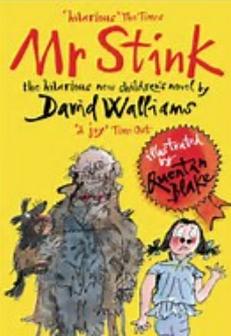


Storykit - Homelessness



Mr Stink by David Walliams

Summary
12-year-old Chloe gets talking to the tramp she sees every day – Mr Stink, “the stinkiest stinker who ever lived”. Chloe is unhappy; she feels ignored by her family and is bullied at school. As she builds her relationship with Mr Stink she fantasises about why he finds himself homeless. Eventually she secretly moves Mr Stink and his little dog Duchess into the garden shed, in the process uncovering amazing secrets about her Dad as well and Mr Stink. The tramp’s presence is finally revealed and Chloe’s awful mother (a prospective MP) tries to use him to her advantage. Inevitably this fails spectacularly but gives the family the jolt it needs to reconnect. Mr Stink moves on, leaving the family happier and closer.

Theme: Homelessness

Additional themes: bereavement; family relationships; bullying

Notes This kit focuses on two of the characters because they have their own separate issues. You could focus on just one character/issue or follow both. We suggest a closure/celebration activity at the end, highlighting the happy outcomes to ensure that no child is left feeling anxious – perhaps using number 5 below

Recommended age range: Key Stage 2 year 4, 5,6

Orientation

- Make a visual Empathy-Ometer exploring a baseline question: “how do you feel about homeless people?”
- Research young people’s homelessness, e.g. Centrepoin (UK) <http://centrepoin.org.uk/> and Railway Children (international) <https://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/>
- http://www.mungosbroadway.org.uk/about/real_life_stories has some real life video accounts of being homeless. Best if you watch them first.
- Families could talk to Big Issue vendors: *"It's great when people stop and say hello, it's nice to feel that people actually care."* Bryan Rowe, Big Issue Vendor
- Research and read other stories about homelessness: Lauren Child’s *That Pesky Rat* is a picture book about a rat desperate not to live in bins. Libby Hathorn’s *Way Home* is a stunning picture book for older children.

Activities	Empathy skills practised	Learning approaches
A: Stepping into Mr Stink’s shoes		
<p>A1 Reflect on being homeless</p> <p>Use Linoit online sticky notes to share questions and answers about Mr Stink’s experience. Linoit allows for sharing with other schools.</p> <p>Collect all the reflections and discuss. How cold would it be for Mr Stink; where would he eat and drink, without any money; where would he wash; what would he do all day, where could he sleep?</p> <p>Discuss/research what people on the streets use to make shelters. Children could list/collect the things Mr Stink needs to survive.</p> <p>Empathy expert Roman Krznaric http://www.romankrznaric.com/empathy-a-handbook-for-revolution recommends seeking out new experiences to build empathy. If your school is near a park, consider taking children to sit on a park bench and talk about what it would be like just to sit there all day and have to find somewhere to sleep at night.</p>	<p>Strong imagination</p> <p>Capacity for reflection</p>	<p>Immersive activities helping children step into the characters’ shoes.</p> <p>Springboard for class/ group discussions</p>
<p>A2 Hot seating</p> <p>Organise a hot seat TV interview with Mr Stink.</p>	<p>Empathic listening</p>	<p>Drama</p>

