

Building successively, these three units provide students with the foundational understanding of the importance of shelter as a basic human need, helping them develop an understanding of why some people need housing assistance. This understanding encourages students to explore ways in which they can personally contribute to the community. Ultimately, by better understanding the wide ranging effects of homelessness and/or the lack of proper housing, students will be more likely to establish empathy with people living in these situations and develop a disposition towards giving back to the community.

About Habitat for Humanity's Mission

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit Christian housing ministry. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat invites people of all backgrounds, races, and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need.

Habitat for Humanity welcomes and encourages the participation of all people — regardless of their belief systems — who identify with the mission and want to partner with the organization. Habitat does not discriminate on the basis of faith, or on any other basis, in the selection of partner families to live in Habitat homes. Habitat's aim is to build simple, decent, affordable homes in partnership with people who need them.

Habitat for Humanity encourages its partners not to conceal the organization's Christian identity to gain supporters. By doing this, we run the risk of offending people later when they learn the truth on their own and feel deceived.

About Habitat's Partner Families

It is important for students to understand that Habitat partner families are key players in the home-building process, and are chosen based on these three criteria: 1) their level of need; 2) their willingness to become partners in the program; and 3) their ability to repay the no-profit, no-interest loan. Habitat families are typical families: they work hard to invest hundreds of hours of their own labor — called "sweat equity" — into building their Habitat house and the houses of others, they pay back a mortgage, and they create a loving and nurturing environment for their children.

Sensitivity

Teachers using these lessons should keep in mind that they may have students who are homeless, living in poverty housing, or who may be members of Habitat families. Being sensitive to these issues when conducting these activities is crucial. Teachers may want to consider discussing with the students that fellow classmates may be experiencing housing conditions similar to what they're reading and learning about, and how we all need to be respectful and sensitive to those situations.

Teaching Units

Included in this curriculum package are three teaching units for grades 3–5. The units have been designed to help students deepen their understanding of poverty housing as they progress through each unit. Each unit in this program contains the following important information: unit overview, standards addressed, learning objectives, teacher preparation time, class time, materials needed, activity sheet(s), lesson steps, assessment, extension activities, and an abridged unit activity.

Descriptions of each unit follow:

Unit 1: What Is Home?***Description***

In Unit 1, students investigate and answer questions about the meaning of a home and the essential characteristics of homes. This investigation and exploration includes examining photographs that depict homes throughout the world, creating collages, and writing diary entries from different points of view.

Learning Objectives

By completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Recognize that shelter is a basic human need, both physical and emotional.
- Identify common characteristics of a home.
- Express meanings and characteristics in homes through writing and through artwork.

Unit 2: The Many Faces of Need***Description***

After reading personal stories and being introduced to homelessness and housing statistics, students reinforce their mathematical and analytical skills through an analysis of the statistics.

Learning Objectives

By completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Put a human face on housing crises, including homelessness.
- Write in response to visual and written stimuli.
- Understand and analyze statistics in order to make connections to real world situations.

Unit 3: Giving Back to the Community***Description***

In this unit students investigate the Habitat for Humanity International Web site and then create a promotional brochure based on information they have learned over the three units through the materials and through their own personal reflections.

Learning Objectives

By completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Better understand the purposes and benefits of Habitat for Humanity through online investigation.
- Recognize how giving back to the community personally benefits both the givers and recipients.
- Use prior knowledge and artistic choice to convey ideas and feelings.

What Now?**Getting Involved in Habitat for Humanity**

To extend these lessons into community action — and to address the passion and energy that these lessons may spark in your students — the following strategies can be used:

- Order the **Habitat for Humanity Activity Poster**, which is an interactive class activity for 8- to 11-year-olds. The poster provides a colorful classroom visual, as well as educational and service tasks. Each task has a corresponding sticker that is added to the poster upon the task's completion. The activity poster provides an opportunity for further study and involvement in Habitat for Humanity.
- To find your local Habitat for Humanity affiliate, do a search at www.habitat.org. Once there, click on “find your local affiliate,” and ask them about the Youth United program.
- Take a field trip to the Global Village & Discovery Center at <http://www.habitat.org/gvdc/>
- If you would like more information about how you can get involved in your community, e-mail the Youth Programs office at yp@hfhi.org, or call 1-800-HABITAT, Ext. 2422.

Visit the Global Village & Discovery Center

- Bring learning to life with a field trip to Habitat for Humanity's Global Village & Discovery Center. Students can explore Habitat's international work at this 6-acre village in Americus, Georgia. After a walk through an urban poverty neighborhood, students can imagine living in 15 Habitat homes from different countries around the world. Tours, activities, and crafts can be tailored to students' studies.

For more information, go to the GV&DC Web site at www.habitat.org/gvdc or schedule a visit with the group tour coordinator by calling 866-924-5823, Ext. 5815.

Additional Primary Sources

Web Sites

Habitat for Humanity's Web site provides extensive information about the organization's mission, its success stories, and opportunities for involvement — both as a volunteer and as a potential partner family. Visit the site at <http://www.habitat.org>

For a description of a HFH affiliate program go to <http://www.volunteersolutions.org/volunteerway/org/216639.html>

For a description of a ReStore program, which touches on issues of affordable housing as well as pragmatic uses of construction materials, go to <http://www.shfh.org/restore/>

The National Low Income Housing Coalition works to help solve the United States' affordable housing crisis. Visit its Web site for key legislative updates and resources at <http://www.nlihc.org/>

Visit the National Coalition for the Homeless Web site for background information and statistics on homelessness, as well as opportunities for advocacy at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Web site provides information on public housing and equips potential homeowners with the knowledge they need to purchase and maintain a home. Visit their Web site at <http://www.hud.gov/>

Videos

Building Hope, Lives, and Dreams shows how Habitat helps families worldwide step out of poverty and into decent, affordable homes. To order, go to the HFH Gift Shop at http://www.habitatgiftshop.com/product_list.asp?SKW=VIDEO& or call 1-800-422-5914. (item number 1069, 1069DVD)

Two Families tells the stories of two Habitat for Humanity families — one from Costa Rica and one from Boston, Massachusetts — who, with the help of Habitat and its corps of volunteers, overcame their housing problems to join the ranks of proud homeowners. To order, go to the HFH Gift Shop at http://www.habitatgiftshop.com/product_list.asp?SKW=VIDEO& or call 1-800-422-5914. (item number 35-1068)

World's Fastest House Build — On December 17, 2002, the Shelby County Habitat for Humanity affiliate broke the world's record and built a house in 3 hours, 26 minutes, and 34 seconds. This broke the New Zealand affiliate record of 3 hours, 44 minutes, and 59 seconds. This short video captures the excitement through a time-lapse sequence and commentary from the amazed homeowner. To order, go to the

HFH Gift Shop at http://www.habitatgiftshop.com/product_detail.asp?T1=HAB+35%2D1096 or call 1-800-422-5914. (item number 35-1096)

Questions? Comments?

Direct any questions or comments about the curriculum to Habitat for Humanity International's Youth Programs Coordinator, via e-mail at yp@hfhi.org or by phone at 1-800-HABITAT, Ext. 2422