

2.3 Somebody's Mother

■ ■ ■ Warming up! ■ ■ ■

1. Read the following proverb that has a biblical reference.

‘Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.’

Now find at least 5 other proverbs/axioms/quotations which convey the same message. Search the internet/dictionary of proverbs.

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2. Study the following sets of words :

Set A – pleased, happy, joyful, ecstatic

Set B – letter, word, sentence, paragraph

Note :- The words in these sets are arranged in an ascending order, each word showing a higher degree than the previous one. Now rearrange the following groups of words in the ascending order.

(a) (1) adult (2) aged (3) infant (4) youth

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(b) (1) cold (2) freezing (3) cool (4) chill

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(c) (1) brilliant (2) genius (3) bright (4) intelligent

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(d) (1) mountain (2) peak/summit (3) mound (4) hill

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- Prepare similar word chains using the following ideas.

• rain – drizzle

• wind – breeze

• sunshine – warm

• waterbody – pool

• size – big

• size – small

Somebody's Mother

The woman was old and ragged and gray,
And bent with the chill of a winter's day;
The streets were white with a recent snow,
And the woman's feet with age were slow.

At the crowded crossing she waited long,
Jostled aside by the careless throng
Of human beings who passed her by,
Unheeding the glance of her anxious eye.

Down the street with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of 'school let out',
Came happy boys, like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep;
Past the woman, so old and gray,
Hastened the children on their way.

None offered a helping hand to her,
So weak and timid, afraid to stir,
Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet
Should trample her down in the slippery street.

At last came out of the merry troop
The gayest boy of all the group;
He paused beside her and whispered low,
'I'll help you across, if you wish to go.'

Her aged hand on his strong young arm
She placed, and so without hurt or harm
He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were young and strong;
Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.

**Guess the following,
using references
from the poem :**

- ◆ The setting –
the region,
the locality
- ◆ The time –
the time of the year
and the day.

- ragged : wearing old
and torn clothes
- throng : large crowd
- unheeding : neglecting
- hailing : welcoming
- Lest : for the fear
that ...

- lend a hand : help

‘She’s somebody’s mother, boys, you know,
For all she’s aged, and poor and slow;
And someone, some time, may lend a hand
To help my mother – you understand? –
If ever she’s old and poor and gray,
And her own dear boy so far away.’

‘Somebody’s mother’ bowed low her head
In her home that night, and the prayer she said
Was: ‘God be kind to that noble boy,
Who is somebody’s son and pride and joy.

- Mary Dow Brine

■ ■ ■ ENGLISH WORKSHOP ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

1. Pick out lines from the poem that help create images of the following in our mind and write them in the table.

No.	Old Woman	The Street	Schoolboys
1.			
2.			
3.			

2. Write at least 5 rhymes from the poem.
3. Give, in your own words, TWO reasons for each of the following :
 - (a) The woman was reluctant to cross the street by herself.
 - (b) The schoolboys were in a happy mood.
 - (c) One of the schoolboys helped the old woman cross the street.
 - (d) We must help those who are in need.
4. Think and write in 5-6 lines, why most of the people on a road/street ignore those in need of help. What about you? Write about your feelings after you have helped/not helped, when needed.

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5. **Read the poem :** ‘Home they brought her warrior dead’
by Alfred Lord Tennyson

