



24 August 2005
19 Av 5765

Dear Educators:

Enclosed please find a draft of our new Communal Tzedakah Project, a five-session curriculum which studies tzedakah, tikkun olum and their practical communal application in Rhode Island today. Thank you for agreeing to pilot it in your school. We would also like to thank Mark Feinstein, President of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island for using his president's discretionary fund in order to make this curriculum possible.

I look forward to feedback from you and your teachers on ways to improve this draft. I am available to meet with you or your teachers to help implement the curriculum. Please let me know how the BJE/RI and I can assist you.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Jacqueline Romm Satlow
Director of Professional Development



Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island

COMMUNAL TZEDAKAH PROJECT

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Enclosed please find a copy of the new Communal Tzedakah Curriculum. This curriculum teaches Jewish values and tzedakah practice. By participating in these six lessons, the students will learn why tzedakah is important. They will understand the importance of community. The students will see that they can make a difference in their community through tzedakah and tikkun olum. They will realize that they can help to make the world a better place. Students will discover the vast array of diverse agencies doing tikkun olum in our own community and how we can support their work. They will learn that their collective action yields a network of services that serves our own community. They will learn about philanthropy and allocation and how they can help the world.



Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island

COMMUNAL TZEDAKAH PROJECT – SUPPLIES

- γ Raisins or cookies
- γ Envelopes
- γ Blindfolds
- γ *Trevor's Place: The Story of the Boy Who Brings Hope to the Homeless* by Frank and Janet Ferrell, chapter 1
- γ Poster paper and poster board (white and colored)
- γ Blackboard and chalk
- γ Camera with film
- γ Art Supplies: magic markers, glue sticks, scissors for each student, stack of magazines for collage, glitter, colored paper, paint, paintbrushes
- γ Banner on mural paper (explained below)
- γ Two posters for opening (explained below)
- γ Overhead projector and screen
- γ TV/VCR and the film *Witness* (This film is easily available commercially.)
- γ Background material on some of JFRI's agencies either from their Website (www.JFRI.org) or by inviting selected individuals (professionals and volunteers) to make short presentations
- γ Five plastic chips per student
- γ Accounting of how much tzedakah money is available for the students to divide between agencies (Suggestion: this can either be the tzedakah money this class has collected throughout the year or a suggested donation of \$10 per family)
- γ Five tables to display materials
- γ RAMBAM's levels of tzedakah (attached) each on a separate note card
- γ Copies of the attached texts and resource sheets for each student
- γ Tzitzit in art (overhead included)
- γ Opening two posters (for session 2). The text (to be placed in the center) is included.
 - Poster #1 "*And God created people in God's image, in the image of God they were created, male and female....*" (Hebrew and English) (Gen. 1:27)
 - Poster #2 "*And you shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (Lev. 19:18) (Heb and Eng)
- γ Banner (for session 3) on which the following text (Hebrew and English) is written across the top "*Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that the Eternal your God redeemed you from there.*" (Deuteronomy 5:15).



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COMMUNAL TZEDAKAH PROJECT – SESSION I

Aim of the Lesson: to convince the students that a world in which we are responsible for each other would be a better world.

Supplies Needed: raisins or cookies, envelopes, blindfolds, *Trevor's Place: The Story of the Boy Who Brings Hope to the Homeless* by Frank and Janet Ferrell, chapter 1, poster paper and marker or blackboard, camera with film.

Amount of Time Needed: 1.5 hours

OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

Introduction: Tzedakah is... Brainstorming activity. (10 minutes)

What do the children think Tzedakah is before they start? Make a poster with a list of everything the children associate with Tzedakah. Tell them that the word Tzedakah comes from the Hebrew root tzadee, dalet, koof that means righteous or just. This is in contrast to the word "charity" which comes from the Latin word "caritas" which means loving and caring. Thus for us tzedakah is not only a matter of feeling, but also a matter of obligation. (If you use the blackboard for this activity, be sure to take a photograph before you erase.)

