



## **Secondary School Resource Pack 2023**

**The Homeless and  
Marginalised in our  
Community**



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This pack has been produced so that secondary schools can understand more about the work that is done by Gloucester City Mission with the homeless and marginalised members of our community.

This pack has resources that can be used for assemblies/Christian Union as well as discussion areas and activities for classroom lessons and beyond.

Gloucester City Mission works with homeless and vulnerable members of society. It was established in 2003 to offer one on one support, advice, hot meals, drinks, as well as distributing clothes and sleeping equipment.

Our aim is to do more than just be an aid agency by offering just food, drinks, clothes and prayer, we want to transform lives and give people hope and opportunities to flourish. Over the past two years we have really changed the way we approach this and we now have;

**Outreach teams going into the city centre 4 days week offering food, drinks and prayer;**

**Renew (72 Eastgate Street) - our main offices, drop in centre and training Training Centre;**

**Retreat—a day centre open all year round for rough sleepers and sofa surfers with beds, food, shower, clothes a laundry and advice.**

**Refresh – this is our weekly hot lunch service and time for fellowship at St Mary's Congregational Church;**

**Friday lunch service at Renew;**

**Restore- a clothes bank for clients to come to get fresh clothes, toiletries and emergency provisions,**

**Our Revive Coffee House in the Eastgate Shopping Centre where we offer employment opportunities to people who have experienced homelessness or addictions;**

**Our Mobile outreach teams support rough sleepers away from the city centre;**

**Replenish – Warehouse storage space**

**Refuel – our monthly worship session for staff, volunteers, clients and anyone to come and spend their lunchtime in prayer and praise.**

In our new education and training centre we offer courses and multi-agency drop in sessions 5 days a week. We have a free optician clinic, a medical clinic twice a week, podiatry, Probation, the DWP and the City Council Housing Department as well as other organisations to have drop in sessions too. This week for example we have had courses on in crafts , gardening, basic skills literacy, football, music therapy, Narcotics Anonymous and art courses as well as our Discipleship Course.

Some of the resources or material is directly linked to the Christian faith, these are colour coded in blue so that they are clearly identified. They can be used by everybody but are particularly useful for Collective Worship and faith based



## **Key Stage 3 and 4 School Assembly/Collective Worship**

### **This will take between 15 and 20 minutes**

This format is aimed to introduce key stage 3 to the issue of homelessness, to provoke thought and help explain the causes and issues surrounding the topic.

**Welcome the young people and explain that in today's gathering you will be thinking about homelessness, and the experiences of those without a home.**

**Watch video clips -**

[Homelessness During the Pandemic \(6mins 7secs\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vk7dAHzM9w>

### **Talk about what Homelessness is**

**Explain** that often homelessness isn't just people sleeping rough on the streets, but also people sofa surfing with friends or family members, or without legally parked (boat or caravan) residency.

**As much as possible, encourage participation from the young people in the audience. It is good for people to engage with the issue and understand people's lives in these circumstances.**

Ask the young people what they think are the causes of homelessness.

There is no one cause of homelessness, but these are real people with real stories, and it is important to be compassionate towards individuals and understand that it is a very complex issue.

***Some young people may be directly affected by some of the issues you talk about, and may even be facing homelessness. If you are aware of this, take time to follow up with them in private, and reassure them if necessary.***

Ask the young people what issues a homeless person might experience?

Health complications, loneliness, isolation, addiction, mental health problems, lack of support etc.

Talk about how it might feel to be rough sleeping, or staying with friends with no stability. Help the young people to understand that homelessness is not easy, and people are often really struggling with very few people to turn to, or that they feel they can trust. People

often feel marginalized and ostracized from the rest of society, feeling like lesser humans and often treated as the issue and disrespected in public.

People come to us because they may also need various other forms of support:

Gloucester City Mission also works closely with other organisations in Gloucester such as the NHS Homeless health care team, probation, the DWP, the council, drugs and health services, the mental health team, housing providers to provide a multi-agency support for vulnerable people and help to facilitate a hopeful future.

### **How many people do you think are homeless in Gloucester?**

Official figures say that there are 14 people who are homeless in Gloucester. Do you think this is accurate? We say no, we work with an average 25 rough sleepers each day and between 150—200 people per week.

### **Reflection/Prayer**

#### **What can we do to help homeless people?**

- Be kind to them, acknowledge their presence even if you are unable to buy anything
- You can donate clothes, toiletries or food to a local homeless center like Gloucester City Mission. Or fundraise for charities and organisations that work alongside homeless and vulnerable people.
- Buy a hot drink or some food for someone on the streets, it is good to go with another person when involved in such things to protect both yourself and the vulnerable people on the streets.

Dear Lord,

Hear our prayer today for all women and men, boys and girls who are homeless this day.

For those sleeping under bridges, on park benches, in doorways or bus stations.

For those who can only find shelter for the night but must wander in the daytime.

For families broken because they could not afford to pay the rent.

For those who have no relatives or friends who can take them in.

For those who have no place to keep possessions that remind them who they are.

For those who are afraid and hopeless.

For those who have been betrayed by our social safety net.

For all these people, we pray that you will provide shelter, security and hope.

We pray for those of us with warm houses and comfortable beds

that we not be lulled into complacency and forgetfulness.

Jesus, help us to see your face in the eyes of every homeless person we meet.

Empower us to work for justice and peace through words and deeds,

and through the political means we have.

Give us open hearts to greet and meet the homeless people in our neighbourhoods.

in your name we pray.

