

No Home

Grades 3-6 By Elizabeth A. Gilbert-Bono, From *Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul*
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Time

30 min

Materials Needed

'No Home' Handout (*see attachment*), student worksheet

Objective

To create awareness of homelessness, hunger, and the purpose of soup kitchens and shelters.

Procedure

- Discuss the meaning of the words 'homeless', 'shelter', and 'soup kitchen'.
- *Optional: use attached worksheet to have students think about the term hunger*
- Give each student a copy (or read aloud) the 'No Home' story
- After reading, Discuss:
 - Why is Elizabeth homeless?
 - Why doesn't Elizabeth's mother make her eat peas like she usually does?
 - Does Elizabeth have the right to throw away peas when they are homeless and hungry?
 - What does Elizabeth say that lets you know she is a strong person and still optimistic?
 - What do you think Elizabeth and her mother "need" besides food and a place to live?
- Have the students write a list of ways to help Elizabeth feel comfortable when she returns to school.

Possible Actions

- Bring in a speaker from a local soup kitchen.
- Soup kitchens are reluctant to have children come volunteer but often welcome children's art to help enliven their space. Have students design and make colorful placemats or art to hang. Send to a local soup kitchen with a cover letter the students dictate.
- Create a fund drive- *see list of fundraising ideas* – or contact The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts for information & resources.
- Collect backpacks and school supplies for homeless children that are returning to school.

MA DOE STANDARDS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Anchor Standards

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support the conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH

Mental Health

- 5.1 Identify the various feelings that most people experience and describe the physical and emotional reaction of the body to intense positive and negative feelings.

Family Life

- 6.5 Describe how the functions, purposes, and responsibilities of family members change with life events.

No Home



America is an enormous frosted cupcake in the middle of millions of starving people.
- Gloria Steinem

My mama lost her job. She has no money, so we have to move out of our house. We have nowhere to live because Mama has no money. While we look for a place to sleep, I help take care of my sister. I tell her not to cry and dry her tears with my mitten.

We find a church basement to live in at night. Because it's late, all the cots are taken. The basement is cold, and the cement floor hurts my head. I wonder what will happen if Mama never finds a job. We might have to live in a basement forever.

During the day, I watch my sister on the street corners while Mama looks for a job. Mama talks to lots of people. We stand on lots of street corners. All day, people rush by us. I think about why they hurry. Maybe they're going to their jobs, or maybe to their homes. I guess only people without homes stand still on street corners.

Mama finishes talking to people for today. I decide not to ask her if she got a job. Her face, all tight with worry, tells me the answer. As we walk, I think about school. Mama says I can't go to school for a while. I wonder if I'll like it when I go back. Maybe the work will be too hard for me. Maybe the kids will tease me because we lost our home. What will happen to my sister if I go back to school before Mama finds a job? Mama tells me not to be afraid, drying my tears with her glove. She says she will find a job soon.

At night, we eat at the soup kitchen. A woman wearing plastic gloves and a baseball cap puts food on my tray. I'm real hungry, but I look in my stew for anything mushy. I see lots of peas. Picking out each one, I hide them under the rim of my bowl. Mama is reading want ads in the newspaper and doesn't notice. But a man with dirty hair sitting across from me does. When he smiles, I see he has lost both his front teeth. He hisses when he tells me his name is Joe. As I eat my stew, I wonder if I missed a pea. I chew slowly, just to be sure. After supper, Mama takes my tray to the trash can. She sees the peas but says nothing. When we had a home, she used to make me eat my peas. Things are different now.

Later on, we find three cots to sleep on. Each has a pillow, a blanket and a small towel. Picking up my towel, I follow Mama to the bathroom. She shows me how to take a bath at the sink. I use grainy soap that hurts my skin. I wonder if someone will come in while I'm taking my bath. I wash fast. I'm cold. Even with my clothes on, I'm cold. Mama says my hair will have to wait. I think about Joe's hair. Living in a church basement for a long time must have made his hair look that way. I think about my hair. Maybe I'll wash it in the sink sometime.

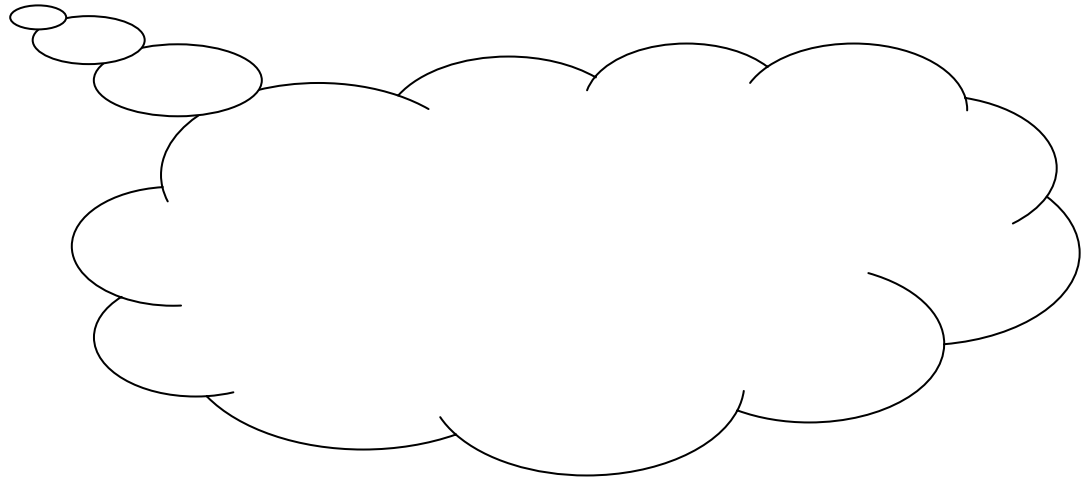
Joe's hair is a mess, but he has money. I see the shiny coins in his guitar case. At night, he plays his guitar. I listen real hard to the music, and then I'm not so cold. When the music stops, I see my sister shiver. Mama puts her coat over us. I wonder if Mama sleeps.

My mama lost her job, and it takes a long time to find another. But I'm not afraid because I know my mama is smart. She keeps me warm at night. She dries my tears with her glove. I know she will find a job. I know my mama will carry us home.

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Where have you seen hunger?



List 1-2 effects of hunger for each category.

physical health	
education	
mental health/ feelings	