<p>Someone takes Mr Stink's part and the other interviews him. Then swap.</p>	<p>Strong imagination</p>	
<p>A3 Drawing/writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to tell the story of Mr Stink's life through a cartoon strip or newspaper article • Form pairs to write Mr Stink's life story. One child is the journalist, the other Mr Stink. Together they write a magazine interview, focusing on feelings. • What does being homeless really mean - lack of a physical space or more than that? Use the Kennings structure to write an emotive poem about home. (A Kenning is a two word phrase describing an object, often using a metaphor. A Kennings poem is a riddle using several of these phrases). • Try Quadblogging, a motivating online tool for children to share their writing more widely. 	<p>Strong imagination</p> <p>Valuing/understanding others' perspectives</p>	<p>Drawing activities</p> <p>Creative writing activities</p>
<p>B: Stepping into Chloe's shoes</p>		
<p>B1 Homeless teddy Introduce a doll or teddy to the class and leave it outside in a cardboard box all night. Explore how children felt about the doll; is this how Chloe felt about Mr Stink?</p>	<p>Deep discussion</p> <p>Strong imagination</p> <p>Capacity for reflection</p>	<p>Immersive creative activities</p>
<p>B2 Bullying Why did Chloe feel so unhappy? Why was she bullied? What was she like as a person? What could we say to Chloe to help her feel better? Children could email Chloe suggesting what she could do. The class could learn about charities to support bullying such as Childline</p>	<p>Pro-social attitudes/behaviours</p> <p>Valuing/understanding others</p> <p>Capacity for reflection</p>	<p>Encouraging social action</p> <p>Creative writing activities</p>
<p>B3 Name calling It was horrible to stick a note on Chloe's back - what should we say to Rosamund the bully? Why did she do that? Use a doll or a teddy and stick a note on their back and encourage each child to suggest a word that explains what it would feel like to be that doll or teddy. Form the words into a wordle for classroom display.</p>	<p>Strong imagination</p> <p>Valuing/understanding others</p> <p>Capacity for reflection</p>	<p>Activities that help children see through the eyes of the characters</p>

<p>B4 Discussion/ listening Why did Chloe and Mr Stink become friends? Practice listening skills using open questions etc.</p>	<p>Empathic listening Deep discussion</p>	<p>Opportunities for class and group discussions</p>
<p>B5 Dilemmas Use Mr Stink's story to facilitate deep discussion. Pose a dilemma with no obvious right answer. Stick posters with two different possible answers on either side of the room; draw/make a line on the floor. Emphasise that there is no right/wrong answer. Children move to the point on the line which best represents their answer, and explore why they stood there, and the implications of their decision for the character. Online voting platforms like <i>PollDaddy</i> can extend debate, including with other schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Should Chloe tell her mum how upset she was when her mum tore up her story?</i> • <i>Should Mr Stink have stayed or was it best for him to leave?</i> <p>“Stay” on one side, “Leave” on the other. Children move to where they feel comfortable and the class can discuss the reasons for their decisions.</p>	<p>Empathic listening Deep discussion Valuing/understanding others Capacity for reflection</p>	<p>Opportunities for class and group discussions Activities that help children see through the eyes of the characters.</p>
<p>C: Following on: putting empathy into action</p>		
<p>C1 Discuss, explore, decide Was Mr Stink's reason for being homeless unusual? What is the best way to help the homeless?</p>	<p>Deep discussion</p>	<p>Opportunities for class and group discussions</p>
<p>C2 Class or whole school action plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children come up with a class/whole school action plan, and prepare a linked school assembly. • Use media inspiration like The Big Issue and Metro's Good Deed Feed. • Could range from fundraising for homeless children abroad to joining a Centrepoin sleep out. 	<p>Pro-social behaviours</p>	<p>Children working as a group to undertake social action</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School could ask families to help children put together a small food box to donate to a local shelter 		
C3 Revisit the Empathy-Ometer question – have feelings/ attitudes changed?	Capacity for reflection	

Booklist (additional stories on the theme)

Title	Author	Publisher	Suggested age range	In print
Mr Stink	David Walliams	Harper Collins Children’s Books	9+	√
Way Home	Libby Hathorn	Anderson Press	8+ picture book	√
That Pesky Rat	Lauren Child	Orchard Books	5+	√
The Garbage King	Elizabeth Laird	MacMillan Children’s Books	9+	√
Shadow	Michael Morpurgo	Harper Collins Children’s Books	7+	√

A note about Storykits

Empathy Storykits aim to help children understand other people through a story and characters. The text is used as a springboard for discussion, activities and social action.

Empathy skills supported by Storykits

- Stronger ability to imagine, understand and reflect on other people’s perspectives and feelings
- Wider vocabulary to recognise and share own and others’ feelings
- Stronger empathic communication skills: deep listening and conversation
- More developed social values which turn feelings of empathy into moral actions in the home, school and community

Note for teachers

- Some books used will deal with sensitive issues, it will be important for teachers to know the book well.



How to use

- Teachers could read the story aloud to the class in suitable chunks, with some activities taking place as it progresses and others being completed when the story is read, or each child could read the text on their own.
- Teachers might choose to do all the activities or just those most appropriate for the class/ group.

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