

“Make a Difference” Day Educational Materials

Resources for Schools, Communities and
Families

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These materials are sponsored by the Omnicare Charitable Foundation

Additional copies of this document can be downloaded at:

www.areyvut.org



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Introduction

On behalf of *Areyvut*, I am pleased to introduce our first “Make a Difference” Day. We have created this day in connection with our *A-Kindness-A-Day Calendar: 365 Ways to Make a Difference* desk calendar. The *A-Kindness-A-Day Calendar*, which offers 365 suggestions of how to incorporate *tikkun olam* (social justice) into everyday life, is already uniting Jewish communities across the country in an effort to inspire acts of kindness. On “Make a Difference” Day, this effort will be strengthened as thousands of schools, synagogues, families and community organizations dedicate Friday, April 8 as a time to turn the calendar’s suggestions into action. Participants will be extending the activities throughout the weekend (Sunday, April 10th) so that everyone can be included in this event.

On April 8th, the *A-Kindness-A-Day Calendar* encourages people to:

“Try to be totally unselfish today.”

By using the educational material that *Areyvut* has developed, you will be able to bring this powerful suggestion to life. Participating in “Make a Difference” Day will be a meaningful experience because it enables each individual to incorporate *tikkun olam* into the context of his/her busy life. This marks a large step in fulfilling *Areyvut*’s mission to make the helping of others into a lifelong ambition of each individual.

The following exercises and suggestions may prove helpful in participating in “Make a Difference” Day. To successfully address “Make a Difference” Day, you need to decide which exercise(s) will work best with your audience. We suggest that you take some time to preview all material carefully so that you can modify the activities to best meet the needs of your target audience. The exercises and suggestions are labeled to indicate which audience they are intended for; however, you can decide which ones will work best for your listeners.

We hope that these educational resources help schools, communities, families and agencies become better equipped to “Make a Difference” in their lives, family, school and community. In addition, *Areyvut* has created a number of resources that can be adapted for the occasion, many of which can be downloaded at www.areyvut.org. Both the *A-Kindness-A-Day Calendar* and the Ideas for Educators, which can be used to facilitate the extension of the calendar to the classroom, can provide a good starting point for “Make a Difference” Day activities. We encourage you to let us know what you are planning by registering on our website or by e-mailing all information to projects@areyvut.org so that we can share your ideas with others.

I would like to thank *Areyvut* Board Chair Ezra Tuchman for suggesting “Make a Difference” Day and Shira Hammerman, our Special Projects Coordinator, for her help in developing these resources. I would also like to express my gratitude toward all the sponsors, organizations and individuals who gave of their time, sent us educational materials and offered helpful suggestions.

Good luck!

Daniel Rothner
Founder & Director

School

Advertisement and/or Brochure : Create a brochure advertising a program or agency dedicated to “Making a Difference.” You can advertise an already existing program or make up your own one.

Extensions:

- If you are advertising an already existing organization consider sending them a letter explaining your brochure along with the brochure and ask them to consider using it or implementing some ideas from it in their next advertisement.
- If you are not advertising an already existing organization, consider an organization similar to yours. Assuming such an organization exists, send them a letter explaining your brochure along with the brochure and ask them to consider implementing some ideas from it into their programs or advertisement.
- If you are not advertising an already existing organization and there isn't any organization that runs similar programs, consider how you would go about starting your own organization. Be sure to answer the following questions: How would you get people interested in the idea? How would you fund this idea? Why is it important to start this organization? What are the goals of your organization? How do you plan on obtaining your goals?

Art

- Ask students to create posters, pictures or a collage of someone who has made a difference, impact or is a hero.
- Once students complete their artwork, ask them to show their creation to the rest of the group.
- The group needs to determine what is represented in the picture & how that illustrates someone who has made a difference, impact or is a hero.
- You can ask them how one gauges if someone has made a difference or impact or what makes someone a hero?
- Ask students if one can become a hero for doing something once or if it requires an on going effort?

Assembly: Have an assembly that acknowledges all students and staff that excel in “Making a Difference.” Invite parents and politicians and consider honoring someone who lives within a mile of school who has impacted the school, community and/or country.

Clean-up: Clean up a city street, a public park or another area in need of cleaning close to school.

