

## Bedtime Bags

### Lesson Plan

Adapt this one-period **lesson plan** for any grade level and follow it with a simple and powerful **service project** on Giving Tuesday. The **reflection** brings learning and service impact together.

**Anticipatory Set:** (10 minutes) Discuss and build empathy for children who are homeless. What are the stresses and daily difficulties?

- **Younger students:** Read the book *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting. The book is about a homeless boy who lives in an airport with his father, moving from terminal to terminal trying not to be noticed. They are given hope when a trapped bird finally finds its freedom.
- **Middle to high school:** Show the following scene from the film, *Pursuit of Happyness*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOIPGQ6aYNI>

**Discussion:**

- Suppose you did not have a home and a place to keep your things. What are your most important possessions you would want to keep with you? Discuss how it would feel to be homeless. What would you do to stay safe? What problems would you face?
- Discuss the ways the boy and his Dad found places to sleep. Ask, “Why do you think it is especially hard for families who are homeless? Can you think of another place they could stay?”

**Part One:** (10 minutes) Give students time in small groups to read aloud and discuss the meaning of the following quotes. Choose a handful of quotes that are age appropriate.

“Never look down on someone unless you are helping them up.”	“I always wondered why somebody didn’t do something about that, then I realized I am somebody.”	“Your job is not to judge. Your job is not to figure out if someone deserves something. Your job is to lift the fallen, to restore the broken, and to heal the hurting.”
“In the world where you can be anything, be kind.”	“People often forget that kindness is free.”	“Who are we as human beings if we ignore the suffering of others”

**Variation for older students:** Working in small groups, students identify the common theme among the quotes listed (possibly “responsibility”). They may come up with a mission statement describing their civic responsibility to others in the community.

**Variation for younger students:** Working in small groups, students identify different ways they can show kindness to others. How are they already showing kindness to others, including family, friends, and people they do not know?



**Part Two:** (10 minutes) Define advocacy and introduce #GivingTuesday

- Define *advocacy* as writing or speaking in favor of a cause. As an example, view this video that builds empathy and shares facts. Tell students to listen for what this is asking people to do.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBmiRgOiW1A>
- After watching, discuss the message of the video. What do they feel and want to do after watching? Call attention to the fact that there is not a “call to action” for the viewer. Effective advocacy shares facts, engages emotions, and asks people to take action.
- Tell the students that they are going to plan an action related to asking people to help gather bedtime supplies for homeless children.
- Tell the students about #GivingTuesday, a day of giving that is fueled by social media and communication about what people care about. Share the [www.givingtuesday.org](http://www.givingtuesday.org) website.

## Service Project

*This service project may be started in class and completed in subsequent days, either with the class or with friends and family.*

**Project Overview:** Students tell others about homeless children and hold a collection drive for items needed to put together “Bedtime Bags” for children in need in the community. They use social media building up to and on #GivingTuesday.

**Procedure:**

1. Invite a representative from a local nonprofit to talk to the class about families that are homeless and their needs, particularly around bedtime.
2. Students ask the guest what items are needed, such as toothbrush, books, music, pajamas, blankets, pillow, bedtime snack, socks, stuffed animal.
3. The students plan a collection drive with an end date around GivingTuesday.
4. Students create signs, social media messages, and letters telling others about the needed items. They post their messages in their family and community networks.
5. Collect “bedtime items” needed for children in the local shelters.
6. They may use recycled bags, decorated boxes, or sew homemade bags to hold the donated items.
7. Students write notes or letters of encouragement to include in the bags.
8. After GivingTuesday, the students deliver the bedtime bags to the nonprofit that visited their school.
9. Students create a presentation to capture the impact of their project and share it on social media and at a school family night. They may include pictures, video, interviews, a narrative of people’s reactions, or a blog.

## Reflection:

Follow the project with a brief reflection.

1. Discuss the impact of their project on the recipients and themselves.
2. Students write a reflection or create a slideshow to share to encourage others to “pay it forward.”
3. Share the reflections with Learning to Give and a national audience. The TeachOne initiative connects teachers across the country with others who completed this project.
4. Use social media on GivingTuesday to enhance their project.

**Follow-up:** Discuss what they’d like to do next to continue in their community.