Activity I Blind Treasure Hunt (30 minutes)

- γ Place one treat in each envelope.
- γ Number the envelopes and place them around the room or the building. (Take care not to put any in high places or in locations which could be dangerous for a blindfolded student to reach.) Keep a record of where each is put. Place envelopes in such a way that the number is visible.
- γ The class should be divided into pairs.
- γ One person in each pair will be blindfolded and "talked" to another location by his/her partner. *Only the blindfolded partner will receive a prize at the conclusion of this activity.*
- γ Each pair must decide which partner will be blindfolded. Each pair is assigned a number. (Consider secretly telling the "sighted" partner where his envelope is located.)
- γ Sighted partners must give oral instructions to "blind" partners, directing them to their prize, without bumping into anything along the way. You may only give oral instructions, e.g. "turn right, stop" etc. You may not touch your partner or lead him by the hand.
- γ When the blindfolded partner reaches the prize, he may keep it.
- γ Consider having half the group work in pairs and the other half as spectators.
- γ Repeat so all can have a turn if necessary.

Activity II Analysis of activity (20 minutes)

Children should sit in a circle and discuss the following:

- γ How did you feel playing the game?
- γ How did the blindfolded partners feel? Did they trust their partners? How did the others feel?
- γ In what ways was each responsible for the other? How did each show concern or lack of it?
- γ What happened to the raisins? How did each partner feel about that? What else might have been done with it?
- γ How did you decide who would be blindfolded? How did you feel about that decision?
- γ What did both partners share in this experience?

Activity III Read “The Beginning: A Pillow and a Yellow Blanket” in *Trevor’s Place, The Story of the Boy Who Brings Hope to the Homeless* by Frank and Janet Ferrell. Begin by asking the students to listen carefully. Tell them that when they are done they will discuss how this story is like the game we just played. (10 minutes)

Activity IV Brainstorm (10 minutes)

Ask, “How is this story like the activity we participated in at the beginning of the lesson?” (The words you are looking for are: Helping, supporting, caring, love, responsibility, concern, feeling good, sharing, etc.) Use the blackboard or similar.

Activity V Wrap Up (10 minutes)

Return to the introductory activity. Tell them that Tzedakah is also rooted in Deuteronomy 15:8 “You must open your hand to a neighbor and lend that which will cover his (or her) needs. The rabbis (in Sefer HaHinuch 478) say that if you are able to aid someone who is in need, and you fail to do so, you have violated a Torah rule. Make a new poster. Have the children changed their definition of Tzedakah?



Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island

COMMUNAL TZEDAKAH PROJECT – SESSION II

What does the Jewish tradition say about helping other people?

Aims of the Lesson: To convince the students that tzedakah is not only the right thing to do, it is also the Jewish thing to do, and students will enjoy studying Torah together.

Supplies Needed: Opening posters, (directions for making the posters are given below), chalkboard and chalk, magic markers, glue sticks, scissors for each student, Stack of magazines for collage, extra posterboard, RAMBAM's levels of tzedakah (attached) each on a separate notecard, copies of the attached texts for each student.

Amount of Time Needed: 1.5 hours.

OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

Introduction: Relate verses to Tzedakah. (5-10 minutes)

Activity I Present two posters with the following text in the center:

- γ Poster 1 *“And God created people in God’s image, in the image of God they were created, male and female....”* (Gen. 1:27) (in Hebrew and English)
- γ Poster 2 *“ And you shall love your neighbor as yourself”* (Lev. 19:18) (in Hebrew and English)

Ask students, “Can you connect these two verses? How do they relate to Tzedakah and last week’s lesson? “

Brainstorm. Make a list of what the students say on a third poster. (10 minutes)

Activity II Divide the class into three groups. Ask the students to decorate each poster based on its theme using markers and collage. Each group decorates one poster. (25 minutes)

Post the posters on the walls. Allow the students to go on a “museum walk”. (5 minutes)

Activity III Maimonides Ladder of Tzedakah (20 minutes)

- γ *Explain to students:* Maimonides, Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon (RAMBAM) was born in 1135 and spent his early years moving from place to space to escape the religious persecutions of Spain and North Africa. Eventually RAMBAM settled in Cairo, Egypt where he served as the court physician. Somehow, in spite of his difficulties and his wanderings, RAMBAM became the greatest Jewish scholar of all time. RAMBAM’s ladder of tzedakah is a classic Jewish text. It is an expression not only of the values of giving tzedakah, but doing so with sensitivity to the issue of kavod (respect, dignity).
- γ Give each student a copy of RAMBAM’s ladder. Have a full class discussion. What values can we learn from RAMBAM’s ladder? Each student should give at least one value.

