Acknowledgments

Jewish tradition understands the act of giving tzedakah as an expression of deep appreciation for one’s wealth and resources and an acknowledgment that one cannot claim full ownership of that wealth. It is in that spirit that I want to recognize that this curriculum represents an extraordinary creative collaboration among many individuals and institutions and express gratitude for the contributions they made to bring this curriculum to fruition.

The incredible staff at American Jewish World Service (AJWS), including Sasha Feldstein, Julie Gersten, Stephanie Ives, Rabbi Lauren Kurland, Sarah Mulhern and Rachel Weber, helped envision this resource, provided critical editorial feedback and worked tirelessly to promote Where Do You Give? in the American Jewish community.

Congregation Beth Elohim and Hannah Senesh Community Day School, two schools in Brooklyn, New York, piloted Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum. Special thanks to Ora Fruchter and Hope Levav, the educators who taught the curriculum and provided invaluable feedback and suggestions for improvement; Lena Eson and Jessica Lissy, the administrators who welcomed the curriculum and AJWS staff into their schools; and the seventh grade students at both schools who took the curriculum for its first ride.

Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum was made possible in part by funds granted by the Jim Joseph Foundation. The statements made and views expressed, however, are solely the responsibility of American Jewish World Service.

Questions or comments about this curriculum can be directed to American Jewish World Service at education@ajws.org.
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For Educators: How to Use
Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum

This resource will help you successfully interact with Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum and implement it in your context. It explains the pedagogical assumptions behind the curriculum and addresses practical questions related to implementing it.

Questions or comments about the curriculum can be directed to American Jewish World Service at education@ajws.org.

WHAT IS WHERE DO YOU GIVE?
Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum is part of Where Do You Give?, an initiative of American Jewish World Service (AJWS) designed to reimagine tzedakah for the 21st century. Through a national design competition, online interactive media and educational resources, Where Do You Give? engages the Jewish community in critical questions about where we give, to whom and why. Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum, a critical component of this initiative, provides middle school students the tools to think about giving tzedakah in a thoughtful, responsible and impactful way while inspiring them to make life-long commitments to intentional philanthropic giving.

WHY FOCUS ON TZEDAKAH?
Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum is particularly focused on the act of tzedakah—giving financial resources—as a means of pursuing justice. Certainly there are many other ways of engaging in and educating about tikkun olam, including service-learning and political advocacy, and AJWS engages in and is committed to those forms of tikkun olam as well. However, because AJWS believes that donating money is a crucial element of tikkun olam and one that is often de-emphasized in educational contexts, we have focused this curriculum on tzedakah exclusively. We encourage educators to use it as one component of their broader approach to teaching tikkun olam and social justice.

The primary goal of Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum is to educate students to be more thoughtful and intentional tzedakah-givers. Secondarily, the curriculum seeks to expose students to the global dimensions of poverty and injustice, challenging them to consider whether and how their giving could address people outside of their local and Jewish communities. At no point does the curriculum suggest to students to donate to American Jewish World Service, nor is this an expectation of schools that use the curriculum.

ARC OF THE CURRICULUM
Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum guides students through an exploration of key questions related to tzedakah. It begins by defining tzedakah and asking students to reflect on why they give tzedakah. It continues with an exploration of students’ privilege relative to the extreme poverty and injustice that exists in the world and suggests that tzedakah is a tool for addressing this injustice. The curriculum then guides students through an analysis of where to give tzedakah, engaging students in discussions and debates about prioritizing different issues, populations and tzedakah strategies. Next the curriculum asks students to consider how much tzedakah to give. Finally, the curriculum culminates with a project in which students design tzedakah boxes that reflect and demonstrate their learning from the unit.
PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum is a fresh and innovative approach to tzedakah education. The curriculum is unique in that it:

- Empowers students to articulate their own tzedakah priorities and examine their giving decisions in relation to their own money.
- Situates tzedakah in the context of current social justice issues.
- Integrates Jewish text, history, culture and values as authentic and relevant sources of wisdom about tzedakah.
- Incorporates technology and social media, connecting students to Where Do You Give?’s national conversation about giving.
- Fosters “productive discomfort,” a state in which students experience the dissonance and tension that provokes change and growth.

FACILITATING PRODUCTIVE DISCOMFORT

Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum challenges students to confront and discuss difficult and sometimes uncomfortable questions about their privilege and the existence of extreme poverty and injustice in the world. It also asks them to make tough choices about allocating resources and defend their choices by articulating their deeply held values. Its intention is to elicit “productive discomfort”—a state in which students are challenged to the point of being uncomfortable enough that they must interrogate their assumptions and engage in productive intellectual and personal growth. Because “productive discomfort” is uncomfortable for students, educators should be prepared for students to respond in different ways—from vigorously debating to making jokes or sarcastic comments in order to diffuse tension or discomfort. It may be helpful for educators to acknowledge to students, from the outset and throughout the curriculum, that this type of learning can be challenging. Educators should also be well attuned to students’ emotional states so that they can push students when appropriate and pull back when necessary.

AGE OF STUDENTS

The curriculum was designed for middle school students for several reasons. First, middle school students are in a critical period of identity formation when interrogating the values behind their tzedakah-giving can have long-term effects on their giving as adults. Second, in the context of becoming bnai mitzvah, middle school students are likely to receive money and, often for the first time, are able to make decisions about how much and where to give. Third, in many Jewish educational contexts, the middle school curriculum already focuses on tzedakah; this curriculum can make a valuable contribution to their studies by introducing important themes and questions.

With minor adaptations, however, the curriculum can be easily facilitated for students in high school as well as for adults. Educators are strongly encouraged to use the curriculum as a starting point and adapt it to the needs of their students and educational context.

NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum consists of eight 45-minute sessions; however, it can easily be shortened or expanded to accommodate a range of educational contexts. The lesson plans for each session highlight both key activities—marked with a coin icon—as well as optional extension activities—marked with a plus icon and provided at the end of the lesson plan. Educators may also choose to excerpt certain sessions, activities or texts to facilitate as one-off programs, rather than teaching the curriculum straight through. Again, educators are encouraged to adapt the curriculum to the time they have allotted and the context in which they teach.
CURRICULAR COMPONENTS
Each session of the curriculum includes the following components:

- Suggested time to allocate
- Lesson objective and outcomes
- Materials list
- Preparation needed
- Step-by-step lesson plan with options and suggested adaptations
- Indication of key/essential activities and extension activities
- Reproducible handouts

Please note that in addition to appearing with the lesson plans, the handouts have also been collected in a separate file which can be printed as a booklet to distribute to students.

In addition to the lesson plans for each session, the curriculum also includes the following supplementary resources:

- **Letter for Families**
  This sample letter introduces parents and families to *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*.

- **Tzedakah Taking Root: A Guide to Building a Culture of Tzedakah**
  This resource assists educators in embedding the values of thoughtful and intentional tzedakah in their communities.

- **The Year in Giving: Connecting Tzedakah to the Cycle of the Jewish Holidays**
  This resource helps educators integrate tzedakah into students’ learning and practice of the Jewish holidays.

- **Making it Real: Guiding Students through a Tzedakah Allocations Process**
  This resource, produced in partnership with the Jewish Teen Funders Network, helps educators to support class efforts to distribute money that they have raised for tzedakah. This resource can be used alongside the curriculum, allowing students to concretize their learning by making real decisions to allocate real money. Throughout the curriculum, opportunities to incorporate the stages of the Tzedakah Allocations Process (TAP) are marked with the TAP icon.

TZEDAKAH BOX DESIGN COMPETITION
As indicated above, *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum* is part of a broader initiative of American Jewish World Service in 2012 that included a national design competition to design a tzedakah box that reflects the complexities of 21st-century giving. The final session of the curriculum invites students to participate in a similar process by which they demonstrate their learning about tzedakah through the creation of a tzedakah box. In order to best prepare students for this final assessment, the project is introduced in the first session of the curriculum. In addition, the conclusion of each session offers students an opportunity to reflect on how their learning in that session might influence their tzedakah box designs. Educators might also consider inviting students to keep track of their design ideas in an artist’s journal.

WHEREDOYOU GIVE.ORG
*Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum* connects students to *Where Do You Give?*’s national conversation about where we give, to whom and why by providing a variety of opportunities to interact with the *Where Do You Give?* website (www.wheredoyougive.org). These opportunities are noted in the lesson plan for each session. Engaging students in the website exposes them to others’ ideas about tzedakah and helps them understand that their learning is part of a broader movement. Use of the
website also integrates the curriculum into the ways in which students learn and communicate—through the internet and social media—making the curriculum feel relevant to students and also demonstrating for them how their communication tools can be used for positive social change. Finally, the website also provides a platform for national exposure for schools that are implementing *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*.

**FAMILIES AND HOMEWORK**

Tzedakah education is at its strongest when it is reinforced at home. *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum* therefore includes opportunities for students and families to reflect on the concepts and questions that are raised in the curriculum and to discuss their own tzedakah practices. In order to support family learning, most homework assignments are intended to be completed by students and their families together. The curriculum also includes a sample letter that can be copied onto school letterhead (see page 8 and http://wheredoyougive.org/images/uploads/resources/Sampleletter.doc), introducing families to the curriculum and setting up expectations for their involvement. While homework can support students’ learning and provide opportunities for family involvement, the curriculum can also be taught successfully without assigning any homework or with making the homework optional. Educators should consider the context in which the curriculum is being taught and make their own decisions about whether or not to assign homework.
Dear Family,

Your child will soon begin a unit on tzedakah (charitable giving) using *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*. This curriculum is part of *Where Do You Give? Reimagining Tzedakah for the 21st Century*, an initiative of American Jewish World Service (AJWS) that features a national design competition, online interactive media and educational resources that engage the Jewish community in critical questions about where we give, to whom and why. To learn more about *Where Do You Give?*, visit its website at www.wheredoyougive.org.

We are extremely excited to be using *Where Do You Give?* as we believe that it represents the cutting-edge in tzedakah education. This curriculum will provide your adolescents tools to think about giving tzedakah in a thoughtful, responsible and impactful way while inspiring them to make life-long commitments to intentional giving.

While much of students’ learning will take place in the classroom through interactive games and debates, short videos, Jewish text study and individual reflection, we cannot emphasize enough the role that you as parents play in strengthening and reinforcing their learning, especially as the questions raised by the curriculum are intertwined with issues of identity, values and responsibility. To that end, over the course of the unit, we will provide many at-home opportunities for you and your child to reflect on the concepts and questions that are raised in school and to discuss your own tzedakah practices as a family.

Please contact us with any questions about *Where Do You Give?* or with suggestions regarding how we can support your family in meaningful conversation about tzedakah. We look forward to partnering with you to nurture your children’s proclivity to give tzedakah with both generosity and intention.

Sincerely,
Session 1: What is Tzedakah?

**AGE:** Middle School

**TIME:** 45 minutes

**OBJECTIVE**
This session introduces to students the concept of tzedakah as well as to *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*.

**INTRODUCTION**
In this first session of *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*, students explore the fundamental characteristics of tzedakah. Through classical Jewish texts, an interactive vocabulary activity and student interviews, students understand tzedakah as a core Jewish obligation that increases justice and equality in the world. Students also begin to articulate their own reasons for giving tzedakah. This session also begins to connect students to *Where Do You Give?’s* national conversation about tzedakah by encouraging them to post their tzedakah interviews on *Where Do You Give?’s* website.

*Note: This material can also be taught as two sessions, one covering the introductory concepts and tzedakah definitions, and the second focusing on tzedakah interviews.*

**OUTCOMES**
- Students will be able to define tzedakah and will identify it with justice, as opposed to charity.
- Students will articulate tzedakah as a mitzvah/obligation and a core Jewish practice.
- Students will begin to articulate reasons—both personal and traditional—to give tzedakah.

**MATERIALS**
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Computer with internet connection and projector
- “How Great Is Tzedakah?” page (provided below; optional: 1 per student)
- “Tzedakah Definitions” page (provided below; 1 per student)
- “Tzedakah Interview – Classmates” page (provided below; 1 per student)
- “Tzedakah Interview – Adults” page (provided below; 1 per student)
- Video recording device (optional)

**PREPARATION**
- Copy the texts from the “How Great Is Tzedakah?” page onto chart paper or a whiteboard before class begins.
- Create three posters listing words and definitions (see section 2b below).
- Create “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster (see section 3c below).
- Make sure that the Rabbi Manis Friedman video is ready to play at [http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/](http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/).
- Visit [www.wheredoyougive.org](http://www.wheredoyougive.org) in order to familiarize yourself with the site.

**TAP**

If your class is conducting a Tzedakah Allocations Process (TAP) alongside your study of the curriculum, connect this session to the “Learning about Tzedakah and Philanthropy” stage of the TAP. See *Making it Real: Guiding Students through a Tzedakah Allocations Process* for more guidance on facilitating a TAP.
LESSON PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION (15 MINUTES)

   a. Invite one or two students to read aloud the two texts from the “How Great Is Tzedakah?” page written on the chart paper or board. Invite students to reflect on any of the following questions:

   i. Why do you think tzedakah is considered as important as all of the other mitzvot combined?
   ii. What do you think it means to be very careful fulfilling the mitzvah of tzedakah? What are some examples of “careful” tzedakah and “careless” tzedakah?
   iii. When have you or your family been careful about giving tzedakah?

   Option: Instead of writing the texts on the board or posting them in the classroom, give each student a copy of the “How Great Is Tzedakah?” page and ask them to write their answers to the questions. Then conduct a full group discussion using their responses.

   Note: If your students need background on the Jewish texts, please use the following descriptions:
   - Babylonian Talmud: Compiled around 500CE, the Babylonian Talmud is a record of rabbinic discussions about Jewish law.
   - Rambam: Also known as Maimonides, Rambam lived in the 12th century in Spain, Israel and Egypt. He wrote books of Jewish law and philosophy.

   b. Explain to students that they are beginning a unit about tzedakah. You may want to use the following language to introduce the unit: “As we’ve just discussed, tzedakah is clearly very important to our tradition and we therefore must give it thoughtfully and carefully. Over the next few weeks we will be learning about tzedakah together. Our studies will help us understand why tzedakah is so important and also how we can do it well.”

   c. Explain to students that this unit is part of the broader Where Do You Give? project. Consider using the following language: “The tzedakah unit we will be doing over the next several weeks is also part of a national program called Where Do You Give?, which challenges the American Jewish community—both students and adults—to think critically about where we give, to whom we give and why. In the winter of 2012, Where Do You Give? ran a national competition for artists to design a tzedakah box for the 21st century. During this unit, we will have a chance to see some of the winning designs and think about what they say about tzedakah. At the end of the unit, we will design our own tzedakah boxes that express what we think and have learned about tzedakah.”

   d. Briefly show your students the Where Do You Give? website. You may want to use the following language: “Where Do You Give? also has a website, which includes a blog about tzedakah, interactive quizzes and opportunities to discuss tzedakah with other people around the world. Part of our tzedakah unit will include us visiting and posting on the website.”

   e. Transition to the poster activity. You may want to use the following language: “Today, as we begin our tzedakah unit, we’ll learn about what tzedakah is and explore our own reasons for giving.”
2. TZEDAKAH DEFINITION POSTERS (25 MINUTES)¹

**KEY ACTIVITY**

a. Explain to students that defining the word tzedakah, as well as other words related to tzedakah, can help us understand its purpose. Tell students they will create posters in order to help them define tzedakah.

b. Divide students into three groups and give each group a poster with a word and definition written at the top. Words and definitions are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tzedakah / צדקה</th>
<th>The obligation or commandment to give righteously, associated with justice (צדק)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>A voluntary action or donation to help those in need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice / צדק</td>
<td>The quality of being fair, right or moral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruct each group to spend 15 minutes creating an illustration on their poster that represents the word and definition at the top. Acknowledge that some of the words are abstract concepts and students may want to illustrate an example of the word, rather than try to represent the concept itself.

