



The Jewish Federation  
OF GREATER WASHINGTON

presents

# Good Deeds Day

## Connect Your Community

Help congregants establish a connection between their volunteer service and the greater Jewish community through Good Deeds Day!

### Simple ways to raise visibility in your congregation and school

- Forward the registration link [www.gooddeedsdaygw.org](http://www.gooddeedsdaygw.org) to affiliate groups in your congregation (e.g. Sisterhood, Men's Club, Social Action Group, etc.).
- Post a link on your website and send e-blasts to encourage members to register.

### Study texts related to "Doing Good":

Add these study texts to your classes or meetings.

- "Even more than a leap of faith, Jews always believed in the need for a "leap of action." —Abraham Joshua Heschel
- "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve." —Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Good Deeds Day can be the impetus for your members to take a leap of action into a long-standing tradition of service.*

- And once Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were reclining in the attic of the House of Nitzah in Lod [and] this question was asked in front of them: **Is study greater or action greater?**
  - Rabbi Tarfon answered and said, "Action is greater."
  - Rabbi Akiva answered and said, "Study is greater."
  - They all answered and said, "Study is greater, since study brings about action."

*While emphasizing deed over study, the rabbis want to guard against doing becoming routine, where people perform rituals without any understanding of the significance of these actions. In claiming that "understanding brings one to doing" or "study...leads to action," the rabbis can prioritize action without negating the meaning of one's actions.*



### School/shul-wide efforts to frame the Jewish spirit of service

*Create a physical cue to capture the Jewish spirit of service through Good Deeds Day.*

- **Give the Biggest Gift of All:** Place a large gift box in the foyer of your congregation or classroom wing. Have slips of paper (great if they are cut out to look like gift tags) with pens for people to write their answers to this question:
  - What skill or talent do you have to give as a gift to the world to make it a better place? An interesting follow-up would be to have a parent volunteer take the responses and to assemble them on a bulletin board or butcher paper to look like wrapping paper or to create a tag cloud (e.g. [www.wordle.com](http://www.wordle.com)) from key words in the responses to post in the future.
- **Graffiti Wall Wisdom:** Center a Jewish text and/or question on butcher paper with Good Deeds Day flyers adhered to the banner, as well. Note that Jews across our area and around the world will engage in volunteerism on that day! Hang the paper on a wall in a high-traffic area with markers accessible and ask people to respond to prompts. *Mitzvah Magic* by Danny Siegel has great questions such as:
  - What bothers me about the world so much that I really need to change it?
  - What do I really like to do? What am I really good at doing?
  - Who do I know that can help me with this?
- **We are All Gifts Wrapped with a Bow:** At arrival and dismissal carpool lines, distribute adhesive backed bows for people to wear during the day as a reminder that volunteering their skills, talents and time is a gift that ALL may give. Ensure you have a Good Deeds Day visual prop for the classes, hallways or foyer (e.g. a gift box and a large version of a Good Deeds Day flyer or picture) to connect the themes of the day.



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## Classroom efforts to recapture the Jewish spirit of service

Create opportunities for shared doing or discussion to capture the Jewish spirit of service through Good Deeds Day.



- **“Learn the needs....respond with deeds”:** The Torah cautions us that **“There will never cease to be needy ones in your land (Deut. 15:11).”**
  - Rather than become overwhelmed, we are asked to constantly engage in a cycle of assessing people’s needs and responding to them. Ask students to do a Google search using the keyword phrase: “Why volunteer for community service?” or “How can I help my neighbors?” and share results. Then strategize how you may help beyond Good Deeds Day.
- **Take the Plunge or Take the Pledge:** Jews across the area and around the world will take the plunge and volunteer their time on Good Deeds Day. For groups not able to schedule a specific volunteer effort that day (although reference should be made to volunteer experiences before and after) pledge your commitment to service, justice and acts of kindness through text study. Remember... both study and action are critical to the unifying theme of the day—that service is a foundational and shared Jewish responsibility.
- Use [www.sefaria.org](http://www.sefaria.org) for any text you may be thinking about or looking for. A few suggestions are listed below.
  - Which is greater, study or action? (*Kiddushin*)
  - It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task. Yet, you are not free to desist from it. (*Avot*)
  - On three things the world stands: Torah, Worship and Acts of Kindness (*Avot*)
  - Zion will be redeemed with justice. (Isaiah)
  - These are the things that have no measure in the Torah (*Peah*)
- **Sing a Song of Service:** Music educators can teach a song that highlights Jews’ commitment across the world to service. Many examples are listed with links to lyrics and music downloads at <http://rac.org/social/worship/music/>.
- **Pass a Pushka:** “Be the change you want to see in the world” (Mahatma Gandhi) by bringing change to put in a *tzedakah* box. Add an opportunity for children to put in more than just coins. Let them put in their “two cents’ worth” by noting a talent or gift they bring to helping others and a part of the community/world that needs help.



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