- γ Write each of the eight steps on separate pieces of paper or cardboard. After mixing them up, have students try to arrange them on a bulletin board in the correct order from the lowest to the highest.

Activity IV Hevruta Learning (20 minutes)

(Texts, attached, selected by Joel Grishaver for Torah Aura, 2000)

Instructions for the Teacher: A hevruta is a very small study group, usually just two students, sometimes three or four. The teacher should circulate among the groups answering questions.

As the students ask, you can explain that:

- γ *Avot D'Rav Natan* is Jewish commentary in the form of stories. It is from the first few centuries of this era.
- γ *Hosea* was one of the Prophets of the *Bible*. He probably lived around the 8th century BCE.
- γ *Deuteronomy* and *Leviticus* are books of the *Torah*.
- γ *Bava Batra* is part of the *Talmud*, which is full of explanations and commentary by early rabbis. It was written around the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries CE. 10a means the tenth page, the first side.
- γ *Ethics from Sinai* is a modern text.
- γ *Darkai Hayyim* is a book of Midrash (Jewish stories and explanations) *Proverbs* is a book from the *Writings* section of the *Bible*.

Instructions for the students: One-way to study the following five texts is in hevruta. Try to explain each text to your partner in your own words. Ask each other any questions you may think of. Talk about ideas you really like and ideas that give you trouble. Decide which text is your favorite and why.

Activity V Wrap-up (10 min.)

Teacher goes around the room and asks each student which text he or she liked best and why. Three words each.

RAMBAM'S LADDER OF TZEDAKAH

The highest rung of tzedakah is to help a person become self-sufficient.

The next highest rung is when the person giving doesn't know the person receiving, and when the person receiving doesn't know who gave.

The next rung: The giver knows the receiver, but the person receiving doesn't know the giver.

Next: A direct donation into the hand of the needy (given without being asked).

Next: A direct donation of sufficient size (given after being asked).

Next: A direct donation of small size, given cheerfully (after being asked).

Last: A direct, small donation given grudgingly (after being asked).

TEXTS

γ Rabbi Yohanan was walking on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and Rabbi Yehoshua was following behind him. They came to the ruins of the Holy Temple. Rabbi Yehoshua said, "We are ruined. The place that atoned for our sins is destroyed."

"My son" said Rabbi Yohanan, "We still have another means of atonement that is equal to the Temple – *hesed* (deeds of tzedakah and loving kindness). After all, we have been taught that God said, 'Loving kindness is what I want, not sacrifices (*Hosea 6:6*)'." (*Avot D'Reb Natan*, ch.4)

γ If there be among you a needy person, another human within any of your gates, in your land that the Eternal your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your needy brother or sister. (*Deuteronomy 15:7*)

γ Turnusrufus, a wicked Roman governor of Judea, asked Rabbi Akiva, "If your God loves the poor, why doesn't God support them?"

Akiva answered, "In order that we should be saved from Gehenom by giving them tzedakah." (Gehenom is a place, something like hell, which has been part of traditional Jewish belief.)

"Just the opposite," said Turnusrufus, "This will make you deserve Gehenom. I will give you a parable. A mortal king grew angry with his servant. The king had his servant bound in prison and ordered that no one give him food or drink. A certain man went and gave him food. When the king hears about this, how will he react? Won't he be angry? And you are called servants, as it is taught in your *Torah*, 'For Me the Families of Israel are servants' (*Leviticus 25:55*)."

Rabbi Akiva told him, "I will give you a parable. A mortal king grew angry with his son. The king had his son bound in prison and ordered that no one give him food or drink. A certain man went and gave him food. When the king hears about this, how will he react? Won't he send him presents? And we are called children, as it is written, 'You are the children of the Eternal, your God' (*Deuteronomy 14:1*)."

