



Resource guide: Discussion Starters

These questions form a great activity to do during your SVP Summer Sleep event. It also gives children the chance to learn more about homelessness, dispel the myths and think about why they are doing the SVP Summer Sleep. This could be a stand-alone activity or used alongside the other SVP Summer Sleep resources.

1. True or False?

The main reason that someone is sleeping on the streets is because they are lazy and don't want to get a job to get money for their own home.

Answer: False. This is not the case at all. It isn't usually the person's fault why they are homeless. It's very unlikely that it is because they are lazy. There are a number of reasons why someone might become homeless.

2. Can you name five reasons why someone might become homeless?

Answers:

Unemployment

Poverty

Family breakdowns

Becoming a refugee

Health problems

You might like to unpack these reasons a bit more in your discussion and highlight that this is just a small selection of reasons why someone might be homeless.



St Vincent
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Turning Concern into Action



3. What does sleeping rough mean?

Answer: Sleeping outside because you have no home.

4. What does sofa surfing mean?

Answer: Sofa surfing is when a person moves from one friend or relative's house to another, sleeping in whatever space is available to them.

5. Homeless people are only people you see sleeping on the streets. True or False?

Answer: False- Those who are homeless sleeping on the streets are known as rough sleepers, but homelessness can also include those who are in temporary accommodation or staying with friends and family, sofa surfing or living in unsuitable housing. These are the hidden homeless.

6. What is the name of the pack that the SVP puts together with essential items for the homeless to help them feel warmer and valued?

Answer: Vinnie Pack (see the Design a Vinnie Pack activity for more information about these)

7. When you see a homeless person on the streets, what should you do?

A- ignore them B- smile and give a wave C- Cross to the other side of the road

Answer: B - If you see a homeless person on the streets and you are with a responsible adult, a smile and a wave will make a big difference to someone's day. It's very sad for a homeless person when they sit on the street all day, and nobody looks at them.

Note to leader: Though we encourage an interaction, such as a smile or wave, this must be done in a safe way, and we do not encourage children to speak to anyone on their own.



8. How many people experience homelessness in a year in England and Wales?

A - Enough people to fill 2500 double-decker buses

B - Enough people to fill 1000 double-decker buses

C - Enough people to fill 500 double-decker buses

Answer: A- Over 300,000 people in the UK have nowhere to call home. This number would fill 2500 double-decker buses. You could give the children other comparisons, such as this number of people would fill Wembley Stadium just over three times. Is there somewhere more locally to you that you could compare that to?



SVP Summer Sleep: Let's discuss...homelessness (Student's copy)

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