Club: Create a club or elective, if one does not already exist, where students gather to discuss and implement ideas for a better community.

Collage: Have students make a collage of people “Making a Difference” in the world. Discuss the different ways people can have an impact.

Crossword puzzle: Develop a crossword puzzle or word find with “Make a Difference” related words and concepts.

Decorate the Classroom: Decorate the classroom with posters and signs that encourage students to think about things they do that can “Make a Difference.”

Dialogue: Establish dialogue with other Jews, as well as non-Jews, about the various issues that relate to “Making a Difference.”

Essay contest: Have a contest where you award the best essay a prize. Potential essay questions can include: As Jews, why is it important to actively participate in the community? If you could meet anyone who has “Made a Difference” who would meet and why? What person or event has been responsible for the greatest positive impact in the last 10 years? What is the most important source in relation to “Make a Difference” and why? The contest can be judged by a panel of experts and similar contests can be conducted for posters, songs, art projects, etc. You can determine the rules and guidelines for your contest.

Extra Curricular: Develop extra curricular programs that enable students to get more involved in actively “Making a Difference.”

Fundraiser: Hold a school fundraiser to raise money for an organization or individual who is in need of help. You can organize a bake sale, candy sale, run-a-thon, read-a-thon, or numerous other possibilities.

Game show or board game: Develop a game that illustrates the importance of helping others or that teaches the laws and customs.

Interschool Program: Invite a class from another school or within your school to hear a guest speaker, watch a play or participate in a discussion or text study about these values.

Journal: Students can keep a journal of what they have learned, how it has impacted them, etc. Alternatively students can react to a quote, source or story and relate their feelings.

“Make a Difference” from A to Z

Assign students to develop their own list (from A to Z) of things that they can do to “Make a Difference.” They may develop ideas you would not have thought of, and you can utilize the suggestions to continue their involvement.

Nursing Home Visit: Schedule a visit to your local nursing home and have students do a friendly visit and play board game with the residents. You can also have students interview the residents as part of an on going project.

Paper: Write articles for a website, your school or local paper about the various initiatives and programs designed to encourage teens to make an impact.

Play Telephone: At the conclusion of the game, point out to the students how easily information can get distorted and the difference between seeing or hearing something firsthand versus from a secondary source.

Rally: Choose an issue that you feel passionately about and organize a rally to raise awareness about it.

Research: Have students research an organization that deals with actively “Making a Difference” in your community. They can present the agency to the rest of the class and/or put together a poster board describing what the organization does.

Talent Show: Organize a talent show. Find out what everyone’s talent is and then think of ways to encourage them to utilize their talents for the common good. You can have the students do a talent show in a nursing home or hospital and/or invite parents and grandparents to attend such an event.

Yom Iyun: Devote a day or part of a day to special studies and programming around these values and issues.

Additional Activities and Exercises for Schools

The following suggestions have been adapted from Rebecca Sweder, the Director of Universal Service at the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston.

Make it Relevant: Today is a regularly scheduled day at school. The theme is “Make a Difference.” How will you incorporate this into your classes to make the theme meaningful and relevant in each subject?

Let the Students Plan: There are no classes today. Plan an all-day community service program. The theme is “Make a Difference.” What will you do to make it meaningful for everyone?

This exercise has been adapted with permission by the Orthodox Caucus (www.ocweb.org).

It is a Living Torah: Ask students to choose one of the statements below and then look through newspapers, magazines or the Internet to find examples of that statement being acted upon. Ask them to glue the article or the appropriate photograph to a sheet of paper with the quotation on top. At the bottom, students should write a paragraph or two connecting the quotation to the article/photograph. Alternatively, ask the other students in the class to guess which source the picture describes and how it relates to the quote.

- 1) Am I my brother’s keeper? [*Bereshit* 4:9]
- 2) If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself then what am I? If not now, when? [*Pirkei Avot* 1:14]
- 3) It is not your obligation to complete the task (of perfecting the world), but neither are you free to desist (from doing all you can) [*Pirkei Avot* 2:21]
- 4) *Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh B’Zeh*- All Jews are responsible for one another [*Shavuot* 39a]
- 5) Whoever saves one life, it is as if he saved the entire world [*Mishna Sanhedrin* 4:5]

This activity has been adapted from The New Jewish Experiential Book by Ktav.

