

LEARNING & ACTIVITY TOOLKIT

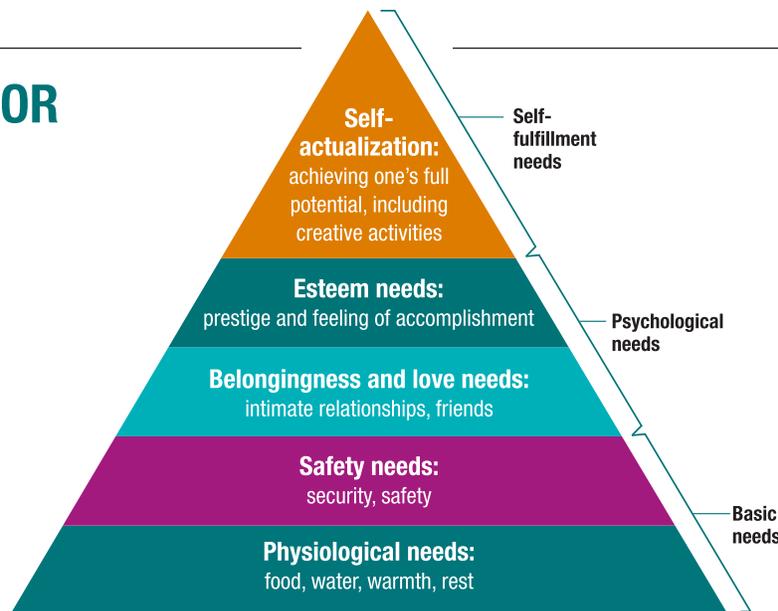


HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

In this packet, you will find a wide range of options for learning and engagement for people of all ages. Some resources lean more religious, others more secular. Some call on our empathy, and others call on our critical thinking. And, some are just plain fun. Browse these options, and dive into whatever interests you and your family.

FOOD DRIVE

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING



Psychological Impact of Hunger - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Ages 6+)

Abraham Maslow developed his theory of the levels of needs during the 1940s. The theory holds that when the most basic needs are not met, it can be hard to impossible to meet the more advanced ones. The more basic needs make up the base of the pyramid that supports the more advanced needs

Questions for reflection:

- Where in the pyramid do we find the need for food? If a person does not have food, what are the needs that become harder to meet?
- Even if someone does not have enough food, they are still able to have strong friendships, accomplish important things, and be creative, but everything is harder. How would food insecurity get in the way of building friendships, accomplishing things, or expressing yourself?

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Ladder of Tzedakah (Ages 10+)

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/eight-levels-of-charitable-giving>

Questions for reflection:

- What level of *tzedakah* does a food pantry fit into?
- Why would it matter if one gives grudgingly or cheerfully?
- Levels 4, 3, and 2 emphasize anonymity between the donors and the recipients. Why would anonymity be important?
- The highest level of *tzedakah* emphasizes “helping the person before they become impoverished...so as to make it unnecessary for them to become dependent on others.” Is that sort of help really *tzedakah*? Why or why not?

This Is Hunger Story Cards (Ages 10+)

<https://mazon.org/assets/Uploads/DylanStory.pdf>

<https://mazon.org/assets/Uploads/Marilyn.pdf>

<https://mazon.org/assets/Uploads/Blanca.pdf>

Questions for reflection:

- What emotions did you feel reading these stories? Did you feel sad or worried for them? Were you angry at anything or anyone? Was there anything that made you feel hopeful?
- Were there any details in the story that surprised you? Anything you hadn't thought about before?
- 13% of people in Jefferson County are food insecure. Picture 10 friends or family members and imagine that one of them was Dylan or Marilyn or Blanca. What would you want to do for them? What would you want organizations like JFCS to do for them? What would you want schools or the government to do?

Impact of Coronavirus on Hunger Interactive Map (Ages 12+)

<https://www.feedingamericaaction.org/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity/>

Questions for reflection:

- Look at the data for Jefferson County Kentucky, and compare it to two other counties of your choosing. Perhaps choose a place you like to visit, or where your grandparents live. How do they compare?
- Look at the projections for the state of Kentucky. What area of Kentucky will have the highest rates of food insecurity? How do their rates compare to our local rates?
- In the United States, the predicted rates of food insecurity in 2020 range from 34.2% in Jefferson County Mississippi, to 8.6% in Loudoun County Virginia. In Jefferson County Mississippi, the median income is about \$22,000. In Loudoun Country, the median income is \$126,000. List 5 ways life would probably be different for a child born in Jefferson Country versus in Loudoun Country.

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The Tradition of Giving Food in Judaism (Ages 16+)

Origins of a Jewish Food Pantry

Questions for reflection:

- What did Biblical Judaism do to ensure that the poor had food to eat? (source 1)
- Whom does the Jewish community give to? Why? (source 2)
- What sort of background check do people requesting food have to go through? (Source 3)
- When Jews started to become urbanized instead of agricultural, we had to change how we distributed food. What were the two methods for distributing food in Jewish cities (source 4)?
- How did the ways the Jewish communities distribute food change over time? How does the JFCS Food Pantry fit into the timeline?
- Was anything surprising in these texts? Anything troubling? Anything affirming?

ACTIVITIES

Practice Giving (Ages 3+)

Traditional Jewish law tells us that everyone should give *tzedakah*, including the person who lives on *tzedakah*. We're told that it's best to give 20% of our assets, but that 10% is more usual, and at the very least we should give a third of a shekel a year, or about \$2 (Mishneh Torah 7:5).

