INFUSING JEWISH VALUES INTO SERVICE PROGRAMS

FRAMING

PURPOSE OF FRAMING:

Framing encourages participants to think more deeply about the actions they are about to do and provides background and context to foster later learning and reflection. Framing is less about being interactive and more about presentation—preferably by a teen service project leader and, when appropriate, an outside speaker (Executive Director of the Food Bank or a recipient of Food Bank Services).

The speakers should make sure the group understands:

- **Roles and Expectations**- describe tasks and activities; review schedule; introduce participants
- **Community Need**- explain issue or situation addressed through service work
- **Impact**- highlight the specific positive changes for the people receiving the service as a result of the actions performed by the group
- **Expression of Jewish values**- today’s actions are motivated by Jewish obligation and privilege to help others in need, tikkun olam

WHO LEADS FRAMING:

One speaker or a small group of speakers, preferably a teen service program leader who is prepped in advance to speak

AND ideally...

One outside speaker or a small group of outside speakers to talk about the service project itself and the needs the service project participants will improve or alleviate

WHEN SHOULD FRAMING TAKE PLACE:

Framing should be the first part of any service, philanthropy, or advocacy activity.
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SAMPLE FRAMING SPEECH, MAD LIBS STYLE!

Fill in all of the spaces with the word(s) that match the description of the guiding word(s) under the line—be creative!

When using this at home, you can modify this speech to fit any of your projects or create remarks of your own!

Hi! My name is ___________________ and I am the _______________________ here in ___________________. I am really _______________________ about the service work we will perform today at ____________—thanks for joining us! Helping others is part of our responsibility as Jews to repair the world, known in Hebrew as “tikkun olam”. I think taking part in really ________________________ service projects together is important because _____________________________. We can use our _______________________ and _______________________ to make the world a better place. Today we will ________________ and ________________ to make an impact on _______________________.

I’d like to now introduce ____________________, the _______________________ at the Name of Outside Speaker Title of Outside Speaker to tell us about the activity we will do today, why this work is needed, and how our actions will make an impact. Welcome, _____________________.

AFTER THE OUTSIDE SPEAKER HAS CONCLUDED…

Thank you, ____________________. Does anyone have any questions? I hope you have a better understanding of your role today and why we are here to perform this mitzvah together. We will be here until ________________. Afterwards, we will meet up at ________________ to talk about our experiences here today. Thanks again for your participation!
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REFLECTION

PURPOSE OF REFLECTION:
Reflection is a time for participants to step out of the activity and process, analyze, ponder, share, and think about how the experience moved them. Ideally, the participants will think, feel, or do something differently as a result of the experience. It is considered one of, if not the most, important parts of the program because it forges the connection between the physical service work, framing, and learning components. Reflection activities range from a simple discussion to something more creative, using art, music, blogs, a thank you note, or photography. Try to mix it up every time and use a variety of different mediums to account for the diverse interests of the participants. Pre- and post activities are helpful to encourage participant reflection on his/her own transformation or change. The participants should examine and form beliefs, values, opinions, assumptions, and judgments related to the experience. No answer or interpretation is right or wrong—trust among the participants is essential for reflection to be successful.

WHO LEADS REFLECTION:
A service program teen leader or small group of teen leaders should guide the group through the reflection process and guiding activity. For ongoing programs, rotate the facilitator for each service project to give all members an opportunity to fully participate in the reflection activity itself. It is a good leadership development opportunity—just make sure the facilitator is well prepared and knows how to create a positive and inclusive environment for everyone.

OR

An outside facilitator, such as the JServe Site Coordinator or a Jewish communal leader can lead the group as needed.

WHEN SHOULD REFLECTION TAKE PLACE:
Reflection should not be done only at the conclusion of the service project, but before, during, and after the service experience. Use expected or even unexpected downtime at a project to incorporate a reflection piece. For unexpected time, come prepared with a few questions or activities in advance, your “back pocket” ideas.
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REFLECTION ACTIVITY

The facilitator ensures all participants have an equal opportunity to reflect on the service and learning experience, personally, and with a larger group.

