



# Machar's Jewish Cultural School

## SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

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Initiative in Congregational Education**

**[www.machar.org](http://www.machar.org)  
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## SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

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## SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

### Topic: "Doing a Mitzvah"

Mitzvot, plural for mitzvah, means "commandment" in Hebrew. Commandments are rules. Jewish people, like other people, agree that helping people is an important rule. Jewish people call helping others or doing good deeds "doing a mitzvah." For secular/humanistic Jews, it is important to do good deeds regardless of whether or not there is a rule. There are 613 mitzvahs in the torah.

Some of the mitzvahs that you can do, and are “required” for Jews:

1. Lighting the menorah at Chanukah
2. Not stealing money
3. Not saying unkind things to your parents
4. Giving charity
5. Not making fun of anyone else
6. Visiting sick people
7. To celebrate Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot
8. Not gossiping about other people
9. Don't stay angry at people (don't bear a grudge)

### Objective:

- Recognize and use the word Mitzvah and Mitzvot.
- Understand that doing a mitzvah is a central part of being Jewish.

### ACTIVITIES:

1. Read Mrs. Katz and Tush by Patricia Polacco.

How is the boy in the book doing a mitzvah?

Who benefited from this mitzvah (both he and Mrs. Katz).

How did the boy benefit?

How does it feel to do a mitzvah?

Is helping an older person the only way of doing a mitzvah?

2. Read and discuss *A Mitzvah Is Something Special* by Phyllis Eisenberg.

In this story, a girl learns all of the different ways that her two very different, but equally special, grandmother use the term "mitzvah."

3. Growing a "mitzvah tree." Explain that over the course of the year, the class will be growing a "mitzvah tree"-have a tall trunk already made out of brown construction paper stapled together, with some branches attached as well. Pass out leaves made from green construction paper to the students and ask each of them to write one mitzvah that they've done during their life (they may need help writing). Have everyone share the story from their leaf and then staple them to the tree. Bring the tree to the next class, and each subsequent class, along with additional branches. Tell the students that you'll be asking them at each class to share stories of good deeds that they've done in between classes. In thinking about Rosh Hashanah/ the upcoming year, what types of leaves would they like to see on their tree (what kinds of mitzvahs would they like to try doing?) Brainstorm mitzvot that could be done before Sunday School is over and do them!

(Examples- make cards for the students and teachers who use the school during the school week; pick up litter around the school grounds and/or nearby streets).

4. Make a list of "good deeds" or mitzvot for the class.

## **TOPIC 2: Tzedakah (Hebrew)/ Tzeduka (Yiddish)**

Tzedakah comes from the Hebrew tzedek, meaning "justice" or what is right. In Judaism a righteous and just life requires devotion to helping the needy. Although the idea of charity appears throughout the Bible, there is no special term for it. Only later, in the Talmud and thereafter, did tzedakah generally come to mean charity

### **Resources:**

Ladder of Tzedakah and an on-line game for "voting" on the order of the levels:  
[www.jtsa.edu/melton/Tzedakah/ladder/index.html](http://www.jtsa.edu/melton/Tzedakah/ladder/index.html)

Jewish Social Action site: [www.socialaction.com](http://www.socialaction.com)

- For religious Jews, giving tzeduka/ Tzedakah is the law. They must give.
- For Secular/ Humanistic Jews, tzeduka/ Tzedakah means taking action, doing what is just and compassionate. The word itself comes from the Hebrew tzedek, meaning justice. Giving tzeduka/ Tzedakah means taking responsibility for others and recognizing that other people's situations are directly connected to ones own. It is most virtuous to do more for others than one is required or expected to do. There is a Hebrew word, Yotzeh, which means meeting your obligations, but not doing anything more (like putting a few coins in the Tzedakah box at Sunday School every two weeks, but not doing anything else).

Note: It is important to present this lesson in a way that does not focus on "helping the needy" or "the less fortunate." By using these types of phrases, the students are taught to think in terms of haves and have-nots-- to separate people, failing to see everyone as part of the same community. Instead, refer to "people who are cold and need sweaters"-which could be anyone in the community, if they lose their job, etc.

