

10
years

SiLENT
FROM
MILLION MINUTES

**YOUTH
RESOURCE PACK**

Resources for those working with young people in Secondary Schools and Parishes

WHAT IS siLENT BY MILLION MINUTES ALL ABOUT?

Million Minutes is a simple idea! If 695 people stay silent for the equivalent of 24 hours, we'd have a million minutes of silence. If each person gets sponsored a pound a minute, we'd have a million pounds to help support young people through our grants scheme, our awards, our networks and more. We think Lent is a great time for schools to come together in action and join our silence. Rather than give up chocolate or sweets, we're asking participants to give up noise and to stay silent in solidarity with young people, who are facing unprecedented challenges. Young people are losing out on education and opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are having their hopes for the future crushed. Yet as society plans beyond the pandemic, adults at the helm are going back to their old ways of working and not taking the time to listen to young people. But rebuilding society gives us a chance to do things differently. Indeed, as Pope Francis has said:



'Anyone who thinks that the only lesson to be learned [from the pandemic] was the need to improve what we were already doing... is denying reality.' (Fratelli Tutti)

As a Church we can stand together as young and old to look to the future with hope. We can include all our voices. Our communities can support young people to be prophets of hope and restore our world.

As a Catholic community, we all know the responsibility we have to look out for more than just 'our own' - and that responsibility is greater today than ever. Young people's voices are needed now more than ever. The world needs to hear young people's vision for the future. They deserve support to make their vision a reality.

This Lent we are creating a million minutes of collective silence:

- a deafening 'noise' as an act of solidarity with young people, and raising awareness of the ways in which they are silenced
- reflecting on and praying for young people
- raising money to help young people be the change they want to see in our world

Will you help raise a million minutes? Why not prioritise silence, reflection, and prayer with your young people this Lent? For instance, you can share the full day's 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.

IT'S TIME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

YOUR SILENCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Your silence in 2021 will support young people like Shanea, from the Diocese of Brentwood.



Shanea felt powerless during the pandemic, as she could not go out into her community and mentor young people, when face-to-face support was needed more than ever. Unemployment, poverty, and unfair treatment were plaguing young people in her area, especially young people of colour. The social enterprise that she had established had its launch date delayed, due to covid-19. In the words of Shanea, the pandemic was a 'huge set-back' for her efforts.

But Shanea was determined to put her hope and energy to good use. With Million Minutes' support Shanea was able to use the time to plan her social enterprise project more effectively, and was able to continue her peer to peer accompaniment with young people, meeting them online. Together, they have been able to research issues impacting the community and are now starting to find solutions.

Shanea has also been inspired and motivated to work closely with her local council to create their first ever Youth Advisory group. Shanea says 'Million Minutes empowered me to believe in the power I have as a young person, and the courage to find alternative solutions to the problems in my community in lockdown. I know there are so many other young people who could benefit from their support, and I wish their support was better known'

Shanea has hope for the future. We know that young people are powerful - and we want to support them to change their lives, find their voice, and make a positive impact in their community. Pope Francis has called on young people to 'make a ruckus' in the Church and in their local communities - and that's what amazing young people like Shanea are doing every day.

Million Minutes can support young people to be the change they want to see in the world, and with your generous support this Lent, Million Minutes will be able to continue our grant-giving, awards and networks, which all support young people.

WAYS OF STAYING SiLENT

Whether it's a large or small group taking on our Lenten initiative, try to get the whole school to be supportive. Having a member of staff taking part alongside some students and giving the community regular updates will help everyone to be included. Don't forget to put up posters so everyone knows what you're doing! And make sure you tell Million Minutes, so we can advertise your efforts across the country.

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. Why not go a bit further and have silence as the running theme through your Ash Wednesday and Easter services?