Bright Dreams, Big World: The goals of this activity are to decide on a group social action project for Israel in a participatory fashion and to give participants a chance to “think out of the box” about one action they might take to improve the world.

- Briefly discuss the concept of *tikkun olam*, or repairing the world (as it says in *Aleinu*).
- Make sure the students understand the basic meaning of this concept before continuing.

- Divide into small groups and within each group the members should select one plan and consider all the necessary steps to bring it about.
- Re-assemble.
- Have one person from each group present their plan.
- The entire group should then choose one plan as a project.

This activity has been adapted from previous Areyvut programs.

Areyvut Chesed Initiative Form

The idea of this exercise is to empower the students to actively “Make a Difference” in making the world a better place (*tikkun olam*). They, as a school, class, an individual or a group will hopefully, implement some of these ideas.

- Have the students work in small groups of not more than 3 people and answer the series of questions that follow.
- Inform the students that these are only basic guidelines and that they can include additional information.
- They will have approximately 15-20 minutes to work on this & then the whole group will get together to hear all the ideas.
- Go around to the groups & help facilitate the students’ development of and completion of this sheet.
- Encourage them to “think out of the box.”
- After all the groups have presented we will decide together which idea to pursue & set a structure for implementing it.

1. Name of idea/program
2. What is the idea/program?
3. Why is this an important idea, event or program?
4. Target population: who is this program for? Adults? Teens? Everyone?
5. When will this program take place?
6. Is there an alternate site in the event of inclement weather?
7. Where will the program take place?
8. Who will run the program?
9. How will you inform people about it?
10. What is the goal of your idea, event or program?

11. How will you evaluate the success of the idea, event or program?

The following ideas were submitted by Edith Horovitz the Mitzvah Project Coordinator at the Martin J. Gottlieb Day School in Jacksonville.

Share a Lunch: For “Share a Lunch,” the attached letter is sent home stapled to a brown paper lunch bag. Students bring in meals in the bags provided, and they are then delivered to a local shelter or food bank.

Dear Parents, Teachers and Students:

Please join with the school on an important “Make a Difference” Day Project. What better way to participate in this day than by sharing with those in our community in need?

On Friday, April 8th, please send the attached lunch bag to school packed according to the menu we have provided. The lunch bags will then be delivered to our local food pantry by our students. Since the lunch bags we deliver will probably be dinner for these children, please include all the items requested. Your child can decorate the lunch bag if they would like to. They can also include a simple note to the child who will receive it. (Sign notes with first names only.)

Sample note: Hi. My name is Joe. I hope you like gushers – they are my favorite snack.

Menu:

- 1 sandwich (peanut butter and jelly, peanut butter, jelly or tuna)
- 1 fruit or vegetable (applesauce, individual fruit cup, veggie and dip)
- 1 individually wrapped cookie/cake
- 1 treat (fruit roll up, gushers, pudding)
- 1 drink (juice or milk box preferred)
- 1 extra item of your choice (individual cereal, crackers...)

Please deliver the lunches to the school lobby when you arrive at school on Friday morning. With so many people in need, this is a great way to involve your child in making a difference! Thank you in advance for your support.

Make a Lunch: For “Make a Lunch” all food is supplied by the teacher and/or school. Alternatively, students can be assigned to bring in specific items.

Students make and package sandwiches and stuff the bags with snacks and a drink. The meals are delivered by the students to selected recipients.

Both “Share a Lunch” and “Make a Lunch” can easily incorporate Jewish sources relating to feeding the hungry.

The following lesson was developed by K’vod Wieder, the National Director of the B’nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy Program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

Meetings with the Evil Inclination

- **For classroom or outdoor setting**
- **Grades 7-12**

I. Introduction

As a group, examine the instruction – “Try to be completely unselfish today.”

1. What does being selfish look like? What does being unselfish look like?
2. Why would we want to try to be completely unselfish?
3. Is it bad to be selfish? If so, why? Are there any instances where it is good to be selfish?