Maimonides (1135-1204) established levels or degrees of tzedakah/ tzeduka as part of longer books that he wrote about rules covering the business of farming. The central concern of these degrees is dignity and self-respect (Kavod, in Hebrew). Bushah -embarrassment, insult and humiliation is the opposite of Kavod. Kavod should always be the priority when giving tzedakah. Maimonides' levels, from most just to least, are:

1. Helping someone to become self sufficient
2. Giving with complete anonymity (giver nor recipient knows each others' identity)
3. Where the giver is unknown.
4. Where the receiver is unknown.
5. Giving before being asked.

6. Giving after being asked.
7. Giving less than what is needed.
8. Giving with a frown. (Someone does not want to give but they do)

### **Objectives:**

- Recognize and use the vocabulary highlighted above.
- Understand that tzeduka/ tzedakah is a central part of being Jewish.
- Appreciate that Jewish people have given the concept of tzeduka/ tzedakah a great deal of thought over time.
- Appreciate the role that tzedakah/ tzeduka plays within a community

### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. Levels of tzedakah/ tzeduka cards: Make 3 X 5 cards with pictures and words related to the levels. Discuss the cards so that everyone understands the different levels. Have the children work in two teams (each with an adult facilitator) to come up with what they think is the correct order for the cards.

The teams also come answer the following questions:

Should people who are poor give Tzedakah?

Should there be a certain percentage-i.e. 20%, 10%, that everyone gives?

(It may be necessary to explain percentages by drawing a pie on the chalkboard) If so, which percentage? Who should decide this?

Should rich people give a higher percentage than other people?

Should you give to someone just because they ask, or should you try to find out first if they're really in need?

Who comes first (i.e. should you give to someone in your own family, in your community, etc. before you give to others)?

Note: there are answers established for many of these questions in Jewish theological texts... i.e. people who are poor are required to give Tzedakah. Reference these if the students ask, but also recognize that part of being secular/ humanistic Jews is that we decide how we lead our lives (guided by Jewish and universal principles)-so having the students come up with their own answers is appropriate.

2. Make tzeduka/tzedakah boxes (pushkes): There are many ways of making these-decorating coffee cans (with construction paper), making clay boxes with slots for coins, etc. With advanced notice, the students could bring in whatever type of container they'd like to use for their pushke.
3. Brainstorm something that the class could do that would qualify as the highest level of tzeduka/ tzedakah (helping someone to help themselves) and come up with a plan for putting this into action.
4. As homework, ask the students to discuss their family's relationship to tzedakah/ tzeduka-how much do their families give and where do they give it to? Encourage the students to create a Tzedakah Agreement with their parents wherein they decide to save 1/3 of their money, give 1/3 of it away as Tzedakah and to purchase items with the last third. The family may also wish to make a Tzedakah agreement on which they state what percentag of their money they plan to give away, and to what ends.

Everyone in the family should sign the agreement. Blank agreement sheets can be made in class.

5. Read and discuss: Gvm Shoes and Irises, by Danny Siegel.
6. Bone Button Borscht by Aubrey Davis. A "poor beggar" arrives in town and wanders from house to house seeking food and shelter. But the townspeople- who don't think they have anything to give- turn him away. Undaunted, the man removes bone buttons from his coat and announces that he can make a delicious soup with just one more button. Soon, the whole town is involved in making the most wonderful borscht.
7. Changing Places: A Kids' View of Shelter Living by Margery Schwartz Chalofsky, Glen Finland and Judy Willis. Eight homeless children describe their experiences living in homeless shelters.
8. Invite a guest speaker from the National Coalition for the Homeless (this could be combined this with older grades), [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org), to dispel myths about people who are homeless (the web-site includes good fact sheets on this).
9. Discuss historical and contemporary Hebrew Free Loan Societies: [www.freeloan.org](http://www.freeloan.org). Invite a guest speaker with direct experience with a Hebrew Free Loan Society (perhaps an older member of Machar-- the students can help to research this).
10. Research and discuss Jewish people living in poverty. For New York City statistics: [www.metcouncil.org/poverty.htm](http://www.metcouncil.org/poverty.htm).