 (*Bava Batra 10a*)

γ One of the heads of the house of Rothchild was once asked how much his great fortune totaled. He reached into a drawer and took out a book that contained careful entries of all his charitable contributions. Patiently, he added the figures and then gave the sum total as his wealth. Believing he had taken the wrong book by mistake, his secretary handed him the general ledger. Rothchild gently said, "Never fear; I know that I own all kinds of mines and properties, business enterprises and render all my securities worthless. Only the figures in my tzedakah book record is what is really mine. This I am worth; this nobody can take away from me." (*Ethics from Sinai*, vol. 3, p.159)

γ Rabbi Hayyim of Tzanz said the following about fraudulent beggars: "The merit of tzedakah is so great that I am happy to give to one hundred beggars even if only one might actually be needy. Some people, however act as if they are exempt from giving tzedakah to one hundred beggars in the event that one might be a fraud." (*Darkai Hayyim*, p. 137)

γ Tzedakah saves a person from death. (*Proverbs 10:2*)



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COMMUNAL TZEDAKAH PROJECT – SESSION III

Tikkun Olam γ Fixing the World

Aims of the Lesson: Students will begin to understand their responsibility to act as a partner with God in fighting poverty. Students will continue to become familiar with the process of interpreting and understanding Jewish texts.

Supplies Needed: blank posterboard for each student, chalkboard, chalk, general art supplies (markers, glitter, colored paper, glue, scissors), Scroll of Values banner (explained below), Tzimtzum in art (overhead included), overhead projector, screen, copies of “Kabalistic View of the World” and “Hands of God” (which are attached) for each student; camera and film.

Amount of Time Needed: 1.5 hours.

Background for the Teacher: Kabbalah, which literally translates into “receiving” or “transmitted teachings,” is the work of the Jewish mystical movement, its teaching, and its adherents. Its perspective on the universe and the presence of God in it is deeply spiritual. The main product of Spanish Kabbalah, which scholars date to the Middle Ages, is called the *Zohar*, meaning Splendor. *Sefer Yetzirah* was written in perhaps the third century CE. It is about the work of creation enacted through the Hebrew letters.

Many Jews today associate the Kabbalah and the *Zohar* with the 16th Century mystics of Tzfat, a city located in northern Israel. The teachings of Jewish mysticism have also had widespread influence over current Jewish practices, such as the Kabbalat Shabbat service.

Directions for the Teacher: Explain to the students that in this lesson they will be studying Jewish texts on tikkun olam. This story (attached) was often told by the famous 16th century mystic Isaac Luria who used the term “tikkun olam,” or repairing the world, to describe human beings’ role in process of the universe’s evolution into a more perfect place.

OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

Introduction: Show Tzimtzum overhead.

Activity I (15 minutes)

Have the students read the attached “Kabalistic View of the World” from *Sefer Yetzirah* out loud while the art is on the overhead. Give them a moment to think. Discuss the art on the screen. What do you see? How does it illustrate the story?

Activity II (20 minutes)

Allow each student to create a cartoon strip based on the story on a poster; consider having the students work in pairs. Post these comic strips around the room. Allow students to go on a “museum walk” and look at each other’s work.

Activity III (10 minutes)

Can the hands of people be like the hands of God? How? Discuss, as a full class group, Write the question at the top of the blackboard. Make a list on the board. Then discuss the following:

- γ Are there any problems you might have with this concept?
- γ Do you agree/disagree with the concept of acting like God acts?
- γ Are there things that God does that you feel humans should not strive to imitate? If so, what?
- γ Are there things that God does that make you angry?

Activity IV (5 minutes)

Distribute the story the *Hands of God* (attached). Give everyone time to read the story to him or herself.

Activity V (25 minutes)

Have three students present the story as a skit, each acting the part of one of the three main characters. Then, have the rest of the class be the congregation who have just learned about the events. Did the rabbi do the right thing by revealing who "God" was to these two men? Divide this part of the class into two groups, one defending the rabbi's actions and one criticizing him. (25 minutes)

Scroll of Values: Put up on bulletin board (or wall or blackboard) a banner (prepared before class) on which is written across the top the following verse from Deuteronomy 5:15. "Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that the Eternal your God redeemed you from there."

