



Jewish Educational Wisdom,
Experience & Leadership

Creating Meaningful Jewish Social Justice Experiences for Your Students

By Rabbi Erin Hirsh & Lori Rubin

Ask for examples of Tikkun Olam projects teachers have tried in their classrooms.

- Discuss challenges of doing this work in a classroom environment
- Discuss reasons to pursue the work in the classroom despite challenges:
 - Social Justice as a Jewish Value
 - Pride students feel upon accomplishment
 - Intrinsically experiential activity
 - Participants' ideas?

Introduce three primary forms of Tikkun Olam:

- Avodah / direct service (hands on helping)
- Tzedakah / indirect service (fundraising, collections, making items to be donated)
- Tzedek / advocacy (petitions, letter-writing, demonstrations, phone calls)

Reinforce through a categorizing activity:

- Write all three terms on the board in a row.

- Participants take turns reading examples of social action activities from individual slips of paper (examples follow this outline) and posting each example under what they think is the right category.
- Have whole group discuss how any slips were categorized if it could be in more than one or if it appears questionable.

Go through steps of planning a Tikkun Olam/service learning activity

- Emphasize the need for explicit Jewish learning to frame it as a Jewish activity. Invite group to suggest a social justice topic they might like to focus on with their students and then immediately go to the computer (or use an iPhone or iPad) and search for related Jewish texts at the website www.on1foot.org.
- Talk through logistics: getting approval from Education Director, contacting an organizations to ascertain if they have actual need of whatever you are thinking of having your class do/make/collect, getting by-in from parents, considering any up-front expenses or how to get key supplies, coordinating transportation, making sure you have adequate support on hand day of project implementation.
- Emphasize the imperative of debriefing and processing both what the students accomplished and learned.

Share image from www.justaction.org of 3 overlapping circles of personal, Jewish and societal reflections. Discuss its meaning and application to what participants would do with their students after the activity.

Brainstorm some issue that participants and their students might be interested in trying to address and come up with activities that address that issue in terms of direct service, indirect service, and advocacy.

Hand out Take-Home Packet with greater details about all topics highlighted in workshop (culled from www.justaction.org)

Slips to Hand Out to Participants for Categorizing Activity

Visiting a nursing home

Boxing and delivering food to the needy

Decorating vases and making tissue paper flowers for area assisted living facilities

Making handmade dog toys and dog treats for area animal shelters

Writing letters to soldiers to brighten their day

Assembling birthday packages for kids in hospitals

Collecting canned food for a food drive

Raising money for American Cancer Society through a bake sale

Meeting with local congress people to advocate for funding for homeless people

Running a car wash to benefit Wylie's Day Foundation

Assembling and decorating breakfast bags for Aid for Friends

Holding a lemonade stand for Alex's Lemonade Foundation

Helping at a special Olympics event

Making a meal for some one who has returned home from the hospital

Walking in the Race for the Cure