



Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

June 2019

Topical Activity

Housing

Britain Yearly Meeting is currently considering Diversity and Inclusion. This Topical Activity follows this theme looking at the place we call home and the inequality of housing. What do we appreciate about the place where we live? We all need somewhere to live. Many of us can choose where we live. But there are many who have no choice and for a variety of reasons are forced to live somewhere not of their choosing.



Some people are homeless – that means they have nowhere to live and end up living on the street. They don't want to be there but sometimes they don't have a job so have no money to pay for a house. Others are not able to work – they may be ill or not able to live with their family.

Refugees have been forced out of their homes because of war and terrible things happening in the country where they live. These people travel many miles to come here but still do not always get treated well. They struggle to find work and somewhere to live.

Poor people who do not earn enough money to live may have a house but can't afford any home comforts. So, their house may be cold and damp. They may not have enough money for food and have to go to a food bank to get food. Talk with the children about their understanding of these things.

What causes homelessness?

Crisis is an organization that helps people who are homeless. This is what they say about the causes of homelessness:

People become homeless for lots of different reasons. There are social causes of homelessness, such as a lack of affordable housing, poverty and unemployment; and life events which cause individuals to become homeless.



Ask the children what reasons they can think of why people might become homeless.

- People can become homeless when they leave prison, care or the army with no home to go to.
- Many homeless women have escaped a violent relationship.
- Many people become homeless because they can no longer afford the rent.
- For many, life events like a relationship breaking down, losing a job, mental or physical health problems, or substance misuse can be the trigger. Being homeless can, in turn, make many of these problems even harder to resolve.

If possible look at this website with the children: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/>

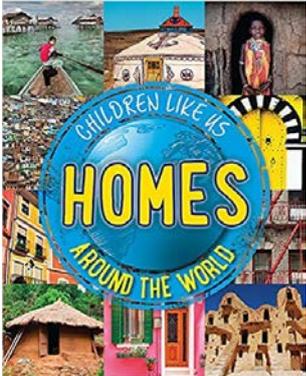


Do you recognize the needs and gifts of each member of your family and household, not forgetting your own? Try to make your home a place of loving friendship and enjoyment, where all who live or visit may find the peace and refreshment of God's presence. (Advice and Query 26)

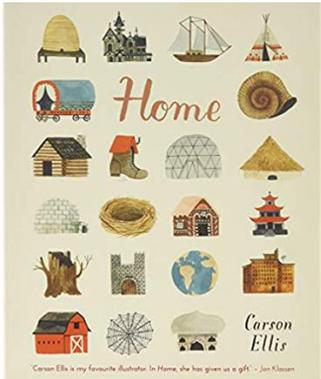
Who lives in my house?

If we are lucky to have a home and a comfortable house maybe we should invite others to share our home. Perhaps we can invite other to eat with us, share our toys and enable conversation and laughter. Let's think about our own home.

Using the house template on page 4 of this issue, either write or draw the people (and animals) who live in your house. Following this have some discussion about each house.



Read *Homes* by Carson Ellies (ISBN-10: 9781406365795) or *Homes Around the World* by Moira Butterfield (ISBN-10: 075029714X). Talk with the children about the huge variety of places people call home, and how important home is to everyone.

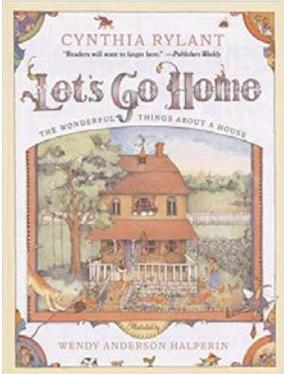


What makes a home a home?

Hopefully when we think about our homes we realise they are more than just bricks and mortar, the paint on the walls or the new washing machine. So, what makes a house a home? What are the home comforts? Invite suggestions but the following may well be the things the children come up with.

- Warmth
- Food
- Comfortable bed
- Friends, family
- Love and joy
- Favourite toys and photos

Read the story – *Let's go Home* by Cynthia Rylant (ISBN-10: 1416908390). Pause on each page to let the children absorb what is in each picture and all



the important objects and people that make a house a home. People who are homeless probably have none of these things.

Activity 1.

