

# **The Power of Tzedakah**



**Magen David Adom**  
SAVING LIVES IN ISRAEL

**for 6th, 7th and 8th Grade**

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**Lesson Planner**  
by Stacey Frishman Delcau, RJE



## Goals:

- ☆ To give students an opportunity to see the many ways in which their tzedakah (both time and money) can make a difference in the world through a simulated exercise.
- ☆ To provide students with important Jewish texts to frame decisions they make in their lives.
- ☆ To give students an opportunity to voice their opinions.
- ☆ To give students the opportunity to learn more about the work that AFMDA does for Israel.

## Objectives:

- ☆ Students will be able to (SWBAT) research an area of MDA and prepare a recruitment poster convincing other students to volunteer for MDA
- ☆ SWBAT verbalize three Jewish values in relationship to what Judaism has to say about the importance of life.
- ☆ SWBAT work together in groups to discuss the meaning of a variety of Jewish texts- both modern and ancient.



## Summary of Themes and Ideas

- ☆ Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh (all Jews are responsible for one another)
- ☆ Pikuach Nefesh
- ☆ Do Not Stand Idly By
- ☆ Mitzvot
- ☆ Tzedakah
- ☆ Importance of volunteerism

### Time:

Whole group: intro to project: **10 min session**

Presentations and processing: **15-20 min session**

Individual groups: **30 min session**

Total time: **60 min session**

If you do not have a large group of students to be able to split the group into three, (or your students are not task oriented learners who can work on their own) choose 2 of the areas to read over as a group and discuss and then have the students debate on which area they would choose to volunteer for in the MDA.

### Materials:

Copies of the group handouts

Poster board

Markers

Pens/pencils

Slips of paper for students to vote



## Set Induction

⌚ **Time:** (5 min)

**Note:** Notes for teachers will be in italics.

*The teacher will read the following script aloud (you can paraphrase and put it in your own words- or feel free to read word by word!)*

*This is not an actual application - rather an exercise for the students to learn more about what MDA and AFMDA does to make a difference in the world. To conclude, you can frame this exercise in a variety of ways based on your students and their reaction to this exercise. Make sure they know the power of the individual- to volunteer time and money to important organizations. Tzedakah comes in many forms!*

*Please read in an excited and passionate voice. The tone helps to set the mood for your students!*

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Students,

I just received special notice that we have been selected out of thousands of schools to apply for one of the most intense and meaningful volunteer training programs in the country of Israel! This volunteer program can involve fast-paced work, intense situations, and an important chance to make a difference in people's lives. With this opportunity, you get to fulfill some of the most important Jewish value in the world, one of which is **pikuach nefesh**- saving a life.

The program is called "Save a Life, Define Your Own."

*(This is the name of the actual volunteer program through the Jewish Agency and MDA. Show them the attached flyer.)*



**Magen David Adom** provides first-aid services throughout Israel and works with its volunteers to provide effective initial treatment. Magen David Adom stands for “The Red Star of David.” The MDA not only provides service in Israel- but takes it’s volunteers around the world to help with any disaster that takes place- they even came to assist the US during 9/11!

Especially during difficult times, MDA needs our help. American Friends of Magen David Adom is a US organization whose supporters help provide valuable resources for Magen David Adom in Israel.

It is an honor and a mitzvah to help. Don’t worry- No previous medical experience is necessary!

**Your mission today:**

To divide and conquer. In order to fill out the application, we need to learn about the three main areas in which Magen David Adom makes a difference, and see which division you’d each like to apply to volunteer.

In order to decide which group you will apply for, we’re first going to learn about what Jewish tradition has about how, when, where, and why Judaism places such an important value on saving lives. Let’s look at some of the sources/values.



## Activity 1: (5 min) ⌚

### 3 corners exercise:

*(Please read aloud the following three quotes. These quotes will eventually relate to the three main areas of MDA that each group will study today)*

Put up three quotes around the room (using large poster board)

Read aloud and discuss each one briefly/ask the students if they need any words defined.

**(1 min a piece)**

Ask students to choose the one they most believe in/agree with (not what their friends believe in!) and stand at the corner in which that quote is posted.

### Three Jewish values:

*(Write each italicized quote on a different piece of poster board)*

#### 1) Pikuach Nefesh

Torah leads us to pikuach nefesh-preservation of life is the highest goal.

*“Whoever destroys a single life is as though he had destroyed an entire world, and whoever saves a single life is as if he had saved an entire world.”*

*Sanhedrin 4:5*

#### 2) Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh

Taking care of each other - the populations of emigres to Israel.

*“All Jews are responsible for one another” (collective responsibility)*

*Shavuot 39a*

Mitzvah is arevut- responsibility.

