

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Read *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting. Identify elements or symbols of hope in both stories.
2. With a partner, research people and organizations that have made a difference in the lives of homeless people in one of the big cities in the United States. Write a short report describing their acts of kindness and present to the class.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Write a paragraph telling about one cause of homelessness and how, in your opinion, it could be minimized or eliminated.
2. Make a list of 20 things you do in your home. If you were homeless, how would each activity change or not change? What would you have to give up and how would you manage essential tasks (e.g., washing)?

ART

1. Draw or paint a city scene. Use white chalk or paint on top of your drawing to create a snowy effect.
2. Look at the second page of the story, and describe the conflicting elements in this scene. Think of other examples, then draw another scene with inharmonious elements. Write a short explanation to go with your picture.

The Lady in the Box

Ann McGovern
1997
New York: Turtle Books

LOVE

USA

Realistic Fiction

Reading Time: 10 minutes

CONCEPTS

Love
Respect
Hope
Compassion

SUMMARY

Compassion surfaces in the hearts of two children as they find small ways to reach out to a homeless woman in their neighborhood. This sensitive story portrays the realities of homelessness, offering no easy solutions. Ben and Lizzie's concern, generosity and honesty lead to greater understanding of how they can help in their community. McGovern's hope is that "this book will make a positive difference in children's lives." The illustrations of snowy streets contrast with the bright warmth of the children's home.

OBJECTIVE

The student will be able to define and discuss love, respect and hope as they apply to this story and will recognize sacrifice as a form of love. The student will gain awareness of the needs of homeless people and of ways to address them.

After the Story

The Lady in the Box

DISCUSSION

1. Talk about differences between the lady in the box and other people in the story. Discuss possible reasons a person might live in a box. How did the author give "a face to homelessness"?
2. Talk about different ways people acted toward the lady in the box (the children, Mama, the owner of the deli).
3. Two aspects of love are feeling and action. What feelings did the children have about Dorrie at the beginning of the story, and how did their feelings change by the end? What did the children do as a result of their feelings?
4. Discuss times when you have felt or observed compassion and kindness shown to another person.
5. Make some predictions about what will happen in the children's lives as a result of this experience.

ACTIVITIES

1. Find the large city closest to you on the world map and place a story pin.
2. Read "A Note From the Author" at the back of the book. Invite a representative from a local temporary shelter to discuss programs for the homeless in your community.
3. Research, and decide on a project your class can do to help the homeless in your community. (Keyword: homeless) Examples: Publicize and collect donations of canned foods or warm clothing as part of a school event; help prepare meals at a shelter for the homeless in your area; collect new and/or used toys to be donated to children in homeless shelters.

JOURNAL

1. Write what you would do if you met a person living in a box.
2. Retell the story from Dorrie's point of view. Write about how she felt after meeting the children.

HOME CONNECTION

1. Retell the story at home. Find out if anyone has helped a homeless person. If so, how?
2. At your next birthday party, have a food scavenger hunt in your neighborhood. Give each team a list of a variety of canned foods. After the party, deliver the collected items to the food bank in your city.

VOCABULARY

confronted
grate
presence
process

sensitive
essence
anonymous
compassion