for online fundraising. **Virgin Money Giving** handles all the Million Minutes online fundraising. Follow the sign up link at [millionminutes.org/silent](http://millionminutes.org/silent).

Then add up all the minutes your school are pledging and input them at [millionminutes.org/stay-silent](http://millionminutes.org/stay-silent). We'll add them to our online counter.



Or you can get sponsored by text. To donate £5, text **LENT24 £5** to **70070** (You can donate £1/ £2/ £3/ £4/ £5/ £10)

You can email the link and texting details around staff and parents to get everyone involved!

- 3 Shout it out!** Once you're all registered start asking everyone they know to help them raise money. Make sure all the staff and students know what's happening, as well as their families! If you're not giving one of them up, using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or email to share the news has never been simpler!

# GET CREATIVE!

To get the most people involved in your Lenten silence, and to get the most people involved and supporting it, get as creative as you can! This can make a huge difference to the impact of your fundraising and depth of your silence.

Let the young people come up with the ideas! Awareness raising and fundraising can be at their best when imaginative and new ideas come from them. Sometimes there can be so much going on that more conventional stunts and fundraising ideas can often just get lost in the busy-ness of life. So don't be afraid to do something new, something exciting!

**The amazing team at St Vincent's Youth Retreat Centre in Whitstable have been getting creative, looking at how to get young people going to their centre involved in Million Minutes. Not only have they been baking Million Minutes biscuits but they have put up a fantastic display on one of their notice boards to track their progress!**



“That people today, often overwhelmed by noise, may rediscover the value of silence and listen to the voice of God and their brothers and sisters”

Pope Francis

# GIVING UP

Sometimes giving things up can be easy, and even liberating, but at other times it can be a real struggle. Lets face it, if it wasn't going to be difficult nobody would sponsor you to do it, would they? We don't want to it to get the stage where you're thinking of jacking it in though, so we've put some ideas and tips on how to help you make it through the whole of Lent only giving up, not giving in!

**Spread the word before you start.** If everyone knows what you're giving up and why, they're less likely to be confused when you don't reply to their SMS, tweet, facebook message (or whatever it is) and they may even be more likely to sponsor you!

**Don't go it alone.** If you're a parent or staff member and not trying to do it as part of a big group, see if you can get a friend or relative to do it with you, then if you're struggling you have someone to talk to and support you who understands!

**Find other ways of being in touch.** If you're giving up modern communications, why not meet up for a coffee instead, use the old landline to ring friends and maybe even send a letter or postcard through snail mail!

# FINDING SILENCE

Million Minutes is about standing up for young people and raising money for young people. And we are choosing silence as a way to achieve this. Fr Christopher Jamison OSB, Million Minutes Champion and presenter of BBC's The Big Silence, explains why.



"Staying silent may seem a strange way of giving voice to an opinion but we are drawing attention to the fact that there are many young people who are effectively voiceless. Million Minutes wants to help them in two ways. First of all we will draw attention to them by being a powerful expression of their voicelessness. By remaining silent together we find that we are giving voice to young people's silence. Secondly, we will raise money for initiatives and projects that help young people to find a voice.

"Silence is a natural part of life. There are two kinds. There's the embarrassed silence you get in a lift with strangers when we're just longing for the lift journey to end and somebody to say something. And then there's the beautiful silence that you get at the top of the mountain when the last thing you want is somebody to start chatting about things. You just want to sit there and absorb the beauty and the silence of the mountaintop. The challenge for all of us is how to find silence like this in day-to-day life. There are some ways of finding that silence and the best place to start is inside yourself."

## How to find the 'deeper silence'

For adults, at some point during your time of staying silent, we encourage you to go a bit deeper into your silence and into a time of reflection. This should be any time between 5 minutes and 30 minutes. It's up to you to choose a time, relatively short, but quite intense. The monastic tradition offers us several ways to help us in the silent times. One of these is the slow reading of sacred texts, called *Lectio Divina*. Fr Christopher offers some guidance at [millionminutes.org/silent](http://millionminutes.org/silent).

Also, check out Fr Christopher's advice on meditation on video at [millionminutes.org](http://millionminutes.org)



## DELIA SMITH

### Britain's best selling cookery writer and Million Minutes Champion

"What my seventy years on this planet can offer you is my utter conviction of the importance of allowing some time for stillness and silence in daily life. There are three main reasons for this. One is that it gradually enables us to understand ourselves more deeply. Two: this then expands our capacity to understand and relate to others and to the world. Three: as the deeper reflective part of our human nature develops it will draw us inexorably towards God.

"Why not begin with Million Minutes? Don't settle for life on the surface of things. The world needs young people like you to take up the challenge. In the words of St Paul 'God's power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine' (Ephesians 3. 20)."

See [millionminutes.org/silent](http://millionminutes.org/silent) for Delia's advice on staying silent.

## SILENCE WITH CHILDREN

We are all aware of how full of sound our world is and how little quiet our children experience. The silence around which the fundraising is based is a huge opportunity to introduce some quality reflective time to young children.

