



Room In The Inn: What Is Homelessness?

Lesson Plan 7th - 9th 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 7th - 9th graders learning about homelessness:

- 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 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.

Suggested Videos

Nashville Community Rallies To Help Formerly Homeless Grocery Employee:

<https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/living/story/nashville-community-rallies-homeless-grocery-store-employee-72929060>

Nashville Teen Commits to Tennessee Volunteers Despite Homelessness:

<https://fox17.com/news/local/nashville-senior-commits-to-tennessee-volunteers-despite-struggle-with-homelessness-football-south-eastern-conference-vols>

Interview with Pam - Hope for the Homeless:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkQc8CUeM7g>

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?
- 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?

Discussion questions AFTER reading:

- Nashville has grown in population by 12% in the last 10 years – why would a growing population potentially lead to an increase in homelessness?
- Why do you think people with mental health issues are more likely to be homeless?
- What are some of the challenges of being homeless in winter? In summer?

Discussion questions AFTER videos:

- What are some ways you could help someone in your school who is homeless?
- What would you say to a classmate if they told you they were homeless?
- What are the things LaShenda will need in her new home?
- How did other people help LaShenda get out of homelessness? What else could you do for them?
- How do you think Pam felt when she first became homeless?
- What have others done to give Pam hope?

Activity Options

Writing:

- Have students write a letter to a homeless person to cheer them up.
- Have students write a letter to their city council and/or mayor asking to prioritize affordable housing programs.

Service Opportunities:

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

