

Children's Books about Hunger, Poverty & Homelessness

Ada's Violin by Susan Hood

Ada Ríos grew up in Cateura, a small town in Paraguay built on a landfill. She dreamed of playing the violin, but with little money for anything but the bare essentials, it was never an option...until a music teacher named Favio Chávez arrived. He wanted to give the children of Cateura something special, so he made them instruments out of materials found in the trash. **Ages 4-8**

Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier

More than anything, Beatrice longs to be a schoolgirl. But in her small African village, only children who can afford uniforms and books can go to school. Beatrice knows that with six children to care for, her family is much too poor. **Ages 4-8**

A Bike Like Sergio's by Maribeth Boelts

Ruben feels like he is the only kid without a bike. His friend Sergio reminds him that his birthday is coming, but Ruben knows that the kinds of birthday gifts he and Sergio receive are not the same. After all, when Ruben's mom sends him to Sonny's corner store for groceries, sometimes she doesn't have enough money for everything on the list. **Ages 5-8**

A Chair for My Mother by Vera B Williams

After their home is destroyed by a fire, Rosa, her mother, and grandmother save their coins to buy a really comfortable chair for all to enjoy. **Ages 4-8**

Community Soup by Alma Fullerton

In a garden outside a Kenyan schoolhouse children are working together to harvest the vegetables they have grown and make them into a soup for everyone to share. But Kioni is having trouble. Her herd of mischievous goats followed her to school today and they are trying to eat all the vegetables. **Ages 4-8**

A Different Pond by Bao Phi

As a young boy, Bao and his father awoke early, hours before his father's long workday began to fish on the shores of a small pond in Minneapolis. Unlike many other anglers, Bao and his father fished for food, not recreation. A successful catch meant a fed family. **Ages 6-8**

Emmanuel's Dream by Laurie Ann Thompson

Born in Ghana, West Africa, with one deformed leg, he was dismissed by most people—but not by his mother, who taught him to reach for his dreams. As a boy, Emmanuel hopped to school more than two miles each way, learned to play soccer, left home at age thirteen to provide for his family, and eventually, became a cyclist. **Ages 4-8**

Fly Away Home by Eve Bunting

A homeless boy who lives in an airport with his father, moving from terminal to terminal trying not to be noticed, is given hope when a trapped bird finally finds its freedom. **Ages 4-7**

Four Feet Two Sandals by Karen Lynn Williams

When relief workers bring used clothing to the refugee camp, everyone scrambles to grab whatever they can. Ten-year-old Lina is thrilled when she finds a sandal that fits her foot perfectly, until she sees that another girl has the matching shoe. But soon Lina and Feroza meet and decide that it is better to share the sandals than for each to wear only one. **Ages 7-10**

I am Bear by Jean-Francois Dumont

Life isn't easy for a bear. Not when he has to sleep on the sidewalk among cardboard boxes and old clothes. Not when he lives in a city full of people who are repulsed by him. Not when he's hungry and homeless. But one day a young girl smiles at the bear, and he realizes that maybe there is something that could make life a bit easier -- a friend. **Ages 4-8**

The Last Stop on Market Street by Matt De La Pena

Every Sunday after church, CJ and his grandma ride the bus across town. But today, CJ wonders why they don't own a car like his friend Colby. Why doesn't he have an iPod like the boys on the bus? How come they always have to get off in the dirty part of town? **Ages 3-5**

Maddi's Fridge by Lois Brandt

Best friends Sofia and Maddi live in the same neighborhood, go to the same school, and play in the same park, but while Sofia's fridge at home is full of nutritious food, the fridge at Maddi's house is empty. Sofia learns that Maddi's family doesn't have enough money to fill their fridge and promises Maddi she'll keep this discovery a secret. **Ages 4-8**

A New Year's Reunion by Yu Li-Qiong

Maomao's dad works many miles away, but he is coming home for New Year! Little Maomao's father works in faraway places and comes home just once a year for Chinese New Year. At first Maomao barely recognizes him, but before long the family is happily making sticky rice balls, listening to firecrackers, and watching the dragon dance in the streets below. **Ages 3-7**

One Grain of Rice by Demi

A rajah who believes himself to be wise and fair uses his hungry people's rice for himself year after year, until a village girl named Rani devises a clever plan using the surprising power of doubling to win a billion grains of rice from the rajah. **Ages 4-8**

The Red Bicycle by Jude Isabella

Leo treasures his bicycle so much he gives it a name --- Big Red. But eventually Leo outgrows Big Red, and this is where the bicycle's story takes a turn from the everyday, because Leo decides to donate it to an organization that ships bicycles to Africa. **Ages 3-7**

Shelter by Celine Calire

As a big storm approaches, two strangers arrive in the forest. All the animal families, safe in their homes, are worried. They wonder what they are doing there? What do they want? As the pair knocks at the door of one home after another asking for shelter, all the animals turn them away, leaving them to fend for themselves. Then an accident suddenly forces the fox family out into the snow and the wind and the foxes find they must ask these outsiders for help. **Ages 4-8**

Still a Family by Brenda Reeves Sturgis

A little girl and her parents have lost their home and must live in a homeless shelter. Even worse, due to a common shelter policy, her dad must live in a men's shelter, separated from her and her mom. Despite these circumstances, the family still finds time to be together. **Ages 4-8**

The Teddy Bear by David McPhail

The little boy and his teddy bear were always together. Every night, when the little boy went to sleep, his teddy bear was right there next to him. When the little boy went on a trip, his teddy bear went too—until one terrible day when the teddy bear was left behind. **Ages 3-6**

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts

Jeremy, who longs to have the black high tops that everyone at school seems to have but his grandmother cannot afford, is excited when he sees them for sale in a thrift shop and decides to buy them even though they are the wrong size. **Ages 5-8**

Tia Isa Wants a Car by Meg Medina

While Tía Isa wants to save money for a car that will take the whole family to the beach, her niece does odd jobs for neighbors. But it's hard to save enough when half the money is set aside to someday bring family members who live far away to join them. **Ages 3-7**

Town is by the Sea by Joanne Schwartz

A young boy wakes up to the sound of the sea, visits his grandfather's grave after lunch and comes home to a simple family dinner, but all the while his mind strays to his father digging for coal deep down under the sea. **Ages 5-9**

The Water Princess by Susan Verde

With its wide sky and warm earth, Princess Gie Gie's kingdom is a beautiful land. But clean drinking water is scarce in her small African village. And try as she might, Gie Gie cannot bring the water closer; she cannot make it run clearer. Every morning, she rises before the sun to make the long journey to the well. **Ages 5-8**

Yard Sale by Eve Bunting

Almost everything Callie's family owns is spread out in their front yard—their furniture, their potted flowers, even Callie's bike. They can't stay in this house, so they're moving to an apartment in the city. The new place is "small but nice," Mom says, and most of their things won't fit, so today they are having a yard sale. But it's kind of hard to watch people buy your stuff, even if you understand why it has to happen.

Ages 5-7