First, the facilitator creates a positive and inclusive environment that encourages deeper conversation—for example, a quiet space with all participants seated in a circle. Then he/she begins to ask the reflection questions he/she prepared in advance. These questions should start simple and build upon one another, thus allowing the participants to gradually think a little harder about their feelings, reactions, and opinions.

Think of your upcoming JServe program or another recent service project and imagine you are the reflection facilitator. Review the set of sample questions below.

Then write TWO QUESTIONS of your own that you would want to ask the other service project participants about their service and learning experiences tied to this issue or project.

The best questions are those the participants are truly interested in debating and answering and should help them see the connections between the issue, service, and their own lives, thus creating meaning.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What are our goals for this project today? What about on an ongoing basis?
- According to the Jewish values we’ve studied, what should our goals for the project be?
- According to the Jewish values we’ve identified, what should we take into consideration when interacting with the people at the service site?
- What are the reasons for conducting this particular service project?
- What did you notice about the service site? Did you notice anything that reminded you of the ideas we studied in the Jewish texts?
- What does it take to have volunteers, like us, come on site for a day? How does the service provider prepare for our group and how long do you think it takes them to get everything ready for us?
- Did you feel prepared mentally, physically, and emotionally to engage in this service work?
- If you had to summarize your experience and what you are taking away with you in a Facebook status, what would it say?
- What did you learn about the issue or population addressed?
- In what ways does this service experience connect with your personal values? Are there values of yours that it conflicts with?

CREATE YOUR OWN!

1. _______________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________

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# INFUSING JEWISH VALUES INTO SERVICE PROGRAMS

## NAMING

### PURPOSE OF NAMING:

Judaism has a rich tradition when it comes to giving someone or something a name. The name automatically places the actions in a Jewish framework and signifies that the service behavior is motivated by Jewish values and beliefs. It is very meaningful for the participants to come together around the selection of names for individual projects and ongoing initiatives. It is important if you are going to give something a Hebrew or Jewish-facing name that you frequently explain the meaning behind the name so members are reminded about the connection to our heritage.

For example, youth group leaders and camp unit head titles frequently use Hebrew words or phrases, such as Rosh (unit head at camp) or Aleph Godol (President of Aleph Zadik Aleph, BBYO Chapters). When you hear them, you recognize that you are part of a Jewish organization and movement and connect the actions performed with this group as an expression of your Jewish identity.

### WHO LEADS NAMING:

Any teen participant can guide a small group, committee, or the entire participant base in the naming process. The more the whole group feels part of the process, the more likely they are to participate in the project itself.

The person in charge of the service activity should research Jewish concepts, ideas, or phrases that are relevant to the issue(s) being addressed. The name will connect the service work to Jewish life, values, or history.

### WHEN SHOULD NAMING TAKE PLACE:

Naming is best when it is done at the very beginning of program conception and creation so the name can "stick" and remain the same throughout the entire life of the project.

OR

For formal groups and organizations, every time, hopefully annually, the bylaws are reviewed, officers also reflect upon the names that the group uses to refer to all service, philanthropy, and advocacy programs. Ask yourselves if the current name captures the most recent values and beliefs of the organization? Does it capture the group's approach to service, philanthropy, and advocacy programs?
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BBYO-PANIM VALUES MATRIX

The BBYO-Panim Values Matrix is a great resource for a quick list of Jewish values that may motivate service actions and is available at http://panim.bbyo.org/educators/resources/

In addition to this list, simply search online for your issue plus the word, "Jewish"—you won’t believe how many resources you will find!

Below are a few samples to get you started.

