



Thanksgiving Care Bags

The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle.

Pope Francis





Thanksgiving Care Bags

Bringing Hope to those in Need

Thanksgiving is a time to celebrate the abundance of God's many blessings in our lives. It is also a time to recognize those among us who struggle with poverty and may not have a home to share God's love. This Thanksgiving, Catholic Charities asks you to come together with your loved ones to assemble meaningful **Care Bags** right in your own home. Your **Care Bags** will be distributed to those in need throughout the Diocese through the "Mobile Response Center Vehicle," a 26-foot truck that CCDA will use to deliver supplies such as water, hygiene products, grocery gift cards, snack packages, and these Care Bags directly to those who so often go without. We appreciate your prayers and your support! For more information, contact Sally O'Dwyer at sodwyer@ccda.net.

This Thanksgiving Care Bag Kit includes:

- ❖ Facts about homelessness and poverty
- ❖ Discussion questions and activities for your family
- ❖ A fun word search for children
- ❖ Suggested items for the Care Bags (non-perishable items, please)
- ❖ Drop-off locations for the Care Bags
- ❖ Blank Blessing Card to fill out for your recipient family (or you can include a greeting card or homemade card of your own!)



*Catholic Charities in Arlington will be able to provide curbside assistance to area homeless using this **Mobile Response Center Vehicle**.*



Facts¹ about Poverty and Homelessness

Most people in the Diocese of Arlington have what they need to live in comfort, they have enough food to eat, enough clothes to wear, and enough shelter to be safe. However, in the United States today, one out of every ten people (43.1 million people) is living in poverty, and about 900,000 of them in the state of Virginia.

People are said to be “living in poverty” when they do not have enough of what it takes to fulfill basic human needs. A person can be poor when he or she lacks the essentials of daily life, such as enough food to keep them from being hungry. A person can be poor if he or she works hard at a job but does not make enough money to buy the things needed to be healthy and secure, such as proper clothing to keep them warm in cold weather or health care to help them when they are sick.

People living in poverty are also most at risk of becoming homeless. The primary cause of homelessness is a lack of affordable housing, meaning a person simply does not enough money to pay for a home. They might work very hard every day of the week and still not have the money to pay for a place for them to live. Some homeless people also have families, so they have to take care of their children too and that can cost a lot of money. Some homeless people have a disability so they ca not take care of themselves or work to make money. Some people are homeless just for a little while; others are homeless for a much longer time, maybe even their whole life. Children under 18 account for 39% of the homeless population; and almost half of those are under the age of five. Families with children are among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population. Persons with severe mental illness make up about one-fourth of all homeless persons living in shelters.

- A family of four—two adults and two children—is considered living in poverty if they earn less than \$24,000 each year.
- While more women live in poverty than men, almost 70% of the homeless population is men of which many are veterans
- Children under 18 experience homelessness at the highest rate at almost 20%
- The marital status of the parents matters -- Children under the age 6 living with a single mother are more than four times as likely to live in poverty as children of the same age living with married parents.
- More families experience homelessness in the United States than in any other industrialized nation

¹ Source: HUD, [The 2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report \(AHAR\) to Congress](#)



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Activities for the Family

Suggested Discussion Questions

Why do you think people are poor or homeless?

If you were poor, what would you do?

What are the poor or homeless doing to help themselves?

Do you think participating in this project will make a difference? Why? Why not?

What are some of the health problems people who are homeless might have?

Have you ever met a person who is homeless?

What can average people do to help solve poverty and homelessness?

What would you take? *Backpack Activity*

People who are homeless generally have few possessions. If they are on the street, people who are homeless are often victims of theft and what few possessions they may have disappear after a short time. People who “couch surf” that is, live on the generosity of family and friends, must often reduce personal belongings to the barest necessities. This activity is aimed at building understanding about the hardships people who are homeless face and the challenge to stay connected to memories of family and home.

Activity Description

- Your family must vacate/leave your home.
- You have only 15 minutes to choose what to take with you.
- What you choose must fit into your backpack.
- Start the clock and write down what you would choose, or run to gather up those items.

After 15 minutes elapses, discuss

Discussion Questions

- What did you choose to take? Why?
- What did you leave behind? Why?
- How did it feel to make your choices?
- How will you do without the things you left behind?
- Where will you get the things you need but no longer have?



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End Homelessness Word Search

T X H O M E L E S S P E O P L E
 R H V R A B N I F T A M H R I M
 A S E T A M R A Y W V T D E I P
 N J M A E Y T F D E T O W S C L
 S O B W R T C F K V U P T I N O
 I H S W Z H J O A Q O W E D C Y
 T R E T Y S U R I C O C P E A M
 I X Z L K J H D G F T D A N S E
 O C W V T B N A M Q E S G C Y N
 N W E T J E U B T R Y V S E Y T
 A E L H N M R L W R N S G U K H
 L R F M P O V E R T Y F B J I M
 H T A K S O P H U C W Q Z I O M
 O Y R O X G D O U B L I N G U P
 U J E P C D O U A R H E M L O Z
 S K S L V I T S P U Y N I T S R
 I D D B Y E V I C T I O N O I H
 N I Z O L P K N A J S H D G F W
 G M Q W N E B G R V T C Y X U E
 Q H I D D E N H O M E L E S S W

Words to Find:

HOMELESS PEOPLE	WELFARE	EVICTION
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	POVERTY	EMPLOYMENT
SHELTER	FACTS	ADVOCACY
MYTHS	RESIDENCE	DOUBLING UP
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING	HIDDEN HOMELESS	



Thanksgiving Care Bags

What to Pack in Your Care Bag

Pack in a one gallon Ziploc bag many of the items listed below—you do not have to include every item. Please include a blessing card or handwritten note inside. Drop off the Care Bags at designated location identified on the next page.

Care Bags

- ✓ Hand written encouragement card
- ✓ Towel & wash cloths
- ✓ Deodorant, shampoo, lotion, soap
- ✓ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ✓ Razors, non-aerosol shaving cream
- ✓ Warm socks
- ✓ Grocery gift cards
- ✓ Hair brush and comb
- ✓ Travel-size mouthwash
- ✓ New underwear
- ✓ Notebook and pen
- ✓ Wallet or coin purse
- ✓ Bus passes or SMART cards
- ✓ Hand or body wipes
- ✓ Winter or ball cap
- ✓ Non-perishable snacks, such as granola
- ✓ Gift Cards



"... within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life." Pope Benedict XVI



Thanksgiving Care Bags

Drop off Locations

Drop off locations:

Please drop off your Care Bags at any of these locations:

- Catholic Charities Administrative Office
200 N. Glebe Rd., Suite 250, Arlington, VA 22203
- St Luke Catholic Church
7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101
- St Ann Catholic Church
5312 10th St N, Arlington, VA 22205
- Church of the Nativity
6400 Nativity Ln, Burke, VA 22015
- Or Mail To:
 - Catholic Charities Care Bags
7913 Foxhound Rd., Mclean, VA 22102

Resources:

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This Care Bag was assembled for you by:
