

Activity 3



Stories About Hunger

Based on true stories

Ray, who is eight, has one brother, who is nine. He lives with his mother and her new husband. His mother works in a factory, but his stepfather is often unable to work.

Ray's favorite food is pizza. His mother makes it two or three times a month. Usually, they have hamburgers, hot dogs or spaghetti. For breakfast, they eat cereal. They almost never have dessert, not fruit or cookies, much less ice cream.



The closest grocery store is three miles from Ray's house. Sometimes they do not have enough money to put gas in the car and to buy groceries. Then his mother puts gas in the car and goes to a food bank, where the food is free. But there isn't much choice of food and everything is canned. Ray's mother would like to provide a healthier menu for her family.

Jane, who is twelve, lives with her mother and her grandmother. Also in the house are her brother Tom and sister Cherry, who are teenagers. Her grandmother does not work, so she does the cooking.



Jane remembers when her mother had a good job and the family would go to a restaurant once or twice a month. No more. Her mother lost her job and now has a low-paying job. Before her mother found this job, the family sometimes waited at the back door of a nearby restaurant. They took the food that was thrown into the dumpster.

They don't do that now, but some days they have only rice to eat. Her mother's salary doesn't go far when there are also bills for electricity, clothes and food. Jane remembers the nice restaurant meals with her family and wishes they could do that again.

Not everyone who is hungry lives with a family. **Nina** lives alone. She cannot work because she fell and can no longer walk without a cane. Although she enjoys cooking for her grandchildren, she doesn't bother to cook for herself. When she eats alone, it is usually cereal or some canned food like spaghetti or soup.

Because Nina worked as a maid, she doesn't get a pension. Every month she worries that she will be unable to pay her bills or that she will get sick and need expensive medicine.



Olivia is five and lives with her mother and her brother (7) and her sister (8). All three children are in school. On school days they have enough to eat because they eat breakfast and lunch at school. On other days and during vacation time, they don't always have enough money to buy food for three meals every day.

Their mother works but sometimes there is not enough money in her paycheck to pay all the bills and buy food before the next paycheck comes. Olivia's sister has a school friend who often invites her for the day when there is no school. Often Olivia's sister brings snacks home for Olivia and her brother. Olivia wishes she were older and could visit a school friend when there is no school.

Ways to Use These Stories

Read all or one of the stories to the children. Then:

- Ask them if they have ever been seriously hungry or known someone at school who doesn't have enough to eat.
- Ask them to think of ways they might help the hungry person.
- Have them act out the story and what they hope will happen next. Then talk about ways to help the hungry person.
- Provide art materials for the children to draw pictures of hunger in the United States.
- After talking about the story, select another activity from this packet for the children to do.
- Think of your own way to use these stories.