Read the verse out loud and explain to students that this statement is one of the reasons why we Jews are supposed to be concerned for those who are in need. This banner is to be the class's "Scroll of Values" Explain to the students that the Jewish values described in the questions they just worked on – along with many other values that will be discussed during this course – all serve to underscore the Jewish value and practice of tzedakah. Have students write out ideas of how they can be partners with God and post them. What do you learn from this verse? What are you going to do about it? Example: God feeds the hungry. I will volunteer at our community soup kitchen one Sunday afternoon. How many can your class come up with? (15 minutes)

“A Kabbalistic View of the Creation of the World” (*Sefer Yetzirah*)

In the beginning there was only God. God was in all time; God was in all space, God's light filled all that was. When (for reasons of God's own), God decided to create the world, there was no place in which to do so because God was everywhere. So, in order to create the universe, God had to pull back. God had to make a space where there was no God, and God had to build a barrier between the light and the space. This act of pulling back was called *tzimtzum*.

In that space, the heavens and the earth and all that is were formed. Yet now, in all of heaven and earth, there was no God. God's ways would have been unknown and unknowable because none of God's divine light was in creation. So creation had to move into phase two. God then breathed a little of this divine light back in – like exhaling after inhaling. This was called *hitpashtut*.

Once the light was inside of creation, it had to have somewhere to go. Special containers called *kaylim* were prepared to hold the light.

But, something went wrong. There was a cosmic accident. We don't understand why or how. Perhaps the light was too bright. Perhaps the *kaylim* were not strong enough. In any case, they broke. The universe was filled with *nitzotzot* (sparks of God's light) and *kliptot* (broken pieces of the containers). This accident was called *sh'virat hakaylim* (the shattering of the vessels).

The world in which we live is filled with *nitzotzot* – the sparks of God's light, and with *kliptot* - useless pieces of broken shells. We are left to figure out which is which. But there's more. Jews have a job to do. We have to gather the sparks of God's light and do *tikkun olam*, repair of the world. The Jew is supposed to be a fixer – God's partner in completing creation.

The Hands of God by Rabbi Larry Kushner.

The following story is told by my teacher, Rabbi Zalman Schacter Shalomi:

A long time ago in the northern part of Israel, in the town of Safed, the richest man in town was sleeping, as usual, through Shabbat morning services. Every now and then he would almost wake up, trying to get comfortable on the hard wooden bench, and then he would sink back into a deep sleep. One morning he awoke just long enough to hear the Torah verses from Leviticus 24:5-6 in which God instructs the children of Israel to place twelve loaves of challah on a table in the ancient wilderness tabernacle.

When services ended, the wealthy man woke up, not realizing that all he had heard was the Torah reading about how God wanted twelve loaves of challah. He thought that God had come to him in his sleep and had asked him personally to bring twelve loaves of challah to God. The rich man felt honored that God should single him out, but he also felt a little foolish. Of all the things God could want from a person, twelve loaves of challah did not seem very important. But who was he to argue with God? He went home and (after Shabbat)* baked the bread.

Upon returning to the synagogue, he decided that the only proper place for his holy gift was alongside the Torah scrolls in the ark. He carefully arranged his loaves and said to God, "Thank you for telling me what You want of me. Pleasing You makes me very happy." Then he left.

No sooner had he gone than the poorest Jew in town, the synagogue janitor, entered the sanctuary. All alone, he spoke to God. "O Lord, I am so poor. My family is starving; we have nothing to eat. Unless You perform a miracle for us, we will surely perish." Then as was his custom, he walked around the room to tidy it up. When he ascended to the bimah and opened the ark, there before him were twelve loaves of challah! "A miracle!" exclaimed the poor man. "I had no idea You worked so quickly! Blessed are You, O God, who answers our prayers." Then he ran home to share the bread with his family.

Minutes later, the rich man returned to the sanctuary, curious to know whether or not God ate the challah. Slowly, he ascended the bimah, opened the ark, and saw that the challot were gone. "Oh, my God!" he shouted, "You really ate my challot! I thought you were teasing. This is wonderful. You can be sure that I'll bring another twelve loaves – with raisins in them too!"

The following week, the rich man brought a dozen loaves to the synagogue and again left them in the ark. Minutes later the poor man entered the synagogue. "God, I don't know how to say this, but I'm out of food again. Seven loaves we ate, four we sold and one we gave to charity. But now, nothing is left and, unless You do another miracle, we surely will starve." He approached the ark and slowly opened its doors. "Another miracle! He cried "Twelve more loaves, and with raisins too! Thank You God. This is wonderful!"