**Note:** Your students may be curious as to why there is no Hebrew world on the ‘Charity’ poster. This is an opportunity to explain to them that there really is no corresponding Hebrew word, and to ask them to suggest reasons why that might be.

c. Invite each group to spend one minute sharing and explaining its poster to the class. After all groups have presented, conduct a discussion using the following questions:

i. How are tzedakah and charity similar? How are they different?

ii. Why does it matter that tzedakah is an obligation or commandment, rather than a voluntary action? What does that mean for us and for our community?

iii. The word tzedakah and the word tzedek are closely related. If tzedakah is about justice or fairness, then do all causes or issues that we support by giving money qualify as tzedakah? Why or why not?

The conversation should draw out the idea that tzedakah is an obligation that is about increasing justice in the world and making things right or fair. As such, not all forms of giving fall under this definition of tzedakah. You may want to illustrate this when students discuss the final question above by giving examples of different causes (e.g., endangered animals, medical research, hunger, etc.) and asking whether giving money to organizations that work on those issues helps to increase justice in the world.

**Note:** If students are struggling to understand the difference between tzedakah and charity, you may want to explain that often a single act could be either tzedakah or charity depending on the intention and attitude of the person giving. For example, charity is when I give a homeless person a dollar because I think, “I feel so sorry for that person and I want to do something to help her.” This is charity because I am motivated by my feelings, and therefore choosing to give in that moment. Tzedakah is when I give a homeless person a dollar because I think, “It’s not right that I have so much more money than she does. I have an obligation to use the money I have to help her.” This is tzedakah because I’m motivated by a sense of justice and fairness and I give from a sense of obligation.

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¹ This activity is adapted from Babaganewz.com with permission.
Note: This is also a good time to clarify that, in the context of this curriculum, tzedakah means giving money. Volunteering time is also a wonderful and important mitzvah, known as gemilut chasadim or chesed, but this unit focuses on financial tzedakah.

d. Post the posters on the wall of the classroom so that you can refer back to the definitions throughout the unit. You may also want to distribute the “Tzedakah Definitions” page to each student to serve as a reference.

3. CONTRUCTION AND HOMEWORK (5 MINUTES)

a. Explain that students will watch a short video that summarizes some of the themes of this session. Ask students to think about the following question as they watch the video: “With which person in the video did you agree the most? Why?” After the video concludes, ask three students to share their responses to the question above.

Note: The video is three minutes long and includes “person on the street” reflections on giving as well as an explanation of tzedakah by Rabbi Manis Friedman. Rabbi Friedman is a Chabad Lubavitch author and lecturer.

b. Remind students that this session began their exploration of tzedakah, specifically what it means and why it’s important—both according to classical Jewish sources and according to the students themselves.

c. Remind students that at the end of the unit they will create a tzedakah box that expresses what they think and have learned about tzedakah. Ask them what they learned about tzedakah today that might influence how they design their tzedakah box. Write responses on the “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster. Post this poster on the wall of the classroom, as you will be adding to it at the end of each session.

d. Explain that the homework will continue the exploration of why people give tzedakah. Explain the homework assignment as follows:

i. Option 1 (If your class does not do the extension activity provided below): Students will learn about how their classmates practice tzedakah by interviewing one another, using the “Tzedakah Interview – Classmates” sheet. Students are encouraged to record the interviews on video and upload them at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/. Or, students can type up the results of their interview and post them in written form at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/tell-us-where-you-give.

ii. Option 2 (If your class does the extension activity): Students will interview an adult about why he or she gives tzedakah, using the “Tzedakah Interview – Adults” sheet. Students are encouraged to record the interviews on video and upload them at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/. Or, students can type up the results of their interview and post them in written form at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/tell-us-where-you-give.
EXTENSION ACTIVITY: TZEDAKAH INTERVIEWS (15 MINUTES)

1. Put students in pairs and explain that now that they have a better understanding of what tzedakah is, they will learn about how their classmates practice tzedakah by interviewing one another. Students should use the "Tzedakah Interview – Classmates" page to conduct their interviews. Instruct students to decide within their pairs who will be the first interviewer and who will go second. The first interviewer will conduct the interview for five minutes and then students will switch roles. Tell students that if they finish all of the questions before five minutes are up, they can ask their partners anything else they want to know about their tzedakah practices. Be sure to keep time and give one minute warnings.

   Note: If you have access to the technology and it is appropriate for your students, please consider making video recordings of these interviews and posting them on Where Do You Give?’s website at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/. Or, students can type up the results of their interview and post them in written form at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/tell-us-where-you-give.

2. Conclude this activity by telling students that tzedakah is a very personal practice that people do in different ways and for different reasons. Explain that one of the goals of this unit on tzedakah is to help students and their families ask sometimes difficult but always important questions about tzedakah so that their tzedakah practice is more thoughtful, impactful and meaningful.

3. Option: You can further extend this activity by having students create “person on the street” tzedakah videos like Rabbi Manis Friedman’s by interviewing their classmates, teachers, family members or other students in the school. If you do this, please consider sharing the videos by posting them on Where Do You Give?’s website at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/.
1. Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra 9a

Rabbi Assi said: Tzedakah is equivalent to all the other mitzvot combined.

2. Rambam, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 10:1

We are obligated to be more careful in fulfilling the mitzvah of tzedakah than any other mitzvah, because tzedakah is the sign of the righteous person (tzaddik), the descendant of Abraham, our ancestor.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. List at least five mitzvot, not including tzedakah.

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why do you think tzedakah is considered as important as “all of the other mitzvot combined”?

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

3. What do you think it means to be very “careful” in fulfilling the mitzvah of tzedakah? What are some examples of careful tzedakah and careless tzedakah?

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

4. When have you or your family been careful about giving tzedakah?

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tzedakah / צדקה</th>
<th>The obligation or commandment to give righteously, associated with justice צדק</th>
<th>Charity</th>
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<td>The quality of being fair, right or moral</td>
<td>Justice / צדק</td>
<td>The quality of being fair, right or moral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TZEDAKAH INTERVIEW — CLASSMATES

Please interview a classmate about tzedakah using the form below.

If you and your interviewee would like, you may make a video recording of your interview and upload it at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/. Or, you can type up the results of your interview and post them in written form at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/tell-us-where-you-give.

Your name: ________________________________________________________________________________

Name of the interviewee: _____________________________________________________________________

Date of the interview: ________________________________________________________________________

1. Please tell me about one place where you or your family gave tzedakah in the last year. Why did you choose this organization or cause?
   __________________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why do you give tzedakah?
   __________________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________________

3. How do you feel when you give tzedakah?
   __________________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________________

4. When you give money, does it feel more like charity or tzedakah? Why?
   __________________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________________

If you have time, and there’s anything else you want to know about your partner’s tzedakah practice, you may ask it now.
TZEDAKAH INTERVIEW — ADULTS

Please interview an adult about tzedakah using the form below.

If you and your interviewee would like, you may make a video recording of your interview and upload it at http://wheredoyoubgve.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/. Or, you can type up the results of your interview and post them in written form at http://wheredoyoubgve.org/get-inspired/tell-us-where-you-give.

Your name: _________________________________________________________________________________
Name of the interviewee: _____________________________________________________________________
Date of the interview: ________________________________________________________________________

1. How would you define tzedakah?
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why do you give tzedakah?
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

3. How do you feel when you give tzedakah?
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Please tell me about one place where you or your family gave tzedakah in the last year. Why did you choose this organization or cause?
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

If you have time, and there’s anything else you want to know about your interviewee’s tzedakah practice, you may ask it now.
Session 2: Why Do We Give Tzedakah? 
Poverty, Privilege and Responsibility: Part 1

AGE: Middle School

TIME: 45 minutes

OBJECTIVE
In this session, students explore the extent of poverty around the world and the role of “the accident of birth” in determining a person’s wealth and position in life.

INTRODUCTION
This session is the first part of a double session that explores the role of tzedakah as a mechanism to increase justice in the world. The double session focuses on the extent of poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth around the world as social problems that exemplify injustice. It also explores the relative privilege of students and their responsibility to respond to these social problems as a result of their privilege.

In Part 1 of this double session, students identify the global nature of today’s world and the connections they have with people from around the world, especially in developing countries, as a result of the media, immigration and our global economy. Students then begin to explore what life is like in many of these countries and the challenges that many people face accessing basic resources. Finally, students use a cartoon and Jewish texts to identify the role of chance or “the accident of birth” in determining a person’s wealth and position in life. Students consider the role that tzedakah can play as a form of gratitude for one’s good fortune and as a tool for balancing the scales.

OUTCOMES
• Students will understand that they are connected to people in developing countries.
• Students will understand that wealth is distributed unequally around the world.
• Students will understand that quality of life varies around the world.
• Students will understand that a person’s wealth and access to resources is determined mostly by the accident of birth.
• Students will understand that, relative to most of the world, they are privileged.
• Students will understand that their privilege is accompanied by responsibility.

MATERIALS
• World map
• “Wheel of Fortune” page (provided below, 1 per student)
• “CIA World Factbook” worksheet (provided below, 1 per student)
• “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster
• Small sticky notes (optional)
• 10 copies of “World Population” sign (provided below, optional)
• Computer with internet access and projector (optional)
• Camera and/or video recording device (optional)
PREPARATION
- Make sure that the “100 People” video is ready to play at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/.
- Please consider recording students’ comments during their discussion about the “100 People” video. If you do the “Miniature World” activity, please consider also taking pictures or recording a video of the activity. E-mail videos, photos and student comments to education@ajws.org to be featured on the Where Do You Give? website.

INTEGRATING THE TAP
If your class is conducting a Tzedakah Allocations Process (TAP) alongside your study of the curriculum, connect this session to the “Learning about Tzedakah and Philanthropy” stage of the TAP. See Making it Real: Guiding Students through a Tzedakah Allocations Process for more guidance on facilitating a TAP.

LESSON PLAN

1. REVIEW AND INTRODUCTION (4 MINUTES)
   a. If students conducted tzedakah interviews in the previous session or for homework, ask them to share something they learned from their interview.
   b. Ask for a volunteer to read the definition of tzedakah off the poster on the wall. Remind students that tzedakah comes from the root ק·ד·צ, which is related to justice or fairness/equality and that tzedakah is a way to respond to inequality in the world. Explain that in the next two sessions, students will explore how people live around the world and how tzedakah can help bring more justice and equality into the world.

2. GLOBAL CONNECTIONS (6 MINUTES)
   a. Have students take turns sharing one country (not America) that they’ve interacted with that day—it can be the country where their clothes were made, the country of a kind of food they ate (Thai, Indian, etc.), the country of origin of various people they encountered on the way to school, a country they read about in school or heard mentioned on TV or on the radio, etc.

      Note: If students have difficulty naming countries or only identify the same three or four, invite a few students to look at the tags on their clothes or other objects they have with them to see where they were manufactured.

   b. Option: If you have a world map and additional time, ask students to locate each country as it’s mentioned. You can also ask students to write the name of their country on a sticky note and place it on the country on the map.

   c. After each student offers the name of a country with which they were involved that day, invite students to reflect on their connections to people from all over the world. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:
i. What are the different kinds of ways that we are connected to people around the world?

ii. What does it mean for you to have these connections?

iii. What do you know about what life is like in these countries?

**Note:** Since this activity is designed to introduce the idea of global inequality, steer your students toward discussing developing countries primarily. You may need to explain that the term “developing country” refers to countries where there is a great deal of poverty and lack of access to the basic resources people need to live healthy lives.

**Note:** Please refer to the “Country Facts” chart at the end of this lesson plan for more data about life in three countries that students may name, and share this information during this conversation as appropriate. Facts about the United States are also provided as a point of comparison. If time and technology permit, consider having the CIA World Factbook website open in the classroom so that you can show it to students and look up the specific countries that are mentioned. [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html).

d. Conclude the discussion by emphasizing that our lives are connected to the lives of people all over the world—sometimes just because we are all human, and sometimes in more practical ways, like when we buy clothing sewn by someone in another country. These connections mean that we can’t ignore people who live far away from us. The next activity will help us understand how our lives compare to the lives of people around the world.

3. 100 PEOPLE (10 MINUTES)

**KEY ACTIVITY**

a. Show students “100 People,” a short video that visually represents the unequal distribution of global resources. You can access “100 People” at [http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos](http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos).

b. Ask students any of the following questions:

   i. What information in the video surprised you?

   ii. Why do you think some people in the world have enough food, water and access to education while others don’t?

   iii. How did this video make you feel?

   iv. What do you think this video has to do with tzedakah?

   v. What title would you give to this cartoon?

c. Explain that this video illustrates the reality that people around the world are not equal. Some have access to the resources they need to live healthy and safe lives, while others do not. The next activity will explore why that is and how the practice of tzedakah can contribute towards creating a more just world.

4. WHEEL OF FORTUNE – STORK CARTOON (10 MINUTES)

**KEY ACTIVITY**

a. Distribute the “Wheel of Fortune” page and ask students to look at the cartoon at the top. Lead a discussion using the following questions (also printed under the cartoon):

   i. What does the wheel in this cartoon represent? Why are there so many more wedges for poverty than for wealth?

   ii. What do you think this cartoon is trying to say about why some people live in poverty while others are middle class or wealthy?

   iii. What title would you give to this cartoon?
b. Help students understand that the cartoon expresses the reality that many more people in the world live in poverty or experience war, famine and disease than the number of people who are wealthy. The chance of being born into a situation of poverty is much greater than the chance of being born middle class or wealthy. Also make sure that students understand that the cartoon implies that one’s situation in life is random—we don’t control the circumstances into which we are born.

c. Encourage students to refer back to the “100 People” video and ask them how people’s abilities to overcome the poverty into which they were born could be connected to their access to education, healthcare, adequate nutrition, etc. In this way, you can help students understand that there are many things we take for granted that allow us to succeed which many people in the world don’t have access to, and therefore it’s much harder for them to emerge from poverty.

5. TEXT STUDY (10 MINUTES)
   KEY ACTIVITY

   a. Option 1: Chavruta
      Ask students to learn the second part of the text study sheet in chavruta (with a partner), using the discussion questions provided. Do a quick check-in as a full group by taking a few responses to the question: According to the midrash, why should a person give tzedakah? Do you think this is a good reason? Why or why not?

   b. Option 2: Full Group
      Alternatively, you can study the texts as a whole group. You may want to explain the verse from Deuteronomy and then invite a student to read the accompanying midrash aloud. Use the discussion questions provided with the text to guide the group conversation.

   Note: If your students need background on the Jewish texts, please use the following descriptions:
   - Deuteronomy: The fifth book of the Bible, Deuteronomy includes Jewish laws as well as stories of the Israelites preparing to enter the Land of Israel.
   - Midrash Aggadah: A compilation of rabbinic stories and comments that explain the biblical text. It dates back to the 12th century but was first published in 1894 by Solomon Buber.

