



Secondary School Resource Pack 2021

**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.

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 activities. Copies of the pack can be downloaded from www.gloscitymission.org.uk There are also downloads and links to the videos mentioned in the pack on the website under 'Support GCM'.

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.

We have a strong mobile presence out in the City 5 days a week who reach out to those sleeping on the streets, those in supported housing and those in temporary emergency accommodation. Their aim is to provide sustenance through hot drinks, soup and sandwiches, a listening ear if needed and signposting people to the agencies appropriate to their needs.

We also offer a full hot meal as a takeout service every Wednesday and clothing, sleeping bags and tents which can be collected in person from our clothing store on a Tuesday and Thursday.

From December 1st—March 31st we run the city's Winter Shelter with an average of 13 sleepers per night over the 122 nights that we are open.

In September 2020 we opened the Revive Coffee House to offer employment opportunities to people who have experienced homelessness. We are also finalizing plans to open an education and training centre for clients so that they can become more independent.



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.

What is Gloucester City Mission

Gloucester City Mission is a Christian organisation that seeks to share the love of Jesus with the homeless and vulnerable people in Gloucestershire. It offers physical, emotional and spiritual support to people of all ages and backgrounds and seeks to support people into accommodation and stability.

Gloucester City Mission offers an outreach trolley service 5 times a week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday Friday and Saturday providing food, drinks, emergency clothing and support across the city. We also offer a hot takeaway meal on a Wednesday and have a clothing store where people can come and source clothes and toiletries on Tuesday and Thursday . We also run a mobile outreach team that go further afield with food, tents and sleeping bags for those in an emergency who aren't able or don't want to come into the city.

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

They might need a uniform or certificate for a new job

They might need new clothes for a job interview

They might need help with contacting local agencies using the internet

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, 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 12 people who are homeless in Gloucester. Do you think this is accurate? We say no, we see on average xxxx across the city with our mobile teams . During the last Winter Shelter we averaged xx sleepers per night.

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 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.

How many rough sleepers do you think there are in Gloucester?

Do you think locally Homelessness is getting better or worse? Nationally?

National

At the end of December 2020, 95,370 homeless households were living in temporary accommodation – a rise of 7,060 households in just one year.

As for the number of people rough sleeping, the latest official count found a total of 2,688 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2020 in England, down 37 per cent on the 4,266 people recorded in 2019. This figure was impacted hugely but emergency funding which was put in place during the Covid 19 pandemic

However, The Combined Homelessness and Information Network is thought to be a more accurate method. This tracks the flow of rough sleeping over a longer period with multiple agencies reporting contact with people on the streets. However it only currently operates in London.

Nevertheless, their annual figures show a much higher number of people sleeping rough – [11,018 people were seen on London's streets](#) by outreach workers in 2020/21.

- Locally

Officially, there are 12 rough sleepers people in Gloucester but GCM works with between 50—80 clients a week.

In our winter shelter we work with an average of 111 guests which is the equivalent over 1500 beds provided over the 4 months it is open, this is an average 13 sleepers per night.

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

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

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?

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
- They might need furniture if they move into a new home
- They might need to improve their maths and English or learn other skills

How do you think we should respond to the issue of Homelessness?

We are called to Love other people, and we change the world through love. All people have a sphere of influence; peer groups, church communities, sports teams etc with whom we can share the love of Jesus.

What is Gloucester City Mission?

Gloucester City Mission is a Christian charity that seeks to serve Christ in the city. They work with the homeless and vulnerable in Gloucester through practical, emotional and spiritual support. They offer hot food and drinks three times a week as well as access to clothes, shoes, sleeping bags and toiletries. They also have access to showers and washing machines.

From December to March, they also run a winter shelter which sleeps 15 people a night so that people can have somewhere safe and warm to sleep overnight.

They also work closely with other organisations, to ensure that people receive the correct support and hopefully are able to find a different future away from life on the streets. This is also encouraged by sports groups, craft, access to phones and computers, and advice on various issues.

How might you share love in your school community as a Christian Union?

Ideas: Giving out free hot chocolates with bible verse on recyclable cups, giving out free chocolates to people, fundraising. Also sharing love in day-to-day kind actions with those around you, being bold in sharing faith.







To find out more please visit-

www.gloscitymission.org.uk

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