



Room In The Inn: What Is Homelessness?

Lesson Plan PreK - 3rd Grade

Curriculum Connections: Social Studies, English, Language Arts, Reading

Thematic Connections: Homelessness, Poverty, Friendship, Community, Responsibility, Tolerance, Self-Esteem

Overview:

The goal of this lesson is to introduce students to the social reality of homelessness and consider ways to help those in their community who are in need. It is important for this age group to learn about homelessness for the following reasons:

- Prepares students for encountering social issues in the future.
- Instills the value of citizenship at a young age.
- Begins breaking down stereotypes and fear of those that are different from them.
- Sensitizes students to be more accepting of those in their school or other circles that may be experiencing homelessness.

Goals for PreK - 3rd graders learning about homelessness:

- Provide an introduction to the issue of homelessness.
- Introduce the concept of being a "Good Neighbor."
- Provide tangible means for students to contribute to the cause of ending homelessness.

In this lesson plan, we've provided suggested reading, videos, discussion questions, and an activity – we strongly encourage group discussion and the activity to ensure students are learning through participation.

Suggested Reading

"What Is Homelessness? Why Do We Care?"

Overview handout included in this packet.

Charles T. Cup

Written by Dalen Keys and illustrated by Ron Wheeler

Purchase link: <https://www.thriftbooks.com/w/charles-t-cup/3266914/item/39620175/#isbn=1606151746&idq=39620175>

Suggested Videos

Sesame Street | Home Is: <https://youtu.be/Axv1qGINuJA>

Sesame Street | Rainbow Kind of Day: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vHkU_DY7go

General Discussion

We suggest doing some questions before and after reading/video, including:

- What does it mean to be homeless?
- What does home mean to you?
- Has anyone ever seen a homeless person or someone you thought might be homeless? What did you think of them?
- What reasons do you think someone might be homeless?
- What are the basic things we need, that we might not have if we were homeless?
- How do you think we can help those that are homeless?

Discussion questions AFTER videos:

- How did you feel when you heard Lily didn't have a home of her own?
- Why do you think it is hard for Lily to live in lots of different places?
- What would you do for Lily to make her feel better?

Discussion questions AFTER reading:

- At the beginning of the story, Charles is not very nice to others. Would you want be friends with him? Why?
- Discuss the concept of pride. Do you think it is ok to brag about your good qualities?
- How did you feel when the others teased Charles after being nicked?
- How did you feel when Charles was taken to the Thrift Store?
- How did you like Charles at the end of the story vs the beginning of the story?

Activity Options

Writing:

- Have students write a letter to Charles T Cup, giving him ideas of other ways he and his friend can help those in their community.

Art:

- Have students draw a picture to give to a homeless person.
- Have students draw a picture of their home and the people who are important to them.

Service Opportunities:

- Have students assemble snack bags to donate.
- Have students assemble hygiene kits to donate.

Adaptations for Older Groups

10th+ grade:

Charles T. Cup became homeless due to an injury that caused his owner to view him as unfit for his job.

- Discuss how the lack of affordable healthcare contributes to homelessness. Consult the attached info sheet on healthcare for more info.
- Discuss how the lack of accessible employment opportunities contributes to homelessness. Consult the attached info sheet on employment for more info.

Charles T. Cup is forced to leave his home without any of his belongings. Add the "Backpack Activity" from the packet to discuss what you would need to pack in a backpack if you were forced into homelessness.

Have students write letters to government officials asking them to promote legislation funding shelters, feeding ministries, permanent housing, etc.

4th+ grade:

Charles T. Cup thought he knew what was required to have a "home." Discuss what "home" means. Add the "What is home?" activity from the packet.

- Have students make no-sew blankets to donate.
- Have students organize a donation drive.