6. CONCLUSION AND HOMEWORK (5 MINUTES)

   a. Invite students to reflect on the session by sharing one question they still have.

   b. Remind your students that at the end of the unit they will create a tzedakah box that expresses what they think and have learned about tzedakah. Ask them what they learned about tzedakah today that might influence how they design their tzedakah box. Write responses on the “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster.

   c. Explain that this session began students’ exploration of inequality in the world and how it relates to tzedakah and that this exploration will continue in the next session.

   d. Explain the homework assignment as follows:
      i. Visit the CIA World Factbook to learn more about life in different countries around the world. Go to: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html.
      ii. Think of a developing country that you had a connection to during the opening activity for this session. At the top of the webpage, where it says “Select a Country or Location,” enter the name of that country.
iii. Look at the map and write down what continent that country is on.
iv. Click on the “People and Society” tab to learn about the people in that country.
v. Write down answers to the questions on the “CIA World Factbook Research” worksheet.
vi. For extra credit, look up the United States in the CIA World Factbook and find the answers to the same questions.

Option: Instead of writing down the answers to questions 1-4 on the worksheet, students can be assigned to design a poster about their country that illustrates those statistics.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: MINIATURE WORLD (15 MINUTES)

1. Ask for 10 volunteers. Explain that these 10 students represent all of the people in the world—they are a “miniature world.” Give each student a “World Population” sign to hold up. Tell students that there are 6.8 billion (or almost seven billion) people in the world, so each of the 10 volunteers represents approximately 680 million people.

2. Explain that you will ask a series of questions about the lives of the people in the miniature world and a number of students will step forward, representing the number of people in the world for whom the statement is true. Give the students the following example: “For example, if I say, ‘I live in China,’ two students would step forward because 20 percent of the world’s population lives in China.”

3. Explain that after you read a statement, the whole class can discuss how many people they think should step forward. Explain that you will then tell the students how many people should step forward based on real statistics about the world’s population.

4. Below are the statements and correct numbers as well as a little bit more information about each statistic. Read each statement, allow the class to guess how many people it is true for, and then call on students by name to step forward until the correct number has done so. You may want to share the additional information after each question and invite students to comment or ask questions.
   i. I do not have access to clean water – 13%.1 (Call one student forward.)
      Access to clean water is important for ensuring health. Waterborne diseases like cholera and diarrhea are a leading cause of death in the world.
   ii. I can’t read – 17.3%.2 (Call two students forward.)
      Literacy rates vary significantly based on gender. 88.8% of males in the world can read compared to 79.2% of females.
   iii. I don’t have access to the Internet – 65%.3 (Call seven students forward.)
      Access to the internet is important for education and for connecting to economic opportunities.
   iv. I do not have enough food to eat – 13.5%.4 (Call one student forward.)
      Hunger also varies based on gender. Women are 50% of the world’s population but 60% of people facing hunger are women.

---

**Note:** Help your students understand the scope of what they are seeing by reminding them what the numbers represent. For example, if 2 students step forward, you could say, “That means that more than 1 billion people do not have . . .”

**COUNTRY FACTS¹**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Sudan</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average household wealth²</td>
<td>$25,399</td>
<td>$2,090</td>
<td>$2,792</td>
<td>$236,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth</td>
<td>76 years</td>
<td>63 years</td>
<td>55 years</td>
<td>78 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 5 who are underweight³</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy⁴</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to clean water</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


² These numbers are in U.S. dollars and are adjusted for purchasing power parity. This means that one dollar represents the amount of money that can buy locally what one dollar buys in the United States.

³ This statistic can be a helpful way to represent hunger, as weight is closely related to nutrition.

⁴ This statistic represents the percentage of people over the age of 15 who can read.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the wheel in this cartoon represent? Why are there so many more wedges for poverty than for wealth?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. What do you think this cartoon is trying to say about why some people live in poverty while others are middle class or wealthy?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. What title would you give to this cartoon?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
PART 2:

Judaism also has an image of a wheel of poverty and wealth, based on the following verse from the Torah that teaches us that we shouldn’t hesitate to give tzedakah:

1. Deuteronomy 15:10

Give to the poor person readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return (bi-gelal) Adonai your God will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings.

The midrash makes a word-play on the Hebrew word bi-gelal (for in return) from the verse above and connects it to the Hebrew word gal-gal, which sounds similar and means wheel.

2. Midrash Aggadah, Deuteronomy 15:10

For in return (bi-gelal). It is a wheel (gal-gal) that turns in the world. Maybe you think in your heart that you won’t come to this fate [poverty]. You might not, but your child or your grandchild might. Therefore, a person should do good things for others whenever he can, in order that others will do good things for him if he or his children need.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think it means that wealth and poverty are “like a wheel that turns in the world”?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. How does this text make you feel about people who are poor?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. According to the midrash, why should a person give tzedakah? Do you think this is a good reason? Why or why not?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
WHERE DO YOU GIVE? SESSION 2

CIA WORLD FACTBOOK RESEARCH

Your name: _________________________________________________________________________________

Country: ___________________________________________________________________________________

Continent: _________________________________________________________________________________

1. What is the life expectancy in this country?
___________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What percentage of children under 5 is underweight?
___________________________________________________________________________________________

3. What percentage of people is literate (can read)?
___________________________________________________________________________________________

4. What percentage of people has access to clean water (an improved source of drinking water)?
___________________________________________________________________________________________

5. What do you think about these percentages?
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Would you want to live in this country? Why or why not?
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
I REPRESENT 680 MILLION PEOPLE.
Session 3: Why do We Give Tzedakah?
Poverty, Privilege and Responsibility: Part 2

AGE: Middle School
TIME: 45 minutes

OBJECTIVE
In this session, students examine the uneven distribution of wealth around the world and explore how tzedakah can respond to this injustice.

INTRODUCTION
This lesson is the second part of a double session that explores the role of tzedakah in increasing justice in the world. The double session focuses on the extent of poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth around the world as social problems that exemplify injustice. It also explores the relative privilege of students and their responsibility to respond to these social problems as a result of their privilege.

In Part 2 of this double session, students engage in an interactive demonstration to learn about the unequal distribution of wealth around the world. They then study two Jewish texts that suggest that wealth belongs to God, not to us, and use this as the basis for a discussion about ownership and tzedakah.

OUTCOMES
• Students will understand that they are connected to people in developing countries.
• Students will understand that wealth is distributed unequally around the world.
• Students will understand that quality of life varies around the world.
• Students will understand that a person’s wealth and access to resources is determined mostly by the accident of birth.
• Students will understand that, relative to most of the world, they are privileged.
• Students will understand that their privilege is accompanied by responsibility.

MATERIALS
• 100 pennies or individually wrapped pieces of candy or fake $1 bills. The activity will not work without 100 objects.
  Option: Ask the students bring in the pennies, and put them in your class tzedakah collection after the activity.
• 10 slips of paper, each with a number from 1-10
• Hat/bowl
• “Whose Money Is It Anyway” page (provided below, 1 per student)
• “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster
• Camera or video-recording device (optional)

PREPARATION
• Please consider taking photographs of the “Wealth Distribution” activity and recording students’ comments during the discussion. E-mail them to education@ajws.org to be featured on the Where Do You Give? website.

INTEGRATING THE TAP
If your class is conducting a Tzedakah Allocations Process (TAP) alongside your study of the curriculum, connect this session to the “Learning about Tzedakah and Philanthropy” stage of the TAP. See Making it Real: Guiding Students through a Tzedakah Allocations Process for more guidance on facilitating a TAP.
LESSON PLAN

1. REVIEW AND INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)
   a. If students researched a developing country for homework, ask them to share one piece of new information they learned. After all the students have shared, ask the class:
      i. How does this information connect to the stork cartoon from the last class?
      ii. Does this information show us a world of tzedek? Why or why not?

   b. Remind students that they will continue their exploration from the previous session about inequality in the world and how it relates to tzedakah. Explain that in the last session, and for homework, students learned about some of the differences in people’s lives around the world in terms of their access to resources like water, healthcare and education. To a great extent, this global inequality is connected to the fact that people have very different amounts of money and wealth. This session will begin with an activity to show how much money or wealth people have around the world.

   **Note:** This session has the potential to become very sensitive for students as it touches on personal issues of wealth, income and socio-economic status. The more personal you choose to make the session, the more powerful it can be, but it can also make students uncomfortable and self-conscious. In addition, some students might be aware of their family’s financial situation, while others might not. Please think about how much you want to ask students to reflect on their own financial situation and consider including some “safe space” ground rules if you plan to ask students to share sensitive information.

2. WEALTH DISTRIBUTION (20 MINUTES)

   **KEY ACTIVITY**

   a. Choose 10 student volunteers, and explain to the group that these 10 volunteers represent everyone who lives in the world. Ask volunteers to draw numbers out of a hat, so that each volunteer has a number between 1 and 10. Ask students to line up in order of their numbers.

   **Note:** This activity is designed for a class with at least 10 students. If your class is smaller, take five volunteers, and give them each a number between one and five.

   b. Show the students the 100 pennies/candies and explain that they represent all of the wealth that exists in the world. Wealth means the combined value of people’s savings, property and possessions. Explain that you are going to divide the pennies/candies among the volunteers the way that wealth is divided in the world. Divide 100 pennies/candies among the volunteers as shown in the table, counting them out as you go so that everyone knows how much each volunteer has received.

   **Note:** The chart on the next page shows you the true percentage of global wealth owned by each. In order to avoid having to divide pennies/candies, the chart suggests a distribution that approximates the true percentages.¹

---

### Table: Candies/True Percentage of Global Wealth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Candies/ Pennies</th>
<th>True Percentage of Global Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: If you have five volunteers, distribute the objects as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Candies/ Pennies</th>
<th>True Percentage of Global Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. After you’ve distributed all of the pennies/candies, ask the volunteers to share how they feel. Then ask the other students what they think about the distribution of pennies/candies. If students need more prompting, consider asking any of the following questions:

i. Do you think this distribution of pennies/candies is fair? Why or why not?

ii. Did the students who received more pennies/candies do anything to deserve the number they got? Does this make the distribution more or less fair? Why?

iii. What do you think the people with more pennies/candies should do? Why?

iv. If the candies represent wealth, what does this say about wealth in the world? Is this a world of tzedek?

v. What do you think someone’s life is like if they have very little wealth? If they have a lot of wealth?

vi. How do you feel about wealth in the world being distributed this way?

vii. Where do you think your family would fall? Do you think your family has more wealth that most in the world?

Note: Because this is a sensitive question, you may want students to think about this rather than answering out loud.

viii. Does this activity make you want to do anything? Why or why not? If so, what?

In the discussion, try to draw out the following points:

1. Wealth is distributed unfairly.

2. Whether or not people have wealth is often not because they did anything to deserve it; they were born into fortunate circumstances or they weren’t.

3. Giving tzedakah can be a way to help make sure wealth in the world is distributed more fairly or equally. It can be a way of increasing tzedek in the world.
3. TEXT STUDY (10 MINUTES)

**KEY ACTIVITY**

a. **Option 1: Chavruta**
   Ask students to read and discuss the text study sheet in chavruta (with a partner), using the questions provided. Do a quick check-in as a full group by taking a few responses to these questions: According to the Tur and the Torat Moshe, who actually owns all of the wealth in the world? How does this affect what it means to give tzedakah?

b. **Option 2: Full Group**
   Alternatively, you can study the texts as a whole group. Use the discussion questions provided with the text to guide the group conversation.

**Note:** If your students need background on the Jewish texts, please use the following descriptions:

- **Tur:** The Tur is a code of Jewish law written by Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, who lived in Spain from 1270-1340.
- **Torat Moshe:** The Torat Moshe is a commentary on the Bible written by Rabbi Moshe Alshich, a 16th-century rabbi who lived in Tzfat.

4. CONCLUSION AND HOMEWORK (5 MINUTES)

a. Conclude this session by reviewing with students the following main points from the double session on poverty, privilege and responsibility. You may either want to try to elicit these ideas from students by asking them to reflect on the previous two sessions, or you may want to summarize the ideas yourself:

   i. We are connected to people around the world in multiple ways, some obvious and some not as obvious.
   
   ii. People around the world have very different amounts of wealth and different levels of access to the resources (water, healthcare, education) that enable human beings to live safe, healthy and comfortable lives.
   
   iii. Comparatively, we have much more than many people in the world.
   
   iv. What others have and what we have was determined largely by the “accident of birth.” We were lucky to have been born in a country in which most people have access to basic resources, education and wealth. Others in the world were born into much more difficult situations.
   
   v. Judaism understands this idea of chance as an important reason for giving tzedakah—“there but for the grace of God go I.”
   
   vi. Judaism also puts forth the idea that our wealth doesn’t actually belong to us; rather, we “take care” of God’s wealth and should use it and distribute it the way that God wants us to, which includes giving tzedakah.
   
   vii. Giving tzedakah is a way of expressing gratitude for how much we have and helping to distribute the wealth of the world in more equitable, just ways.

b. Remind your students that at the end of the unit they will create a tzedakah box that expresses what they think and have learned about tzedakah. Ask them what they learned about tzedakah today that might influence how they design their tzedakah box. Write responses on the “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster.
c. Explain the homework assignment:
   Students should pick two of the following questions/prompts and write a short reflection (one paragraph) on each:
   • In what ways are you connected to people in other countries? What do these connections mean for you?
   • What do you think a person needs in order to live a healthy and comfortable life?
   • Who do you think is responsible for making sure that people have what they need in order to live healthy and comfortable lives?
   • How do you think wealth should be distributed around the world?
   • How do you think tzedakah can help respond to inequality and injustice in the world?

d. Consider compiling students’ reflections into a blog post for the *Where Do You Give?* blog and emailing it to education@ajws.org.
**Where Do You Give?**

1. **Tur, Yoreh Deah, Laws of Tzedakah, 247**

   A person shouldn’t ask, “How can I spare my money to give to poor people?” Because he should know that the money is not his but rather a deposit with which to do the will of the depositor (God) which is to distribute some of it to the poor.

2. **Torat Moshe, Leviticus 19:9**

   Do not think that you are giving to the poor from your own possession, or that I (God) despised the poor person by not giving him as I gave you. For he is My child, as you are, and his share is in your grain; it is to your benefit to give him his share from your property.

**Discussion Questions**

1. **According to the Tur and the Torat Moshe, who actually owns all of the wealth in the world? How does this make you feel about the money you have? How does this affect what it means to give tzedakah?**

2. **The Torat Moshe warns against thinking that some people are poor because they are being punished by God. Have you ever heard people say that poor people “deserve” their poverty? How would you respond to this idea?**
Session 4: Giving to Make an Impact

**AGE:** Middle School

**TIME:** 45 minutes

**OBJECTIVE**
In this session students explore how to give tzedakah responsibly and effectively.

**INTRODUCTION**
Often when we give tzedakah, we give in ways that are most comfortable, meaningful or exciting for us as givers. Unfortunately, this doesn’t always result in the best outcomes for the people whom we are trying to help. In this session, students hear directly from people facing poverty about what they need and explore the differences between giving tzedakah that addresses immediate needs versus giving tzedakah that addresses the root causes of poverty and injustice. Through engaging with quotes from people living in poverty and Jewish texts, students consider how we can ensure our tzedakah is effective and impactful, and responds to the needs of the people we want to help.

**OUTCOMES**
- Students will understand the importance of prioritizing the dignity and stated needs of the recipients of tzedakah.
- Students will understand the importance of ensuring that their tzedakah donations are effective and make an impact.
- Students will understand the difference between addressing the immediate needs or the root causes of poverty and injustice.

