



Night Without a Bed Kit

ALWAYS REMEMBER...

GOAL: Engage the next generation to activate empathy and breakdown stereotypes when it comes to homelessness

Leader Pre-event Instructions:

Goal: to engage the next generation to activate empathy and breakdown stereotypes when it comes to homelessness

Disclaimer: We are in no way encouraging your group to “play homeless”.

This is not a way to make a fun play simulation out of peoples’ real situations. That being said, it is the leader’s job to encourage kids to explore the topic in ways that make sense to them while not invalidating people’s experiences by making it a game or thing to make fun of.






- Read through all the materials. Please reach out to Amanda Farley if you have any questions or concerns AFarley@familypromiseofspokane.org
- Bring all materials to group meeting If you choose to do extra add-on tactile activity in debrief, please purchase materials
- This discussion can raise questions about the reasons why people became homeless in the first place. We suggest leaders keep the focus primarily on the loss of community that accompanies homelessness and that kids didn’t choose these circumstances for themselves

Bias check: There is a lot of misinformation out there about homelessness. Keep the focus on compassion and filter any information that may be politicized or based on prior feelings

Leader Event Notes:

- **Intro the event**
 - Pose a question to activate creativity. An example is: what are some creative places that you could sleep tonight?
 - Prepare kids: This is a reality that many people in our community don't get a choice in where they sleep because they are homeless
 - Share stats:
 - *family homelessness is 21% of all homelessness, but you don't see them on the streets. They are "hidden homeless"*
 - *2,487 kids in Spokane county schools are homeless*
 - *1 in 25 kids in Spokane county are homeless. That's one in every classroom! That could be your neighbor*
 - Group call to action: We need to recognize that homeless people are all around us and we can find ways to understand, empathize, and respond
 - We accomplish this through reading through stories of what other kids your age might have experienced when they don't sleep in their own beds
- Leader passes out stories individually, to small groups of students, or read one story aloud as a large group
- Leader goes through Pre-sleep Discussion Questions
- Share the Sleep Instructions to the group or send home to a guardian

Leader Event “Pre-sleep” Discussion Questions

-  Where have you seen homeless people in your life and around Spokane?
-  Now that you have read your story of a homeless kid, how does that make you feel?
-  What does empathy mean?
-  Have you ever spent the night somewhere that wasn't a bed? Did you choose to or did you have to?
-  Imagine what it would feel like if you only had 15 minutes to pack up your stuff from your room. What would you bring with you?








Leader Event Sleep Instructions

- Specifics:
 - **Where:** Sleep anywhere but a bed for an entire night
 - **What you could have:** A pillow, blanket, anything necessary for normal sleep routine (i.e retainer, head gear, teddy bear, etc), sleeping bag
 - **What you CAN'T have:** mattress pad, bed, cot
 - **How:** Do your bedtime routine all the way up until you would normally climb into bed. Find a place to sleep that is not your bed for the night. Do some reflection on what it feels like to be in the new place and how comfortable you feel. Sleep through the night.
 - Some sleeping ideas for leaders: tent, couch, floor, hammock, outside in backyard, living room

- Extra Info:
 - Tell them to do a lot of noticing through the night
 - It's ok if they don't make it through the whole night
 - If they find themselves not being able to sleep, encourage them to journal or write things down on paper
 - Help them get excited about this new experience
 - Remind them that this is something so that we can better understand what someone else might experience

★ Give them the handout for parents if this event isn't a group sleepover

Leader Event “Post-sleep” Debrief Questions *(choose a few)*

-  What were the most fun and/or the hardest parts about not sleeping in a bed?
-  If you were sleeping in your car or a tent – what about your morning routine before school would be different than it is now?
-  If your family had to leave their home, who are some people you would go to for help?
-  How would your feelings have changed if not sleeping in your bed was something you weren't expecting?
-  How has this exercise changed how you think about homeless families?
-  What are some things you learned because of this activity?
What surprised you? What feelings came up during this activity?
What will you remember from this experience?
-  How can you use the experience and knowledge you gained to respond kindly to those around you experiencing homelessness?

Possible Additional Activities *(choose one if your group has time)*

- Memory Bracelets
 - The bracelets have a charm on them to remind the kids that they stepped into someone else's reality for one night and when they are interacting with someone else they don't know their story, but it could be similar to this experience. Choosing to be kind is a great option!
- Rank the Priorities
 - Write all these priorities on a whiteboard or on slips of paper. (Priorities: clothing, food, shelter, cell phone, transportation, health, education, no addictions, hygiene (add others too!) Tell the group as a whole to discuss in order to come to consensus about what is most important down to least from the perspective of them as they are now.
 - Next, don't erase or take away but tell them to do it again from the perspective of a single parent with 2 young kids.
 - Questions for synthesis: How do they compare? How hard was it to come to consensus? What do you feel as a result from having to choose?
- Play a Game
 - SPENT is a simulation game. Play as a group <http://playspent.org>
- House vs Home vs Shelter
 - Brainstorm and make a list of differences between "house" and "home" and "shelter". Could be in a 3-way Venn Diagram visual or come up with something else that makes sense for your group. What is in common? Why are they so different?

Definitions:

Sympathy

the feeling or mental state brought about by such sensitivity to sharing feelings or interests.

For kids: kind understanding and concern for others when they are sad, suffering, or have trouble

Empathy

the action of understanding, being aware of, and vicariously experiencing feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another

For kids: shared emotion and seeing other's perspectives.
We use these to understand others and share an emotion with them

<p>How are these Similar?</p> <p>concern for others feelings and emotions</p>	<p>How are these Different?</p> <p>Empathy puts yourself in the other person's shoes to share in their feelings.</p>
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★ Why this is important? Our goal is to teach empathy and not sympathy