EXAMPLE:

Your group decided it is important to visit the elderly and now visits a local nursing home together once a month. You collectively decide to call this project your “Bikur Cholim” Initiative, which translates to “visiting the sick”. This term can include a range of activities performed to provide comfort and support to people who are ill, homebound, isolated and/or otherwise in distress.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BBYO-PANIM VALUES MATRIX:

• **Anei Ircha Kodmin** – גַּעַנֵי עִירֵךְ קֶדְמִין
  "the local poor are the priority"
  The concept that your primary tzedakah responsibility is to those closest to you (your family, then the poor of your city, then the poor of other cities). (Bava Metzia 71a)

• **Ahavat Ger** – אַהֲבַּת גֶּר
  "love of the stranger in your midst"
  A series of laws insisting on compassionate behaviour towards strangers, empathy with foreigners, and their inclusion in every aspect of society (Exodus 22:20; 23:9; Deuteronomy 16:14; Tractate on Strangers, Minor Tractates of Talmud).

• **Chesed, Rachamim** – חֶסֶד, רַחֲמִים
  "compassion, especially for those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable"
  (Zechariah 7:9; Hosea 2:21; Sabbath 151b; Bezah 32b; Sotah 14a).

• **Leket, Shichechah, Pe’ah** – לֶקֶט, שִׁכְּחָה, פְּאָה
  "agricultural provisions for the poor"
  A series of ancient agricultural laws designed to guarantee that a portion of agriculturally produced products were left untouched in the fields for the poor to gather. (Leviticus 19:9; 23:22)

• **Pikuach Nefesh** – פִּקֻוָּחַ נְפֶשׁ
  "the saving of life"
  The highest Jewish obligation that overrides almost every other law. (Yoma 85b; Sanhedrin 4:5; Baba Mezia 62b)

• **Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof** – צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדוּף
  "justice, justice, you must pursue"
  The obligation to actively promote justice. (Leviticus 19.36; Deuteronomy 16.20; Zechariah 8.16-17; M. Avot 1.18)

• **V’Shinantam L’Vanecha** – וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבֵנֵךְ
  "and you shall teach your children"
  The mandate to teach and transmit the Torah to one’s own children, one of the most important tasks of any Jewish parent. (Deuteronomy 6:7; Maimonides - Laws of Talmud Torah)
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LEARNING

PURPOSE OF LEARNING:

Judaism teaches us that we are obligated to study Torah. There is also a popular Jewish quote that tells us “study is greater because it leads to action,” meaning that once you gain knowledge, you are more compelled to act upon that information. Learning is a key tool used to illuminate the connection between Jewish values and obligations with the performance of service work or social action activities.

Learning can be a really exciting, interactive, and engaging opportunity for the participants. When leading a group in study, there are no right and wrong answers. Jewish texts and ideas provide great anchors for discussion, background, and connection to Jewish history, memory, and values. Examining ancient texts is especially meaningful when a participant realizes he/she is entering into a long-standing “Jewish conversation” about a topic that was relevant thousands of years ago and remains relevant today.

WHO LEADS LEARNING:

Any teen participant can guide small clusters of or the entire group of service program participants in Jewish learning or study. You do not need a formal Jewish educator to learn together and learning does not just need to be about studying text. While you should feel free to bring in special guests from your community or beyond, anyone can teach and anyone can learn.

The local advisor or coordinator should direct the teens to resources and help create the Jewish learning activities.

WHEN SHOULD LEARNING TAKE PLACE:

Learning and study can be done anytime—it is beneficial and enriching whether it is done on the exact day of the service project or in advance. Ideally it should be done before reflection so that it can further guide and frame the whole service experience.

Jewish learning and study about tikkun olam can be done on an ongoing basis and incorporated into the regular programming and activities done by chapter members. It is important for chapter members to understand how their actions to help others are motivated by Jewish values and that service work is an expression of these values.
Jewish ideas, laws, texts, and commentaries have been debated for thousands of years. Many of today’s ethical and moral challenges are the same issues our ancient ancestors struggled with too. It is very powerful to allow an idea or suggestion written thousands of years ago to guide present day decision-making. When creating a text study, look at ancient and modern texts, quotes, commentary, the week’s Torah portion, or even blog posts—the writing does not need to be from the Torah, contain Hebrew, or even be authored by someone Jewish for it to bring Jewish meaning and perspective to the service experience.