Here are some other ideas:

SOCIAL MEDIA

Commit to a no phone or social media rule over Lent! Adapt it to the school or to a particular class how you wish. And if you spend just half an hour a day in

THE ONE MINUTER

Complete 24 hours of silence as a whole class throughout Lent. For example, if each member of a class of 28 students stays silent for 1 minute every day in Lent (in school and at home) then by Easter Sunday you will have completed 24 hours of silence together! One minute of silence can easily be built into the school day whether that's during form class, as part of the whole school assembly, or even during lunch. Find our sponsorship forms on our resource page. If your students want to do more, ask them to think about how much time they watch TV or spend time online, and if they'd cut down that time during their day.



Why do not try siLENT in solidarity between young people and parents, guardians, or grandparents? See our intergenerational resources to find out more (millionminutes.org/resources-for-silent).

AS A WHOLE SCHOOL

Why not build silence into the whole of Lent by having sponsored lunches, silent meditations, or technology-free lessons? Other ideas include replacing all, or part, of regular prayer times with silence. Use our prayer and meditation resource to assist you (millionminutes.org/resources-for-silent).

SPONSOR A TEACHER

Sign up one or more staff member to take on the silence on behalf of the whole school. There are sure to be adults that people will happily sponsor to stay silent for a day! You could even invite parents to participate. Giving regular updates in assemblies will help everyone to feel included.

ACTIVITIES TO EXPLORE YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES

Aim: Reflect on young people's experiences of lockdown and how young voices are not being heard in society today.

1) Called to be (Extract from Prepare the Future resource – see millionminutes.org/future)

You belong. You matter. We need to hear from you. It's time to stop, to be, to notice and share what we've learnt and start moving forward together. These questions are here to help you reflect on life during the Coronavirus pandemic and to share your hopes, dreams, fears, and challenges.

Discussion questions:

- What have you appreciated during this difficult time?
- What have you learnt to appreciate about yourself?
- What have you come to appreciate about others?

Lockdown disrupted our regular routines, our past-paced lifestyle, and took the busyness away. Take a moment to think about things that may cause worry in your life. Lockdown many have given us more space and time to think about the way we live and any changes we may want to make in the future. Take time to reflect on what has happened and your experience of lockdown.

Discussion Questions:

- How are young people sometimes ignored – by society? By the Church?
- How are young people suffering at this time?
- How have young people missed out at present?
- Where are their collective voices missing?
- Who has inspired you during this time?

You will need:

- A stack of newspapers
- A stack of magazines (age appropriate)
 - Scissors
- Flip chart or A3 Paper
 - Blu tack
- Post-it notes

2) Newspaper activity

Gather groups in twos and threes, and ask them to sift through the newspapers and magazines. Get them to cut out examples of where young people are mentioned, discuss the following questions:

- Is the same message or image appearing over and over in the newspapers/magazines?
- Are the stories mostly positive or negative?
- How are young people being portrayed in these stories?
- What themes are being mentioned? (e.g: mental health, unemployment, BAME and diaspora communities, migration, poverty, education, relationships, crime)
- Where are young people's voices missing (eg in articles about economics and politics)?
- How do you feel looking at the stories and images in front of you? Does it make you feel hopeful for the future?

FOR THE LEADER: While the young people are discussing these questions, write their answers down on post-it notes and place onto a large sheet of paper. You can then 'cluster' the post-its to find common points.

3) End in prayer.

GETTING STARTED

Now you have a few ideas as to how you can implement siLENT in your school, the next step is to SIGN UP. Just follow these simple steps:



1. Sign up online and pledge your support to young people today: millionminutes.org/silent
2. Setup your online fundraising page. Follow the link at sign up millionminutes.org/silent
3. You can also download the siLENT sponsor forms from the website

4. Spread the word. Shout it out! Once you've registered, you can start asking everyone you know to help you raise money. Make sure all the staff and students know what's happening, as well as their families! Encourage the adults taking part to use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, or email (before they give it up!) to ask for support. Share your fundraising page. Tag us and use the hashtag #siLENT so we can see your posts!

Contact us via email info@millionminutes.org to let us know what you're doing, so that we can shout about your efforts!

We can't wait to see what your school gets up to over the 40 days of Lent, we will be following along and sharing your story along the way.

Our Primary school resources are designed to support you over Lent. Check out what other resources are available to you at: millionminutes.org/silent



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