Ask the children to think about their own homes and what is important to them, what brings them comfort and helps them to be safe. Think for a moment of the people, some very young, who do not have a home or somewhere to live. It must be very scary to have to live on the street or even in a hostel. It is important that we really appreciate what we have. Make a large picture of a house with all the things that are important to the children and adults in the group/meeting. Perhaps they can think of some things in this house that they might like to give to someone who doesn't have a home or a house.



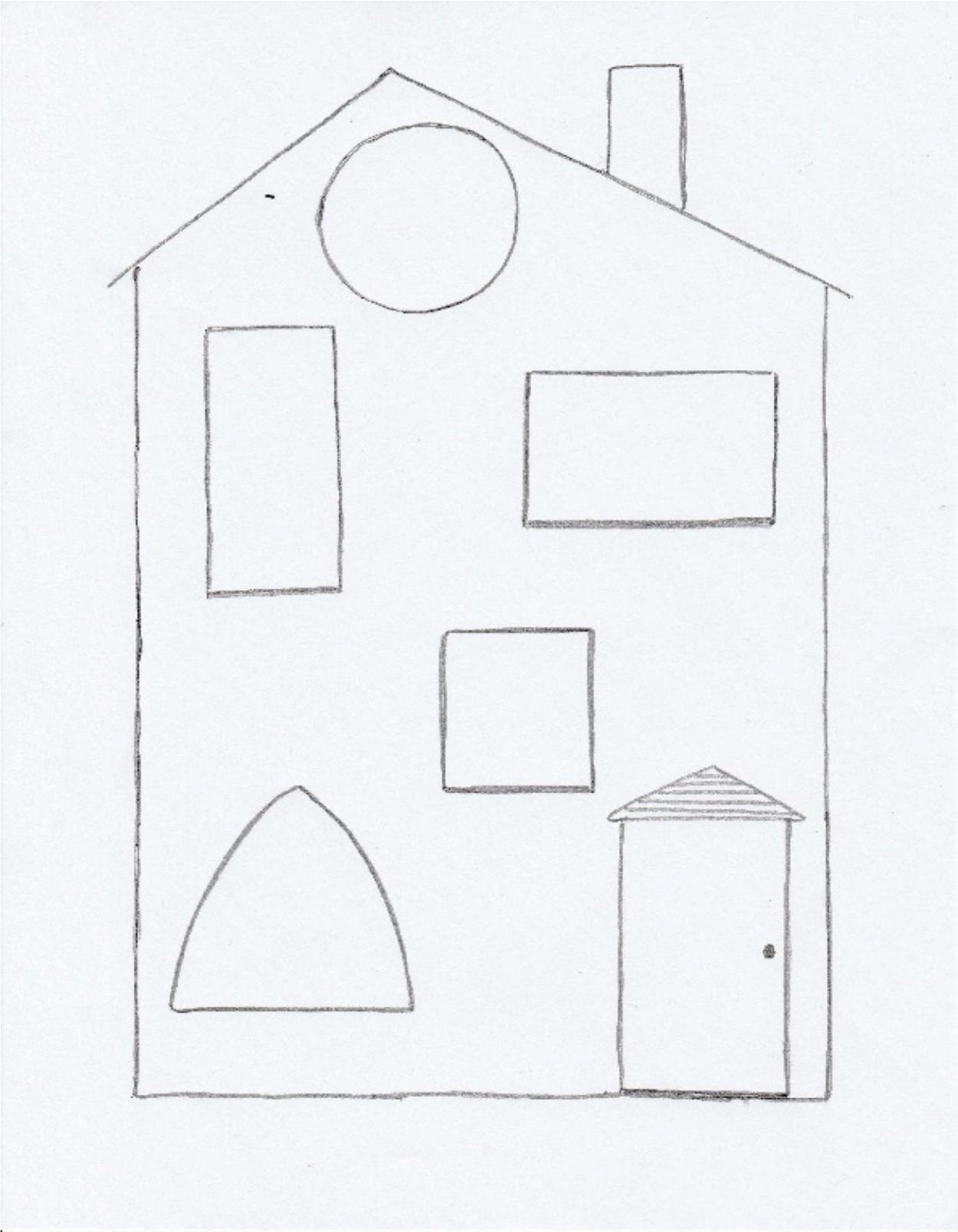
Edinburgh Central Meeting did this activity as all age worship and above is the house with all the things they felt made a house a home.



Activity 2.

Gather some materials of different textures to create unusual pictures of homes, using coloured crayons to complete the picture like the example here.

House template



This Topical Activity was written by Madeleine Harding