Below are two different texts to teach participants about either a specific service project, such as visiting a nursing home, or the broader teachings of the Jewish value and obligation to help others, tikkun olam.

Since Jewish tradition values learning with others, find a partner (group of three is okay too) and together read through one of the two texts below. This style of paired study is called, chevruta. Using the questions provided as a guide, discuss what the text is teaching and how it relates to values and beliefs around service.

TEXT #1: Visiting the Sick, Bikur Cholim

*Translation and guiding questions from American Jewish World Service's [www.on1foot.org](http://www.on1foot.org)

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Why didn’t the sick student’s rabbis visit him?
2. What compelled Rabbi Akiva to go see him?
3. How did Rabbi Akiva give him “new life”? Is Rabbi Akiva magical?

TEXT #2:

*Translation and guiding questions from American Jewish World Service’s [www.on1foot.org](http://www.on1foot.org)

**Guiding Questions:**

1. What are the limits to this law?
2. How do we know when we have done enough?
3. Do you agree with what this text tells us?
PURPOSE OF RITUAL:
Ritual is a special activity that is conducted on a routine basis. This consistent action(s) can be incorporated into all service, philanthropy, and action programs to again represent the motivation and reason for helping others as rooted in Jewish obligations and universal values. When performing or acting upon the ritual, it is important to remind everyone why this ritual is done in connection with the service activities and why this particular ritual was selected.

Incorporating ritual can range from wearing a religious item every time one engages in tikkun olam, to writing a special blessing to say before or after each program, to introducing a service component into a Shabbat tradition, or even performing an organizational ritual or tradition, such as an organization song, as part of the service project. There are a variety of activities you can do to bring ritual into service programs—this is an area you can be really inclusive and creative.

WHO LEADS RITUAL:
Ritual is done as a group, although certain activities may need a specific leader. It is most effective if the entire group is also included in the selection of a ritual. Every participant must be comfortable performing the ritual. Directions should be distributed, preferably in a written format, about how to perform the ritual each time the activity takes place.

WHEN SHOULD RITUAL TAKE PLACE:
The timing and frequency will vary depending on the ritual. If ritual revolves around Shabbat or holidays, it will be timed with the Jewish calendar and sundown. If ritual is about wearing or bringing certain objects to a service activity, the ritual should be acknowledged in the beginning of the activity. Blessings or songs can be recited before, during, or after.
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RITUAL ACTIVITY

Ritual is one of the most spiritual and physical ways to infuse Jewish values into service work. Using the nursing home example of b’kor cholim, visiting the sick, one way to incorporate ritual is to bless the nursing home residents at the conclusion of each visit with the Jewish prayer for healing, mi sheberach, and then offer a blessing to yourselves and others visiting the sick.

Think about your JServe project or a recent service project you participated in and brainstorm three potential ritual activities to incorporate that are meaningful, inclusive, and reflective of the Jewish obligation to help those in need.

Mi Sheberach Prayer - A prayer for those in need of physical, spiritual, or emotional healing

Mi Shebeirach avoteinu M’kor habrachah l’imoteinu.

May the source of strength who blessed the ones before us. Help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing, and let us say Amen.

Mi shebeirach imoteinu M’kor habrachah laavoteinu.

Bless those in need of healing with r’fu-a sh’lei-ma, the renewal of body, the renewal of spirit, and let us say Amen.

Blessing for Bikkur Cholim Volunteers

Eloheinu V’Elohei Avoteinu V’Imoteinu,
God of our ancestors,
We are grateful to You for having given us
The opportunity to gather today in peace and safety–
To explore, share and nurture our ideas and our dreams
Of caring for a broken world.

We thank You for wisdom, for the experiences of others,
And for the anticipation of greeting new challenges.
We thank You for giving us the mitzvah of bikkur cholim,
For giving us hands for reaching and hearts for listening.