II. Yetzer HaTov and Yetzer HaRa

A. Introduce concepts:

1. Rooted in the story of the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Knowledge and Tree of Life.
2. Two drives within us:
 - a. *Yetzer HaTov* – the drive to honor the unity of life and work toward a society built on that awareness.
 - b. *Yetzer HaRa* – the drive to focus on the self – urges towards food, sex, and power – making the self bigger.
3. Human Beings hold both – Adam can be read as A (Aleph) + Dam (blood) – the Infinite and the animal within us.

Sources:

The evil inclination is likened at first to the thread of a spider’s web, and in the end becomes as powerful as a boat’s rope – Sukkah 52a

Said Rav: “The evil inclination first appears to you like a distant wayfarer. Then he becomes as a guest in your home. And before you realize it, he becomes your master.” – Sukkah 52b

Day by day does the evil inclination seek to overcome a person. If it cannot overcome him in ten years, it seeks then to overcome him in twenty years.

Even if there is only one opportunity in eighty years, it seizes it. – Midrash Tanchuma, B'shalach 28a

B. Activity:

1. Number the Students 1 and 2. The “1s” represent the *Yetzer HaTov* and the “2s” – the *Yetzer Hara*.
2. Students need to pair up with someone of the opposite number
3. Each pair represents a person that has to make one of the following decisions:
 - a. Whether to help a friend with an important project or go hang out at an amusement park or rock concert.
 - b. In a conflict with a friend or family member, whether to do something the way you know it should be done, or to seriously consider their perspective and request.
 - c. Any other situations you come up with.
4. Each pair should make up a concrete scenario with details.
5. Each pair should make up a conversation where the *Yetzer HaTov* and *HaRa* argue their respective points.
6. A third of the pairs should end the argument with the *Yetzer HaTov* winning (being completely unselfish). A third of the pairs should end with the *Yetzer HaRa* winning. And a third should end with a resolution where both get what they want.
 - a. Each pair (or a number of pairs) plays out their scenario before the group.
 - b. Large group discussion – re-evaluating selfishness and unselfishness.
 - c.

C. Follow-up Activity

1. Examine how tackle the *Yetzer Hara* by considering different perspectives.
2. Each student chooses a perspective and picks a scenario from his/her own life where it is hard to be unselfish.
3. They are asked to write the scenario on paper and describe how the perspective they chose plays out in between the *Yetzer HaTov* and *Yetzer HaRa* ending in a triumph of the *Yetzer HaTov* or an agreement where both get what they want.

Source:

Says the Holy Blessed One: “I have created the yetzer ha-ra and I have also created Torah as it’s antidote.” – Kiddushin 30b

The following ideas were suggested by Sarah Kay, Director of Community Programs at the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan.

Collections and Drives

Collect school supplies for disadvantaged students or new immigrants groups.
Participate in food and clothing drives during the winter or holiday season.
Donate gently used or new toys and books to a nearby homeless shelter that serves children.
Collect leftover restaurant/cafeteria food and deliver it to a local homeless shelter or food pantry.
Collect blankets and clothing for the homeless.

Family Projects

Make a *tzedakah* box with your child; decorate a coffee can with paper, feathers and other craft supplies. Cut a slit in the plastic lid and fill the box with pennies and change. When the jar is full, take the change to a bank or Coinstar machine and donate the money to your favorite charity.
Make handmade cards and deliver them to a nursing homes or hospital.

Get Others Involved

Get a local civic/corporate group to sponsor a local community improvement project or program.

Volunteer Opportunities

Record books on tapes for the blind and visually impaired or read books to them.
Organize a community clean-up day.
Children can practice their reading by reading to senior citizens at a drop-in or residential care facility.
Volunteer at an animal shelter.
Visit residents at an assisted living facility, children's group home or hospice.
Offer to provide yard maintenance/housecleaning services for elderly or disabled neighbors.
Take pets to visit nursing home residents or terminally ill children.
Match children up with "adopted" grandparents they can spend time with on a weekly or monthly basis.

Community

Advocacy: Develop a program that encourages and trains students to advocate on behalf of others.

Collect: Make sure that collecting *tzedakah* is part and parcel of the community culture by collecting daily during *davening* or weekly before *Shabbat*. Alternatively, you could establish a *tzedakah* collection and form a committee to organize such a group.