Amen

### **Classroom Discussion Activities**

#### **Download the Powerpoint from the Gloucester City Mission website to use in a lesson which could take up to an hour.**

**Discuss what homelessness is?** Rough sleeping, staying in a vehicle (boat, caravan) that is ILLEGALLY parked, sleeping in a car, staying with friends and family 'sofa surfing'.

#### **What are the causes of homelessness?**

Personal causes of homelessness

- individual factors including lack of qualifications, lack of social support, debts - especially mortgage or rent arrears, poor physical and mental health, relationship breakdown, and getting involved in crime at an early age
- family background including family breakdown and disputes, sexual and physical abuse in childhood or adolescence, having parents or partner with drug or alcohol problems, and previous experience of family homelessness
- an institutional background including having been in care, the armed forces, or in prison.

Structural causes of homelessness

- unemployment
- poverty
- a lack of affordable housing
- housing policies
- the structure and administration of housing benefit
- wider policy developments, such as the closure of long-stay psychiatric hospitals. Lack of funding into mental health services and support for people struggling with addictions.

**Question what are some of the issues that someone rough sleeping might experience?**

**If you found yourself having to sleep alone on the streets tonight, how do you think you might feel? What would you miss most about your home?**

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| • Addiction              | • Isolation            |
| • Weather extremes       | • Uncertainty          |
| • Vulnerability          | • Health complications |
| • Women and homelessness | • Life expectancy      |

How can you help?

·Be kind to them, acknowledge their presence even if you are unable to buy anything. Talking to people so they are not invisible goes a long way. As a group, or with responsible adults, engage in friendly conversation with those you come across.

·You can donate clothes, toiletries or food to a local homeless centre like Gloucester City Mission. Or fundraise for charities and organisations that work alongside homeless and vulnerable people.

-Buy a hot drink or some food for someone on the streets, it is good to go with another person when involved in such things to protect both yourself and the vulnerable people on the streets. A possibility is to first ask the individual what they like, they are people who also have preferences, there might be something they desperately need or want.

***For older students, it is possible for those aged 16+ to volunteer at Gloucester City Mission***

**Further extension activities:**

Watch further BBC3 videos around the 'young and homeless'

Make a video diary, journal surrounding the concept of 'home'

Watch and discuss 'I Daniel Blake'

***Discuss fundraising ideas for example a 'big sleepout' whereby people are sponsored to sleep rough for a period of time. In October GCM runs the Big City Sleepout in various landmarks across the city—maybe you could join in or organise a school event***







What would you do if you found people sleeping outside your school/home/church?

**Why do you think an addiction might lead to homelessness?****Why do you think there are less women rough sleeping?**

Research by Crisis, the homelessness charity, found 58% of women sleeping rough had been intimidated or threatened with violence and force in the past 12 months compared to 42% of men.

**WATCH VIDEO**— <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNkDB6DdUVk>

Channel 4's Dispatches programme, Undercover: Britain's Homeless Scandal, has put local councils to the test, after claims that they are unable to cope and are wrongly turning women away.

In many instances, according to the programme, women have been turned away without being fully assessed or prevented from making a homeless application – despite presenting with mental health issues, learning difficulties or fleeing domestic abuse.

SOURCE: <https://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2017/feb/14/homelessness-women-disadvantaged-channel-4-councils>

**How might the experiences of someone rough sleeping be different to someone who is sofa surfing or staying with friends?**

People may also need various other forms of support:

They might need new clothes

They might need a uniform or certificate for a new job

They might need furniture if they move into a new home

Gloucester City Mission also works closely with other organisations in Gloucester such as the NHS Homeless health care team, drugs and health services, the mental health team, to provide a multi-agency support for vulnerable people and help to facilitate a hopeful future.

**What can we do to help homeless people?**

***Our role by asking this question, is to empower young people to make a difference in their local communities. We believe that people can make a difference through love and compassion, so it is good to discuss realistic ways for young people to engage safely with this issue.***

## **Christian Union/Collective Worship DISCUSSION BASED**

### **What is homelessness?**

*Homelessness isn't just people sleeping rough on the streets, but also people sofa surfing with friends or family members, or without legally parked (boat or caravan) residency.*

### **How might a homeless person feel?**

*Isolated, Marginalised, Forgotten, Hurt, Broken, suffering with addiction, rejected, they may have been abused, they may feel let down or abandoned.*

### **What does the Bible say about poverty and loving the marginalised?**

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Proverbs 31:8-9

“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 creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

Matthew 25:34-36

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

1 John 3:17

Then Jesus said to his host . . . When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

Luke 14:14

What do you think the world would look like if everyone loved as we are instructed in these verses?

What stops us from loving like this, why is it difficult?

What prejudices do you think exist about homeless people that makes people fearful? If they are accurate, how do we safely approach loving others?

### **What do you think people need to stop being homeless?**

- They might need new clothes, underwear, sleeping bags, toiletries or blankets
- They might need help finding a home or filling in paperwork

There are over 400 references in the Bible telling us to help those who are needy or marginalised and 2000 references to people being less fortunate than ourselves.

Here are some Bible passages about poverty and need:

**Deuteronomy 15 4-11**

**Ecclesiastes 5, 8-17**

**Isaiah 58 6-11**

**Micah 6 6-8**

**Matthew 25 34-40**

**Luke 18 1-25**

**Luke 15 1-7**

**Luke 14 1 -24**

**Titus 3 1-8**

**James 2 1-17**

**Psalms Megamix – 9:18, 12:5, 14:6, 35:10, 37:16, 41:1, 72:12-14, 82:3, 113:7,  
140:12,**

**Proverbs Megamix – 11:25, 14:31, 19:17, 22:2, 22:9, 28:27, 31:8-9**





To find out more please visit-

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