



The Backpack Activity

Objectives:

1. To start a conversation about homelessness and the people who struggle with homelessness.
2. Show the daily needs of those who are living on the streets.
3. Inform the students how they can participate in providing help for those who are struggling with homelessness.

Lesson Summary:

1. Start with the *"What is Homelessness?"* activity/handout.
2. Ask students to tell you the things they would take with them on a camping trip.
3. Hand out items from the backpack to each student. Have them explain to the class what they have and why someone who is homeless might need the item.
4. When you have gone through all the items in the backpack go back over the list the students put together at the beginning of the class.
5. Talk about the things that were not found in the backpack and why people who are homeless would not have those things.
6. Go over ways the students can help the homeless. Add the *Hygiene Kit* or *Cold Weather Kit* assembly to the activity.

Materials:

1. *"What is Homelessness?"* handout
2. Chalk board or large paper and writing utensil
3. Backpack filled with items from the packing list
4. Packing list (see next page)

Backpack Inventory (packing list)

Front pouch:

- ☐ **First Aid Kit**
 - ☐ Tweezers
 - ☐ Band-Aids
 - ☐ Alcohol pads
 - ☐ Antibiotic ointment
 - ☐ Q-tips
- ☐ **Tissues**
- ☐ **Wet Ones** (antibacterial hand wipes)
- ☐ **Sunscreen**
- ☐ **Glasses repair kit**
- ☐ **Reading glasses**
- ☐ **Baby powder**

Tiny pouch:

- ☐ **Bus Pass**
- ☐ **Shoestrings** (or belt, etc. used to tie things up)
- ☐ **Change purse with change**
- ☐ **Comb**
- ☐ **Glasses repair kit**
- ☐ **Reading glasses**
- ☐ **Baby powder**

Mesh side pouch:

- ☐ **Makeup bag**
 - ☐ Shaving cream
 - ☐ Q-tips/cotton balls
 - ☐ Antibiotic ointment
 - ☐ Sewing kit
 - ☐ Medicine
 - ☐ Floss
 - ☐ Chapstick
- ☐ **Tiny water bottle**

Middle pouch:

- ☐ **Medicine box**
- ☐ **Playing cards**
- ☐ **Pill bottle** (for medicine, soap, sauce)
- ☐ **Pens**
- ☐ **Deodorant**
- ☐ **Altoids can** (to recycle, reuse, store small things)
- ☐ **Big ziplock bag** (to keep wet washcloth, etc. separate from dry things)
 - ☐ Washcloth
 - ☐ Small ziplock bag with bar soap
- ☐ **Notebook**
- ☐ **Puzzle /word game book**
- ☐ **Book**
- ☐ **Rubber gloves**
- ☐ **Toothbrush**

Big pouch:

- ☐ **Blanket**
- ☐ **Flashlight**
- ☐ **Rain poncho**
- ☐ **Garbage bag** (for trash, rain poncho; to keep dirty clothes separate from clean clothes; to sit on to keep clean/dry; to place over backpack to keep dry)
- ☐ **Grocery bags**
- ☐ **Umbrella**
- ☐ **Socks** (to keep feet dry or tie together to use as a rope or belt)
- ☐ **Ziploc bag with silverware** (to keep dirty things away from clean things)
- ☐ **Undies**
- ☐ **T-shirt**
- ☐ **Thermal shirt**
- ☐ **Peanut butter**
- ☐ **Envelope** (to keep important documents together)
- ☐ **Toothbrush**

Clipped on:

- ☐ **Hand sanitizer** (not always able to get to soap and water)

**Blue shows extra uses for specific items or why they are important.*



Cold Weather Kit Activity

"How-To" Guide

Cold weather kits are a simple way to provide practical help to an individual experiencing homelessness during the winter months. Keep some in your car so you're prepared to offer one to a person in need, or donate the kits to Room In The Inn.