#### 3) Do not stand idly by

*“Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor” (Leviticus 19:16).*

*(After you read and explain briefly the three quotes, ask students to choose one quote they believe in the most. They will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the quote further in their groups. These quotes will lead them to the area of volunteer service they will choose while applying to be a Magen David Adom volunteer.)*

Once they collect into their three groups, ask 1-2 people in each group to share why they chose this particular quote over the others.

If the groups are not well divided- ask for a few volunteers to switch groups.



## Say to the students:

- ☆ You are now going to explore a particular area of opportunity to volunteer in the Magen David Adom.
- ☆ I have assigned you each to research an area in which Magen David Adom makes a difference.
- ☆ I will pass out instructions.
- ☆ Each group will need to assign 1 person to record the discussion and answers to questions.
- ☆ Be sure to read all information and answer all questions fully.
- ☆ After you finish reading and discussing the information (which should take about 15 min), you will prepare a recruitment poster in which you will try and convince the members of the other group that this is the area of Magen David Adom in which we should apply to be volunteers. You have 15 minutes to prepare the recruitment poster.
- ☆ Please assign 1-2 members of your group to present the poster to the class.
- ☆ The instructions are written at the top of each handout in case you have any questions.



## Three Research Groups

### **If you have chosen:**

Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh - MDA Emergency Medical Stations/First Aid Training

Pikuach Nefesh - Ambulances

Do Not Stand Idly By - Blood Bank

### **Background information for the teacher on AFMDA:**

Founded in 1940, American Friends of Magen David Adom (AFMDA), previously known as the American Red Magen David for Israel (ARMDI), is the sole fundraising organization in the United States supporting the life saving efforts of Magen David Adom (MDA) in Israel. MDA and its team of trained volunteer and professional medical responders depend on AFMDA's support to provide the entire nation's pre-hospital emergency needs, including medical, disaster, ambulance and blood services. AFMDA has raised more than \$90 million in the last five years to assist MDA with urgently needed medical supplies, equipment, paramedic training and ambulances as well as building the MDA National Blood Services Center and Emergency Medical Stations in communities, large and small, throughout Israel.

After the students have finished their group work, bring everyone back together to make their presentations. Ask if there are any questions.

Each individual in the class will vote by secret paper ballot which group they will apply to volunteer for in MDA.

*You can conclude with a discussion on how the students might be able to implement some of the suggested courses of action they came up with during their group exercises. They can make a real difference- and not just through a simulated exercise. Challenge them to try!*



## Fact Sheet/Information

### Instructions:

1. Read through the following information and follow any instructions/answer questions
2. Assign someone to be the “recorder” in the group
3. Make a recruitment poster (advertisement) for your volunteer branch containing the following items:
  - The name of your value/concept
  - Examples of things you discuss in your small group to share with others why this is an important value (to help convince others why this area of volunteer service is important!)
  - Examples of how Magen David Adom fulfills this mitzvah

### Step 1:

**You have 15 minutes to read and answer the following questions:**

What does Kol Yisrael Arveim Zeh Lazeh mean?

— *All Jews are responsible for one another*

This comes from the Talmud, in section (tractate) Shavuot 39a

Who are the people we come in contact with on a daily basis?

What about on a weekly basis?

Once a year?

What about through the media or travel?

- Make a list! (include your parents/siblings!)
- List the categories of people who we know that are in need of help from others: For example: (people who are in need of medical care, people who are sick, people who need tzedakah, people who we have made fun of in the past/talk bad about)

A very important rule in Judaism tells us to care for other people in the same way as we care about ourselves. In Hebrew this responsibility we have towards each other is called arevut. It is very important to be kind and generous to everyone, especially people who do not have as much as we have.

By fulfilling the mitzvah of arevut, the mitzvah of being responsible for one another—we become like one family. Therefore, together we are one.

*“When the community is in trouble do not say, “I will go home and eat and drink and all will be well with me.”...Rather, involve yourself in the community’s distress... as was demonstrated by Moses (Exodus 27:12) In this way Moses said, “Since Israel is in trouble, I will share their burden.” Anyone who shares a community’s distress will be rewarded and will witness the community’s consolation.”*

— Ta’anit 11a



### **How was Moses an example of Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh?**

This song, Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh, helps to explain what arevut means to the Jewish people.

|                                   |                                         |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh (3x) | All Jews are responsible for each other |
| Kol Yisrael achim                 | All Jews are “brothers”                 |
| Am echad lev echad                | One people with one heart               |
| Am echad shiteym echad            | One people, each pair is one            |
| Am echad ke-ish echad             | One people, as if they are one person   |
| Shmah Yisrael, am echad           | Hear Israel! One people                 |

What does being responsible for another person mean to you? For example, what actions do you need to take in order to fulfill your responsibilities?