Since Machar passes a Tzedakah box each Sunday (with students in each grade voting at the end of the year on where they want the funds to be sent), the second grade students may wish to research the organizations that they'd like to see on the school-wide list.

11. Have students volunteer to read parts in the following “play”

Poor person: Excuse me sir, I don't normally do this, but I am in desperate need of your help. You see, I was working as a mover and I hurt my back. I can't work while I recover & I have 3 kids at home. We are struggling to pay the rent and put food on the table. I'm supposed to get a workman's compensation check, but it hasn't come yet. I don't know how we're going to pay our rent. Can you please help?

Wealthy person A

Patiently listens. (You are visibly shaken & moved to tears). I am so sorry for what you and your family are going through. (Reach deep into your pocket, pull out \$5 and press it compassionately into the palm of the poor person. If you are moved, give a hug.

Wealthy person B

Impatiently listens. You hear just enough to get the picture & politely, but firmly cut off the man's story. Give him \$100. Tell him “good luck” and rush off. It's important not to be mean or rude, just quick.

Which person did the better thing?

Ask for show of hands for each answer from the whole class.

Put yourself in the place of the person who needed the money. Which would you prefer?

Does your answer change?

What do you think would be better according to Maimonides?



### **TOPIC 3: Chesed (Loving Kindness)**

Chesed or Rachamim refers to loving kindness, or compassion, especially for those who are vulnerable. Like tzedakah, it can take various forms.

- "Chesed shel emes" refers to the work done by a group of people who look after the bereaved once a family member dies.
- People act out of Chesed when they have empathy towards others.
- Gemilut Chasidim are acts of loving kindness. Some religious Jews, seeing Tzedakah solely as giving money and Gemilut Chasidim as giving money and/or personal services, feel that Gemilut Chasidim is greater than Tzedakah. Either way, it's clear that without acts of loving kindness, people would be lonely and without community.
- "Compassion implies solidarity, which consists of standing with others who are in pain or are less fortunate than you are. It means accepting their struggles as part of your struggles and implies making conscious sacrifices in their service." - Collin Greer and Herb Kohl in A Call to Character A Family Treasury Of Stories, Poems, Plays, Proverbs and Fables to Guide the Development of Values For You and Your Children.

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. Visit the Hebrew Home for the Aged: [www.hebrew-home.org/help.html](http://www.hebrew-home.org/help.html).

Plan some form of entertainment/skit/ music for the residents or simply visit (ask the volunteer coordinator if bringing food, candy, gifts or flowers would be appropriate). Brainstorm questions that the students may want to ask residents and/or things that they might want to share in order to alleviate awkwardness during the visits. Build in time to discuss the students' experiences directly following the field trip.

2. Read/ discuss the following portion of the Wisdom of the Jewish Sages, translated by Rami Shapiro:

Yochanan said to his disciples: Go out and see which is the wrong path for a person to follow.

Rabbi Eliezer: Blind the eye to Reality.

Rabbi Joshua: Be a bad neighbor.

Rabbi Shimon: Borrow without repaying.

Rabbi Elazar: Familiarize the heart to compassion.

Yochanan said: I prefer the words of Rabbi Elazar, for his words include all of the other words.

3. Read and Discuss:

Be Good To Eddie Lee, by Virginia Fleming. Christy's friend calls Eddie Lee, a child with Down's Syndrome, a "dummy" and tells him to go away. But Christy decides to venture out and make friends with Eddie Lee.

4. The Trees of the Dancing Goats (a story about Chesed around Hanukkah time).
5. Create a class mural with all of the images that the students can remember of people in their lives acting with Chesed towards one another.
6. Organize the class to bring clothes, books, or food to a shelter.

## **TOPIC 4: Shalom Bayyit/ Darchei Shalom**

- Shalom Bayyit is a Hebrew phrase meaning peace in the house or peace in the family. "Family" can refer someone's actual family or an entire country.
- Darchei Shalom means "ways of peace"-- Jewish writings about how Jewish people can and should work towards peace and get along with other groups of people.
- Conflict-- having disagreements with people-- is a natural part of life and, in and of itself, is not bad-- but there are more and less effective ways to resolve conflicts. Jewish young people and adults have, over time, developed ideas about this.
- Like other people, some Jewish people are better at resolving conflicts than others. Many Jewish and Palestinian people in and around Israel, for example, work very hard for peace, but things are still very hard in that part of the world.

