

The Lord's Place **SleepOut**

Working Together to End Homelessness

Resource Guide

Information & Activities to Complete the SleepOut Experience

The following are materials to help members of your family or group learn more about homelessness and how your participation in **SleepOut** is helping The Lord's Place break the cycle of homelessness in our community. The discussion points, activities and resources can be adjusted according to age.

If you have any questions, please check out our website at <http://sleepouttlp.com/>

Discussion Points for those with children under 7

- It is essential to care about those in our family
- It is important to care about others in our community
- Discuss the importance of families being together and showing that you care about each other
- Some people don't get to live in a home-like our family lives.
- All people need to feel love and need a place to live and food to eat.

Discussion Points to add if you have children ages 7-12

- Our family is fortunate to have a home where we can live in comfort
- Not all families have a home to live in
- All families need a place to call their own
- Why is it important to have a place to call home?
- How would your life be different, and how would you feel if you didn't have a home?
- By **SleepingIn for SleepOut** tonight, your family is helping The Lord's Place help other families who don't have a home.
- It is important to respect people who are like us and people who are different from us.

Discussion Points to add for those over 12

- It is important to respect people who are like us and people who are different from us.
- All people deserve a place to live and food to eat.
- What is the main reason people become homeless? Is it because people cannot afford their housing?
- What are other reasons why people become homeless?
- There are many reasons that people become homeless, but all deserve the opportunity to live in a safe and comfortable place.
- How do you think we can prevent homelessness?
- What do you think you can do?

Activities for Adults and Families

- Build a "home" for the night, such as a tent made out of blankets or a house made out of cardboard boxes. Decide when and how you are going to **SleepIn for SleepOut**: on sleeping bags in your home, outside in a tent, or your car.
- The night of your SleepIn, set time aside away from cellphones, to focus on the issue of homelessness and your role in addressing the problem. When you sit down for dinner, discuss what it must feel like to go to sleep without any food.
- Read together as a family one or more of the recommended books and discuss.
- Show us what you are doing! Post photos of your **SleepIn for SleepOut** on social media [#TLPSleepInforSleepOut](#), [#TLPSleepIn](#), [#TLPSleepOut](#), [#TLPSleepOutWithUs](#), and make a donation on our site, <http://sleepouttlp.com/> ([Donate](#)) and shout out to your friends to do their own SleepIn event.
- Watch one or more of the movies together or read one of the suggested books together and discuss how it made you feel and how you think not having a home affects children and their parents. Does being homeless make it difficult to go to school and get your homework and projects completed? Do children who are homeless have access to the same technology and play and learning opportunities that you have? How might this affect their outlook on life and how they see their future.
- As a family, decide on one meal during the day to skip. How do you feel? Would being hungry affect your ability to concentrate and study in school?
- Individually or as a family, give some thought to what you can do to help people in our community who are experiencing homelessness. See below for some ideas, or visit our website at TheLordsPlace.org.
- Consider making a donation in the amount of one hotel night stay.

What you can do!

- Imagine and describe one day in the life of a homeless teenager and how you would feel if you were that person. Think about how you would feel and then create a message of hope to send to The Lord's Place to be given to someone who is homeless:
 - in writing
 - in a drawing
 - through a discussion with family and friends
 - by writing an original song
- Go through your closet and carefully select one of your most treasured items of clothing or a toy to donate to a child experiencing homelessness at The Lord's Place. How does this make you feel? Why? How important are your possessions when you have many?
- How hard is it to find the money to pay rent? Collect \$20 from friends and family until you have enough money to pay for one month's rent in a studio apartment -- \$1200, to cover one month's rent for a family experiencing homelessness. Do the math... how many people need to contribute? If people can only give \$10, ask twice as many friends/family. Donate what you collected to The Lord's Place to help one person pay their rent for the month.

- Plant a garden at your school or buy healthy fruits and vegetables at a farm and then donate the produce to The Lord's Place.
- What would be your most treasured possession if you didn't have a home? A bus pass? A bicycle? A computer? A phone? Discuss with your family/friends and then take action. Did you know The Lord's Place currently has a great need for [TRAC phones](#)?
- What skill or talent do you have that could help someone get a good paying job? Are you willing to teach it to a client of the Lord's Place. Email us at: info@TheLordsPlace.org
- Throw a non-wedding shower to help someone who was homeless and is just now moving back into a place to call home.
- Buy Publix gift cards and donate.
- Did you get a new bike for the holidays or your birthday? Consider donating your bike.
- Give one-week's allowance to The Lord's Place.
- Donate your computer to a student experiencing homelessness and going to college.

Resources

Books

"The Berenstain Bears Help the Homeless" by Jan Berenstain 2012. Ages 4-7 years. The spooky, old house on Spook Hill would make the perfect homeless shelter for Bear Country. The Good Deed Scouts and Old Tom better get busy with repairs!

"Fly Away Home" by Eve Bunting 1991. Grades PreK-3. A young boy talks about his and his father's lives living in an airport and has hope for himself when he sees a trapped bird find freedom.

"The Lady in the Box" by Ann McGovern 1997. Grades K-4. When two siblings discover a homeless woman living in their neighborhood, they discover how easy it can be to make a difference in someone's life.