## **Step 2**

### **Application for the Emergency Station/First Aid Training Services of MDA**

Now that you’ve read all of this information and discussed it, why do you think being responsible for others is important in applying to the emergency station/first aid training section of Magen David Adom?

- How do the emergency stations help others?
- How does being trained in first aid fulfill the mitzvah of being responsible for one another?

### **What America Does to Make a Difference**

AFMDA (American Friends of Magen David Adom) support ensures that all of MDA’s Emergency Medical Station personnel undergo training every year and that the MDA Emergency Medical Stations are fully computerized. AFMDA continuously works to renovate, expand or rebuild many medical stations to insure they are up to current medical standards.

### **Magen David Adom has:**

- 100 Emergency Medical Stations in communities throughout Israel, from large cities to small towns and kibbutzim and 11 dispatch centers. These stations provide emergency care and ambulance services, 24 hours a day, every day of the week.
- 1,400 paid employees (ambulance medics/drivers, doctors, paramedics, blood technicians, communication center workers and administrative workers)
- 10,000 volunteers, of which half are teenagers (the oldest volunteer is 86)



- years old, the youngest is 15).
- A nationwide lifesaving network of 100 Emergency First Aid Stations spanning the country. The number of Stations is gradually being expanded, to answer the needs of a growing population.

Most of MDA's Emergency First Aid Stations operate on a 24-hour around-the-clock basis and are equipped for emergency procedures. All Stations are also linked by the most modern communication technology, so that immediate information concerning accidents or mass disasters can be relayed and needed action and assistance provided immediately.

### **First Aid Training**

More than 50,000 Israelis each year learn the basics of First Aid and resuscitation in courses provided by MDA's First Aid Instruction Department.

All 7th and 8th grade students in the country's schools are taught a 10-hour course in the fundamental techniques of First Aid. This adds thousands of youngsters every year to the ranks of those who can render assistance in emergencies.

The most intensive training is given to MDA's own personnel. Every ambulance driver must successfully complete an intensive 120-hour course in all phases of First Aid, including obstetrics. Frequently, ambulance drivers have been needed to deliver a baby in route to the hospital.

### **How can you help Magen David Adom:**

1) Volunteer for the emergency medical station/first aid station program! (and convince others to do the same with your poster!)

2) Raise money to help update the emergency medical stations

3) Think of other ways as a group! \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now go back to the instructions at the beginning and create your poster! Please construct your recruitment poster out of the information you have discussed as well as the Magen David Adom Facts.

*You have 15 minutes*



## Instructions:

1. Read through the following information and follow any instructions/answer questions
2. Assign someone to be the “recorder” in the group
3. Make a recruitment poster (advertisement) for your volunteer branch containing the following items:
  - The name of your value/concept
  - Examples of things you discuss in your small group to share with others why this is an important value (to help convince others why this is important!)
  - Examples of how Magen David Adom fulfills this mitzvah

## Step 1:

You have 15 minutes to read and answer the following questions:

**What does pikuach nefesh mean?**

- It is the obligation to save a life.
- *“Whoever destroys a single life is as though he had destroyed an entire world, and whoever saves a single life is as if he had saved an entire world.”*

— Sanhedrin 4:5

- Explain this saying in your own words.
- Why do you think the rabbis wrote this saying?

The rule of pikuach nefesh is based on a statement in the Torah:

“These are the mitzvot which one shall do and live by them,” to which the Rabbis add: “and not die by them.”

— Leviticus 18:5

In Judaism, human life is essential and so pikuach nefesh, the obligation to save a life in jeopardy, is considered a major value to follow. This obligation applies to both an immediate threat and a less grave danger that has the potential of becoming serious. According to pikuach nefesh a person must do everything in their power to save the life of another, even donate bodily organs. Ovadia Yosef, the former Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, ruled that one may donate an organ to a person in critical need, so long as it does not put the donor’s life at risk.

**Why do you think life is so important in Jewish tradition?**



## Step 2:

### Application for the Ambulance services of MDA

How does Magen David Adom fulfill the obligation of pikuach nefesh?

— By sending ambulances to people in need!

Imagine if your city/neighborhood didn't have any ambulances. What would happen if someone was in a car accident and couldn't drive themselves to the hospital? What if your friend fell out of the tree and broke his/her leg and couldn't walk?

— What would be the consequence of having little or no ambulances to respond to emergencies? What about people to staff those ambulances?

### Ambulances



When Magen David Adom was established in 1930, its pride was its single ambulance, which was always on call.