We thank You for giving us eyes that gaze into others’ souls,
And we thank You for the presence of Your Shechinah
That hovers in the many places we visit.

Elohei HaShamayim, Most High G-d,
Shine forth Your blessing to the community
Of caregivers gathered here today.

Give us courage and renewed energy
During these challenging times
To do our holy work of caring in good faith.

Make us worthy to look upon every sufferer
With clear eyes and open hearts. May we be
Agents of compassion, representatives of hope,
Messengers of laughter and light.

May our own lives be blessed with wellness and security
So that we may continue to bring to others the gift of ourselves.

And let us say: Amen.

*An original prayer composed by Rabbi Sara O'Donnell Adler for the closing of the 14th Annual Bikur Cholim Conference in 2001. Text taken from the National Center for Jewish Healing Website.

RITUAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR CHAPTER

1. ________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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SOCIAL JUSTICE QUOTES AND REFERENCES

The Torah begins and ends with acts of loving kindness – It begins with an act of loving kindness, as it says: “The Lord made clothing of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.” (Gen 3:20) It ends with an act of loving kindness, as it says, “And He buried Moses there in the Valley.” (Deuteronomy 34:6) Sotah 14a

A person never becomes poor from giving tzedakah, and nothing bad will happen and no harm will come to him as a result of giving tzedakah. Rambam, Mishna Torah, Gifts to the Poor 10:2

Honoring one’s fellow humans is so great that it takes precedence over “negative” (thou shalt not) commandments from the Torah. Berahot 19b

In 1965, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel went to Selma, Alabama, to march with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the struggle for civil rights. Someone who marched with him questioned why this eminent scholar came to Selma instead of remaining in his ivory tower in New York. Heschel’s reply: “When I march in Selma, my feet are praying.”

“The more deeply immersed I became in the thinking of the prophets, the more powerfully it became clear to me what the lives of the prophets sought to convey: that morally speaking there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings. It also became clear to me that in regard to cruelties committed in the name of a free society, some are guilty, while all are responsible.” Rabbi AJ Heschel, Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity, pg. 225

Poor non-Jews should be supported along with poor Jews; the non-Jewish sick should be visited along with the Jewish sick; and their dead should be buried along with the Jewish dead, in order to further peaceful relations. Gittin 61a

A Jew should give tzedakah to poor non-Jews. Rambam Mishna Torah, Gifts to the Poor 7:7

There was a secret chamber in the Temple where pious people would leave money in secret and those who had been well-to-do but had become poor would come and take in secret. Mishna Shekalim 5:6

If you want to raise a person from mud and filth, do not think it is enough to keep standing on top and reaching a helping hand down to him. You must go all the way down yourself, down into mud and filth. Then take hold of him with strong hands and pull him and yourself out into the light. Rabbi Shelom of Karlin (8th Century)

One who causes others to give tzedakah is greater than the giver him/herself. Baba Batra 9a

Rabbi Elazar stated, “The reward of tzedakah depends entirely upon the extent of kindness in it.” Sukkah 49b

You are commanded to give a poor person whatever he needs. If he has no clothing, he should be provided with clothes; if he has no house furniture, it should be procured for him...Even if an impoverished person is used to riding while a servant is running in front of him, a riding horse should be procured for him, and a servant to run in front of him...Though you are commanded to relieve his needs, you are not obligated to make him rich. Maimonides, Mishna Torah, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 7:4

Great is peace, since the entire Torah has been given to create peace in the world, as it is written: "Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace." (Proverbs 3:17) Maimonides, Mishna Torah, Laws of Megillah and Hanukkah, 4:14

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

• Repair the World (http://weRepair.org) (http://RepairLabs.org)
• JServe- International Day of Jewish Youth Service (www.jserve.org)
• BBYO- Panim Institute (http://panim.bbyo.org/teens/resources/)
• American Jewish World Service- On 1 Foot (www.on1foot.org)
• My Jewish Learning (myJewishLearning.com)