**MATERIALS**
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Tape
- "Voices of the Poor" cards (provided below)
- "Preventing Poverty” page (provided below, 1 per student)
- “Tzedakah Strategies” cards (optional, provided below, 1 set for every 4-5 students)
- “Voices of the Poor: Jenny’s Story” worksheet (optional, provided below, 1 per student)
- “Charity Navigator Research” worksheet (optional, provided below, 1 per student)
- Computer with internet connection and projector (optional)
- Camera (optional)
- “Tzedakah Box Influences” chart

**PREPARATION**
- Paste or write each “Voices of the Poor” quote in the center of a piece of chart paper. Write the questions from section 2b above the quote. Hang the chart paper around the classroom.
- Please consider taking photographs of the “Voices of the Poor” activity and/or video recording students’ comments during the discussion. E-mail photos and videos to education@ajws.org to be featured on the Where Do You Give? website.
- Optional: Cut out the “Tzedakah Strategies” cards.
- Optional: Make sure that the “1 Million Shirts.org Trying to Donate 1,000,000 T-Shirts to Africa,” video is ready to play at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYZFyzmyCRE.
INTEGRATING THE TAP
If your class is conducting a Tzedakah Allocations Process (TAP) alongside your study of the curriculum, connect this session to the “Conducting Due Diligence” and “Making Final Decisions” stages of the TAP. See Making it Real: Guiding Students through a Tzedakah Allocations Process for more guidance on facilitating a TAP.

LESSON PLAN

1. REVIEW AND INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)
   a. Remind students that in the last two sessions they learned about the unequal distribution of wealth and access to necessary resources around the world and how tzedakah is an important way to respond to this lack of tzedek. Tell students that today they will learn about different ways of distributing tzedakah, some of which are more and less effective at addressing these problems. Explain that this session will explore the challenge of ensuring that tzedakah actually benefits the people receiving it.

   Note: This session can be particularly challenging for students who are used to being praised for any effort to help people in need. It is important to be sensitive to students’ need for validation and praise for the act of giving tzedakah, while gently challenging students to interrogate their methods for giving. One way to frame this for students is: “I know how much you care about tzedakah and how much you want to help others. That’s why it’s so important to make sure that we give in ways that actually help people both in the short term and the long term.” You may want to use this framing at the beginning of the session or at any point if students become defensive or resistant to more deeply examining the way they may have previously given tzedakah.

2. VOICES OF THE POOR (10 MINUTES)
   KEY ACTIVITY
   a. Explain to students that the quotes displayed around the room come from a study conducted by the World Bank in the 1990s called “Voices of the Poor,” in which 60,000 poor people from 60 countries were asked to talk about their lives and the challenges they face.

   b. Distribute markers to students and ask them to walk around the room, reading the quotes. In the space around each quote, students should respond to the following questions:
      i. What does this person want?
      ii. What question might you ask this person?

   c. Tell students that they will have five minutes to do this and that it’s alright if they don’t get to every quote.

   d. Debrief the quotes by leading a group discussion using any of the following questions:
      i. What kinds of things did the speakers indicate that they want or need?
      ii. How did they compare to what you might have expected them to want or need?
      iii. Why is it important to talk to people who face poverty about their lives rather than act on their behalf before asking?
3. IMMEDIATE NEEDS AND ROOT CAUSES (20 MINUTES)

KEY ACTIVITY

a. Explain to students that the “Voices of the Poor” quotes show that people living in poverty generally don’t want money, food or clothes. These things—immediate needs—are important and might help them in the short term, but in the long term, they’ll just continue to need them again and again. Instead, people living in poverty want support to solve root causes—the problems that cause their poverty in the first place, like lack of land, lack of education, lack of work, and lack of access to power and the ability to change laws. When we give tzedakah, therefore, it is important to think about whether we want to address immediate needs or root causes.

Note: While this session emphasizes the importance of giving tzedakah to address root causes, it does not mean to imply that addressing immediate needs is not important or worthwhile. However, because students are often more familiar with tzedakah that addresses immediate needs, this session challenges them to consider the value of addressing root causes.

b. Write the terms ‘immediate need’ and ‘root cause’ on chart paper or the board and have students brainstorm examples of actions which fall into each category. If your students are having trouble, suggest examples such as providing money, food, clothes or shelter for immediate need, and access to education or healthcare, and power in decision-making for root cause.

c. Explain to students that they will look at some Jewish texts that explore the importance of giving tzedakah in ways that address root causes and not just immediate needs. Distribute the “Preventing Poverty” page to each student.

d. Option 1: Chavruta

Ask students to learn the texts in chavruta (with a partner) using the discussion questions provided. Do a quick check-in as a full group by taking a few responses to these questions: Why do you think it’s important to help people before they become too much in need? What do you think are different ways to “strengthen” someone who is in danger of getting into financial trouble?

Option 2: Full Group

Alternatively, you can study the texts as a whole group. Invite one or two students to read each text aloud. Then use the discussion questions provided with the text to guide the group conversation.

Note: If your students need background on the Jewish texts, please use the following descriptions:

• Leviticus/Vayikra: Leviticus is the third book of the Torah and primarily consists of a compilation of laws.
• Rashi: Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki wrote the first comprehensive commentaries on Tanach, Mishnah and Talmud. He lived in France at the end of the 11th century.
4. REFLECTION, CONCLUSION AND HOMEWORK (10 MINUTES)

a. Bring the full group together for a discussion to debrief the whole session, focusing on the following question: Based on the quotes and texts you read, how do you think we should be trying to help people facing poverty around the world?

*Note:* If you have time and if you think your students will be receptive, consider asking them to brainstorm the ways their communities typically give tzedakah. This will likely yield a list of fundraisers as well as different types of drives (clothes, toiletries, food) and possibly also volunteering. Ask students how well these tzedakah initiatives align with the stated needs of people living in poverty and how they might be able to align better by taking into account the perspectives of poor people and addressing root causes.

b. Remind your students that at the end of the unit they will create a tzedakah box that expresses what they think and have learned about tzedakah. Ask them what they learned about tzedakah today that might influence how they design their tzedakah box. Write responses on the “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster.

c. Conclude the session by reminding students that the good intentions that underlie our desire to help people and correct injustice are important but do not permit us to give tzedakah in whatever way we want. If we truly want our tzedakah to bring more tzedek and equality into the world, we need to make sure that our tzedakah is effective and meets the needs of the people we are trying to help. This means that tzedakah is a big responsibility and that we need to learn about how to do it best before we give.

d. **Homework Option 1:** Remind students that one of the best ways we can ensure that our tzedakah has impact is by listening closely to the people we seek to help. Ask them to visit the *Where Do You Give?* blog (http://wheredoyougive.org/blog/post/voices-of-the-poor-jennys-story) and read the blog post entitled “Voices of the Poor: Jenny’s Story” to hear the story of one formerly homeless American. Distribute the “Voices of the Poor: Jenny’s Story” worksheet. Explain that students should write a short reflection in response to each of the questions on the worksheet.

If appropriate for your students, encourage them to post their reflections online as comments to the original blog post.

e. **Homework Option 2:** Explain to students that, sadly, not all organizations that collect tzedakah are acting in the best interest of the communities they serve. Emphasize the importance of researching organizations to find out if they spend money wisely, evaluate their programs and respond to the articulated needs of the communities they seek to help. Tell students that websites like Charity Navigator (http://www.charitynavigator.org/), which evaluates charitable organizations, can be a helpful resource for learning about organizations before donating. Distribute the “Charity Navigator Research” worksheet. Explain to your students that they will choose one organization and research it on Charity Navigator, answering the questions on the worksheet.
EXTENSION ACTIVITY: TZEDAKAH STRATEGIES (15 MINUTES)

1. Explain to students that there is not one right way to make change, and it often takes multiple strategies to impact an issue. This activity will expose them to four common strategies that many charitable organizations use to achieve their goals.

2. Explain that you will break students into groups of four or five. Each group will receive one set of “Tzedakah Strategies” cards. Each card contains a description of the tzedakah strategy as well as an example of an organization that uses that strategy. Explain that groups will have 10 minutes to read the cards and have a discussion about either or both of the following questions:

   a. Which strategy are you most inclined to support and why?

   b. Look back at the “Voices of the Poor” quotes around the room. Which of the different tzedakah strategies would you use to address the different quotes?

   Note: You may want to make sure students understand that several strategies could be applied to one quote. For example, the quote about the school could be addressed through direct service (sending money to repair the school building) and through political advocacy (helping people in the community organize to demand that their local government repair the school building).

3. Bring the full group together for a short discussion. Invite each group to respond to one of the following prompts:

   a. Which tzedakah strategy was your group most inclined to support and why?

   b. Was there a tzedakah strategy that your group had disagreement about? If so, why?

   c. What was the most interesting point from your group’s discussion?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: CLOTHING DRIVES AND BEYOND GOOD INTENTIONS (10 MINUTES)

1. Explain to students that, sadly, too often we give tzedakah in ways that don’t actually address the problems that people living in poverty face. Explain that you will show students the first part of a video by Jason Sadler, a Florida businessman who tried to start a project called “1 Million Shirts” in 2010. His project was harshly criticized by many people who work in international development, the field of work that seeks to improve living conditions in poor countries around the world. After several months and 11,000 t-shirts donated, Jason stopped the project. Ask students, as they are watching, to try to figure out why people were so critical of Jason’s project.

2. Show students the first 1 minute and 10 seconds of “1MillionShirts.org Trying to Donate 1,000,000 T-Shirts to Africa,” available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYZFyzmyCRE.

3. Ask students: “In light of the quotes you read and the texts about responding to root causes of poverty, why do you think people were so critical of Jason’s project?” Help students understand that Jason’s project was problematic because it didn’t respond to the actual needs of the intended recipients. You may want to relate this to the idea of respecting the dignity of people facing poverty by making sure that what we give is aligned with what they want, rather than simply assuming that we can give them things we don’t want anymore and they will be automatically grateful.
EXTENSION ACTIVITY: RAMBAM’S LADDER (10 MINUTES)

Note: Consider using this activity if your students are already familiar with Rambam’s Ladder. For the full text, visit http://on1foot.org/rambamladder.

1. Ask students to list the “rungs” of Rambam’s tzedakah ladder in order, either from memory or by looking at the text.

2. Ask students what general principle they think Rambam was using in order to determine the level of each act of tzedakah on the ladder.

3. Ask students to focus on the highest “rung” of Rambam’s ladder. Invite students to respond to the following questions:
   a. How do you think Rambam would respond to the question of whether to address immediate needs or root causes?
   b. What are some ways of giving tzedakah today that would qualify as the top “rung” on Rambam’s ladder?
   c. Do you agree or disagree that helping another person become self-sufficient is the highest form of tzedakah? Why?
“We do not want money; we just want you to employ us. We need factories that would draw all these unemployed people from the streets.”

– Resident of El Gawabber, Egypt
“All our problems derive from lack of land. If we have enough land we will be able to produce enough to feed our households, build houses, and train our children.”

– Resident of Elieke Rumuokoro, Nigeria
“I used to never worry about my illiteracy and the fact that I was not able to send my children to school, as long as we had something to eat. But now . . . I realize that my children are in trouble for life because they cannot get any decent job if they don’t know how to read and write.”

– Resident of Swaziland
“Poor people have no access to the police station, bank, government offices, and the judge of the village court. The rich people dominate these institutions.”

– Resident of Bangladesh
“The school was OK, but now it is in shambles, there are no teachers for weeks . . . . There is no safety and no hygiene.”

– Resident of Vila Junqueira, Brazil
PREVENTING POVERTY

1. Leviticus 25:35
If your brother becomes poor and weak when near you, you should strengthen him; whether he is a stranger or a settler he should live with you.

2. Rashi on Leviticus 25:35
"You should strengthen him:" Don’t allow him to falter and fall because it will be difficult to lift him up [when he has already fallen]. Rather, strengthen him from the moment that he starts to falter. To what is this similar? To a load on a donkey. While it is still on the donkey, one person can grab it and hold it up, but once it falls to the ground even five people aren’t able to raise it up.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Rashi, why is it important to help someone before he or she becomes too much in need?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. How do you think this text relates to the question of whether to give tzedakah to address immediate needs or root causes?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. What do you think are different ways to “strengthen” someone who is in danger of getting into financial trouble?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Tzedakah Strategies Cards

Immediate Needs:
Organizations that use this approach provide directly for the immediate needs of the communities they serve.

Example:
No More Hunger is an organization that provides food to residents of rural villages in Central America. It delivers tons of corn and rice to hundreds of villages every month.

Technical assistance and training:
Organizations that use this approach provide technical services to help people better their own lives.

Example:
On My Own is an organization that teaches women in rural villages in Central America new techniques in farming. It also provides small loans for women to start their own businesses. Many women have used loans to set up small shops in the local markets where they sell the food they have grown in their home gardens.
**Education and research:**
Education and research organizations work to increase society’s knowledge about important issues so that those working on those issues are better able to make an impact.

**Example:**
Hunger Hurts is an organization that interviews people facing hunger in countries around the world and publishes their stories in a monthly newsletter. They also create educational videos to teach children about the impact and causes of hunger around the world.

**Political or legal advocacy:**
Organizations that engage in advocacy work put pressure on government representatives to change laws or bring cases to court to ensure that laws are not violated.

**Example:**
Fairer Foreign Aid is an organization that puts pressure on members of the U.S. Congress to increase the amount of money that the United States sends to countries around the world where people are facing poverty. It also puts pressure on members of Congress to pass trade laws with other countries that don’t harm farmers in those countries.
VOICES OF THE POOR: JENNY’S STORY

Visit http://wheredoyougive.org/blog/post/voices-of-the-poor-jennys-story and read the blog post entitled “Voices of the Poor: Jenny’s Story.” Answer the following questions based on what you learn.

Your name:  ____________________________________________________________

1. What did you learn from this story about homelessness that you could only learn from someone who had been homeless?
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

2. What does Jenny want? How does this compare to what you expected homeless people would want or need?
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

3. Why is it important to talk to people who face poverty about their lives rather than act on their behalf before asking?
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
CHARITY NAVIGATOR RESEARCH

Visit http://www.charitynavigator.org/. Find the words “Charity Search” at the top of the page, type the name of the organization you are researching and click “Go.” Click on the name of the organization and information about that organization should pop up. Read about the organization and answer the questions below.

Your name: _________________________________________________________________________________

Name of the Organization: ____________________________________________________________________

1. What is the mission?
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What is the total income? ___________________________________________________________________

3. What percentage of its total income is spent on programming? _______________________________________________________________________________

4. What overall score did it receive? _________________________________________________________________________________________

5. What do users who have reviewed the organization say about it?
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Would you donate to this organization? Why or why not?
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________________
Session 5: Where Do We Give?
Part 1: The Options

AGE: Middle School
TIME: 45 minutes
OBJECTIVE
In this session students begin to grapple with how to make decisions about where to give tzedakah.

INTRODUCTION
This session is the first part of a double session in which students explore how to make decisions about where to allocate tzedakah. The double session recognizes that because no individual possesses the necessary financial resources to solve all of the poverty and injustice in the world, we must each make choices about which causes and organizations to prioritize when we give tzedakah. In the double session, students identify the factors that influence their decisions, construct arguments for assigning certain priorities and begin to articulate their own giving priorities.

In Part 1 of this double session, students participate in an interactive game that illustrates competing tzedakah priorities and helps them begin to identify the priorities that resonate with them. Through this game and Jewish text study, students develop a language for describing and evaluating the different options for where to give. Finally, students have an opportunity to articulate their own tzedakah priorities by authoring their own versions of a classic Jewish legal text.

OUTCOMES
• Students will understand that the act of giving tzedakah is complex and involves making tough decisions among competing priorities.
• Students will articulate the different factors at play in deciding where to allocate tzedakah.
• Students will articulate the reasons to assign priorities to different causes or populations.
• Students will begin to articulate how they themselves make decisions about where to give tzedakah.