Today, MDA has an ambulance fleet of more than 700 modern lifesaving vehicles, deployed in all parts of the country. Most of the ambulances are attached to MDA Stations; others are stationed in villages and kibbutzim in areas along threatened borders. All ambulances are equipped with wireless radios linking them to their Stations or ambulance posts, and to regional headquarters.

215 of these ambulances are also Mobile Intensive Care Units (MICU's) which are equipped with more sophisticated equipment for immediate diagnosis and treatment such as in the case of cardiac arrest. The MICU's are staffed by physicians trained in emergency medicine and by paramedics who have undergone thorough and very strenuous training at MDA.



## What America Does to Help Magen David Adom

### Ambulances

- ☆ The past five years, AFMDA raised over \$90 million to purchase medical supplies and ambulances for MDA in Israel. (For example, this includes the tzedakah raised from your religious school)
- ☆ AFMDA provided 110 ambulances to MDA Israel in 2004, of which 49 were specially-equipped MICU's (Mobile Intensive Care Units).
- ☆ In 2003, AFMDA sent 99 ambulances to MDA Israel, including 22 MICU's and 7 Bloodmobiles.
- ☆ Thanks to AFMDA supporters, 700 MDA ambulances travel over 5.25 million miles a year, taking care of more than 325,000 patients annually.
- ☆ AFMDA furnishes MDA with the crucial life-saving equipment and supplies to serve Israel as "first responders" to all disasters and medical emergencies.

### How can you help Magen David Adom:

- 1) Volunteer for the ambulance-training program! (and convince others to do the same with your poster!)
  - 2) Raise money to help buy more ambulances and medical supplies
  - 3) Think of other ways as a group! \_\_\_\_\_
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Now go back to the instructions at the beginning and create your poster!

Please construct your recruitment poster out of the information you have discussed as well as the Magen David Adom Facts.

*You have 15 minutes*



### **Instructions:**

1. Read through the following information and follow any instructions/answer questions
2. Assign someone to be the “recorder” in the group
3. Make a recruitment poster (advertisement) for your volunteer branch containing the following items:
  - The name of your value/concept
  - Examples of things you discuss in your small group to share with others why this is an important value (to help convince others why this is important!)
  - Examples of how Magen David Adom fulfills this mitzvah

### **Step 1:**

You have 15 minutes to read and answer the following questions:

**Do not stand idly by**

*“Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor” (Leviticus 19:16).*

- What does the phrase “stand idly by” mean to you?

Many people translate this saying to mean- don’t stand by and watch as something happens to someone else. It is your obligation to do something to help!

*“Rabbi Akiva commented that anyone who spills blood is considered to have lessened the image [of God] because it is written ‘He who spills human blood, his blood shall be spilt.’ Why is this so? Because God created Man in his own image.”*

— Bereshit Rabbah 34:14

- What does it mean to you to be created in God’s image?

How would you react to the following scenarios based on our obligation to “not stand idly by.”

Choose one to write down a group answer:

- You are at school and you see another student being teased or bullied by others. What do you do?
- You are riding in the car with your parents and you see someone lying on the ground who appears to be unconscious. What do you do?

### **Step 2**

Application for Blood Services of MDA

- Basic question: What does blood have to do with life?
- Why is the Jewish quote “Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor” so important when we talk about saving lives?



## What America Does to Help Magen David Adom

AFMDA (American Friends of Magen David Adom) raised over \$32 million to build the MDA National Blood Services Center in Ramat Gan and \$16 million for the Erna and Dr. Henry Marx MDA Blood Fractionation Institute. Both of these institutions ensure that the Israel's health care providers have enough blood to save lives.

☆ MDA provides 100% of the blood requirements of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)

☆ MDA provides 97% of the blood needs of Israeli hospitals and the general population.

## Blood Services

One of the most important jobs of Magen David Adom is to make sure that there is enough blood to provide for emergencies.

☆ More than 280,000 units of fresh blood are collected annually by Magen David Adom

☆ All blood contributions are made by volunteer donors. The donors are not paid for their donations.

The fresh blood, brought to the MDA National Blood Services Center in Ramat Gan, is sorted for blood groups and is tested and screened to ensure that it is free of any diseases, including hepatitis and AIDS. The fresh blood and its components are supplied by the MDA Blood Bank to the country's hospitals and to the Israel Defense Forces according to their ongoing needs, and blood reserves are stored for emergencies

## How can you help Magen David Adom:

1) Volunteer for the blood bank station! (and convince others to do the same with your poster!)

2) Raise money to help campaign for more people to donate blood

3) Think of other ways as a group! \_\_\_\_\_

Now go back to the instructions at the beginning and create your poster!

Please construct your recruitment poster out of the information you have discussed as well as the Magen David Adom Facts.

*You have 15 minutes*