Condolence Cards: Make sure that there is a system in place where condolence cards are sent to all families who have lost loved ones in the community as well as to Israeli families who have lost relatives from terrorist attacks.

Current Events: Clip articles that show how people influence society and people can make an impact. These articles can be placed on a bulletin board and should be updated regularly.

Drives: Hold a community-wide food drive, clothes drive, book drive, shoe drive or coat drive to collect objects for those who are lacking vital necessities.

E-mail or Call the President: Voice your thoughts on issues that concern you and encourage President Bush to “Make a Difference” in those areas. You can e-mail President Bush at president@whitehouse.gov or call him at 202-456-1111.

Family Learning: Sponsor a family learning or parent-child program where you learn about the responsibility helping out those in need.

Fact: Post a fact or source daily in your lobby encouraging people to help others and “Make a Difference.”

Fundraise: Hold a community-wide fundraiser on behalf of an organization or individual who is in need of help.

Guest Speaker: Invite a speaker who has developed and implemented an idea or program that has “Made a Difference.”

Hachnasat Orchim: Create new friendships within your community by organizing a program where community members share a *Shabbat* meal with other members whom they hardly know.

Lobby: Meet with local and national government officials on behalf of important domestic issues, Israel and the situation in Darfur.

Network: Form a network of colleagues and get together to share ideas and common issues. Work together to see how you can each other “Make a Difference.”

Organizations: Inform the community of several key local, national and Israel related agencies that may be of interest. Learn about the myriad of Israel based organizations, adopt one, work together with them and ask them how you can help them achieve their goals.

Parade: Plan a community wide parade to honor those involved in regularly “Make a Difference” in the community.

Quick Response: Develop a system to respond to situations that require an immediate response in order to “Make a Difference.”

Save A Life: Organize a blood drive or bone marrow screening to help those for whom these are life-saving measures.

Scenarios: Develop scenarios that address various aspects of “Making a Difference” and have families act out the scenarios and discuss them.

Unite: Work with other local organizations and synagogues to plan an event that engages participants from across the Jewish spectrum. This can be a speaker, a day of learning or a community service project.

Volunteer: Volunteer at a local agency.

Welcome Wagon: Make new community members feel at home by delivering gift baskets and inviting them to *Shabbat* meals.

Family

Bikkur Cholim: Visit someone who is sick or can use a friendly visit.

Buy Israeli Products: Shop for Israeli products at the local supermarket or through the various websites selling Israeli products.

Call Friends and Family: Call just to talk and to tell them you miss them and are thinking about them.

Celebrations: Utilize anniversaries, birthdays, *Bnai Mitzvahs* or any other family celebration to do *mitzvah* projects.

Dinner: Eat dinner together.

Hachnasat Orchim: Invite over friends and family.

Make a Family *Tzedakah* Fund: Involve your entire family in the process of choosing charities to support.

Mission Statement: Develop a Mission Statement outlining the role *tikkun olam* plays in your family.

Study: Study a Jewish text together that relates to the importance of “Make a Difference” and discuss how the source relates to your family.

Volunteer: Decide on an organization that interests your entire family and spend some time volunteering together.

All

Dedicate: Dedicate ten minutes a today to do something relating to “Make a Difference.” Choose any idea and just do it. Do not delay because you are not sure what project to do.

Interview: Interview someone who has made an impact. Find out what the person did, what influenced him/her to do what s/he did, etc.

Letters to Israeli Soldiers: Express your appreciation or send letters of encouragement to Israeli soldiers by writing your name, address and message and sending it by e-mail as an attachment to LettertoSoldier@jazo.org.il or by forwarding them to: The Jewish Agency for Israel, 633 Third Avenue, 21st Floor, New York, NY, 10017.

Maot Chitim: Participate in *Maot Chitim* by donating money, helping to pack and deliver the packages.

Solidarity with Israel: Show solidarity with Israel by wearing a blue ribbon, pin or displaying an Israeli flag.

Tzedakah: Collect *tzedakah* for an organization that deals with teaching the Jewish community about the importance of “Making a Difference.”

Write letters: Write letters to thank government officials, people and corporations you know who actively make an effort to help others and “Make a Difference.”