

Using the ZIV Tzedakah Fund, Inc. Report in the Classroom

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USING THE TEXTS

Texts invite us into a worldview. They comfort; they challenge; they expand our horizons.

The texts placed throughout the Report are the documents of our people and our time.

- Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Assign each one of the texts. Have the group discuss 'their' text and report their conversation to the class. Class members might be invited to comment on each groups' discussion.

Questions for discussion:

What does the text say?

How do you reaction to its message?

Is/How is the text a challenge to us?

How might we respond to the text through our actions?

- Ask students to read some or all of the texts used throughout the Report and find the one that is most meaningful to them. Have students group themselves according to the text selected and discuss what each found important about the particular text.

Variation: Ask students to find the text that is most challenging, makes them the most angry/comforted.

UNLIKELY MITZVAHS

Tikkun olam is NOT just about putting coins in a cardboard box! Teaching tikkun olam is about enabling students to flex their own 'tikkun olam muscles' and to find their own place in the world of tikkun olam.

One way to stimulate mitzvah-thinking is with the use of mitzvah cards. This collection of words on index cards invites students to use each specific word combined with 'mitzvah' to come up with new ideas for mitzvah-doing. The set is available from Naomi Eisenberger, Managing Director of the ZIV Tzedakah Fund [(973) 763-9396, naomike@aol.com].

PLAY 'MITZVAH HUNTERS'

The greatness of some of the mitzvah teachers portrayed in the Report is their ability to see the mitzvah-power in seemingly everyday activities and objects. To encourage students to familiarize themselves with the projects and the extraordinary 'ordinariness' of their themes, play a discovery game.

- Divide the class into teams. Provide each team with the following list: LOANS, YARMULKES, DOLLS, HOTEL ROOMS, SHOES, HEBREW, SCHOOL LUNCH, BOOKS, DRESSES, TOOTHBRUSHES, ANIMALS, CHICKENS (add others as you wish, based on the Report projects)

Give the teams an amount of time to find the projects covered in the Report that might pertain to each category. At the conclusion of the predetermined time play the responses as a 'sing down,' having each team add a project to any heading in a round-robin fashion. The team that has the last acceptable response in any category 'wins.'

Remind students that the answers are not always obvious. The name of a group or its paragraph heading on the Report are NOT all the information one needs to play the game!

Some projects might fit into more than one category. Be expansive in your judgment! If a group makes a good case - one that demonstrates their knowledge of the project - the answer is an acceptable one.

- Superstar Challenge Round: extra points for careful reading

Challenge students by asking which Report project might be described as: a rock and roll mitzvah, a motorcycle mitzvah, a hair cutting mitzvah, a paperclip mitzvah. Award extra game points for the team that identifies each first.

AROUND THE WORLD WITH MITZVAHS

Combine tikkun olam with a lesson about Jewish communities around the world and world geography.

- Assign students to a world Jewish community in which one of the Report's projects operates (Ethiopia, Cuba, FSU, Germany). Ask students to find out about the community using whatever resources you (or they) can provide. (Newspaper archives, organization's materials and Internet sites are particularly useful.)
- Assign students to a place in the world in which one of the Report's projects operates in the universal community. Provide and suggest resources as above.

Using a world map, have students indicate the countries in which projects supported by the ZIV Tzedakah Fund operate.

SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF TLKKUN OLAM: JEWISH VALUES SEARCH

Develop and practice a tikkun olam vocabulary.

- Provide lists of Jewish values (in Hebrew, translation and/or transliteration).
- Ask students to categorize Report projects according to the Jewish values each represents.

Some suggested value-words:

• Observing/remembering the Sabbath	<i>shamor v 'zachor Shabbat</i>	Exodus 20:8-11
• Leaving the gleanings	<i>peah, leket and shich'chah</i>	Leviticus. 19:9-10
• Welcoming the Stranger	<i>hachnasat orchim</i>	Genesis 19:1-3
• Visiting the sick	<i>bikur cholim</i>	Genesis 17:26-18:1
• Honoring the elderly	<i>hidur pnai zaken</i>	Leviticus. 19:32
• Not placing a stumbling block	<i>lo titeyn michshol</i>	Leviticus. 19:14
• Feeding the hungry	<i>ha 'achaklat re 'ayvim</i>	Deut. 10:17-19
• Not wasting	<i>bal tachshit</i>	Deut. 20:19

Advanced version:

Instead of providing the mitzvah, give students copies of the texts cited and have students derive the mitzvah in the text before finding the appropriate project.

BE MITZVAH REPORTERS

Turn the Report into a class newspaper by assigning each student or group an individual or project. Ask that each student or group produces an article on their assigned mitzvah teacher. The articles might be used for a bulletin board or compiled into a class newspaper.

BEING KAVOD DETECTIVES: 'It's not just what you do, it's how you do it!'

Healing of the world cannot be done while injuring human dignity. All the projects represented assure the dignity of their participants.

- Have students be *kavod* detectives and search out examples of *kavod* being bestowed upon project beneficiaries.