### **Objectives:**

- Recognize and use the vocabulary highlighted above.
- Understand that resolving conflicts is a Jewish value.
- Appreciate that there are many ways to resolve conflicts.
- Practice conflict resolution skills.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. Discuss with the students what happens in their families or at school when there are conflicts. What do the students think is good about how these situations are handled and what do they wish was different? What types of conflicts do they sometimes find themselves in?
2. What can all families do in order to create a more peaceful home?
3. What can all schools do to create a more peaceful school?
4. Introduce the idea of a peace table-- spread out a blanket on the floor and explain to the students that while they're on the blanket they must listen to each other and try to discuss their conflict in a way that brings them both to agreement. As pairs of volunteers sit on the blanket, offer them various scenarios (both of them believe that a toy should be theirs to keep; both of them think that the other person should have to clean up; one of them is a parent and one is a child and the parent wants the child to play with someone whom the child does not want to play with, etc). This activity works best if the scenarios come from

the children themselves (use their contributions from the previous discussion).

5. Why do people have war? How can we avoid it? What wars have students heard of?  
What can people do to end wars?

Read and discuss:

*The Secret Grove* by Barbara Cohen. Two young boys, one Israeli, the other Jordanian, meet one afternoon in an orange grove separating their two border villages and make a secret pact.

*The Red and Black Hat in The Cow of No Color* by Nina Jaffe. There are often different sides to a story, depending on whose perspective one is coming from. Following discussion of the story, make paper bag masks-- keep the paper bags intact and on one side ask the students to draw a picture of their face and on the other side to draw a plain circle (an empty face) to represent another perspective. Explain that they can keep these as a reminder to think about other people's perspectives in the future.

*The Law of the Great Peace* from the Iroquois Book of the Great Law.

Sing and discuss the meaning of "Lo Yisa Goy."

### **Resources:**

*Starting out Right: Nurturing Young Children as Peacemakers*, by Kathleen McGinnis and Barbara Oehlberg.

*Keeping the Peace: Practicing Cooperation and Conflict Resolution with Preschoolers*, by Suzanne Wichert.

*The Big Book for Peace*, edited by Ann Durell and Marilyn Sachs (includes *The Law of the Great Peace* from the Iroquois Book of the Great Law)

*Peace Begins with You*, by Katherine Scholes.

## **TOPIC 5: Oshek and Organizing**

Oshek is the Hebrew word for not oppressing workers-- not treating workers badly. Over time, Jewish people have been workers and bosses (supervisors of workers). Jews have been slaves and have owned slaves.

When people are treated badly where they work, they often join together to change their situation. This is called "organizing." Sometimes they organize a union in which they negotiate (work out a deal) for better pay, benefits and working conditions. The biblical story of the Jews leaving Egypt is just one example of people organizing to improve their situation. In this case, Moses, Miriam and many others were the organizers.

### **Objectives:**

- Recognize and use the vocabulary highlighted above.
- Understand that not treating workers badly is part of Jewish tradition.
- Understand that when workers are treated badly, there are ways for them to change their situation.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. Read/ act and discuss Shalom Aleichem's story "Kaporos"-- this involves making chicken costumes and assembling various props-- this activity can take almost all of a class period--the students should be encouraged to really get into their chicken characters--squawking around, etc. Notes for this story are attached. Explain before beginning about the scapegoat ritual of kaporos (comes from the root word kippur, meaning to become purged in order to be forgiven-- it evolved in Europe in the middle ages and consists of circling a live chicken three times around ones head--schlogging kaporos"), with the idea of transferring their "sins" to the chicken and thus being absolved. Discuss any activities/ rituals that the students and their families or friends do today that might be considered "weird" someday. (Story not found)
2. Read and discuss Click, Clack Moo: Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin. How are the animals' actions in this modern-day book similar to the older Kaporos story?
3. Invite a union member and/or staff person to discuss their union's work.