### Practice

In preparation for Million Minutes use silence as your prayer through Lent. Make the silence a little longer each time starting with a minute or so. See *Top Tip* below. When the day comes try to ensure the scene is well set and the school environment is really quiet for the duration of the silence.

### Ideas to help lead children into silence

#### Set the scene:

- For young children it can be useful to have a focus for silent time, for example the children could sit in a circle on the floor with a candle in the centre. During their preparation for silence they can focus on the candle before closing their eyes.
- Say a short prayer.
- Explain that they are going to try to empty their minds, to give a little time to God.
- Gentle music could also be used initially and then slowly turned down.
- Try to ensure that the children will not be interrupted.
- Help the children to be calm and peaceful before they start.

**How to sit:** Emphasise that the children must be able NOT to move for a few minutes. The most comfortable way for them to sit is with straight backs, legs crossed and hands resting on knees. Encourage them to be aware of any tension in their bodies and let it go. The children should not lie down.

**Relaxation:** Encourage children to be aware of their own QUIET breathing. To focus on it, to listen to it.

Suggest that in their minds they slowly repeat a phrase over and over again (a mantra) to help them to concentrate.

#### Suggestions:

- Maranatha (come, Lord)
- Be still and know that I am God
- Speak Lord - I am listening

**Silent time (meditation):** Tell them how they will know that the silent time has started and finished (could use a soft bell, stop and then restart quiet music, or just gently say that we are starting/stopping now)

**To conclude:** At the end of the time allow them to come out of the silence in their own time.

**Follow up:** Gentle discussion of how it felt (see opposite page).

**Top Tip**  
Aim to lead children in silence for a short time, equal to 1 minute for each year of their age (i.e. 5 mins for 5 year olds)

# CLASS/GROUP ACTIVITIES

Here are some simple ideas to help introduce the themes of Million Minutes. More resources, PowerPoint presentations and videos are available at [millionminutes.org](http://millionminutes.org).

## The voice of the very young

Because of the nature of this project these suggestions are aimed initially at the top end of Key stage 2, with the idea that they themselves will work to introduce it to still younger children.

The project is all about hearing the voice of the young, valuing their opinions and realising that they are our future, and supporting them. This is just as true of the very young so a useful starting point is discussion and planning, get their opinions on the project, its aims and what it hopes to achieve. Help them to register, download sponsor forms and to plan assemblies, newsletters etc to inform as many people as possible.



## Discussion and planning session with children

Million Minutes is all about recognising that young people have the right to be heard, and the right to an opinion. Here are a few suggestions for discussion themes/questions:

- What do you think about the way that the television, magazines etc present young children and young people?
- What positive things do we see and hear about the young?
- What negative things?

### What would you change?

- What do you think needs changing in our country/society?
- What can we do about it?

### Million Minutes

- What do we want to do about this project?
- How do we want to take part?
- How can we inform the rest of the school/other people about what we are doing and why?

## FOLLOW UP

The following are some suggestions for reflective questions which could be used to help the children think back over their experience.

### Reception/Year 1

- Draw yourself being silent.
- How did you feel?

### Year 2

- What did the silence feel like?
- What did you think about?
- Draw yourself being silent.

### Year 3/4

- How did you feel during the silence?
- What was the nicest part of this time?
- Talk to God about this.

### Year 5

- Describe how the silence felt?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- Talk to God about this.

### Year 6

- What do you think about this quiet time?
- What effect do you think it could have on you and your class?
- Talk to God about the silence.

“We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass - grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence ... we need silence to be able to touch souls.”

Mother Teresa



## OUR INSPIRATION

At Million Minutes we're inspired and challenged by Catholic social teaching. It lies at the heart of what we're trying to do. Six key principles of social teaching guide us and the projects we will support through the money raised.

**The dignity and equality of each human person:** Every human being is lovingly and beautifully made in God's image and likeness. The other principles flow from this.

**The call to participation and community:** Human beings exist in relation to one another. All of us are called to participate, to join in, to work for the common good of all.

**A preferential option for the poor:** Caring for those living in poverty is a fundamental duty of us all. The voice of people living in poverty needs to be heard. We must enable those living in poverty to play a full, active role in society.

**The dignity and rights of workers:** The right to work, to have a job, to earn money and so support your family are all connected to the dignity of each individual. They deserve a fair wage and proper working conditions.

**Solidarity among peoples and the promotion of peace:** We seek the good of one another, aware of our dependence on one another. Peace flows from this. We are called to live honestly with one another, working together in love for the good of all. This is what will lead to true peace.

**Care for the earth:** God created the earth. Often, the way we treat creation leads to the harm both of it, and of those living on it. We need to treat the earth with respect.

This is just a taster about Catholic social teaching. More ideas and resources available at [millionminutes.org](http://millionminutes.org) and at [catholicsocialteaching.org.uk](http://catholicsocialteaching.org.uk)

### Group Discussion

Talk through the six principles of Catholic social teaching.

