

# Bags of Compassion

## **What's in the bag?**

Water, food, socks, bandaids, Kleenex, toothbrushes, toothpaste, lotion/soap, wipes & a resource card with specific numbers to call for shelter and other services.

## **What do I do with the bags?**

Hand the bag to someone on a street corner or freeway ramp who is asking for help. Or you can hand deliver them in parks or other places where there are people who need help.

## **Smile**

This person probably gets ignored by hundreds of people every day.

## **Make eye contact**

It shows that the person matters.

## **Be Aware and Available**

Some people won't want to talk, so be sensitive. Others will be delighted to tell you their story. have a conversation. Even something as simple as introducing yourself and ask their name. Telling them you will pray for them means a lot as well.

## **Pray**

Before you go, while you go, and after you hand out a bag for the people you encounter.

## **Offer Resources**

There is a card contained in the bag that offers resources for shelter, food, medical care for the homeless. Let the person know it is inside.

## **Be Wise**

The majority of men and women experiencing homelessness are not dangerous they're people just like you. It is smart to go out with a friend or spouse to share your gift of compassion.

## **Inspire Others**

Share your Bags of Compassion story on your social media pages and with PoP preschool teachers and leadership. Send a note about your experience to [n\\_hilden@yahoo.com](mailto:n_hilden@yahoo.com)

## **How do I talk to my child about homelessness?**

1. **Express empathy and sadness for the person.** By emphasizing how you feel sad that some people don't have a place to live, you provide an opportunity for children to understand the importance of recognizing others' hardships while modeling empathy. All humans deserve our kind regard, simply because they are human. Avoid making judgmental comments or put-downs. Treat homeless people with dignity and respect. Look people in the eye and smile. Your children will learn more from these simple moments than any lecture.
2. **Provide a simple explanation to their question.** We've all been asked questions by small children about our homeless neighbors (Why? How come?) It's best to respond with an answer that a small child can understand, i.e. "*Some people don't have enough money to pay for a house.*"
3. **Avoid discussing additional components such as mental illness or disability.** Unless your child has specifically asked, adding in this layer can confuse a young child. It's important to keep information basic.
4. **Encourage your child to discuss how to help.** At this age, donating toys or picking-out items to give to a nonprofit may make more of an impact than donating money, which may be too abstract for some young children. That said, depending on your level of involvement, it may be appropriate to provide opportunities for your children to give through family activities like hosting a donation drive, or collecting donations in lieu of birthday gifts or holiday gifts. Handing out the bags of compassion is a great start!
5. **Assure your child that there are options for those struggling with homelessness.** Young children may have feelings of sadness or worry after hearing that some children don't have a place to live. Assure them that there are organizations who help homeless people find places to live, and reassure them of their own safety and security. Remind your child that we can continue to pray for those people we meet who are homeless and for the organizations who help.