

Grade Level: Middle School Lesson Length: 1 Hour	Lesson Topic: PART 1 (C): FACTS OF POVERTY GAME
Lesson Authors: Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty	Date Created: 2007

Goal(s):

- To learn more about the statistics and facts of poverty.
- To realize the extent of poverty in New York City.

Learning Sequence: Week three. Third out of six lessons.

Objective(s):

- To realize that poverty affects a vast amount of people through playing a game where statistics and facts are involved.

Sources, Equipment, and Materials:

- Journals (one per student)
- Pencils/Pens
- Handout #9 Game Show Vouchers (provided but not pre-cut)

ACTIVITY

Warm Up (15 Min):

A. Directions: Better Look on World Poverty

1. Divide the students into three groups, representing the three income groups in our world today - high-income, middle and low-income groups.
 - Divide students by where they are already sitting in the classroom.
 - i. 15% of the students represents the high-income group
 - ii. 30% of the students will be in the middle group
 - iii. And the rest (55%) represent the low-income group.
2. Tell the high-income group to sit at desks at one end of the classroom. Have the middle income group stand in the middle of the classroom. Lastly, have the students in the low-income group sit on the floor on the other side of the room. Give out the handouts with the profile chart and tell each group to fill out information about the lifestyle they were assigned.




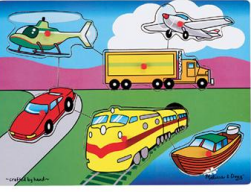

The following information is to help the teacher guide discussion after the students are done filling out their charts.

- B. Class Discussion:** Teacher asks each group to describe their lifestyle and use the following questions as prompts during the class discussion.
- i. How do you think you ended up in this situation?
 - ii. Can you afford necessities such as food, water and shelter?
 - iii. How much money do you think you make a year?
 - iv. Do you think you have an education?
 - v. What do you think you eat for dinner?
 - vi. What kind of job do you have?
 - vii. How do you get around town?
1. Read the lifestyle of each income group. They can use that information to fill out the table.
 2. *High-income situation:* As a group, your income group is able to afford a nutritious daily diet. You have access to the best medical care. You were born destined to go to school. It's a good life because you and your family have access to everything you need and security to enjoy it.
 3. *Middle-income situation:* You are the folks who can afford most necessities but have to watch your spending. It would take losing only a fire, flood, or a serious illness, to throw you and your family into poverty. Your parents may work as teachers, administrators, domestic help, or waiters. You probably graduated from high school and/or college. Your family probably owns no land and you live in a small rented apartment.
 4. *Low-income situation:* Every day is a struggle for your family to meet their basic needs. Finding food, water, and shelter can consume your day. School is a luxury few of you will ever experience. Healthcare is out of the question, so for most families, serious illness or even death is all too familiar. Your family might end up living in a shelters or homeless and you are frequently hungry.
- C. Reflection:** Although we are mostly studying poverty in New York, it is important to remember all those around the world who need help too. Although we do not see the poor in other countries daily, that does not mean their troubles do not exist. We must make an effort to help all people.

Type of Lifestyle: Once the teacher tells you which income you have, you will sit with other people who are in the same income group. Fill in the information in the table below in order to analyze and discuss your assigned situation with the class.

Circle one of the following situations and use this information to fill in the table below:

1) High-income situation, 2) middle-income situation, or 3) low-income situation.

	Circle one choice for each item	Additional Comments or Reasons for Making Choices
Salary per year/ per month 	a) Cannot meet basic needs b) Can meet basic needs c) Exceeds needs	
Education 	a) None b) Some high school c) High school graduate d) Vocational or trade school e) College f) Graduate school	
Career/job 	a) Babysitter b) Waiter c) Lawyer d) Doctor e) Teacher f) Salesperson	
Transportation 	a) Car b) Bus c) Train d) Taxi e) Walk f) Bike (more than one choice can be circled here)	
Vacation 	a) Yes b) No c) Maybe	

Activity (25 Min):

A. Directions: People in Poverty Guessing Game

1. Ask students to get into teams of 3-4 people.
2. Give out the scrambled answers handout. The answers are out of order, but correspond with the questions below.
3. Ask questions, one by one.
4. Give teams up to 30 seconds to find the correct answer on the scrambled handout. Whichever team gets the answer first gets a prize.
 - i. Students get a choice of a voucher for one month of rent, one month of food for 2 people, one doctor's visit or \$100 cash assistance.
 - ii. The goal is for each team to work for/win necessities that will last for the next 3 months.

