



# Room In The Inn: More Than A House

## 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 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?

## Suggested reading:

Read the one-pagers "Who are the homeless?: Transportation Challenges" and Homelessness," "Who are the homeless?: Domestic Violence and Homelessness," and "Who are the homeless?: Housing Challenges and Homelessness."

## Discussion Questions:

- What surprised you about the info in the one pagers?
- What did you learn? How do you see homelessness differently?
- How does homelessness impact someone's ability to maintain formal employment?
- How does demand for affordable housing impact someone's ability to move forward from homelessness?
- What ways can you get involved in promoting better resources for those experiencing homelessness in your community?

## Read the book *Dear Librarian* by Lydia Sigwarth

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyP5d-M8sf0](http://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?

## Suggested Videos:

**Watch this video about ending homelessness: (11.42 min)**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=L41peAlrkGw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L41peAlrkGw)

## Discussion Questions:

- What is the Point In Time count? How does this help cities address homelessness?
- What is homelessness?
- What issues lie beneath the blanket of homelessness?
- What does it mean to be chronically homeless?
- How does the language we use around individuals experiencing homeless impact how we view them?
- What is the "housing first" approach?

**Watch this Ted Talk where Adam talks about homelessness as a community issue: (10:37min)**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBWflF2jo1k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBWflF2jo1k)

## Discussion Questions:

- What is your daily routine? How might it change if you began experiencing homelessness?
- Why does Adam call the population of those experiencing homelessness the “invisible population?”
- How does an individual’s story, like Charlotte, change how you view individuals experiencing homelessness?
- What are the three different types of homelessness that Adam outlines?
- What is community-based problem solving? How does it attempt to solve the problem of homelessness?

## Activity Options:

### Immersive activity:

- Engage students in the [Poverty Exercise](#)

### Math:

- Have students complete the [Budgeting Worksheet Activity](#)

### 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 an individual kit. If possible, volunteer at the shelter and lead the craft time on-site at the shelter.

### Service Opportunities:

- Invite a representative from the local housing authority to share about the housing needs in your local community.
- Create [snack bags](#) to donate to a local homeless shelter.
- Have students research local organizations that resource those experiencing homelessness to see how they can get involved in their own community.

