

Month 1: Philanthropy—Why Should We Do It?

Goal: To introduce the members of the group, to present the aims of the collective and to begin a conversation about *tzedakah* and philanthropy, including an initial discussion on spending money and what Jewish tradition says about *tzedakah*.

I. Welcome, Agenda Review, and Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

“Introduce Your Partner” – Divide into pairs. Each participant learns her partner’s name and two additional facts about her (e.g. where she was born, a specific interest, etc.). Then, the first pair finds another pair, and each partner is introduced to the new pair. This continues until all participants are introduced.

II. Introduction (10-15 minutes)

- The session leader presents the aims of the collective:
 - 1) To learn to identify and understand our relationship with money, specifically as it applies to giving – both individually and as a group;
 - 2) To introduce gender into the discussion and teaching of *tzedakah* – what we learn about our giving when we look through a “gender lens;” and
 - 3) To understand that no matter how much money you have, you can be a philanthropist and have an impact on something important to you.
- The leader initiates a discussion on the question, “What is a collective and why participate in one?” Possible answers include:
 - a group of people united around a common goal or idea
 - a group that pools its resources
 - a group that makes decisions as a unit, which may mean that individual wishes are compromised
- The leader presents the guidelines for the collective. Possible guidelines include:
 - Confidentiality. We are creating a safe and trusting space so that participants can share personal thoughts and feelings. Talking about money is very personal.
 - Be attentive. Listen to each other and wait until they are finished before you respond.
 - Speak from your own perspective, the “I.”

III. Check-in activity: “Give Me 3” (10-15 minutes)

Materials: paper and pens

Ask the participants to write the first thoughts that come to mind in response to the following categories:

- 3 favorite ways to spend money
- 3 ways you feel Jewish
- 3 ways you would change the world

- 3 great things about being female
- 3 values you think are important

Ask participants to share some of their answers. Suggest that participants keep their lists, especially the values and how they would change the world, for use in later sessions.

IV. Break (10 minutes)

V. Discussion: What is *Tzedakah*? What is Philanthropy? (30 minutes)

Materials: flip chart, markers

The leader calls out the word “*tzedakah*” and solicits associations from the participants. This is repeated with the word “philanthropy.” For example, participants might associate *tzedakah* with putting coins in a *pushke*, parents talking about the local Jewish Federation, walk-a-thons for Israel, or connect philanthropy with giving money to a museum or a hospital.

The group discusses the similarities and differences of these two types of giving. Other possible questions can be addressed in the discussion, including: How does *tikkun olam* (repairing the world through justice) fit in with *tzedakah* and philanthropy? How does each participant’s family approach *tzedakah*? Philanthropy?

VI. Text Study and Discussion: Jewish Values and *Tzedakah* (20 minutes)

Materials: Each group should have a set of cards that list Maimonides’ 8 levels of *tzedakah* (one level per card, see below).

Divide participants into small groups of no more than four. Distribute the Maimonides cards and ask each group to rank them according to what it decides is a hierarchy of importance. After each group has explained its ranking process, present and discuss the ranking according to Maimonides (see below).

Maimonides’ 8 Levels of *Tzedakah*

1. Providing a loan or gift by finding work or business so a person in need can become independent
2. Giving to someone anonymously
3. Giver knows recipient, but recipient does not know giver
4. Recipient knows giver, but giver does not know recipient
5. Both giver and recipient know each other, giver gives before being asked
6. One who gives appropriately after being asked
7. One who gives less than appropriate, but cheerfully
8. One who gives grudgingly

Discuss the following text sources on *tzedakah*:

***Shulhan Arukh* (Code of Jewish Law) – Laws of *Tzedakah*, Ch. 249**

The amount to give. . . give as much as you can without impoverishing yourself...up to 1/5 of assets is the choicest fulfillment of the *mitzvah*; 1/10th is average. Anything less than this is stinginess.

***Shulhan Arukh* – Laws of *Tzedakah*, Ch. 248**

Every person is obligated to give *tzedakah*.

***Shulhan Arukh* – Laws of *Tzedakah*, Ch. 249**

You must give at least 1/3 of a shekel per year to perform the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*.

***Shulhan Arukh*, Ch. 251**

If someone says, “Feed me,” we do not investigate [the truth of his/her claims to be in need], rather we feed the person immediately.

VII. Logistics: Money collection, scheduling, homework assignment (10 minutes)

Homework Assignment for Session 2

Directions: Interview your parents about money. The following are suggested questions; you may modify or add additional questions if you'd like.

1. What was your first job and how much did you earn?
2. Why did you get your first job? How old were you?
3. Did your siblings have jobs? Did they make the same amount of money as you?
4. Did you get an allowance as a child?
5. Do you currently give money to *tzedakah*?
6. At what age did you become self-reliant financially?
7. What do you wish you learned about money as you were growing up?