The challah exchange became a weekly ritual that continued for many years. And, like most rituals that become routine, neither man gave it much thought. Then, one day, the rabbi, detained in the sanctuary longer than usual, watched the rich man place the dozen loaves in the ark and the poor man redeem them.

The rabbi called the two men together and told them what they had been doing. "I see," said the rich man sadly, "God doesn't really eat challah."

"I understand," said the poor man, "God hasn't been baking challah for me after all."

They both feared that now God would no longer be present in their lives.

Then the rabbi asked them to look at their hands. "Your hands," he said to the rich man, "are the hands of God giving food to the poor. And your hand," said the rabbi to the poor man, "also are the hands of God, receiving gifts from the rich. So you see, God can still be present in your lives. Continue baking and continue taking. Your hands are the hands of God."

** words added*



Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island

COMMUNAL TZEDAKAH PROJECT – SESSION IV

Aim of the Lesson: The students will understand the importance of community action. They will discuss values that define and sustain our Jewish community. They will also understand how JFRI acts upon those values.

Supplies Needed: Resource sheets (Biblical and Prayer texts), colored poster board, markers, paints, glue, bric-a-brac type items which could enrich the design of their poster, TV/VCR and the film *Witness*, additional background material on some of JFRI's agencies either from the Web or by inviting selected individuals (either professionals or volunteers) to make short presentations.

Amount of Time Needed: 1.5 hours

OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

Activity I Show the barn raising scene from the movie *Witness*. Ask the students: Could this young couple possibly have gotten what they needed (a new barn) by themselves? Was this scene appealing to you? Why? Does this scene give you any ideas we can use for solving the problems in our own community? (10 minutes)

Activity II (25 minutes)

- γ Divide the students into groups of 3-4. Give each group a cut-up list of quotes from the Bible and Prayerbook (see attached) as well as a list of JFRI beneficiary agencies (also attached).
- γ Ask each group to read through the quotes first and make sure everyone agrees with their general meaning. Then, ask them to match agencies according to the quote that describes the functions they do. You can make up new agencies if none of them seem appropriate.
- γ As a class, discuss the group results.
- γ Let each group of students choose one agency from the attached list. Suggest ways they can research that agency. (e.g.. Check their web page, telephone them for published materials, invite staff members or volunteers to come and speak, etc). Ask the students to get a general idea about their agency. (25 minutes)
- γ Concluding Activity: Ask each group to pick one of the Jewish texts from the resource sheet. (They can choose based on their agency, or they can randomly pick a quote). Ask students to develop a campaign poster that integrates information/illustrations about the specific agency and Jewish text. (25 minutes)
- γ Post the posters in the school.
- γ Concluding Activity: Go for a "museum walk" and look at all the posters. (5 minutes)
- γ After lesson V, consider donating the posters to the agencies.

Biblical Texts

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the orphan, plead for the widow. (Isaiah 1:17)

It has been told you, O man, what is good, and what Adonai requires of you: Only do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

Blessed is the person who considers the poor. (Psalms 41:1)

One, who has mercy on the poor, is happy. (Proverbs 14:21)

If there be among you a poor person, one of your relatives* within any of your gates in the land which Adonai gives you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor relative; but you shall open your hand wide to him, and shall surely lend enough for his need, for what he lacks. (Deuteronomy 24:14)

When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the stranger, for the orphan, and for the widow. (Deuteronomy 24:19)

**Relatives usually refers to a Jewish person, whether directly related by blood or not.*

Texts from the Siddur

The *Sh'moneh Esray*, the blessings in the middle of the Amidah, at the center of Jewish daily worship, contains concepts which may be matched to specific beneficiary agencies in our Jewish community:

Blessed is the Eternal, our God, Ruler of the universe, who hallows us with God's Mitzvot, and commands us to engage in the study of Torah.

Eternal our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet to us, and to the House of Israel, Your people, that we and our children may be lovers of Your name and students of Your Torah.