People in Poverty Guessing Game Questions:

B. Questions about Poverty:

1. What was the number of poor people in the United States in 2000?
Answer: 31.1 million. That is 11% of all the people in the US. In 2000 there were approximately 282,000,000 people living in America.
2. What was the percentage of people in New York State who were poor in 1999-2000?
Answer: 13.8%. That is 2,660,000 out of the 19 million that lived in New York.
3. What is the number of Jewish Poor in New York City?
Answer: 226,000. That is 1 in every 5 Jews in NYC.
4. What is the number of Jewish people living near the poverty line in the New York area?
Answer: 104,000 people. That amount of people could fill up Shea Stadium 2 times.
5. Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants make up what percent of the Jewish poor in New York City?
Answer: Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants make up 44% of the Jewish poor in New York City.

Questions about Hunger:

1. In 2004, this percentage of households in the United States went hungry:
Answer: 11.9%. That is about 36 million people.
2. What is the number of New Yorker State Residents who rely on Emergency Food Programs (EFPs), or soup kitchens and food pantries, each week?
Answer: 904,884 rely on these food programs every week.
3. What was the percent increase of people fed at the city's pantries and kitchens from 2000-2004?
Answer: 57%

Questions about Homelessness:

1. What is the number of people who experience homelessness in the United States?

Answer: 3.5 million. To put that number into perspective, that would be every senior, adult and child living in Oklahoma.

2. How many people are currently homeless in New York City?

Answer: 36,000

3. What is the number of households on the waitlist for Section 8* housing?

Answer: 210,000

*Federal assistance dedicated to sponsoring subsidized housing for low-income families and individuals.

Questions about Healthcare:

1. How many people in the United States lack any form of health care?

Answer: 45 million. That is as if the entire country of Spain had no health care.

2. How many children in the United States are without health insurance?

Answer: 8.4 million. That is almost everyone in NYC.

3. How many people in New York City are without health insurance?

Answer: 1.8 million

4. What is the percentage of low wage workers in New York City holding full time jobs who are not able to fill medical prescriptions?

Answer: 31%. That is over 2.6 million people.

5. What is the percentage of low wage workers in New York City holding full time jobs who are not able to afford, or who postponed, medical care?

Answer: 23%. That is almost 2 million people.

Teacher Wrap Up (20 Min):

D. Conclusion and Journal Entry:

1. **Class Discussion:** When the game is over, have teams take turns telling the class how many vouchers they ended with.

i. Do teams think they ended up being poor?

ii. How long could a team survive on the vouchers they won?

iii. If an unexpected event was to happen like a car accident or a drought or fire could the teams make it through easily?

iv. Seeing that other teams are poor and need help, are any teams willing to share their vouchers with other teams? Why or why not?

2. Take about 5-10 minutes and tell each student to write his/her own personal views on the subject of poverty. How it makes the students feel? Below are some sample questions the teacher can address the class with.

i. Has anything you learned about changed your mind about the severity of poverty?

ii. Was there a number or fact that made a big impact on you?

iii. What can we do to help alleviate this world wide problem?

Scrambled Answers

- 45 million. That is as if the entire country of Spain had no health care.
- 31.1 million. That is 11% of all the people in the US. In 2000 there were approximately 282,000,000 people living in America.
- 36,000
- 31%. That is over 2.6 million people.
- 13.8%. That is 2,660,000 out of the 19 million that lived in New York.
- 8.4 million. That is almost everyone in NYC.
- 210,000
- 23%. That is almost 2 million people.
- 3.5 million. To put that number into perspective, that would be every senior, adult and child living in Oklahoma.
- 1.8 million
- 904,884 rely on these food programs every week
- 57%
- 226,000. That is 1 in every 5 Jews in NYC.
- 104,000 people. That amount of people could fill up Shea Stadium 2 times.
- 44%

Game Scoring pieces: Pieces should be cut out and displayed on the board. Do not distribute this sheet to the class.

One Month's Rent



One Pound of Rice



One Doctor's Visit



\$100 in cash assistance



