

### 3. Gifts – Stereotyping/Prejudice/Judging

*This activity helps students to define and recognize stereotyping, with a simple lesson on how wrong you can be.*



#### **Materials Needed:**

Three differently wrapped boxes (fancy, plain brown, newspaper) of similar size  
(See below for items to wrap)

Chart paper/markers

Computer/Internet access to view the video “**Stories from the Street**” at [www.ladybugeducation.ca](http://www.ladybugeducation.ca)

**Teachers should preview all video content before screening it for students. Lengths are approximate running times. Before use, consider classroom and community sensitivities, and age-appropriateness.**

#### **Stories from the Street**

This documentary tells stark and honest stories of life on the streets of Calgary, from the voices of the homeless and the leaders of organizations trying to help. Viewers will quickly see that homelessness in Canada knows no ethnic, gender or age boundaries. There are no easy answers but the root of change comes from hope and caring.

Content Warning: some graphic content and images

**Length: 16:30 minutes**

The classroom teacher will have three different boxes of similar size. One will be wrapped in fancy paper with bows and ribbons, one will be wrapped in plain brown paper and the last one will be wrapped in newspaper.

The teacher will put something in each box. The fancy box will contain something like a paper clip or pencil, the plain brown paper box will contain a loonie and the newspaper box will contain something valuable. The students will not see the boxes until the teacher shows them one by one.

The classroom teacher will hold up the fancy box and ask the following:

1. Would you like to know what’s inside the box? The teacher will shake it to illustrate that there is something inside.
2. Do you think it is something valuable? Record students’ responses by keeping a tally chart on the board or chart paper – “Valuable” / “Some Value” / “No Value”



Do this with each box and record the students' responses. Ask for student volunteers to open the boxes and show what each contains. Discuss how what the box contains compares with what they thought about the value of the contents.

Discuss with the students:

1. Can you tell what is inside a box based on its appearance?
2. Are people like boxes with different wrappings?
3. Is it a good idea to judge or stereotype people based on appearances?
4. Have you ever judged something/someone and came to the wrong conclusion about it/them?
5. Have you ever been judged unjustly because someone else jumped to the wrong conclusions?
6. How can preconceived notions affect how you judge someone?
7. Is it fair to "jump to conclusions" about someone based on appearances, behaviour or comments from others?
8. When you first saw the poster, did you stereotype him as homeless? What are the cues for stereotyping him – other than the shopping cart?
9. When you were asked earlier to list his character traits, were you stereotyping him?

From this discussion, lead the students into discussions about preconceived notions and ideas that people have about the homeless and poverty.

Access [www.ladybugeducation.ca](http://www.ladybugeducation.ca) and follow the links to the video, "**Stories from the Street.**"

This video is a glance at homelessness through the eyes and words of those living on the streets or in shelters. Homelessness in Canada knows no ethnic, gender or age boundaries. It will become evident that there are no easy answers, but change for the better is rooted in how we treat people living in dire circumstances.