



FOR SCHOOLS & PARENTS
Kindergarten – 6th Grade Students

Project PJ

Friday, Jan. 29, 2021

ProjectPJ.org

#ProjectPJ

Why pajamas?

For most people, putting on pajamas before heading to bed is part of their daily routine. For hundreds of men, women and children who are homeless in Iowa, getting comfortable before bedtime, let alone finding a warm place to sleep at night, is not an option.

Project PJ serves as a visible reminder that everyone needs a warm, safe place to sleep. Whether your children are at school or learning from home, wear pajamas, slippers and robes to show your support for ending homelessness!

How to participate:

1. All students, teachers, staff and parents are encouraged to wear their PJs on Friday, Jan. 29, 2021
2. Take a picture and upload it to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram
3. Use the hashtag #ProjectPJ to show your support!

In this packet, you'll find:

- Homelessness Fact Sheet
- Activities for Teachers/Leaders
- Additional Lesson Plans & Resources

For more information, visit ProjectPJ.org or email ProjectPJ@joppa.org.

Homelessness Fact Sheet

What does it mean to be homeless?

Most people who live in the U.S. have a home. They live just like we do, in houses or apartments. They have plenty of food to eat and a warm bed to sleep in. But not everybody is like us. Some people don't have homes. These people are homeless. When someone is homeless, they might live outside on the streets or in a shelter with lots of other people. They don't have a place to put all of their belongings, so they must carry everything with them in big bags or in a suitcase. Many homeless people do not have enough money for food or new clothes, so they are often very hungry.

Why are people homeless?

There are lots of reasons why people are homeless. Most of the time, a person is homeless because they do not have enough money to pay for a home. They might work very hard every day of the week and still not have the money to pay for a place for them to live. Some homeless people have families, so they have to take care of their children too and that can cost a lot of money. Some homeless people have a disability, so they can't take care of themselves or work and make money. Some people are homeless just for a little while; others are homeless for a longer time, maybe even their whole life.

What does a homeless person look like?

Homeless people do not look any different than you or me. It does not matter what color your skin is, where you live, if you are a boy or a girl, or how old you are. Anyone can be homeless. Homeless people are just like us—they grew up with a mom and dad, brothers, sisters, and friends. Some even went to elementary school just like you and learned some of the same things.

Can only adults be homeless, or are there homeless children too?

Not every homeless person is by themselves. Some homeless people have families and children. These children could look just like you, but they do not live like you do. They do not have a warm bed to sleep in or their own room to play in. They do not have their own toys, and they cannot have friends over to play at their house or have a sleepover. Their lives are very different from yours, but they are still kids—just like you!

Is there a way to end homelessness?

Ending homelessness is a possibility, and many cities and states are working very hard to try and help people find homes. There are a few ways that these places are able to end homelessness.

1. They can build homes that do not cost a lot of money to live in.
2. They can pay people enough money to be able to pay for their house and their food and clothes.
3. They can teach people how to find a job and keep their house.

Source: National Coalition for the Homeless

Activities for Teachers/Leaders

1. Supplies Drive

Send a letter home with each child explaining that your class is having a food/clothing drive and you will be collecting items to donate for homeless people. Have the kids bring in items throughout the week and put them in a cardboard box. You can bring the supplies to Joppa (2326 Euclid Avenue) on Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

See a [list of critical supplies needed](#).

2. Color a Picture

Have the kids draw a picture, make a Valentine's Day card, or color a [Joppa Bear Coloring Page](#). Older kids can write a letter of encouragement to a homeless person. You can mail or drop off the finished products to Joppa, and we'll distribute them to our homeless clients to spread cheer and hope.

3. Story Time

Read a story about homelessness to the children and ask them their reactions about the book and some of the things that they learned. Options include:

- *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting
- *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by Dyanne Disalvo Ryan
- *The Lady in the Box* by Ann McGovern

4. Awareness Activity

Plan an awareness activity, such as having the children sleep on the floor for a night. Ask them to share their experience and how they felt, then imagine what it would be like to be homeless every day.

5. Make a Blessing Bag

Have children make a "blessing bag." Most importantly, add a note of encouragement to each bag. Drop off the bags to Joppa, and we'll distribute to those in need.

There are several types that can be put together:

- Toiletry items – deodorant, wipes, toothbrush and toothpaste, disposable razor, chap stick, soap, hand sanitizer
- Food/water/snack items – bottle of water, soft granola or protein bars, peanut butter crackers, pretzels, gum, mints
- First Aid kit – Band-Aids, triple-antibiotic ointment, gauze, medical tape, alcohol wipes, masks
- Water – reusable water bottle with flavored drink pouches

Additional Lesson Plans:

[Unsheltered Lives: An Interdisciplinary Resource and Activity Guide for Teaching about Homelessness in Grades K-12](#), Committee on Temporary Shelter

[Homeless in America Lesson Plan](#), PBS Religion & Ethics Newsweekly

[Teaching Resources](#), National Coalition for the Homeless

[Fact Sheets](#), National Coalition for the Homeless

Additional Resources:

- National Coalition for the Homeless: <https://nationalhomeless.org>
- National Alliance to End Homelessness: <https://endhomelessness.org>
- National Center for Homeless Education: <https://nche.ed.gov>
- National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty: www.nlchp.org
- Institute for Community Alliances: www.icalliances.org

About Joppa:

Joppa is a local, volunteer-based nonprofit organization that helps homeless people survive, find housing and rebuild their lives. Our mission is to create communities of unconditional love, support, and hope for the homeless, as we work together to prevent and ultimately end homelessness.

Joppa collaborates with community partners and helps homeless people access existing resources by mobilizing private donations from families, churches, and corporations to meet unmet needs in homeless services, housing, and education.

Since 2008, Joppa has helped over 450 individuals and families get off the streets. More than 80% of these men, women and children remain in housing today.

For more information, visit joppa.org.