

## Somebody's Mother

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learning about the beauty and blessings that compassion and kindness brings into one's life, both for the giver and the receiver.
- Reading and reciting the poem with the correct rhythm and emphasis.
- Answering questions on the poem.
- Learning words, meanings, spellings, pronunciation, rhymes.
- **Outcome:** Kindness without any expectation of reward is very enriching.
- Understanding the poem well.
- Learning to pronounce perfectly by reciting the poem.

<b>Get Going!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explain the exercise. Let the students have a discussion with their partners about what their grandmothers would like as a birthday gift. Walk around the classroom to guide and assess their discussion.</li> </ul>
<b>Read and Enjoy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'Somebody's Mother' is a beautiful poem by Mary Dow Brine, depicting the important values of care and love for others. The poet describes a scene in which an old, poor woman is trying to cross the street on a cold winter's day. She's in the snow, like everyone else, but no one is stopping to help her.</li> <li>➤ People run past her, hardly noticing her plight. This happens for some time till a school boy stops and helps her cross the street. He explains to his friends that he did so because he knew she was in need and that she's 'somebody's mother'. When the old woman goes to bed later, she prays for the boy, referring to him as 'somebody's son'.</li> <li>➤ The poem is written in 19 couplets, with a rhyming pattern aabbcc. The poet, through the poem, gently reminds her readers that they should take care of their fellow humans, even if they are strangers.</li> <li>➤ Lines 1-2: The poet begins by describing a woman walking down the street on a winter's day. She was 'old and ragged and gray'. She was also 'bent with the chill,' suggesting that she has had a hard, long life and felt very cold.</li> <li>➤ Lines 3-6: In these lines, the poet describes how the woman was walking, and no one was paying any attention to her. She had clearly been struggling for a long time. The poet describes her standing at a crossing alone. She is 'amid the throng', meaning that there are people moving around her like in any busy street, ignoring her.</li> <li>➤ Lines 7-8: Here, the poet describes the people passing by the old woman in very simple terms as 'human beings'. None of them stopped to look at her 'anxious eyes'.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☛ Lines 9-12: A group of boys came out of the school laughing and shouting because it was the end of a long school day. They felt free after the school. The poet uses a simile here, saying that the boys were 'like a flock of sheep' and moved as though they had no independent thought. They were interested only in the snow that was 'piled white and deep'.</li> <li>☛ Lines 13-18: In these lines, the poet focusses on the woman, whom she describes as 'old and gray'. She conveys how timid and fearful the woman was. She feared that if she moved, she could come under the carriage wheels or the horses' feet due to the slippery street. No one was willing to stop and help her. Note the use of alliteration in 'slippery street' (line 18).</li> <li>☛ Lines 19-24: Finally, one of the young boys walking on the street stopped near the old woman and offered to help her cross the street. He was the 'gayest' or most upbeat and kindest of the group. He put her 'aged hand on his strong arm' and was very gentle as he guided her cross the street. This is an example of juxtaposition. The boy's kindness is even more striking since the poet has already described the disregard that the other people on the street showed to the old woman.</li> <li>☛ Lines 25-30: These lines describe the two crossing the street. The old woman's feet were 'trembling', indicating how unsteady she was and how much trouble she would have had crossing the street on her own. The boy was content with his good deed. The poet explains why the boy took time to help her cross the street. The boy used a casual tone, which indicates helping the woman was an obvious choice. She's 'aged and poor and slow', but 'she's somebody's mother,' he tells his friends.</li> <li>☛ Lines 30-38: The boy further says that he helped the old woman because he imagines his own mother in that situation and how he would want someone to help her if he wasn't around when she was 'poor and old and gray'.</li> <li>☛ That night, the old woman, who is described as 'somebody's mother', prayed for the 'noble boy' who had helped her cross the street, calling him 'somebody's son'. This reversal shows how much the woman appreciated the boy's act of kindness and how she recognised him in the same way as he did her.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☛ Exercises A, B and C: Explain the exercises. Do them orally first and then ask the students to write the answers in their books/notebooks. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.</li> </ul>	<b>Read and Understand</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☛ Explain the meanings of the three figures of speech (simile, metaphor and alliteration). These have been covered in the earlier classes too. Explain with the examples given and use your own as well. Simile is to make a comparison using 'as' or 'like': He looks like a fish out of water. Metaphor is a more direct comparison between two things that do not use 'like' or 'as': Her smile is sunshine. Alliteration is the use of a consonant letter or sound at the beginning of words that are close together, as in 'he built a big boat'.</li> </ul>	<b>Appreciating the Poem</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☛ Exercise A: Explain what is required in the exercise and let the students do it on their own. Then ask the students to write the answers down. Announce the answers aloud and let the students check their work.</li> </ul>	

<b>Write Well</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explain the question to make sure that the students know what is being asked. Then let them write the paragraph on their own. You can talk about the first lesson, 'The Portrait of a Lady', which also deals with the generation gap and some of the problems people, especially the elderly face. The young generation must try to understand why the older generation, that is, our parents and grandparents, may feel neglected or isolated, and what it is that we can do to help them. We can benefit immensely from their advice and rich experience. They need someone to talk to, to feel loved and to feel appreciated.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Work/ AIL Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Exercise A: Explain the exercise first and then ask the students to work with their partners to enact the poem as a conversation. Help them wherever required.</li> </ul>