## **TOPIC 6: Bal Tashchit - Protection of the Environment**

Bal Tashchit means “don’t waste or destroy”

Bal Tashchit – not ruining the Earth, protecting the environment, understanding and respecting nature

Over the centuries, our rabbis elaborated on what it means not to waste anything. We are told not to use more than what we need, not to needlessly destroy anything, not to use something of greater value when something of lesser value will suffice and not to use something in a way it was not meant to be used (which increases the likelihood the item will be broken or destroyed).

Reduce, reuse and recycle are three ways of saying bal tashchit.

### **Objective:**

To understand Discuss “Jewish Earth Day,” Tu B’Shevat.

Discuss why we should not use more than we need.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. Discuss: What is “Jewish Earth Day?” What is Tu B’ Shevat?
2. What trees are near our homes, why are they important? The connection between plants and food, whether people are animals, and whether people are a part of nature.
3. Act the parts of leaves, trees, the sun, etc. Use the Tu B’Shvat lesson on the website of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life [www.coejl.org](http://www.coejl.org).
4. Have students list as many trees, fruits, vegetables, animals as they can in 10 minutes.
5. Eat snacks (apples, etc.), and discuss where does this food come from, how does it grow?
6. Sing the song Big Yellow Taxi (“they paved paradise, put up a parking lot ...”) Discussing the lyrics is a good transition into threats to nature and the need to protect it.
7. How can children stop littering in their neighborhoods?
8. Seed planting

Materials: string beans in plastic bags with cotton.

Procedure: Keep cotton moist, bag open, in sunlight until two sets of leaves appear after about 2-3 weeks, then plant in dirt.

## TOPIC 7: Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World

Repairing the world means teaching and encouraging tolerance, acceptance, and diversity. In order to repair the world, we must be leaders. Why is a good leader always on the look out? What does it mean to have a vision? What is Machar's vision? Why is tikkun olam everybody's responsibility?

What Jewish prophets were involved in Tikkun Olam? How did Amos demonstrate leadership?

Standing up for your beliefs - When is it important to stand up for your beliefs?

Martin Luther King Jr. – Review his biography. What was his vision? How did he preach Tikkun Olam?

Why is it sometimes wise to be a resister? What if everyone is a resister?

**Objectives:** For the students to consider how they would try to get their peers to do things differently to live up to the principle of justice.

To exercise the kids' hearts and minds on the subject of the why and what of an effective protest that focuses on discrimination.

### ACTIVITIES:

1. Have all students stand in a line. Choose one student to be the captain. The captain should throw a ball to each student and they throw it back to him. Tell the captain to encourage the kids and be a "leader." When the first captain finishes he/she goes to the end of the line and the next person becomes captain. Go through the entire class.

Ask the students:

- a. What was the role of the captain in this race?
- b. How was the captain responsible for keeping the action moving?
- c. What were the responsibilities of the other team members?
- d. What was the effect of changing captains?
- e. What do the students think this has to do with repairing the world?
- f. This group of values are all related to the value of social action, which stresses the need to repair the system, not just the separate symptoms which make life difficult for people.

2. In the spirit of Amos, students, with their parents' support, bring in stories comparable to those of the prophets, where the hero has to try to lead the community to do something that is not their natural inclination.
3. Discuss how the students would try to get their peers to do things differently based upon principles of justice.

Examples:

If you see one child in your class say something that is not nice to another child, what could you say?

If someone says something to you that hurts your feelings, what could you say?

If you hear someone say something that is mean to a whole group of people what could you say?

If someone is all alone and has no friends, what can you say or do?

4. Read and discuss If You Had To Choose, What Would You Do? There are several stories in this book illustrating interpersonal tensions that children might face.
5. Discuss how Tikkun Olam is different from tzedakah and mitvot.
6. Demonstration to practice standing up for what you believe in:

### **Crafts Project**

Make decorated protest posters

Preparation: teacher brings in a sample poster to show the class

Materials: stiff paper, string or 3-foot lengths of lathing strips, tape; markers or crayons

Procedure: Ask each student what is something that they would like to see a whole lot more of, or ... a whole lot less of in the world.

Make signs that reflect the answers: "No War," "More Trees," "Better Teachers," "I Deserve The Best", "I Want More Ice Cream, etc." If kids want to do silly ones, have them put it on the back of a more meaningful slogan.

