



Room In The Inn: More Than A House

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 factors that contribute to the 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 this unit:

- Build an awareness for homelessness and other social issues
- Begin laying a foundation for understanding factors contributing to homelessness
- Provide tangible means for students to contribute to the cause of ending homelessness

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

Before leading your group through these materials, read the one-pagers "[Who are the homeless?: Health Factors and Homelessness,](#)" and "[Who are the homeless?: Disabilities and Homelessness](#)" These documents will explain why understanding different factors contributing to homelessness is helpful as we seek to be in community with our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness.

Discussion Questions BEFORE Reading:

- What does it mean to be homeless?
- What do you think of homeless people when you see 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 would you feel if you became homeless?

- How do you think we can help those that are homeless?

Read the book *Still a Family* by Brenda Sturgis

www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5gvcc7TV2g

Discussion Questions AFTER Reading:

- What makes a family a family? What does your family look like?
- The narrator lists different sounds she hears at night when sleeping in the shelter. Do you think you would be able to sleep with all of those sounds at night?
- What do you think it would be like for your family to be split between two shelters?
- What do you think holidays would look like?

Alternative Lesson Options:

Read the book *Dear Librarian* by Lydia Sigwarth

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyP5d-M8sf0

Discussion Questions:

- What were some of the things the main character missed about Colorado?
- Where did the main character and her family move to in Iowa?
- What was wrong with the houses in Iowa?
- Why was the library so important to the main character?
- How did the librarian make a difference in the main character's life?

Reflection Activity:

For this reflection activity, students will discuss stereotypes and assumptions people often make about others. Students will first create a collage about themselves, then they will try to determine who created each collage in the group.

Materials:

- Paper (construction, white, cardstock, etc)
 - Glue
 - Magazines
 - Sets of paper slips with each student's name on it for each student
 - Tape
1. Provide students with materials. Instruct them to create a collage by cutting out pictures or words that describe how they see themselves. Insist that they are to create this on their own. Tell them to put their name on the back of their collage.
 2. Designate a space in the classroom for students to hang their collages.
 3. After the students have displayed their collages, provide each student a set of student name slips. Instruct students to place the student's name by the collage they think each student created.
 4. After students have finished, reveal the actual creators of the collages.

5. As a class discuss the following reflection questions:

- How did you make your decisions about who created each collage?
- How many are a match? How many are mismatched?
- What did it feel like to make a decision about each collage with just seeing the pictures and words?
- How did it feel to have someone judge your own collage?
- When you look at other people, how quickly do you make assumptions about them?
- How do you feel when others make assumptions about you without getting to know you?
- End the discussion by saying something like: "Like we have discussed in this activity, it is often easy to make assumptions about people based on how they look. These assumptions are often mismatched to reality. As you meet new and different people, be aware of the assumptions and stories you create about them before you get to know them."

Activity Options:

Writing:

- Write a letter, as a class, to local community leaders about the need for more affordable housing.

Art:

- Have students make craft kits to donate to their local women and family shelter. Pick your favorite craft, buy the materials, write the instructions, and make individual kit. If possible, volunteer at the shelter and lead the craft time on-site at the shelter.
- Color "[Welcome Home Basket](#)" labels for those going into housing

Service Opportunities:

- Have students make [snack bags](#) to donate to a local homeless shelter or school feeding program.
- Check out the [Room In The Inn Amazon Wishlist](#) and host a donation drive.