Shopping list:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gallon-size ziplock bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand warmers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves | <input type="checkbox"/> Thick socks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold weather hat | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size lotion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scarf | <input type="checkbox"/> Chapstick |

Assembling Kits:

- ☐ Sort items by type into piles
- ☐ Create an assembly line
- ☐ Place one of each item into gallon-size ziplock bag

Optional Ideas:

- ☐ Add an encouraging note
- ☐ Decorate bags with fun images
- ☐ Throw a cold weather kit party to make assembly more fun





Hygiene Kit Activity

"How To" Guide

Hygiene kits are a simple way to provide practical help to an individual experiencing homelessness. Keep some in your car so you're prepared to offer one to a person in need, or donate the kits to Room In the Inn.

Shopping list:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gallon-size ziplock bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size deodorant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size shampoo | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size Q-tips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size conditioner | <input type="checkbox"/> Disposable razor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size lotion | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size hand sanitizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bar of soap | <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size body wash | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel-size toothpaste |

Assembling Kits:

- ☐ Sort items by type into piles
- ☐ Create an assembly line
- ☐ Place one of each item into gallon-size ziplock bag

Optional Ideas:

- ☐ Add an encouraging note
- ☐ Decorate bags with fun images
- ☐ Throw a hygiene kit party to make assembly more fun





What is Home? Activity

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Analyze text and images in order to synthesize information and reflect on the question: What is home?
- Compare and contrast their ideas of "home" with ideas collected from participants at Room In The Inn.
- Evaluate and revise their ideas and connections to this topic by discussing the details in the text and images.

Warm-up:

1. Deposit a set of prompts to your students and ask them to jot down their responses on Post -its.

- What is home?
- What is essential to home?
- If you lose that thing that is essential, how do you feel?
- What does it look like when you don't have a home?

2. Turn and talk: Pair students up in partners and small groups to discuss their responses. Ask students to look for common themes and differences amongst their responses.

3. Tell your students that you will work together as a class to come up with a definition of "home." Ask each group to share a few of their findings. Document these findings on the board, grouping similar themes together.

4. Based on this class discussion, ask each student to write a 1–2 sentence definition of home.

5. Frame the topic by sharing, "We're going to be looking closely at people who have had to leave their homes."

6. Optional discussion topics:

- Reasons for loss of home locally and globally.
- Definitions of "refuge" and "refugee."
- Is it possible to feel "at home" in a place that is not home?

Introducing the Resources and Activity:

1. Guide students through the “What is home?” slides.
2. Read responses from Room In The Inn Participants. Have students consider these questions:
 - What ideas about “home” emerge?
 - What are the differences between their responses about home and these shared from Room In The Inn? What is similar?

Reflection:

Ask students to reflect and write a response to the activity using the following prompts:

- After reading the responses and viewing the images, how has your definition of home changed?
- What in the responses and the images changed your thinking?

Extension Activities:

Option 1.

Use Instagram Stories to document your own “home” experiences for a day. Capture five moments that define your home. Share your Instagram feeds with us by tagging **@roomintheinn**.

Option 2.

Provide square Post-its and ask them to draw scenes of their “home.” Display in a collection to create a class gallery.

Option 3.

Discuss this topic locally and connect this to policy.

- Who is finding home in our communities?
- How can we help?

What is home?





“Home is a safe haven and a comfort zone. A place to live with our families and pets and enjoy with friends. A place to build memories. A place where we can truly just be ourselves. And whether our homes are houses, tents, spaces in the city or just a group of people, they are our shelters and our sanctuaries.”

Monica





“I think that home is simply wherever you’re surrounded
by people who love you.”

Sonise





“Home is a place blessed, where you and your family can be secure, have all you need, and share your sadness and happiness. Where you can help each other as a family. It does not matter how big or small.”

David





“Home is the place where you know you are welcome.
You don’t have to worry about being rejected or unwanted.
You are safe there, even if it's just a group of people you trust.”

Dennis





What ideas about “home” come to mind?

What are the differences between our responses about “home” and these shared from Room In The Inn? What is similar?