Set these words, which I command you this day, upon your heart. Teach them faithfully to your children.... (From the Sh'ma/V'ahavta).

You favor us with knowledge and teach mortals understanding. May You continue to favor us with knowledge, understanding, and insight.

Help us to return, our Maker, to your Torah.....

Forgive us, our Creator, when we have sinned.....

Heal us, O Eternal, and we shall be healed....grant us a perfect healing from all our wounds. Blessed is the Eternal, the Healer of the sick.

Bless this year, O Eternal our God, and let its produce bring us well-being. Bestow Your blessing on the earth and satisfy us with Your goodness. Blessed is the Eternal, from whom all blessings flow.

We praise you, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe who...gives sight to the blind, who clothes the naked, who releases the bound, who raises the downtrodden,...who strengthens the people Israel with courage,...who restores vigor to the weary.

Keep us far from wicked people and corrupt companions. Strengthen our desire to do good deeds...

Sound the great shofar to herald our freedom, raise high the banner to gather our exiles. Gather us together from the ends of the earth...

Praised are You, Eternal Ruler, who loves justice.

...let all evil very soon disappear...

...And for Jerusalem your city, have mercy and return...Build it now in our days...

Grant peace to the world, with happiness, and blessing, grace, love and mercy...

Texts from the Talmud

It has been taught that a scholar should not reside in a city where the following ten things are not found: A court of justice....a charity fund collected by two and distributed by three, a synagogue, public baths, a convenience (bathroom), a circumciser; a surgeon, a scribe, a ritual slaughterer; and a teacher of young children. The sages said in the name of Rabbi Akiva: Also several kinds of fruit trees, because their fruit gives light to the eyes. (Talmud, Sanhedrin 17b)

These are the obligations without measure, whose reward, too is without measure:

- To honor father and mother;
- To perform acts of love and kindness;
- To attend the house of study daily;
- To welcome the stranger;
- To visit the sick;
- To rejoice with bride and groom;
- To console the bereaved;
- To pray with sincerity;
- To make peace when there is strife.

But the study of Torah is equal to them all, because it leads to them all. (Talmud, Shabbat 127a)

Listing of Beneficiary Agencies of Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island is to perpetuate and enhance a vibrant Jewish community through its development of human and financial resources, planning and allocations, community relations and leadership development to meet the changing needs of Jews locally, nationally, in Israel and worldwide.

The JFRI is committed to enhancing the connection of individuals to their community by enriching the quality of their Jewish experience. In addition to the fundraising efforts to support social service, educational and continuity programs both in Rhode Island and around the world, the JFRI is also dedicated to being a strong voice for the Jewish community.

In representing the Rhode Island Jewish community, the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island carries out the tradition of righteousness and justice, guided by the principle: "Kol Yisrael Areyvim Zeh Bah Zeh" "All Jews are responsible for one another."

Bureau of Jewish Education

The Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island (BJE/RI) is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the transmission of our heritage to the Rhode Island Jewish community. The BJE/RI identifies the changing educational needs of the community and plans for the future in order to meet those needs. The BJE/RI acts as a catalyst for educational excellence. It promotes the professionalism of Jewish educators and provides materials and training to enhance their skills. The BJE/RI works to cement ties to the Jewish community, locally, nationally, and in Israel. Helps teachers to teach in a stimulating and dynamic way by offering them courses, seminars and resources.

Jewish Community Day School

Providence Hebrew Day School

Your School/Synagogue Here

Jewish Community Center

The mission of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island is to strengthen Jewish identity, family life, community and the connection between the local Jewish community and Israel. The JCC provides for the social, cultural, educational, recreational and health related needs of the Jewish community. With commitment to Jewish tradition, the JCC provides a common meeting place for all Jewish individuals and groups, and welcomes the general community to join and participate in its activities.

- Preschool ranging in age from 3 months to 5 years.
- Jewish Summer Camp
- Health and Fitness Center
- After school programs
- Lunch for Senior Citizens

Jewish Family Service

Counseling Services, information and referral

Cranston Kosher Mealsite

Homecare Services to help the very elderly remain at home.

Lifeline remote alert devices which inform family / physicians when the client is in medical distress.

Adoption Options.

Campus Services

Brown Hillel and URI Hillel

Educational, religious, social and cultural programming to Jewish college students.

