



HOMELESS SCAVENGER HUNT

Explanation:

Deut. 11:18-19 *"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*

"Family on Mission Together" activities are a simple and fun way to teach your children about how to live out God's Word in God's world. These activities are created to be "hands on, minds on" experiences that give you family teaching moments by actively doing something together. These activities will hopefully create unique conversations as well as unique lasting family memories, beyond the normal family outings.

Information:

(* consider reading this to your family, before starting your activity)

The fastest growing demographic of homelessness in America is children, those under the age of 18 and families. Just in the last 10 years childhood homelessness has gone from 1 in 50 to 1 in 30. That is 2,483,539 children experienced homelessness in the U.S. in 2013 (2.5 million) according to the US Census.

Family homelessness is also on the rise. Family Homelessness is described like this by the National Center on Family Homelessness:

"...They move frequently, and many are doubled-up in overcrowded apartments with relatives or friends. Others sleep in cars and campgrounds or send their children to stay with relatives to avoid shelter life. Once in shelter, despite the efforts of dedicated staff, life can be noisy, chaotic, and lack privacy. Homelessness increases the likelihood that families will separate or dissolve.

Family homelessness is caused by the combined effects of lack of affordable housing, unemployment, limited access to resources and supports, health and mental health challenges, the challenges of raising children as a single parent, and experiences of violence. As the gap between housing costs and income continues to widen, more and more families are at risk of homelessness. Even a seemingly minor event can trigger a catastrophic outcome and catapult a family onto the streets.

Families experiencing homelessness are under considerable stress. Homelessness is a devastating experience that significantly impacts the health and well-being of adults and children. Often, members of homeless families have experienced trauma. These experiences affect how children and adults think, feel, behave, relate, and cope.



Instructions:

Read or explain the above information about Family and Childhood Homelessness.

Tell your family your going to do a special family activity. You can decide if you want to tell them in advance what you going to do or not.

Take your family to a downtown section of the nearest town or city near your home. It is up to you if you would like to do some research before hand or would like to be just as challenged as your family doing the activity.

Decide on time limit based on your family, time available and how large of an area you have to cover on foot.

Explain the instruction and rules for the **Homeless Family Scavenger Hunt**.

Additional Hints & Help:

Choose to do your scavenger hunt during the day, late morning or early afternoon.

You may want pick a downtown location, that is easily walkable.



Homeless Family Scavenger Hunt

Instructions:

Today as a family you are going on a unique scavenger hunt. You will be will not be looking for silly items for win points for a game. Today's scavenger hunt will be looking for the basic, essential items for those who are homeless, especially those a homeless family would need to survive.

Rules:

You cannot use a phone unless it is borrowed or a payphone

You cannot buy or purchase anything, unless the money has been given to you

You cannot drive, if you need to get somewhere you need to use public transportation.

You can ask for help from people, especially other "homeless" people, they are great resource of information.

You can choose to find the items in any order you choose.

MOST IMPORTANTLY: YOU NEED TO STAY TOGETHER AS A FAMILY THE WHOLE TIME

THE SCAVENGER HUNT

Meal for your whole family

Clean, drinkable water

Place to stay for the night for your whole family

Doctor that will see you for free

Dentist that will see you for free

Place to get an address and get your mail

A Shower

A bathroom

Fresh set of clothes

Place to do laundry

Toiletries

Soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant

Container to carry your belongings

Place to cool off during the hot summer

Place to warm up during the cold winter

Place to get out of the rain or snow



Safe, Free Childcare

Job application or way to earn money

Secure place to store your belongings

Transportation

Reflection:

Take a couple minutes as a family to talk and reflect after your scavenger hunt is done. You can use the below suggested questions to help start the conversation as well as the suggested scriptures to talk about homelessness and poverty.

Questions:

Was it hard to find all the items on the list?

Which item do you think was the hardest?

Which was the easiest item to find?

Was everyone friendly to use?

Were you ever embarrassed to ask or be looking for something?

Which item(s) had you never really thought about needing or having to look for if you were homeless?

Do you think it would be scary to be homeless as a family?

What do you think would be the hardest or scariest part of being homeless as a family?

Of the places we went today, which one would you most like to go back to serve at?

What are some ways we as a family could help homeless families?

What are things we have in our house, that we don't need and could help other families?

How has today changed your ideas and thoughts about homelessness?

When you think about homelessness did you always think just about a person, maybe even just a man? Have you ever thought about a whole family being homeless or someone your age being homeless?



Scriptures:

Lev. 25:35-36- *“If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you. Take no interest from him or profit, but fear your God, that your brother may live beside you.*

Matt. 25:24-40- *Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’*

Matt. 8:20- *And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”*

James 1:27- *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY HOMELESSNESS:

<http://new.homelesschildrenamerica.org/mediadocs/275.pdf>

<http://www.familyhomelessness.org/media/306.pdf>

<http://www.familyhomelessness.org/facts.php?p=tm>

<http://nationalhomeless.org>

<http://www.dccfh.org>

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/families>

<http://partnershipforthehomeless.org/pages/family-resource-center>