MATERIALS
• Chart paper or whiteboard
• Markers
• “Would You Rather? Questions” (provided below)
• “Who Gets Priority?” page (provided below, 1 per student)
• Watch or clock
• “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster
• Paper and pen or pencil (1 each per student)
• Camera (optional)

PREPARATION
• Write the following prompt on the chart paper or board: Give an example of a time when you had to make a decision about where to give tzedakah. How did you make your decision? What did you decide? How did it feel to decide?
• Please consider taking photographs of the “Would You Rather?” activity and recording students’ comments during the discussion. E-mail them to education@ajws.org so that they can be featured on the Where Do You Give? website.
INTEGRATING THE TAP

If your class is conducting a Tzedakah Allocations Process (TAP) alongside your study of the curriculum, connect this session to the “Making the First Level Decision” and “Making Final Decisions” stages of the TAP. See Making it Real: Guiding Students through a Tzedakah Allocations Process for more guidance on facilitating a TAP.

LESSON PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)
   a. Ask students to take out paper and a pen or pencil and respond in writing to the following prompt, written on the board:

   Give an example of a time when you had to make a decision about where to give tzedakah. How did you make your decision? What did you decide? How did it feel to decide?

   Instruct students to write continuously for four minutes, even if they can’t think of anything else to say. Time them and tell them when the time has passed.

   b. Invite two or three students to share their responses.

   c. Conclude the introduction by connecting to the previous session on “Giving to Make an Impact.” Explain that the coming sessions will explore how we decide where to give. You may want to use the following language: “Last time we talked about needing to make sure that we give tzedakah in a way that has the greatest impact and most responds to what people facing poverty actually need. This is only one of many difficult decisions we make when we give tzedakah. Because even the wealthiest of us can only give away a limited amount of money, giving tzedakah always involves making choices about which issues, organizations and communities to prioritize. In this session and the next session, we will learn about different ways of setting priorities and develop our own tzedakah priorities.”

2. WOULD YOU RATHER? (20 MINUTES)
   KEY ACTIVITY

   a. Explain to students that they are going to play a game called “Would You Rather?” They will be presented with two options for where to give tzedakah and they need to choose the one to which they would rather give. If they choose the first, they will stand on one side of the room, and if they choose the second, they will stand on the other side of the room. They must choose a side to stand on; they cannot stand in the middle. Explain that after students have chosen where to stand, you will ask for a few volunteers from each side to explain why they chose that side. If students are persuaded to change their decision based on anything that is said by their peers, they can move to the other side of the room. Remind students to think for themselves and to switch sides only if they are really compelled by their friends’ explanations. Also remind them that while they should try to persuade their classmates, they should do so respectfully and never by insulting the other organization or their classmates.

   Note: If at any point all of the students choose one side of the room, the facilitator should either play the role of arguing for the other side or ask for a student volunteer to do so.
**Option**: You can add a twist to the game by asking students if their answers would change depending on how much money they were giving. For example, “If you were giving $10 which would you choose? If you were giving $10,000 which would you choose?”

b. The “Would You Rather?” questions highlight different categories that we prioritize when we decide where to give tzedakah. As students explain their decisions, write on the board the key words that students use to describe priorities and categories of giving. By the end of the game, you should have the following words or categories in your list:
   - local/global
   - Jewish/non-Jewish
   - greater need/lesser need
   - family and friends/people I don’t know
   - addressing the immediate problem/addressing the causes of the problem
   - issues that matter to me/issues I don’t care about so much

If students don’t generate all of these categories on their own, you may want to add them yourself.

c. After the game, bring the group together to debrief. Invite students to reflect on their priorities when deciding where to give by referring back to the categories listed on the board. Ask them if they can draw any general rules based on their answers to the different scenarios. For example, “I always prefer to give to Jews before non-Jews.” Or, “I think hunger is very important and always prioritize that issue.” Or, “It depends who’s asking.” If students can arrive at general rules or guidelines for prioritizing, encourage them to articulate why these are their priorities.

**Note**: Depending on how much time you have, you may choose to do all or only some of the “Would You Rather?” questions. We recommend that you prioritize questions #3, #4, and #6. The questions can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

3. TEXT STUDY (15 MINUTES)
   **KEY ACTIVITY**

a. Explain to students that Jewish communities have been debating the question of how to decide where to give for over 2,000 years and that the students’ conversation today is part of that continuing debate. Tell students that they are going to look at one of the earliest voices in the debate, a statement from Rabbi Yosef that dates back to the 4th century.

b. **Option 1: Chavruta**
   Ask students to learn the text in chavruta (with a partner) using the discussion questions provided. Do a quick check-in as a full group by taking a few responses to the question: “Do you agree or disagree with the tzedakah priorities expressed in this text? Why?”

**Option 2: Full Group**
Alternatively, you can study the text as a whole group. Invite one student to read the text aloud. Then use the discussion questions provided with the text to guide the group conversation.

For either option, consider using the visual model of concentric circles to help students understand the priorities suggested by the text. In this model, write the prioritized group in the inner circle and the other group in the outer circle. For example:
Note: If your students need background on the Jewish text, please use the following description:

- Babylonian Talmud: Written around 500CE, the Babylonian Talmud is a record of rabbinic discussions about Jewish law.

4. Conclusion and Homework (5 minutes)
   a. Conclude the session by inviting several students to read their versions of the text aloud.

   Note: Students’ statements can be shared on the Where Do You Give? website at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/would-you-rather/ by posting them as comments. Consider either inviting students to post their texts or collecting the texts and posting them yourself.

   b. Remind your students that at the end of the unit they will create a tzedakah box that expresses what they think and have learned about tzedakah. Ask them what they learned about tzedakah today that might influence how they design their tzedakah box. Write responses on the “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster.

   c. Summarize the session by reviewing the different categories that emerged from the “Would You Rather?” game and emphasizing how difficult it can be to assign priorities to some of these categories over others. Tell students that they will continue to explore and debate tzedakah priorities in the next session.

   d. Explain the homework assignment. Consider using the following language: “Ask a parent to join you to take the “Would You Rather?” quiz online at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/would-you-rather/. For each question, you and your parent should vote independently and then discuss your answers. Notice when you agree or disagree and why. The, click on “view results” in order to see how others voted. What, if anything, surprised you about other peoples’ votes?”
**WOULD YOU RATHER? QUESTIONS**

1. Would you rather give to:
   a. An organization that fights poverty?
      OR
   b. An organization that protects the environment?

2. Would you rather give to:
   a. An organization that helps homeless people in your city?
      OR
   b. An organization that helps homeless people in Israel?

3. Would you rather give to:
   a. An organization that sends doctors to clinics in villages in India to perform surgery and train health workers?
      OR
   b. A local clinic that provides medical care to low-income residents of your city?

4. Would you rather give to:
   a. Your local public library, which runs an after-school program that helps low-income elementary school students improve their reading and writing skills?
      OR
   b. Your synagogue’s scholarship fund that helps Jewish students in your community go to Hebrew school, day school or Jewish summer camp?

5. Would you rather give to:
   a. An organization that fights hunger by providing people with hot meals at a soup kitchen?
      OR
   b. An organization that fights hunger by teaching people job skills so that they can get jobs and earn a living?

6. Would you rather give to:
   a. An organization that tutors low-income high school students in math?
      OR
   b. An organization that tries to convince the government to give more money to public high school math programs?

7. Would you rather give to:
   a. Your cousin who is participating in a walk-a-thon to raise money for cancer research?
      OR
   b. An organization that runs a camp for children with cancer?

8. Would you rather give to:
   a. An organization that provides new sports equipment to children who live in the slums in Kenya?
      OR
   b. Your friend who is raising money for new uniforms for his/her basketball team?
Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 71a

Rabbi Yosef taught [about the verse in the Torah that says]: “If you lend money to any of my people that are poor with you.”

[This verse teaches that if you have to choose between:]

• a Jew and a non-Jew, give to the Jew first;
• a poor person and a rich person, give to the poor person first;
• a poor relative and poor people in your town, give to your poor relative first;
• poor people in your town and poor people in another town, give to the poor people of your own town first.

1. Exodus 22:24

WHO GETS PRIORITY?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The text above describes four pairs of people who may need financial help. Underline each pair. Within each pair, circle the person who the text says should be prioritized.

2. The text suggests prioritizing “a poor person” ahead of “a rich person.” When might “a rich person” need financial help?

3. Why do you think these four statements are listed in this specific order?

4. Do you agree or disagree with these statements of priority? Why?
Session 6: Where Do We Give?
Part 2: The Arguments

AGE: Middle School

TIME: 45 minutes

OBJECTIVE
In this session students continue to grapple with how to make decisions about where to give tzedakah.

INTRODUCTION
This session is the second part of a double session that explores how students make decisions about where to allocate tzedakah. The double session recognizes that because no individual possesses the necessary financial resources to solve all of the poverty and injustice in the world, we each must make choices about which causes and organizations to prioritize when we give tzedakah. In the double session, students identify the factors that influence their decisions, construct arguments for assigning certain priorities and begin to articulate their own giving priorities.

In Part 2 of this double session, students delve into the arguments and rationales for assigning priority to particular causes or populations. They engage in formal debate, using Jewish texts to inform their positions.

Note: This lesson can also be taught as two sessions—the first devoted to preparation and the second for the debate itself. In this case, the debate can be elongated and made more formal by inviting in a guest moderator and/or other students or families to watch.

OUTCOMES
- Students will understand that the act of giving tzedakah is complex and involves making tough decisions among competing priorities.
- Students will articulate the different factors at play in deciding where to allocate tzedakah.
- Students will articulate the reasons to assign priorities to different causes or populations.
- Students will begin to articulate how they themselves make decisions about where to give tzedakah.

MATERIALS
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- “The Great Tzedakah Debate” pages (provided below, labeled for each group, 1 for each student in the group)
- “Texts on Tzedakah Priorities, Groups A & B” page (provided below, 1 for each student in groups A & B)
- “Texts on Tzedakah Priorities, Groups C & D” page (provided below, 1 for each student in groups C & D)
- “Where Do You Give? Giving Plan” (provided below, 1 per student)
- Watch or clock
- “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster
- Camera (optional)
PREPARATION

- This lesson includes a number of handouts that are differentiated for four different groups within the class. Please make sure you have pre-divided the class into four equally-sized groups and prepared the necessary handouts for each group.

Note: If you are short on time or have a small class, we recommend you choose only one of the debates. Break the class into three groups—two to debate and one to be the audience. Have the audience prepare questions based on the Jewish texts and organization descriptions to ask each of the debate teams after its presentation.

- Please consider taking photographs of “The Great Tzedakah Debate” activity and recording students’ comments during the discussion. E-mail them to education@ajws.org so that they can be featured on the Where Do You Give? website.

INTEGRATING THE TAP

If your class is conducting a Tzedakah Allocations Process (TAP) alongside your study of the curriculum, connect this session to the “Making the First Level Decision” and “Making Final Decisions” stages of the TAP. See Making it Real: Guiding Students through a Tzedakah Allocations Process for more guidance on facilitating a TAP.

LESSON PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION (2 MINUTES)
   a. Ask two or three students to share their experience taking the “Would You Rather?” quiz online with their parent. When did they agree/disagree with each other and why? How similar or different were their results from other users?
   b. Remind students that in the previous session they identified a number of categories to choose between when deciding where to give tzedakah, including:
      i. local/global
      ii. Jewish/non-Jewish
      iii. greater need/lesser need
      iv. family and friends/people I don’t know
      v. addressing the immediate problem/addressing the causes of the problem
      vi. issues that matter to me/issues I don’t care about so much

Explain that in this session, students will debate which of these categories to prioritize, using Jewish texts and their own ideas as a guide.

2. DEBATE PREPARATION (3 MINUTES INTRODUCTION; 10 MINUTES PREPARATION)
   KEY ACTIVITY
   a. Explain that students will participate in a debate about where to donate tzedakah.
   b. Divide students into four groups and explain that there will be two debates, one after the other. In the first debate, Group A will face Group B and debate whether to donate to a Jewish or non-Jewish organization, while Groups C and D will be the audience. In the second debate, Group C will debate Group D about whether to donate to a local or global organization, while Groups A and B will be the audience. Tell students that the structure of the debate will be as follows:
• One group presents for two minutes
• The next group presents for two minutes
• The first group responds for one minute
• The second group responds for one minute
• Three minutes of Q&A from the audience

Explain that in each debate students will try to convince their classmates to allocate tzedakah to a particular organization. Explain that you will provide them with information about their organization. They must base their arguments on the facts they are given. You will also provide them with several Jewish texts. They must use at least one Jewish text to support their arguments. Also remind your students that they must debate respectfully by presenting their ideas, but never by insulting the other organization or their classmates.

c. Give each group the appropriate “The Great Tzedakah Debate” page (1 per student) as well as the appropriate “Texts on Tzedakah Priorities” page (1 per student).

d. Instruct students to read “The Great Tzedakah Debate” page and use the remaining time (around 10 minutes) to prepare for the debate.

Note: During the preparation time, you may want to check in with each group to make sure that they understand their assignment and have identified which text supports their arguments.

Note: If your students need background on the Jewish texts, please use the following descriptions:
• Shulchan Aruch: The Shulchan Aruch is a code of Jewish law written in the 16th century in Israel by Rabbi Yosef Karo.
• Babylonian Talmud: Written around 500CE, the Babylonian Talmud is a record of rabbinic discussions about Jewish law.
• Rambam: Also known as Maimonides, Rambam lived in the 1100s in Spain, Israel and Egypt. He wrote books of Jewish law and philosophy.
• Responsum of the Hatam Sofer: A collection of legal questions and answers written at the turn of the 19th century by Rabbi Moses Sofer, rabbi of Bratislava, Austrian Empire (now Slovakia).

3. THE GREAT TZEDAKAH DEBATE (15 MINUTES)

KEY ACTIVITY

a. Bring the group together to review the situation and structure of the debate:
   i. Situation: Class must decide how to allocate its $500 for tzedakah. Group A will advocate for L’Chaim. Group B will advocate for Knowledge is Power.
   ii. Structure:
      • Group A presents for two minutes
      • Group B presents for two minutes
      • Group A responds for one minute
      • Group B responds for one minute
      • Three minutes of Q&A from the audience

b. Invite Group A to begin.

c. Be sure to keep strict time. You may want to introduce a “time warning” (raise your hand, ring a soft bell) to indicate that students have 30 seconds left.
d. After the debate has concluded, ask the audience members to put their heads down and vote anonymously for the organization they would give the money to. Tell students that they may not split the $500 between the organizations, but must vote for one organization or the other. Share the results with the class.

Option: Ask students to write down the name of the organization they would give the money to along with a one-sentence explanation of why they chose that organization.

e. Begin the second debate by reviewing the situation and structure again:
   i. Situation: Class must decide how to allocate its $500 for tzedakah. Group C will advocate for Breakfast in Class. Group D will advocate for Food for Life.
   ii. Structure:
      • Group C presents for two minutes
      • Group D presents for two minutes
      • Group C responds for one minute
      • Group D responds for one minute
      • Three minutes of Q&A from the audience

f. Invite Group C to begin.

g. Again, be sure to keep strict time.

h. After the debate has concluded, ask students to put their heads down and vote anonymously for the organization they would give the money to. Tell students that they may not split the money between the organizations, but must vote for one or the other. Share the results with the class.