Jewish Campus Programming at Bryant College, Roger Williams University and Johnson and

Wales University

Birthright Israel Trips

Jewish Eldercare of Rhode Island

Programs and visits for residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Training volunteers to work with the elderly.

Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum

Teaches about the Holocaust and about tolerance.

Camp JORI

Chabad

New American Scholarships for Day Schools and Camps.

Aliyah: Help Jews move to Israel

Jewish Agency for Israel

To strengthen the connections among Jews everywhere who share a common heritage, identity, and one common ground – Israel.

Partnership 2000 (P2K)

Our connection with Afula and the Gilboa region in northeastern Israel. We fund coexistence programs, educational initiatives, and leadership development.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

The JDC sponsors programs of relief, rescue and reconstruction, fulfilling its commitment to the idea that all Jews are responsible for one another and that "To save one person is to save a world" (Mishna, Sanhedrin 4:5)



Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island

COMMUNAL TZEDAKAH PROJECT – SESSION V

What Can You Do to Help Federation? You are the Distribution Committee.

Aim of the Lesson: The students will understand that the central mission of the Jewish Federation is Communal Tzedakah.

Supplies Needed: Representatives from each chosen agency or posters from lesson #4; 5 plastic chips per student; Accounting of how much tzedakah money is available for them to divide between agencies (Suggestion: this can either be the tzedakah money this class has collected throughout the year or a suggested donation of \$10 per family); large paper to make graphs (5); 5 tables to display materials; materials from 5 agencies; mural paper; the student's work from the past 4 lessons.

Amount of Time Needed: 1.5 Hours

Background for the teacher/students: We will be establishing a Tamchui – our community's pool of tzedakah funds. Dating back to medieval times, the Tamchui was established in every community to take care of the needs of the moment. Those who could give would give. Those who were in need would take from it. Even those individuals who did not reside in the community, but who were passing through, were eligible to take from the Tamchui.

So, too, collectors are appointed who fetch bread and foodstuffs from every courtyard as well as fruit products or money, from anyone who donates for the needs of the moment. They distribute the collections among the poor--this is what is called the Tamchui – (Maimonides, Yad, Gifts to the Poor, 9.2)

Activity 1

Have your students stand in a large circle. To do this, you will have to either clear out your classroom (push all desks and chairs to the side) or move to a large open space. Divide the class into 5 groups. Let them look at the posters, pictures and photographs from each lesson. Pass the materials from group to group. Remind each group of the general subject matter of that lesson and ask the members of the group what they remember as being the values discussed in that lesson, i.e. you would ask the first 2 or 3 students what they remember from the first lesson. What values did they learn? Create a Scroll of Values on a large piece of paper or on the board as they recount the different values studied in each unit. (20 minutes)

Or, have each group make a list of the values from each of the 5 lessons.

Activity II

Select five organizations from those on last session's list. Invite these organizations to become full partners in educating students about philanthropy and compassionate giving. Each organization sends a representative to spend a morning with the students and faculty. Each organization makes a presentation. (8 minutes per organization = 40 minutes)

Or, have each group present their poster from lesson #5 to the entire class. They get the chance to "sell" the entire class on their particular organization. (5 minutes per group = 25 minutes)

Activity III Donation Week – every student receives a packet of 5 plastic Tamchui chips – each chip representing a portion of the total funds that has been collected for the Tamchui. The value of each chip is dependent on the amount of tzedakah that is given to the Tamchui. Students contribute chips to the organization of his/her choice. They can give all 5 chips to the same organization or they can divide them up as they see fit. Every student receives 5 chips, equal in value, no matter whether or how much their family contributes to the Tamchui. Made graphs of the totals. Hang them around the room. Students have the opportunity to examine the totals for each organization on the various graphs. Students are also invited to leave a message or drawing on long white mural papers showing their connection to the organization. They also can help to create the graph by coloring in one square. When they put in their chip. (30 minutes)

Activity IV Present and discuss the graphs. (15 minutes)

Make a new “Tzedakah is...” poster. Put “You must open your hand to a neighbor and lend that which will cover his (or her) needs” (Deut. 15:8) What do the students think Tzedakah is now?