What actions can the group think of as ways to ensure that each principle is lived out in the world, both locally and globally? Challenge the students to identify actions that are real and practical, which they could commit to get involved with.

## YOUTH PEACE ON THE STREETS

The streets of the UK can be a dangerous place. In 2008, Jimmy Mizen was killed in a violent attack. Every year, hundreds of teenagers are killed or injured by broken bottles, guns and knives. It doesn't have to be this way. It's time for an urban revolution. Million Minutes is working with the For Jimmy charity, supporting them to speak to young people about keeping safe, reconciliation and peace. Through Million Minutes' support, the foundation will expand the "City Safe Havens" project, getting businesses and public buildings to become 'havens' for young people in danger, and building community cohesion. It will also help develop the Jimmy Mizen Apprenticeship scheme, enabling young people to develop the skills they need to make a positive difference in the world.



## Million Minutes Projects

## YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Tens of thousands of young people experience homelessness in the UK every year, with thousands of young people finding out the hard way that the city streets aren't paved with gold. With nowhere to call home, life on the streets or in bad accommodation is frightening. It can seem like there's no way out. When Basil Hume founded the Cardinal Hume Centre it was because he could not stand by and see homeless young people living rough. Million Minutes will work with the Centre to support homeless young people, helping them to gain the skills they need to break out of poverty and live life to the full.



"I've never seen the house so full. People from church, people from down the road, people from school. Lots of cards. Lots of flowers. No room for them all! Out of vases. The kettle never stopped boiling, kept having to get more milk. Mum escaped to her room. There was lots of crying. It was a Saturday. I'll never forget it. May, bright, sunny. Spring definitely in the air. He'd only gone down the High Street with his brother to buy his first lottery ticket. "See you later, Jimmy!" Mum will have shouted as the door slammed behind him. But that wasn't just any Saturday, and we wouldn't see him later. None of us would. He got killed. In the baker's. Unprovoked, a completely random murder by some other teenager. It could have been anyone, but it wasn't. It was our Jimmy. After the court case finished and the press stopped calling, we took some time to think. And we realised that revenge wasn't going to bring Jimmy back. We realised that he would have wanted us to help make sure no-one else was killed, that our streets needed to be safer, and that other young people needed to know violence was never an answer. That's when we started the Jimmy Mizen Foundation. Things can change. There is hope. We can all do something to make our world better."

Tommy Mizen, Jimmy's brother.



## How does it work?

You, your school or your class promise to give 24 hours of silence (or whatever you can) through Lent and to get sponsorship of £1 for every minute of that silence. There are lots of ways you can do this. Some people are trying to be silent for 24 hours on their own! Others are dividing that time up among themselves, for example 48 people could stay silent for half an hour, 96 people could stay silent for 15 minutes – it all adds up.

If 695 people or groups can give 24 hours this makes a million minutes, and a million pounds to help children and young people!

## Where does our money go?

Here are some of the ways your money could help

- A homeless charity which supports homeless young people, helping them to gain the education and skills they need to lead a good and happy life
- 'For Jimmy' supports and speaks to young people about keeping safe, reconciliation and peace
- Recently Million Minutes supported SAFE Gorton, a project which helps children stay off the streets in a part of Manchester where there are many challenges. The Ambition music project gives children a chance to make and perform their own music, to help them to become great people

There is also an 8 page Participant Pack for you to download at [millionminutes.org/resources](http://millionminutes.org/resources)

## Information for Sponsors

"Million Minutes is all about young people changing lives, their own lives and the lives of others. We're creating a million minutes of deafening silence to stand side-by-side with young people. And to raise money. We'll raise a million pounds! It is as simple as that. 1,000,000 minutes is 695 days. That means me and 694 others! And all I need is for people like you to sponsor me £1 a minute for part of my 24 hours. Please help!"



# HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE

Photocopy this double sided sheet

This sheet (with the Sponsorship form) is for everyone who is staying silent.

Welcome to our Big Sponsored Silence through Lent - siLENT!

Being silent is hard, because our lives are busy and noisy. But staying silent is also a great way to do two things.

First, your silence will help show that you want to support children and young people who need help. Sometimes young people don't get listened to. Your silence asks everyone to listen to young people who are in need. The money you raise from sponsorship will help children and young people who are homeless and who need support.

Secondly, being silent will also give you a little time to be with God. So please, try really hard to get as many sponsors as you can and together we'll use our silence to give a voice to young people and to think about how we can help them. Thank you.



## Raising money

You will help disadvantaged young people who don't always have happy lives to have the chance to enjoy life. You will also support young people who are homeless to get help to find a home. And you'll be helping young people to make the world a better place.

Use the Sponsor Form inside this leaflet to ask people to sponsor you. How long are you staying silent for? Can you ask them to give you £1 for one minute of your silence? Or perhaps some more? £2, £5, £10 .... ?