Almost Home by Joan Bauer. 2012. Sixth-grader Sugar and her mother lose their beloved house and experience the harsh world of homelessness.

A Shelter in our Car. 2013. Zettie and her Mama left their warm and comfortable home in Jamaica for an uncertain life in the United States. With Papa gone, Mama can't find a steady job that will sustain them and so they are forced to live in their car. A hopeful ending as she and her mother meet all challenges.

Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen. (1997) A gentle and age-appropriate introduction to two key issues of our time—hunger and homelessness—from a kid's point of view. This empathy-building book is good for sharing at home or in a classroom.

The King of Dragons by Carol Fenner. 1998. Having lost access to the old railroad station where they had been staying, homeless Ian and his father move into an unused city courthouse and try to avoid being discovered by the authorities.

Tinfoil Sky by Cyndi Sand-Eveland. 2012. When Mel and her mother leave the home of an abusive man, Mel allows herself to dream of a secure place to live, but that dream soon falls apart when the grandmother that they looked to for shelter is not as expected.

Shelter by Beth Cooley. 2006. Following her father's death and the discovery of his debts, high school sophomore Lucy moves with her mother and brother from their upper-middle-class neighborhood into a homeless shelter where she tries to come to terms with her new life.

Non-Fiction

A kids' guide to hunger and homelessness: how to take action by Cathryn Berger Kaye.

No Place to Be: Voices of Homeless Children by Judith Berck. 1992. The stories and poems of actual homeless children depict the reality of homelessness in America, illustrating what it means to be deprived of the things most people take for granted.

Lives Turned Upside Down: Homeless Children in Their Own Words and Photographs by Jim Hubbard. 1996. Two girls and two boys, ages nine to twelve, talk about their own personal experiences with homelessness and life in shelters.

Anyplace But Here: Young, Alone, and Homeless: What to Do by Ellen Switzer. 1992. Examines the problems that lead young people to live on the streets and what life is like for them there. Also provides information on how they can get help

Homeless to Harvard – the Liz Murray Story. This is the inspiring true story about a young girl, Liz Murray, who despite being homeless at 15 and dealing with personal tragedy manages to finish high-school and accepted to Harvard.

Movies*

- **Up** (2009). A little boy named Russell is a stowaway aboard the balloon-powered house
- **The Little Red Wagon** (2012). Zach (Chandler Canterbury) sets out to help the homeless of America with his wagon.
- **Pursuit of Happyness** (2006). Will Smith and Jaden Smith. Life is a struggle for single father Chris Garner. Evicted from their apartment, he and his young son find themselves alone with no place to go. Even though Chris eventually lands a job as an intern at a prestigious brokerage firm, the position doesn't pay. The pair must live in shelters and endure many hardships, but Chris refuses to give in to despair as he struggles to create a better life for himself and his son.
- **Blind Side** (2009). Michael Oher (Quinton Aaron), a homeless black teen, has drifted in and out of the school system for years. Then Leigh Anne Tuohy (Sandra Bullock) and her husband, Sean (Tim McGraw), take him in. The Tuohys' eventually become Michael's legal guardians, transforming both his life and theirs.
- **Same Kind of Different as Me** (2017) Jon Voight. International art dealer Ron Hall must befriend a dangerous homeless man in order to save his struggling marriage to his wife, a woman whose dreams will lead all three of them on the journey of their lives.
- **The Soloist** (2009) Jamie Foxx, Robert Downey Jr. Lost Angeles columnist Steve Lopez has reached an impasse in his life. His marriage is on the rocks, and he's disillusioned with his job. Then, while wandering through L.A.'s Skid Row, he spots a homeless man playing a two-stringed violin with a virtuoso's skill. Lopez initially thinks of the man, named Nathaniel Ayers, as just a story idea. But as he begins to unravel the mystery of Ayers' strange fate, he realizes that a change is happening within himself.
- **The Lady in the Van** (2015) The true story of Miss Shepherd, an eccentric homeless woman of uncertain origins, who "temporarily" parked her broken-down van in writer Alan Bennett's London driveway, and proceeded to live there for the next 15 years.

- **Time Out of Mind** (2014). George (Richard Gere) seeks refuge at Bellevue Hospital, a Manhattan intake center for homeless men, where his friendship with a fellow client helps him try to repair his relationship with his estranged daughter.
- **The Public** (2018) Alec Baldwin, Emilio Estevez. An act of civil disobedience turns into a standoff with police when homeless people in Cincinnati take over the public library to seek shelter from the bitter cold.
- **The Fisher King** (1991) Robin Williams, Jeff Bridges. A former radio DJ, suicidal and despondent because of a terrible mistake he made, finds redemption in helping a homeless man with mental illness who was an unwitting victim of that mistake.
- **Dark Days** (2000) Documentary. A cinematic portrait of the homeless population who live permanently in the underground tunnels of New York City.

***Some of these movies are not suitable for children due to profanity and graphic content.**

*On behalf of the men, women and families we serve who are experiencing homelessness, thank you for supporting The Lord's Place through your participation in **SleepOut**.*