Option: Ask students to write down the name of the organization they would give the money to along with a one-sentence explanation of why they chose that organization.

i. Spend a few minutes debriefing the debates by asking students any of the following reflection questions:
   1. What did you hear during the debates that influenced you?
   2. What did you hear during the debates that you agreed with? Why?
   3. What did you hear during the debates that you disagreed with? Why?
   4. If you had to donate tzedakah to one of the four organizations, which would you choose and why?

4. CONCLUSION AND HOMEWORK (5 MINUTES)

a. Conclude the session by explaining to students that the debates that they participated in represented only a few of the competing tzedakah priorities that exist; namely, the tension between prioritizing the Jewish community versus the non-Jewish community and the tension between prioritizing geography or proximity versus level of need. Remind students that these debates didn’t address other categories like the organization’s tzedakah strategy, the type of issue it addresses or students’ personal relationship with the organization or cause.

b. Reassure students that the debates limited their options by forcing them to choose one organization rather than dividing the money between organizations, and that in real life they can choose to respond to the challenge of prioritizing by dividing up their donations among different causes. However, even when they do this, they still need to make decisions about where to give and how much to allocate to each organization or cause.
**Note:** If the students can handle another level of complexity, you may also want to mention that the decision to divide tzedakah money between multiple organizations or causes diminishes the impact of the money, as less money goes to address each cause. Therefore, it can be an important, although difficult, process to identify priorities and make decisions about giving a larger amount of money to one organization rather than distributing smaller amounts to multiple groups.

c. Remind your students that at the end of the unit they will create a tzedakah box that expresses what they think and have learned about tzedakah. Ask them what they learned about tzedakah today that might influence how they design their tzedakah box. Write responses on the “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster.

d. Distribute the "Where Do You Give? Giving Plan" and explain that the homework assignment is to complete Step 1 of the Where Do You Give? Giving Plan, which is also available at: http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/create-a-giving-plan/.

**Note:** The Where Do You Give? Giving Plan was originally written for adults. Therefore, please encourage students to work with their parents to complete the assignment.
THE GREAT TZEDAKAH DEBATE – GROUP A

SITUATION
Your class has raised $500 for tzedakah and is ready to decide where to give it. The class has narrowed down its choices to the following two organizations:

• **L’Chaim**
  For decades, Jews living in the former Soviet Union (FSU) were not allowed to openly practice or teach Judaism. As a result, many Jewish children in the FSU know very little about their Jewish heritage. L’Chaim is an organization that supports over 25 new Jewish programs across the FSU, providing them with money to run family Shabbat programs, purchase Jewish books, host Jewish musical performances and teach Bnai Mitzvah preparation classes. $500 will enable five students to receive tutoring for their Bnai Mitzvah.

• **Knowledge is Power**
  Research has shown that children who receive an education are more likely to earn more money and live healthier lives. And yet, millions of children around the world do not go to school. Knowledge is Power is an organization that helps children living in poor countries receive an education. It gives children scholarships to attend school and it also funds community literacy centers that teach reading and math skills as well as basic health information. $500 will enable five children to attend school for a year.

YOUR TASK
• **You need to convince your class to give all of the money to L’Chaim.** Your class cannot split the money between the two organizations. You will have two minutes to present an opening argument in favor of L’Chaim. After your opponents present their opening argument in favor of their organization, you will have one minute to respond. There will then be three minutes of question-and-answer with the audience.

• Before you construct your argument, read the texts on the “Texts on Tzedakah Priorities” page. You must refer to at least one text in your opening argument.
THE GREAT TZEDAKAH DEBATE – GROUP B

SITUATION
Your class has raised $500 for tzedakah and is ready to decide where to give it. The class has narrowed down its choices to the following two organizations:

- **L’Chaim**
  For decades, Jews living in the former Soviet Union (FSU) were not allowed to openly practice or teach Judaism. As a result, many Jewish children in the FSU know very little about their Jewish heritage. L’Chaim is an organization that supports over 25 new Jewish programs across the FSU, providing them with money to run family Shabbat programs, purchase Jewish books, host Jewish musical performances and teach Bnai Mitzvah preparation classes. $500 will enable five students to receive tutoring for their Bnai Mitzvah.

- **Knowledge is Power**
  Research has shown that children who receive an education are more likely to earn more money and live healthier lives. And yet, millions of children around the world do not go to school. Knowledge is Power is an organization that helps children living in poor countries receive an education. It gives children scholarships to attend school and it also funds community literacy centers that teach reading and math skills as well as basic health information. $500 will enable five children to attend school for a year.

YOUR TASK

- **You need to convince your class to give all of the money to Knowledge is Power.** Your class cannot split the money between the two organizations. You will have two minutes to present an opening argument in favor of Knowledge is Power. After your opponents present their opening argument in favor of their organization, you will have one minute to respond. There will then be three minutes of question-and-answer with the audience.

- Before you construct your argument, read the texts on the “Texts on Tzedakah Priorities” page. You must refer to at least one text in your opening argument.
THE GREAT TZEDAKAH DEBATE – GROUP C

SITUATION
Your class has raised $500 for tzedakah and is ready to decide where to give it. The class has narrowed down its choices to the following two organizations:

• **Breakfast in Class**
  The families of many children in your city cannot afford to provide healthy, nutritious breakfasts before school. As a result, these children either don’t eat breakfast or they eat unhealthy food, which leads to high rates of obesity. Breakfast in Class is an organization that works with the public schools in your city to make sure that every classroom provides a healthy breakfast for every student every day. $500 will enable Breakfast in Class to provide one student with a healthy breakfast every day for an entire school year.

• **Food for Life**
  In developing countries in Asia, Africa and Central and South America, five million children under the age of five die every year because of hunger. Food for Life is an organization that provides one meal per day to schoolchildren in these parts of the world. This program also serves as an incentive for students to attend school, because often, the meal they receive there is the only full meal they eat each day. $500 will enable Food for Life to provide three students with one meal every day for a whole year.

YOUR TASK

• You need to convince your class to give all of the money to Breakfast in Class. Your class cannot split the money between the two organizations. You will have two minutes to present an opening argument in favor of Breakfast in Class. After your opponents present their opening argument in favor of their organization, you will have one minute to respond. There will then be three minutes of question-and-answer with the audience.

• Before you construct your argument, read the texts on the “Texts on Tzedakah Priorities” page. You must refer to at least one text in your opening argument.
SITUATION

Your class has raised $500 for tzedakah and is ready to decide where to give it. The class has narrowed down its choices to the following two organizations:

• **Breakfast in Class**
  The families of many children in your city cannot afford to provide healthy, nutritious breakfasts before school. As a result, these children either don’t eat breakfast or they eat unhealthy food, which leads to high rates of obesity. Breakfast in Class is an organization that works with the public schools in your city to make sure that every classroom provides a healthy breakfast for every student every day. $500 will enable Breakfast in Class to provide one student with a healthy breakfast every day for an entire school year.

• **Food for Life**
  In developing countries in Asia, Africa and Central and South America, five million children under the age of five die every year because of hunger. Food for Life is an organization that provides one meal per day to schoolchildren in these parts of the world. This program also serves as an incentive for students to attend school, because often, the meal they receive there is the only full meal they eat each day. $500 will enable Food for Life to provide three students with one meal every day for a whole year.

YOUR TASK

• **You need to convince your class to give all of the money to Food for Life.** Your class cannot split the money between the two organizations. You will have two minutes to present an opening argument in favor of Food for Life. After your opponents present their opening argument in favor of their organization, you will have one minute to respond. There will then be three minutes of question-and-answer with the audience.

• Before you construct your argument, read the texts on the “Texts on Tzedakah Priorities” page. You must refer to at least one text in your opening argument.
# Texts on Tzedakah Priorities: Groups A & B

## Prioritizing Jews

1. *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah* 249:16

There are those who say that the commandment to build a synagogue is more important than the commandment of general tzedakah, but tzedakah that teaches young children Torah or heals poor people who are sick is more important than the commandment to build a synagogue.

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## Supporting Non-Jews

2. *Babylonian Talmud, Gittin* 61a

Our Rabbis taught: We provide for the non-Jewish poor with the Jewish poor, visit the non-Jewish sick with the Jewish sick, and bury the non-Jewish dead with the Jewish dead, for the sake of peace.

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TEXTS ON TZEDAKAH PRIORITIES
GROUPS C & D

PRIORITIZING GEOGRAPHY

1. Rambam, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 7:13
A poor person who is one’s relative takes precedence over any other person; poor people in one’s household take precedence over poor people in one’s city; poor people in one’s city take precedence over poor people in another city.

2. Responsum of the Hatam Sofer 2:231
There are two statements: “When one is starving, the one who is starving takes precedence” and “The poor of your city take precedence over the poor of another city and your poor relatives take precedence over non-relatives.” That is to say—this applies if both poor people need food or clothing. However, if the poor of your city have what they need to live, but just don’t have any extra money [and the poor of the other city don’t have food or clothing], then the poor of the other city take precedence over the poor of your city, for the neediest takes precedence.

PRIORITIZING LEVEL OF NEED
Create a Giving Plan

To give away money is an easy matter ... and in any man's power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how large and when, for what purpose and how, is neither in every man's power nor an easy matter. Hence it is that such excellence is rare, praiseworthy and noble.

— Aristotle

The act of giving money is a powerful way to participate in changing the world. Your money can contribute to saving lives and make an impact on serious problems in our world today. Giving money is also an important expression of your values and an opportunity to put your values into action. Being intentional about where you give and how much money you give away each year will help you maximize an opportunity to create change in the world in a way that aligns with your values. This worksheet will help you design an intentional plan for your philanthropic giving.

Step 1: Set your priorities

1. Start by considering the causes that are most important to you. What about our world makes you angry? What keeps you up at night? What are the most important things that you think need to change in order to improve our society and our world?

2. Financial donations often go not only toward addressing certain issues but also to particular communities of people. Factors such as relationship, geography, religion and perceived level of need impact our decisions on who to help. For example, you may prioritize supporting members of your own community and also supporting those in greatest need in a country far away where hunger and poverty are acute. Take a moment to consider not only the causes you want to support, but also which communities you prioritize.
Step 2: Find organizations to support

In order to decide where to give your money, it is important to articulate your vision for what you hope your money will help accomplish and the strategies you believe will help to achieve this vision.

1. For each issue and community you listed in questions four above, what do you hope your money will help to accomplish? Write your answers into the issue and vision columns in the below table.

2. For each row on your table, what strategy do you want to support to reach this vision? [See box below for more information.] Write your answers into the corresponding strategy column below.

Think about where you have given in the past. Are these donations aligned with priorities you expressed in questions one and two? If not, why not? Are there additional priorities you need to factor into your future giving? (For example, a donation to your alma mater.) Are there causes you have supported in the past that do not align with your priorities that you can stop funding? Respond to these questions in the space below.

WHERE DO YOU GIVE? GIVING PLAN

4. Using your answers to the above questions, list the issues and communities you will support this year.

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Strategies for changing the world

There is not one way to effect change, and it often takes multiple strategies to impact an issue. While not comprehensive, here is a list of four common strategies that many charitable organizations use to achieve their goals. As you read these different strategies for change, consider the types of organizations that you want to support.

a. Direct service: A direct service organization provides for the immediate needs of the community it serves. (For example: homeless shelters, food pantries and free or low-cost medical clinics.)

b. Technical assistance and training: Organizations that employ this approach provide technical services to help people better their own lives. (For example: career counseling, job training or micro-loans to help individuals start their own businesses.)
3. Which organizations can you support that share your vision and strategy for change? If you don’t know how to find these organizations, reach out to friends, family, teachers and others to ask for suggestions. In addition, experts in the field often recommend organizations to support in newspapers, magazine articles and blog posts. If you still can’t find what you are looking for, search online for the causes you care about. Write the organizations you want to support in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing due diligence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to make sure the organizations you support act in the best interest of the communities they serve. As you research organizations, ask the following questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Is the organization transparent about how money is allocated and spent? Check online services such as Charity Navigator and GuideStar to evaluate the financial health and accountability of an organization you want to support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. How effective is the organization in meeting its goals? Ask for success stories and whether the organization evaluates its programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Do people who are served by this organization have an active role in deciding where money goes and how it is spent? Communities in need often know best how to address the challenges they face. Organizations are most helpful and effective when they respond to the articulated needs of those they seek to help, not when they push their own agenda.</td>
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<p>| c. <strong>Education and research</strong>: Education and research organizations work to advance society’s knowledge about important issues so that those working in the field are better able to make an impact. (For example: medical research, think tanks and organizations that educate to raise awareness about certain issues.) |
| d. <strong>Political or legal advocacy</strong>: Organizations that engage in advocacy work put pressure on government representatives to influence policy change or bring cases to court to ensure that laws are not violated. (For example: by lobbying Congress to pass policies that support affordable housing or bringing a legal case against a corporation that is in violation of environmental protection laws.) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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Step 3: Decide how much you will give
The question of how much money you will give away is not trivial. How can we individually, and as a society, filter more of our money to bettering the world? Many of us can afford to give far more than we are giving, or can curb our spending on things we don’t need in order to give more. Supporting causes that align with your passions and values can help you to feel more compelled to give. But you will also need to take the plunge to maximize your giving potential.

1. How much money (and what percentage of your income) did you give away last year?

2. Honestly ask yourself: Can you afford to give more than you are currently giving? If so, what holds you back from giving more? What will help you overcome this obstacle?

3. What percentage of your income will you donate this year? Use the following chart as a guide. Find your income level and then look across until you see the percentage of your income that makes sense to you.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>2%</th>
<th>3%</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>15%</th>
<th>20%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$60,000</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$2,225</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$11,250</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$37,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The amounts are listed in pre-tax dollars but you can choose to calculate post-tax figures.

4. Fill in the blank. This year, I commit to giving away $______________ to philanthropic causes.
**Step 4: Divide it up**
Use the chart below to divide your money across the organizations you listed. Consider whether you want to divide your money so that many organizations receive a small amount, or if you would rather give larger amounts to a smaller number of organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Percentage of my giving</th>
<th>Amount to donate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Totals**

**Step 5: Write the check or click the “donate” button**
Congratulations on making a thoughtful and intentional plan for your philanthropic giving. Now, help others learn from you! Discuss your giving plan with friends and ask them about their giving priorities. We also invite you to share your planning process on the Where Do You Give? blog or by uploading a video about your experience on the website.
Session 7: How Much Do We Give?

AGE: Middle School
TIME: 45 minutes
OBJECTIVE
In this session students explore how much tzedakah they believe is the appropriate amount to give, and make their own tzedakah commitments.

INTRODUCTION
In this session students explore the question: How much should we give to tzedakah? Using classical Jewish texts as well as a video clip about a contemporary family’s radical tzedakah decision, this session encourages students to consider how much they would be willing to change in their lives in order to increase justice in the world. The session concludes by asking students to commit to giving some amount of their own money to tzedakah.

OUTCOMES
• Students will understand the traditional Jewish obligation of giving 10% of one’s earnings to tzedakah.
• Students will explore the question of whether and how much a person should change his or her lifestyle in order to give tzedakah.
• Students will make commitments to give a percentage of their earnings/gift money to tzedakah.

MATERIALS
• Chart paper or whiteboard
• Markers
• Computer with internet connection and projector
• “How Much Do We Give?” page (provided below, 1 for each student)
• 3x5 index cards cut in half (2 halves for each student)
• “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster
• “Where Do You Give? Giving Plan” (provided below, optional, for teacher reference)

PREPARATION
• Make sure that “The Power of Half” video is ready to play at http://wheredoyougive.org/get-inspired/watch-videos/.

