

Here are 14 children's picture books that offer opportunities to explore homelessness and the kindness we're capable of.

### People Without Homes

1. **"Shoebox Sam"** by Mary Brigid Barrett  
2011. Grades 1–4. Delia and Jessie spend Saturdays with Shoebox Sam, who teaches them about making old shoes new again and helping those in need.
2. **"The Lunch Thief"** by Anne C. Bromley  
2010. Grades 1-4.  
Rafael notices the new kid stealing lunches (including his), and uses his mom's advice to use his voice & not his fists to resolve the problem
3. **"December"** by Eve Bunting  
1997. Grades 1–4.  
Simon and his mom live in the tiny cardboard house they've built for themselves. On Christmas Eve they don't have much, but it's more than the woman who comes knocking on their door has. Does their generosity bring them a miracle?
4. **"Fly Away Home"** by Eve Bunting  
1991. Grades PreK–3. A young boy talks about his and his father's lives living in an airport and has hope for himself when he sees a trapped bird find freedom.
5. **"A Shelter in Our Care"** by Monica Gunning  
2004. Grades K–3.  
Since moving to America from Jamaica after her father died, Zettie and her mom live in their car while they both go to school and plan for a real home.
6. **"Sélavi: That is Life: A Haitian Story of Hope"** by Youme Landowne  
2005. Grades 1–4.  
Haitian street children band together and work to create a life for themselves.
7. **"The Lady in the Box"** by Ann McGovern  
1997. Grades K–4.  
When two siblings discover a homeless woman living in their neighborhood, they discover how easy it can be to make a difference in someone's life.
8. **"I Can Hear the Sun"** by Patricia Polacco  
1999. Grades 2–5.  
A boy without a real home, Fondo feels lonely and unwanted. Then he meets Stephanie Michele, who takes care of the waterfowl at the pond and shares his sensitivity for nature. She teaches him how to help take care of the geese, especially one with special needs. When Fondo finds out he's to be taken away, he looks to the geese for a miracle.
9. **"The Can Man"** by Laura E. Williams  
2010. Grades 2–5.

Tim's family doesn't have a lot of money, but he really wants a skateboard for his birthday. When he sees Mr. Peters, "The Can Man," who is homeless, collecting cans, Tim gets the idea to collect enough cans to pay for his skateboard, even though that means Mr. Peters gets less ... it's only until Tim's birthday, after all. Tim really wants that skateboard, but a couple of encounters with Mr. Peters give him pause about what to do with the money he's earned.

### Animals Without Homes

0. **"A Home for Dakota"** by Jan Grover and Nancy Lane

2008. Grades 1–3.

Dog #241 lives in a dark crate on a puppy mill, until she is rescued and learns to trust humans again. When the puppy (now named Dakota) meets a young girl who has been as traumatized as she, healing begins for both of them.

1. **"Mutt Dog"** by Stephen Michael King

2005. Grades PreK–2.

Mutt Dog is brave and fast and gentle and loyal and smart, but he's also hungry, and he doesn't have a home. Then one day his luck changes, and he at last finds a family—and a cozy, loving place to belong.

2. **"Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship and Survival"** by Kirby Larson and Mary Nethery

2008. Grades K–3.

A dog and a blind cat abandoned during Hurricane Katrina evacuations manage to find each other and stick together until they realize a happy ending.

3. **"Go Home! The True Story of James the Cat"** by Libby Phillips Meggs

2000. Grades K–3.

Cat has been lost for a long time. His collar has grown too tight, and he's always hungry and thirsty. One day he finds a house with a kind family, but they think because he has a collar, he has a home. It's not until he's badly injured that the family realizes just how much the cat needs them.

4. **"The Stray Dog"** by Marc Simont

2003. Grades PreK–3.

A family picnicking in the park encounters a little stray dog. The children play with him and name him Willy. But the parents won't let Willy come home with them. Willy stays in their hearts and heads, so the next week they go looking for him ... but so does the dog catcher.

Source: [www.humaneducation.org](http://www.humaneducation.org)