

Meet Mary!

Mary is in the fourth grade at a school in the San Fernando Valley. Her mother is ill and her grandmother is looking after both of them. Unfortunately, with caring for her daughter, she is unable to work to pay the rent. They are homeless and Mary's mother is staying with one of her sisters.

However, there is not enough room for all three of them, so Mary and her grandmother spend each week sleeping in the living room and staying with a different member of the family. They rotate among three different homes; one of which is close to the school, but the others are quite a distance away. Mary has no privacy and no space of her own, nowhere to put her things, nowhere to do homework. She can't invite friends around or go to play with them because she is living too far away from where she used to live.

She had been at the school since first grade, has friends there and always did well. She is still at the same school and some weeks she can walk to school, while other weeks she has to take two buses to get there with her grandmother. The other children in the class do not know about her situation.

Her teacher was concerned because Mary had become very quiet and she was not completing her homework. She put aside some time after school to spend with Mary while waiting for her grandmother to come and became a great support to the family.

**Draw Mary As
You Imagine Her Below!**



Thoughts & Conversations

1. If Mary were your cousin, where could she stay in your house and how could you give her a little bit of space to do her homework and put some clothes away safely?

2. How could you make her feel comfortable and welcome back at your house in the weeks that she would be away staying with other cousins?

3. Imagine that you are Mary. What would you need and want to have but may not be comfortable asking for?

4. What might be good about her staying with you, and what might be difficult for you and for Mary?