Attach signs to the lathing strips with tape, or to the string. The students can either hold up the signs with the wood, or wear them hanging from their necks with the string.

Parade in the halls.



If you are lucky someone will complain about their behavior and you can point out that people always give trivial reasons for stopping principled protest (too noisy, disrupts traffic, etc.).

1. Discuss examples of angry protest that may be ineffective or destructive. Read and discuss *The Sneetches*, by Dr. Seuss.
2. Discuss the value of beliefs starting with the principles for which the kids protested  
Theme: Beliefs energize your life and action
3. Singing – Music -Discuss how people use music to face difficult challenges and what it does for them: Sing “We Shall Overcome” - Discuss the meaning of “overcome.” Sing “If I Had a Hammer”
4. Play Musical Chairs - Purpose: to illustrate that although everyone tries hard to be included, some get left out because of someone else’s action, in this case moving the chairs. Sometimes people fight over silly things and make a lot of people miserable in the process.

Discuss the feeling of wanting to be included and how hard you play to be kept in; the feeling of being left out. And talk about how strange it is to fighting over the last few chairs when most of your friends have long ago left the game. In particular, for the last person, fighting for something all alone

Play the game again, but this time with no chairs – let the students improvise a solution.

5. Discrimination Game/Theme: Discrimination is not really about the person.

Preparation: Teacher makes small signs with cards or paper. On each one, put some characteristic, like “too tall,” or “too short,” or “blue eyes,” etc. Instructions: Have kids stand facing the wall. Tell them you have signs, but not to look. Randomly attach the signs to the kids’ backs. Then let them wander around for a while looking at the signs while not telling each other what is on their backs. Then have them guess what they have on their backs, then reveal. Talk about what a discriminatory idea does to people. Use examples from people you know, etc.

6. Telephone Game - Theme: Don’t believe bad things you hear about people you don’t really know. Instructions: Play “telephone” starting with a couple of phrases that are flattering to someone (e.g., “the teacher is great”). Then, phrases not so flattering, like “all tall kids are stupid.” Ask them if they know all tall kids families personally. Ask them if they think they can ever get to know all tall kids personally. Then point how easy it is to get bad info about people you don’t know.

## TOPIC 8: “Kedusha” -- Each Person is Unique

Stress how people can be different but still follow principles of Secular Humanistic Judaism

Discuss: What does it mean to be unique? Is each person different from every other person? Is every person different physically? Is every person’s personality unique? Is that a good thing?

Discuss how snowflakes are unique – and many things in nature are unique.

Are some people smart and some people dumb?

### ACTIVITIES:

1. Introduce the concept of likenesses and differences. Ask students to name things they can think of which are similar to each other, and tell why. Ask them to do the same thing for differences. (They need not begin with people, they may pick any items they wish to compare.) Next encourage students to talk about ways in which they think that people in general are alike or different.
2. Encourage children to begin thinking about ways in which they are alike or different from other children in the classroom. For example, use an overhead projector (for shadow) to trace each child’s silhouette onto paper, and have the children cut them out and mount on a background sheet. Print the child’s name vertically on his or her silhouette and ask the child to choose words beginning with these letters which s/he feels describe her/himself and print these on the silhouette.
3. Have children trace their hands on paper, cut them out, use an ink pad to print their fingerprints on them, and mount these on the bottom corners of the silhouettes. (Shoeprints or footprints can also be traced and mounted as if “walking” along a wall. These might be labeled, or left plain for children to try to guess which are their own.)
4. Ask students to bring in baby pictures without showing their classmates and mount these in windows cut in paper musical notes. Do not identify individuals, but post a list of students whose pictures are displayed and hold a contest to see who can correctly identify the most pictures. Discuss ways that people changed as they grew up, and ways in which they still look the same.
5. Measure students’ heights and list and graph them. If this activity is done early in the year, save the graphs to be redone and compared at the end of the year.
6. Have students create “recipes” for themselves, such as “Take a dash of mischief, add a sparkling smile and a happy heart, . . .” etc. ( Encourage students to look at positive traits, as some special education students see themselves very negatively.) If you find that students are reluctant to name their own traits, you may want to choose friends to write about each other. As a culminating event, have each child make a list of those qualities that make him/her proud of their own unique traits.