LESSON PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)
   a. Remind students that they have spent the last several weeks discussing the various complicated factors that go into deciding where to give and beginning to set some of their own giving priorities.
   b. Ask two or three students to share which communities or issues they listed on their giving plan. Tell them that now that they have developed an idea of what causes and organizations they want to support, the question they will explore in this session is: “How much tzedakah should we give?”
c. Ask students to brainstorm answers to the question: “How much tzedakah should a person give?” Encourage students to think in terms of amounts of money, percentages of money, impact of the money, etc. For example, students might say “25 dollars” or “five percent of my allowance” or “Enough money to provide food for someone else.” Record answers on chart paper or whiteboard. Make sure to attribute the answers to the students who shared them.

2. TEXT STUDY (15 MINUTES)

KEY ACTIVITY

a. Explain to students that Jewish communities have been debating the question of how much to give for over 2,000 years. Tell students that they are going to look at two of the voices in the debate, a statement from the Tur from the 1300s and one from the Rambam from the 1100s.

b. Option 1: Chavruta

Ask students to learn the texts in chavruta (with a partner) using the discussion questions provided. Do a quick check-in as a full group by taking a few responses to these questions: The Tur suggests that we should be able to earn a living before we have to give tzedakah while the Rambam suggests that even poor people should give tzedakah. Which opinion do you agree with and why? If you disagree with both, can you suggest another approach?

Option 2: Full Group

Alternatively, you can study the texts as a whole group. Invite one or two students to read each text aloud. Then use the discussion questions provided with the text to guide the group conversation.

Note: If your students need background on the Jewish texts, please use the following descriptions:

- **Tur**: The Tur is a code of Jewish law written by Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, who lived in Spain from 1270-1340.
- **Rambam**: Also known as Maimonides, Rambam lived in the 1100s in Spain, Israel and Egypt. He wrote books of Jewish law and philosophy.

c. Ask your students to summarize how much the Tur and Rambam think people should give to tzedakah. Add these responses to the board or chart paper you generated earlier.

3. THE POWER OF HALF (20 MINUTES)

KEY ACTIVITY

a. Tell students that you will show them a short video clip about the Salwens, a family in Georgia that decided to sell their house and move into one half its size in order to be able to give away more money. Ask students to consider the following question as they watch: What are you willing to give up so that others can have a better life?


c. Ask your students to summarize how much the Salwen family gave to tzedakah. Add these responses to the board or chart paper you generated earlier.
d. Guide a discussion on the video by asking your students the following questions:
   i. What do you think the Tur would say about the Salwen family’s decision to sell their house in order to be able to give more tzedakah?
   ii. What do you think the Rambam would say about the Salwen family’s decision to sell their house in order to be able to give more tzedakah?
   iii. What do you think about the Salwen family’s decision to sell their house in order to be able to give more tzedakah?
   iv. How would you feel if your sibling or parent suggested that your family make a similarly dramatic tzedakah decision? Why?

4. PERSONAL PLEDGE AND HOMEWORK (5 MINUTES)
   a. Ask your students to review the board or chart paper with the different suggestions for how much to give. Ask them to think silently for a moment—where do you want to fit in on this board?
   b. Ask students to decide on one concrete commitment they will make related to how much tzedakah they will give. Some sample commitments could be:
      i. I will give 10 percent of my allowance to tzedakah.
      ii. I will give 25 cents to tzedakah every week.
      iii. Once a week, instead of buying a snack after school, I’ll give my snack money to tzedakah.
   c. Distribute the index card halves, two halves to each student. Ask students to write their names and commitment on one half and then copy them again on the second half. If you have time, encourage them to decorate their cards. When the students have completed the cards, have each student share their commitment with the class. Then collect one half to display in the classroom and ask the students to place the other half in their wallets to remind them of their commitments.
   d. Explain the homework assignment:
      i. Share your index card commitment with your family and ask them what their tzedakah commitments are.
      ii. Complete Steps 2 and 4 of the Where Do You Give? Giving Plan that you began for the last homework assignment together with your parent.
      iii. Optional: Complete step 5 of the Where Do You Give? Giving Plan by asking your parent to help you donate online or write checks.

*Note: The Where Do You Give? Giving Plan was originally written for adults. Therefore, please encourage students to work with their parents to complete the assignment.*
HOW MUCH DO WE GIVE?

1. Tur, Yoreh Deah 251

Rav Saadia Gaon wrote: “A person’s own parnassah (livelihood) takes precedence over that of anyone else, and one is not required to give tzedakah until one has acquired a parnassah . . .”

2. Rambam, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 7:5

. . . The donor should give according to how much he or she is able.

And how much is that?

• The greatest way to fulfill this commandment is to give up to 20 percent of one’s possessions.

• The average way to fulfill this commandment is to give 10 percent of one’s possessions.

• Less than this is considered an evil eye [too little].

• One should never give less than 1/3 of a shekel in a year [a very small, symbolic amount], and anyone who gives less than this has not fulfilled the commandment.

Even a poor person who is supported by tzedakah is obligated to give tzedakah to another.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Rav Saadia Gaon (quoted in the Tur) says that a person should be able to earn his/her own living before he or she is required to give tzedakah?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. What do you think it means to be able to earn a living? Does it mean earning just enough to survive or is it more than that?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. Why do you think the Rambam says that even poor people who receive tzedakah have to give tzedakah to others?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. Many people use the Rambam’s statement to support the idea that Jews should give 10% (or 1/10) of their earnings to tzedakah. Do you think 10 percent is the right amount to give to tzedakah? Why or why not?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Create a Giving Plan

To give away money is an easy matter ... and in any man's power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how large and when, for what purpose and how, is neither in every man’s power nor an easy matter. Hence it is that such excellence is rare, praiseworthy and noble.

— Aristotle

The act of giving money is a powerful way to participate in changing the world. Your money can contribute to saving lives and make an impact on serious problems in our world today. Giving money is also an important expression of your values and an opportunity to put your values into action. Being intentional about where you give and how much money you give away each year will help you maximize an opportunity to create change in the world in a way that aligns with your values. This worksheet will help you design an intentional plan for your philanthropic giving.

Step 1: Set your priorities

1. Start by considering the causes that are most important to you. What about our world makes you angry? What keeps you up at night? What are the most important things that you think need to change in order to improve our society and our world?

2. Financial donations often go not only toward addressing certain issues but also to particular communities of people. Factors such as relationship, geography, religion and perceived level of need impact our decisions on who to help. For example, you may prioritize supporting members of your own community and also supporting those in greatest need in a country far away where hunger and poverty are acute. Take a moment to consider not only the causes you want to support, but also which communities you prioritize.
3. Think about where you have given in the past. Are these donations aligned with priorities you expressed in questions one and two? If not, why not? Are there additional priorities you need to factor into your future giving? (For example, a donation to your alma mater.) Are there causes you have supported in the past that do not align with your priorities that you can stop funding? Respond to these questions in the space below.

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4. Using your answers to the above questions, list the issues and communities you will support this year.

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Step 2: Find organizations to support

In order to decide where to give your money, it is important to articulate your vision for what you hope your money will help accomplish and the strategies you believe will help to achieve this vision.

1. For each issue and community you listed in questions four above, what do you hope your money will help to accomplish? Write your answers into the issue and vision columns in the below table.

2. For each row on your table, what strategy do you want to support to reach this vision? [See box below for more information.] Write your answers into the corresponding strategy column below.

**Strategies for changing the world**

There is not one way to effect change, and it often takes multiple strategies to impact an issue. While not comprehensive, here is a list of four common strategies that many charitable organizations use to achieve their goals. As you read these different strategies for change, consider the types of organizations that you want to support.

a. **Direct service**: A direct service organization provides for the immediate needs of the community it serves. (For example: homeless shelters, food pantries and free or low-cost medical clinics.)

b. **Technical assistance and training**: Organizations that employ this approach provide technical services to help people better their own lives. (For example: career counseling, job training or micro-loans to help individuals start their own businesses.)
3. **Education and research**: Education and research organizations work to advance society’s knowledge about important issues so that those working in the field are better able to make an impact. (For example: medical research, think tanks and organizations that educate to raise awareness about certain issues.)

**Political or legal advocacy**: Organizations that engage in advocacy work put pressure on government representatives to influence policy change or bring cases to court to ensure that laws are not violated. (For example: by lobbying Congress to pass policies that support affordable housing or bringing a legal case against a corporation that is in violation of environmental protection laws.)

3. Which organizations can you support that share your vision and strategy for change? If you don’t know how to find these organizations, reach out to friends, family, teachers and others to ask for suggestions. In addition, experts in the field often recommend organizations to support in newspapers, magazine articles and blog posts. If you still can’t find what you are looking for, search online for the causes you care about. Write the organizations you want to support in the table below.

**Doing due diligence**
It is important to make sure the organizations you support act in the best interest of the communities they serve. As you research organizations, ask the following questions:

- **Is the organization transparent about how money is allocated and spent?** Check online services such as Charity Navigator and GuideStar to evaluate the financial health and accountability of an organization you want to support.
- **How effective is the organization in meeting its goals?** Ask for success stories and whether the organization evaluates its programs.
- **Do people who are served by this organization have an active role in deciding where money goes and how it is spent?** Communities in need often know best how to address the challenges they face. Organizations are most helpful and effective when they respond to the articulated needs of those they seek to help, not when they push their own agenda.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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**Step 3: Decide how much you will give**
The question of how much money you will give away is not trivial. How can we individually, and as a society, filter more of our money to bettering the world? Many of us can afford to give far more than we are giving, or can curb our spending on things we don’t need in order to give more. Supporting causes that align with your passions and values can help you to feel more compelled to give. But you will also need to take the plunge to maximize your giving potential.

1. How much money (and what percentage of your income) did you give away **last year**?

2. Honestly ask yourself: Can you afford to give more than you are currently giving? If so, what holds you back from giving more? What will help you overcome this obstacle?

3. What percentage of your income will you donate this year? Use the following chart as a guide. Find your income level and then look across until you see the percentage of your income that makes sense to you.*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>2%</th>
<th>3%</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>15%</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tr>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
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<td>$50,000</td>
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<td>$60,000</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
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<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$2,225</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$11,250</td>
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<td>$100,000</td>
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<td>$250,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$37,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
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* The amounts are listed in pre-tax dollars but you can choose to calculate post-tax figures.

4. Fill in the blank. This year, I commit to giving away $__________________ to philanthropic causes.
Step 4: Divide it up
Use the chart below to divide your money across the organizations you listed. Consider whether you want to divide your money so that many organizations receive a small amount, or if you would rather give larger amounts to a smaller number of organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Percentage of my giving</th>
<th>Amount to donate</th>
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Totals

Step 5: Write the check or click the “donate” button
Congratulations on making a thoughtful and intentional plan for your philanthropic giving. Now, help others learn from you! Discuss your giving plan with friends and ask them about their giving priorities. We also invite you to share your planning process on the Where Do You Give? blog or by uploading a video about your experience on the website.
Session 8: Reflecting on Tzedakah through the Tzedakah Box

AGE: Middle School
TIME: 45 minutes

OBJECTIVE
In this session, students reflect on their learning about tzedakah and apply their new insights and knowledge to the design of a tzedakah box.

INTRODUCTION
This session concludes Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum and provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning and apply their knowledge. It focuses on the tzedakah box as a ritual object and invites students to reflect on the ways in which the tzedakah boxes they are familiar with do (or do not) represent the complexities of giving tzedakah and students’ own giving practices. It also introduces students to the winning tzedakah box designs from Where Do You Give?'s National Design Competition. Using text, personal reflection and art, the session encourages students to design their own tzedakah boxes that reflect their learning and their responses to the critical questions of where they give, to whom and why.

Note: This session can easily be expanded into multiple sessions for students to design their tzedakah boxes and share/explain their designs to one another.

OUTCOMES
• Students will analyze the tzedakah box as a functional ritual object.
• Students will reflect on how tzedakah boxes can both reflect and influence how we give.
• Students will begin to design tzedakah boxes that reflect a range of competing tzedakah values in the 21st century.

MATERIALS
• Chart paper or whiteboard
• Markers
• Stickers (optional)
• Computer with internet connection and projector
• 10-15 tzedakah boxes (see preparation section below)
• “Guidelines for Running a Tzedakah Box Design Competition in Your School or Classroom” (provided below)
• Images of tzedakah boxes (provided below, 1 set per class, printed in color if possible)

Note: These images include the three winners of Where Do You Give?'s National Design Competition along with the designers’ statements. The language of the designers’ statements is sophisticated, so consider whether to display it along with the images or to use it for your own reference.

• “Tzedakah Box Tour” page (provided below, 1 per student)
• “Tzedakah Box Memories” page (provided below, 1 per student, optional)
• “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster
• Camera (optional)
PREPARATION

- Plan the logistics of the student competition in your class or school (see “Guidelines for Running a Tzedakah Box Design Competition in Your School or Classroom”). Determine whether you expect students to complete their designs, whether you will give class time for creating designs, what the timeline is, what the prizes are, etc.
- Ask students to bring in a tzedakah box from home. (If students don’t have tzedakah boxes or would prefer not to bring them in, they can bring in a photograph or picture of a tzedakah box instead.)
- Bring in your own tzedakah box(es) and those of friends and colleagues to supplement the students’ boxes. Try to include some examples of tzedakah boxes that are from specific organizations and some that are especially creative.
- Set up part of the room like a museum exhibit with the tzedakah boxes the students brought from home as well as the tzedakah box images, including the winning designs and artists’ statements from the Where Do You Give? National Design Competition.
- Make sure that the “Where Do You Give? Competition” video is ready to play at http://wheredoyougive.org/.
- Please consider taking photographs of the “Tzedakah Box Tour” activity and recording students’ comments during the discussion. Email them to education@ajws.org so that they can be featured on the Where Do You Give? website.

LESSON PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)
   a. Tell students that Judaism employs different ritual objects to help us perform mitzvot. Ask them to brainstorm some. Examples may include: kiddush cups, tallitot, chanukiot, mezuzot, etc. Point out to students that these ritual objects can be designed in very different ways and that their designs can reflect their purpose and can also evoke different feelings in us when we use them. Explain to students that in this session they will examine the tzedakah box as an important Jewish ritual object that helps us practice and think about the mitzvah of tzedakah. They will reflect on how the design of a tzedakah box expresses its purpose and can even affect how we do the mitzvah. Show them the “Tzedakah Box Influences” poster and remind them that we have been discussing how what we have learned about tzedakah might affect how we design our tzedakah boxes for several weeks. Tell them that at the end of the session (or afterwards), they will have the chance to design their own tzedakah boxes reflecting what they have learned.

2. TZEDEKAH BOX TOUR (10 MINUTES)
   KEY ACTIVITY
   a. Tell students that they will now have the opportunity to look at a variety of different tzedakah boxes. Explain that some of the tzedakah boxes are from their homes, and some are the designs that won the Where Do You Give? National Design Competition along with the artists’ statements. Remind them that this was a competition for artists to design a tzedakah box that motivated people to think about where they give, to whom and why.
   b. Distribute the “Tzedakah Box Tour” page and ask students to complete it as they walk around the room.
Option: Give students different colored stickers with which to vote for tzedakah boxes. For example, students can put their red sticker next to the tzedakah box that is their favorite, their blue sticker next to the tzedakah box they think is most unusual and their green sticker next to the tzedakah box that most motivates them to give tzedakah. This will allow you to see if there are particular tzedakah boxes that attract a lot of attention from students and focus the following discussion on those tzedakah boxes in particular.

c. Invite students to walk around the room looking at the tzedakah boxes and the images of tzedakah boxes.