As a family, decide a percentage you would like to give, and then give it. Perhaps you have a piggy bank you'd open together and donate 20% of it. You and your children donate 10% of your income and allowance for the week. Perhaps you fill your wallets with dollar bills and donate to anyone who asks as you go about your day. Choose an option that works for your family.

Questions for reflection:

- The acceptable range of donation is quite large: from \$2 to 20% of your income, to even more. How do you decide what the right level is for your family? What were your parents' giving practices? If you have children, what practice do you want to model for them.
- Why would the person who is surviving on *tzedakah* also be required to give *tzedakah*? Is this rule surprising?
- How did it feel to give your donations? Many people feel good knowing that they're helping others, but many people also feel some sort of resentment or frustration wishing they were spending their money for themselves. What could make giving a more emotionally positive experience?

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Decorate a Tzedakah box and Establish a Giving Ritual (Ages 3+)

Tzedakah boxes are small boxes to place coins or bills for later donation. They can come in any shape, size or style. Judaica stores have many beautiful options, and there are many ways for kids and families to make or decorate their own. For inspiration check out [42 Best Tzedakah Boxes images](#) | Tzedakah box, Tzedakah, Jewish crafts.

Make placing some coins in the box part of the family tradition. Perhaps you do it before dinner each night, or perhaps just before Shabbat begins on Friday nights. Many people give on special days, such as birthdays or the anniversary of a loved one's death. Students may want to make a ritual of giving before a test or presentation. Many people find that this giving practice helps remind them of their gratitude for all that they do have, and helps them remember to help wherever and whenever they can.

Questions for reflection:

- Is there a specific time or occasion that would work for you to create a ritual of giving?
- Does giving remind you to be grateful? Does it feel good to know you're deliberately working to help others? What motivates your giving?

The Pudding Challenge (Ages 3+)

1. Set out a pudding cup and spoon for each member of the household.
2. Eat the pudding, but no one is allowed to bend their elbows.
3. See if you can figure out a way to enjoy the pudding!
4. The challenge is inspired by this traditional tale. Read it, and enjoy the pudding however you like.

There was a man and he wanted to see the difference between Heaven and Hell. An angel appeared by his side, and said "I will show the difference between Heaven and Hell." Naturally the man was a little scared; after all he had never seen an angel before. With great hesitation he followed the angel up these stairs to a huge hallway. The hallway had two doors. The angel opened the first door and said, "I will first show you hell." Much to the man's surprise there was a huge banquet with many guests. The food on the table looked so delicious and so plentiful. There was definitely enough for everyone to eat as much as they needed and it was displayed so deliciously. The man looked closely at the banquet and noticed something really weird about all the guests; they were all crying!!! The man asked the angel, "With all this delicious food and tasty drinks, why are the guests crying?" The angel remained silent. The man asked his question again, but again the angel remained silent. The man looked closer at the guests and noticed that instead of arms and hands the people had wooden spoons. The people could not bend their arms, therefore they could not feed themselves and were stuck just looking at this amazing food.

The angel then brought the man through the other door down the hall. Again there was this beautiful banquet. The food looked delicious, the drinks looked tasty, but this time all the guests were smiling, laughing and having a lot of fun. The man assumed that these people must have regular arms, but as he looked closer he noticed they had the same arms as the guests in the first room. Then he looked really close and realized that all the guests weren't feeding themselves, but rather they were feeding each other. In that moment the man immediately realized the difference between Heaven and Hell.

Questions for reflection:

- Were you able to figure out the challenge on your own?! How did it feel to feed each other the pudding?
- The story suggests that the only difference between heaven and hell is how people interact with each other. How could we create more "heaven" here on earth?

Source: <https://www.jewishedproject.org/sites/default/files/2017-02/Temple%20Emanu-El%20Mitzvah%20Corps%20Feeding%20the%20Hungry%20Learning%20Session.pdf>

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The SNAP Challenge (Ages 13+)

This activity asks you to make a meal for Julie and her family, and then to see if that meal would be accessible to them on SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The activity asks you to reflect on how easy it was to make the meal, if it turned out to be nutritious, and if you would like to eat it yourself.

The Meal Planning Challenge (Ages 16+)

JFCS distributed about 25-30 pounds of food for two people for two weeks, which is enough food for 20-25 meals.

A typical JFCS food set might contain:

- 1 can of corn, 1 can of green beans, 1 can of peas
- 2 cans of pears
- 2 cans of black beans
- cans of soup
- 1 bag of rice
- 1 box of vegetable bullion
- 1 box of cereal
- 1 lb pasta and a jar of sauce
- 1 bag of tortilla chips
- 5 granola bars
- 4 cans of tuna
- 2 boxes of mac and cheese
- 1 bog of “cheeseburger helper”
- 1 box of cookies

Additionally, we distribute fresh produce, meat, and dairy as available. Let’s say that this couple got a head of lettuce, 4 tomatoes, 2 onions, 1lb of ground turkey, and a gallon of milk.

Your challenge is to plan 7 dinners for two people based on the foods listed above.

Questions for reflection:

- What was the hardest aspect of this challenge? What ingredients were missing from the food set that would have been helpful to create your meals.
- How different is this meal plan from how you typically eat?
- Overall, how balanced is the nutrition of the meals you designed?