## **TOPIC 9: Discuss “Ahavat Ger” -- Loving the Stranger**

### **ACTIVITIES:**

#### 1. Discuss the bible story of Ruth and Naomi

Read a simplified version of the Bible story about Ruth and Naomi. Why does Ruth stay with Naomi?

#### 2. Discuss issues of immigration and adoption

1. How can we practice Ahavat Ger and not talk to strangers?

## **SECULAR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM – Overview and Review**

### **FOR K-3 Jewish Cultural School**

From a power point presentation to introduce prospective members to Humanistic Judaism created by Dr. Scott Randell and Fay Kalman from Kol Haskalah, NC, based partially on an Introduction to Humanistic Judaism talk by Rabbi Miriam Jerris – Rabbi for Society of Humanistic Judaism

Humanism: Everyone should feel proud of who they are. All people should be treated fairly and equally.

### **SELF-RELIANCE**

- Trust ourselves and trust other people.
- We do not rely on a God that we can not see.

### **SELF-RESPONSIBILITY**

- We must be responsible for what we do.
- Doing what needs to be done, rather than expecting others to do it.
- Taking responsibility for making things better for ourselves, our families, our community and our world- in Judaism this is referred to as tikkun olam- repairing the world.

### **INTEGRITY**

- Say what you mean and mean what you say.

- Do not say things that you do not believe.

Beliefs and behavior are consistent.

## **IDENTITY/CONNECTION**

- We like being Jewish.
- We Celebrate Jewish holidays and life cycle events- they are meaningful.
- We educate ourselves and our children about being Jewish
- We participate in the greater Jewish community.

## **DIGNITY**

- Dignity creates a focus and purpose to life. Dignity is being proud of how we behave and who we are.
- Dignity means that we make our own decisions and that we respect ourselves and others.
- Achieving dignity is a life-long process.
- Dignity gives us control over our own life.
- Dignity means making ethical decisions that consider the consequences of our behavior on yourself and others.

## **COMMUNITY**

People need.....

- to be friends
- to ask for help sometimes
- to educate our children and ourselves
- to celebrate holidays and life's special moments

## **HUMANISTIC JUDAISM**

Provides a meaningful alternative for people who identify with the values, history and culture of the Jewish people.

- Educates children and adults in the traditions of Judaism.
- Celebrates/commemorates Jewish holidays and life cycle events.

- Welcomes people from diverse backgrounds who will be embraced by our community.

Humanistic Jewish Values -The practice of Humanistic Judaism is a way to personal growth, meaning, and fulfillment. (Cary Shaw, Congregation for Humanistic Judaism CTCHJ)

As a Humanistic Jew I seek:

- To increase the well-being of others (Tzedakah).
- To perform acts of loving kindness (Gemilut Chassadim).
- To pursue justice, counter oppression, and make the world a better place (Tikkun Olam).
- To use my reasoning power to understand the world about me, applying this knowledge to advance ethical, moral goals.
- To treat adversity, not as divine punishment for wrongdoing, but as a challenge to be overcome with all the personal strength and community support I can muster.
- To build a community of Humanistic Jews and like-minded people who care for and support each other from birth to death, through joys and sorrows.
- To reflect personally on my own behavior, its motivations, expression and consequences, and to commit to improving myself, throughout the year, with renewed emphasis at High Holidays.
- To recognize and celebrate the role of the Jewish people and culture in living these values.
- To support Israel in its search for peace.
- To foster understanding of Humanistic Judaism in the broader community so that beliefs such as ours can be expressed without fear of prejudice.
- To live my life, so that at my death, I may live on through my positive impact on others' lives.

**TRADITIONAL JEWISH VALUES:** Cheerfulness, Clothing the naked, Comforting mourners, courtesy and respect, do not covet, feed the hungry, guard your tongue (No gossip), kindness to animals, peace in the home, repairing the world, do not destroy needlessly, bringing peace between people, respecting the elderly, return of lost articles, righteous deeds, righteousness, justice, saving a life, seeking peace, study, truth, visiting the sick, welcoming guests, love your neighbor as yourself.