

During this holiday season, we want your family to have the chance to engage in the hope and the joy that comes from putting our faith in action. Christ the King is co-hosting an overflow shelter with Lighthouse Mission Ministries to make sure that no one is left out in the cold this winter for lack of space.

This is more than an ask for your help. It is a chance for your family to do what God calls us to - LOVE others. It's a perfect way for you to share age-appropriate information with your kids about homelessness here in Whatcom County. And beyond that, have a conversation as a family about how God sees those people and what he asks of us in response. It is a powerful thing when parents model for their children what it means to share God's love in tangible ways, and let their children be hands on. Here are ways to help your children love others...

1. As you're driving around town, **point out a person or two** who is pan-handling or hunkered down somewhere. Ask your kids questions like these and really listen to your how they're thinking about it and what sorts of questions they have about homelessness.

1. Where do you think that person gets their food?
2. Where would you sleep to keep warm and safe if you didn't have a home?
3. I wonder how they became homeless....
4. Can you imagine them as a child or as a little baby?

2. **Find a time to bring the conversation back up.** Let your kids know that the church is making a place for 40 men without homes to sleep this winter and you've decided to help. Let them know you got some information, as part of the project, that you'd like to share with them. Share some or all of this information with them based on their age and level of curiosity.

At last count, over 700 of our neighbors are homeless.

Some of those are families with kids.

Many people who are homeless had difficult families growing up and weren't ready to take care of themselves when they got older.

One in three homeless people in Whatcom County has a disability.

Almost 20% of those who are homeless locally are seniors.

3. **Share God's perspective with them.** Remind them that every single person is created by God and loved by Him, no matter what happens in their lives. God cares about them and asks us to care too, by noticing them, praying for them, and by helping in safe, appropriate ways.

Choose one of these Bible verses to read and share what it means to you. For older kids, ask them how that particular verse might relate to homeless people.

Psalm 68:5, 6 The True God who inhabits sacred space is a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows. He makes a home for those who are alone. He frees the prisoners and leads them to prosper.

Proverbs 14:31 Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Proverbs 19:17 Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.

Psalms 72:12-14 He will take care of the helpless and poor when they cry to him; for they have no one else to defend them. He feels pity for the weak and needy and will rescue them. He will save them from oppression and from violence, for their lives are precious to him.

4. Introduce your kids to the Lighthouse Mission. Explain that there is a place where caring Christians provide homeless people somewhere to sleep, shower, wash their clothes, make friends, be safe, see a doctor, get new clothes, and experience a place to belong--where people look them in the eyes and know their name.

- If you have kids ages 2-7, we'd like to gift you a children's book to read together. Email DyonaR@ctk.church and she'll arrange to leave it at CTK reception for you to pick up.
- If you have kids ages 6-12, watch one or both of these short videos about a family who stayed at LHM's Agape Home: <https://youtu.be/tHyT2p67aio> or <https://youtu.be/fvrqE00tbi4>
- If you also have middle/high school age kids, check out our Student Service Project page for other videos, resources and discussion questions.

5. Decide which after-dinner snack your family would like to bring to the Overflow Shelter (enough for 40 people). These can be store bought or homemade as long as they are wrapped/bagged individually. Coffee is already offered by the shelter volunteers each night.

We suggest:

Protein: Cheese sticks, Peanut butter on bread (think softer foods)
Single serve Bread: muffin, scone, etc.
Treat: Brownie, Cookie, Rice Crispy treat, etc.
Beverage: Vitamin Water, Gatorade, ICE flavored water, etc.

6. Choose which week you'd like to bring a snack to the Overflow Shelter (located at 1013 W Holly St in Bellingham) by [filling out this form](#). Each Wednesday during December, January and February, the decision will be made which nights the following week to open the overflow shelter. At that point, we will get in touch with you to confirm a date during the week you chose and review all the specifics with you. At that point, you'll have the option to drop off the snack or come in for 15-20 minutes to serve the snack as a family. [This is the link](#) for more information about the cleaning, screening, masking, and social distancing procedures in place. To date, the Mission's Base Camp has had no positive COVID cases among staff or guests!

7. If you have any questions at all, please contact Daylee Hames, the CTK Outreach Coordinator at 360.733.1337 or DayleeH@ctk.church.