

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Identifying Theme:**

**Directions:** read each short story and determine the theme or message in the story. Remember that a good answer will focus on big world lessons, not small world details of the story.



#### **The Man in the Baseball Hat**

Dylan couldn't wait for his mom to come home from work. They had a fun evening planned. Even though he was almost fifteen, he still enjoyed spending Sunday evenings with his mom since he only got to see her on weekends after his parents were divorced. Mom worked all day on Saturdays and Sundays though, so they always did something special on Sunday nights.

Tonight, Dylan and his mom were going to dinner at his favorite restaurant. Before supper, however, they were going to stop at Guitar World so Dylan could buy a guitar. His mom wasn't very excited about it, but she knew Dylan really wanted to learn how to play. After weeks of begging her for a guitar, she finally told Dylan that if he found a way to earn the money for a guitar, she would pay for music lessons.

Dylan didn't really want to work, but got a job mowing lawns in the neighborhood. He wanted to spend summer skateboarding and playing video games with his friends. Some of his best times were spent with his buddies. After hanging out and playing video games for most of the afternoon, they would skateboard downtown for smoothies or root beer floats. They did this almost every evening and Dylan loved the freedom and the time spent with his friends. The only thing he didn't like so much was the way his friends treated the homeless people who were often found in the parking lot behind the Dairy Treat. It was a great parking lot to skateboard in with all the stairs and rails, and everyone who knew how to skateboard hung out there.

All of the kids picked on the homeless people, especially the stinky guy in the old baseball hat. He always seemed to sit on the bench that everyone hung out by. When he didn't move, they would throw rocks at him. Dylan's best friend, Mike, even threw his blueberry smoothie at him once. The homeless guy got up to move, but he was so old, that it took him a long time to move away from the kids. Mike shoved him a couple times and swore at him because he couldn't get out of his way fast enough. Dylan didn't agree with it, but tried just to forget about it. It was often all he thought about, however, when he was mowing lawns in his neighborhood.

Dylan and his mom got ready to leave the house and buy his guitar.

"What's wrong, Dylan?" his mom asked.

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**“Nothing.”**

**As they walked past the parking lot where everyone went to skateboard, Dylan couldn't keep it from his mom anymore. He told her about Mike and the homeless guy in the parking lot and how the other kids treated the man.**

**“You know, Dylan,” his mom mentioned, “if you feel so bad about it, why don't you do something to try to change things.”**

**Dylan thought for a moment. He turned and walked towards the parking lot. Once his mom caught up with him, she saw Dylan talking to the man in the baseball hat.**

**“Mom, I'd like to take my friend to supper with us. Is that okay?” Dylan asked.**

**Dylan's mom pulled him aside and explained that she couldn't afford supper for three people this evening. She had just finished paying bills for the month and could only afford to take the two of them for supper and pay for guitar lessons.**

**Dylan handed his mom the fifty dollars he had saved up for the used guitar he couldn't wait to buy.**

**“I'll just mow a few more lawns this month. I'd like to do this.”**

**The three of them walked over to the Italian restaurant next door. They ate supper, talked, and learned a little about the man in the baseball hat. Dylan decided that next week, he wanted to invite Mike to have supper with the three of them, hoping that Mike might change his mind about the man.**

**What is the theme of this story?**

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**What happens in the story that leads you to believe this?**

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