3. DEBRIEF AND DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

KEY ACTIVITY

a. After students have completed their “Tzedakah Box Tour” page, bring them together for a debrief using the following questions (also found on the page) as a guide.

i. What features did most of the tzedakah boxes have in common?
   (You may want to prompt students and ask specifically about features such as slots for coins, a way to get the money out, the word tzedakah appearing in Hebrew or English, the name of a specific organization, etc.)

ii. What were some of the main differences among the tzedakah boxes?

iii. Which tzedakah box do you like most? Why?

iv. Which tzedakah box do you think is most unusual? What is unusual about it? Why do you think the designer chose to make it this way?

v. Which tzedakah box (or boxes) would motivate you to give tzedakah? Why?

vi. Which, if any, of the tzedakah boxes made you think of something you learned in this tzedakah unit? What did it remind you of?

vii. Are there any aspects of tzedakah that you learned about that aren’t reflected in any of these tzedakah boxes? If so, what are they?

b. Remind students that the design of a ritual object—in this case a tzedakah box—can actually influence how we feel or act when we use that object. Discuss which boxes might motivate students to give tzedakah and why.

c. Explain to students that a tzedakah box not only has the power to motivate people to give, but can also help people think about where they are giving.

i. Remind students of the sessions on tzedakah priorities and the range of options for where we give tzedakah.

ii. Ask students to think back to the tzedakah box that they liked the most or the one that would motivate them to give.

iii. Ask students: Does that tzedakah box remind you in any way of where you give or how you decide where to give? If so, how does it do that?
4. INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT COMPETITION (15 MINUTES)
KEY ACTIVITY


b. Review your class’s “Tzedakah Box Influences Poster.” Ask your students how each of these ideas might be expressed by a tzedakah box.

c. Explain to students that they are about to imagine and design a tzedakah box that would reflect where they give and help them and others make decisions about where to give. What would it look like?

Note: Encourage students not to design a tzedakah box that is an advertisement for a particular organization or cause, but rather one that makes people think about where they give and why.

d. Give students a few minutes to either draw a sketch or make a list of what elements such a tzedakah box would include. If there is time, ask a few students to share their sketches or lists.

e. Explain to students that will have a chance to design these tzedakah boxes. Much like the Where Do You Give? National Design Competition, their class/school will run a competition to find the tzedakah box that most makes them think about where we give, to whom and why.

f. Explain how the tzedakah box competition will work in your school, including when submissions are due and what students can win. For guidance on how to run a competition in your school, see “Guidelines for Running a Tzedakah Box Design Competition in Your School or Classroom.”

5. CONCLUSION AND HOMEWORK (5 MINUTES)

a. Explain that although this session concludes the unit on tzedakah, it should not conclude the students’ thinking about and giving tzedakah. Remind students that they can continue learning about and reflecting on tzedakah by reading and posting on the Where Do You Give? blog at http://wheredoyougive.org/blog/.

b. Explain the homework assignment:
   i. Complete your tzedakah box design.
   ii. Write an explanation of your tzedakah box design that explains the design and the Jewish values that it reflects.

   Note: Decide how long the explanation should be and communicate that guideline to students as well.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE TZEDAKAH BOX (15 MINUTES)

1. Distribute the “Tzedakah Box Memories” page.

2. Ask students to read the short text on the handout and answer the questions below it.

3. Bring the full group together and invite a few students to share their tzedakah memories with one another.

4. Encourage students to visit http://wheredoyougive.org/blog/post/tell-us-your-tzedakah-story to share their tzedakah memories. Explain that their early memories of tzedakah and tzedakah boxes probably continue to influence how they respond to different tzedakah boxes that they see today.
Guidelines for Running a Tzedakah Box Design Competition in Your School or Classroom

INTRODUCTION

*Where Do You Give?* is a project of American Jewish World Service designed to reimagine tzedakah for the 21st century. Through a national design competition, online interactive media and educational resources, *Where Do You Give?* engages the Jewish community in critical questions about where we give, to whom and why.

In 2011, *Where Do You Give?* sponsored a national design competition that challenged artists, designers and conceptual thinkers—both adults and students—to create a tzedakah box for the 21st century that reflects these critical questions. Running a similar competition in your classroom or school is an effective and engaging way to culminate and assess your students’ engagement with *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*. Please note that the competition can also include students who have not been exposed to the curriculum; however, the design process will be significantly more meaningful and thought-provoking for students who have considered the nuances of giving tzedakah through the use of *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*.

The following guidelines will help you plan a competition that will enable students to use art and design to reflect on tzedakah as well as to connect students to bigger conversations about tzedakah in our modern world.

DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

Consider whether to run the competition within each class or grade, or whether to open it up to the whole school. If you open it widely, you may wish to create categories for different ages. Also determine and advertise the total number of winners and in which categories, if applicable.

DETERMINE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The competition should invite students to design a tzedakah box that will inspire users to think deeply about where they give, to whom and why.

Determine whether you wish to accept submissions that are two-dimensional (drawings or sketches) and/or three-dimensional physical boxes. Drawings or photographs may be easier to create and manage, but physical boxes have the advantage of being functional and also allow for the possibility of being used in an exhibit at the school after the competition.

You may want to require students to include an artist’s statement that explains their design and the Jewish values that it reflects. If you are connecting the competition to *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*, an artist’s statement can be an excellent form of assessment if it asks students to reference elements of the curriculum. Decide in advance the suggested length of the artist’s statement.

DETERMINE WHEN AND FOR HOW LONG THE COMPETITION WILL RUN

Consider connecting your school’s competition to your school’s calendar. For example, you may want to schedule the competition to coincide with a tzedakah unit in a particular grade or a Jewish holiday that includes tzedakah themes, such as Purim or Passover.
Determine whether you expect students to work on their designs at home or whether you plan to devote class time to the creation of their designs.

Determine how long the competition will run. You may want to limit it to a few weeks to give students enough time to work on their designs but not too much time so that you lose momentum.

SET THE CONTEXT FOR THE COMPETITION

The competition is intended to provoke reflection and dialogue about where we give, to whom and why. For students who have not been studying *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum*, consider teaching excerpts from the curriculum or bringing in speakers who can talk about their relationship to tzedakah and their commitment to philanthropy.

Consider sharing with students sample designs from the competition to inspire them in the creation of their own designs. Designs can be viewed at www.wheredoyougive.org.

You may also consider running the competition as an annual program for the grade that studies *Where Do You Give? A Tzedakah Curriculum* or specifically for bnai mitzvah students.

SELECT JUDGES AND DETERMINE PRIZES

Decide whether the competition will be judged by a select panel of faculty and/or student leaders or by student vote. If you decide on a popular vote, be sure to plan when, where and how the voting will take place as well as who is eligible to vote. You may also consider a hybrid judging system in which some winners are selected by a panel and others by popular vote.

Consider offering prizes that reinforce the tzedakah values that are embodied by the competition. For example, you may want to make the prize a donation to the winner’s organization of choice.

CONTINUE THE IMPACT

*Where Do You Give?* has continued the impact of its national design competition by creating a traveling exhibition of the winning and finalist designs. Consider doing something similar with your school’s competition by displaying students’ designs in a prominent location in your school. You may also want to include photographs of the designs in your school’s newsletter or on its website. Please also consider sending your school’s winning designs to education@ajws.org to have the designs featured on the *Where Do You Give?* website.
Images: Tzedakah Box Images
The Vending Box
THE VENDING BOX
Doug Burnett, Where Do You Give? Grand Prize Winner, Tzedakah Box Category

Please briefly describe your design:
The design of The Vending Box not only sparks conversation on the irony of our spending habits but is an encouragement towards a solution. It causes the participant to rethink the value of not only their one-time coin contribution but asks the question of the donor, “where do you give your other coins besides charity?”

After inserting a coin, participants choose a beneficiary. A screen on the back side of the box shows a video of that individual and the benefit he or she will receive as a direct result of your donation.

The materials for this box would use plastics to mimic a real vending machine. The design treatment makes charity a marketed brand and compliments the irony of our donation behaviors.

How does your design reimagine the future of giving? How will your design spark a national conversation about the obligation to give, where to give, to whom and why?

Perhaps the most startling financial behavior of all-time is this: we as Americans spend 50x more on losing weight than on feeding the hungry. One of the many reasons for this is that the former brings immediate satisfaction while the later causes an unknown and unseen benefit in a country far away.

Matched with this behavior is the vast gap between spontaneous purchases and charitable donations. We buy a soda without batting an eye but, ironically, we turn a blind eye toward a $1 donation, the likes of which could provide dramatic differences in a person’s life.

What if we had moments of spontaneous donation? And what if we could make the benefit of that donation more tangible? The Vending Box seeks to do just this.
Discover Need

Mosquitos can ruin more than a BBQ.
Malaria kills over 600,000 people every year; find out how mosquito nets can change this.
www.discoverneed.org/nets

Food problems beyond indigestion.
Over a billion people worldwide are malnourished; find out how you can help feed them.
www.discoverneed.org/hunger
Please briefly describe your design:

Elizabeth is at the grocery store doing her weekly shopping. Since the weather is getting warm, she decides to pick up some bug spray. Finding the right aisle, she glances down at the shelf to check the cost when she notices another tag next to the price tag with a mosquito on it. “Mosquitoes can ruin more than a BBQ.” she reads quietly to herself. “Malaria kills over 600,000 people every year; find out how mosquito nets can change this.” Wow, she thinks, that’s a lot higher than I thought. Noticing the QR code printed on the tag, she takes out her iPhone, grabs the link and continues shopping. Back at home, she pulls up the website she captured earlier and starts reading. She learns that malaria is caused by a parasite carried by mosquitoes and what UNICEF is doing to fight malaria through its “Nothing but Nets” campaign. She shares the link on Facebook with the status “Didn’t know it was this bad : (” and clicks on the donate button to contribute to the campaign. On the donate page, she is given the option to donate once or register and create a tzedakah box on the website that will keep track of all her donations and also track all the ‘discover need’ tags she has found. Elizabeth decides to register and makes a mental note to look for more tags the next time she goes shopping.

How does your design reimagine the future of giving? How will your design spark a national conversation about the obligation to give, where to give, to whom and why?

Americans are generous people. We contribute in huge numbers when a natural disaster strikes, and many of us have a personal cause we support, often due to the effect it has had on our lives or the lives of loved ones. While these kinds of giving should always be encouraged, many of the causes we contribute to are one-time issues or first-world diseases. In order to encourage giving that addresses the kind of systemic issues that affect the poorest people in developing countries, we need to create a deep, emotional connection between the kinds of everyday tasks we all share. ‘Discover Need’ is about highlighting the similarities between all people and educating potential donors on the kind of things we all take for granted.

Everybody needs to eat and find a place to take shelter but oftentimes we don’t think of how hard these basic needs are for many people across the world. We see such a gulf between our lives and theirs and we don’t often think of how to bridge that gap. Part of this is education. While most people know about malaria, malnutrition and other issues, they may not know how extensive and damaging the problem is or they may not know how to contribute to fighting these causes.

This project has three parts: discovering, learning, and contributing. Through the use of ‘discover need’ tags placed next to relevant products, people learn about problems in the developing world everyday just by going to their local grocery store or pharmacy. The links on the tags provide more information and empower the user to share the information and contribute. With the user’s tzedakah box they get one place to collect all the information they’ve found and all the contributions they’ve made. In this way, tzedakah isn’t just collecting coins in a tin box, but the causes and needs that the money is going to fight.

In this way, we are able to build a personal connection to the everyday problems many people face and develop a habit of giving as easy and commonplace as going to the grocery store.
Change
Please briefly describe your design:

My tzedakah box is a large-scale sculpture that functions both as a receptacle for tzedakah and as a catalyst for community engagement in local causes and reflection on the act of giving. The structure physically spells out the word “change,” a word that indicates its contents as well as its ultimate function. The dual meaning of this word prompts tzedakah givers to associate more closely the act of physically giving money to the impact it actually can have.

This tzedakah box would be part of a program where communities or private organizations such as synagogues or schools could obtain a sculpture and choose a local recipient for all the change it takes to fill the sculpture. I envision these tzedakah boxes in locations with high pedestrian traffic so that as people give, the whole community can visibly see the progress being made. It could be produced in a variety of sizes to be appropriate for different environments, and signage would be posted nearby explaining the project and encouraging more people to give.

While all this change may not amount to an extremely large sum of money, it would raise awareness about a deserving cause and could prompt larger, private donations from individuals. When the sculpture is full, the process would start over, but with a new recipient of the tzedakah.

How does your design reimagine the future of giving? How will your design spark a national conversation about the obligation to give, where to give, to whom and why?

In an increasingly virtual world, this physical, community-based tzedakah box grounds people to the real impact tzedakah can have. To be in a highly visible public space is a reminder in itself of the obligation to give. In addition, it’s very clear how much money has been given already and how much more progress remains to be made. The immediacy of it makes it so simple: to visibly, directly monitor progress as opposed to using charts, graphs, and numbers would encourage people to act. The beneficiaries of this tzedakah project are working in the same communities as the givers, and with heightened awareness about their work, people will learn more about the good their chosen recipients do and feel more compelled to give in order to better their own community.

These tzedakah boxes could be located in cities across the country, each with its own local recipient chosen by that unique community. Each time the tzedakah box is full and the cycle restarts, the community would decide by vote or selection by a committee or some other means who the next round’s tzedakah will go to. This cyclical decision-making process would spark discussions across the country about worthy local causes because community members would have to assess a variety of factors to determine how and why they would choose a certain recipient. In addition, this project would engage national dialogue about tzedakah through repetition and recognizability. In traveling from city to city, people could recognize these tzedakah boxes and be able to learn about who different communities are giving to at the time and its specific importance to them.
TZEDAKAH BOX TOUR

1. What features did most of the tzedakah boxes have in common?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

2. What were some of the main differences among the tzedakah boxes?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. Which tzedakah box do you like most? Why?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. Which tzedakah box do you think is most unusual? What is unusual about it? Why do you think the designer chose to make it this way?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. Which tzedakah box (or boxes) would motivate you to give tzedakah? Why?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

6. Which, if any, of the tzedakah boxes made you think of something you learned in this tzedakah unit? What did it remind you of?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

7. Are there any aspects of tzedakah that you learned about that aren’t reflected in any of these tzedakah boxes? If so, what are they?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
TZEDAKAH BOX MEMORIES

Please read the following text about a tzedakah box.

The characters in the text are:

- Mr. Kantor – an elderly member of the synagogue who collects tzedakah during services
- The gabbai – the main character of this text, responsible for helping to organize synagogue services

As the men rock back and forth, Mr. Kantor moves down the center aisle, using his cane for support. He stops before each man and holds out the pushke, the small tin box used to collect money for Jewish charities. One of the gabbai’s memories from childhood was the blue pushke that his mother’s parents—his bobba [grandma] and zayde [grandpa]—kept on the lace doily in the center of their small kitchen table next to the heavy crystal salt-and-pepper shakers. Their pushke had a Jewish National Fund logo on the side and a coin slot on top, like a piggy bank. Each night his grandfather emptied his loose change into it. When he had dinner with his grandparents at their house, his zayde would hand him the coins to drop into the slot, one by one.¹

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What memories does the gabbai recall when he sees the tzedakah box in the synagogue?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

2. What did your first tzedakah box look like? Where did you get it or who gave it to you?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. Share a favorite memory about a tzedakah box.
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________