SIX-PART UNIT ON SOCIAL LEARNING AND THE INTERNET
Part 2: SERVICE
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ACTIVITY
1) Set Induction
Place the following items in a garbage bag: hammer, paint brush, get-well card, sandwich in a Ziploc bag (or a picture of a sandwich), old T-shirt or sweater, packet of flower seeds, small broom with dustpan, small toiletry item, cell phone, pet toy or collar, stuffed animal, balloon, pack of markers, can of soup, recycling bin (or picture of one), blanket, etc. Try to put in at least one item per pair or triad of students in the room.

Divide the group into pairs or triads and have each small group reach into the bag and pull out one item. Give them about 10 minutes, a sticky poster, and markers. Assign them to think about how they can use that item to help another person. Ask:
If you were going to create a mitzvah project using that item…who would you serve?
What is the need you are addressing?
What would the project be?
How long would you need to do that project?
Who would you invite or need to have there to do the project?

Bring the class back together and have each group present their project. After each presentation, ask the entire class:
What Jewish value does that project address? (for example, a pet toy could be taking care of animals, tza’ar ba’alei hayyim; a get-well card could be visiting the sick, bikur holim; etc.)

After all of the presentations, ask:
How do we know that we, as Jews, should participate in these acts of service for others?
What are some social action projects you have participated in?
Who in your lives has role modeled doing social action?

2) Text Study

SOTAH 14a
“You shall follow God, your God” (Devarim 13:5). Is it possible for a human being to follow God’s Presence? …Rather, we should emulate the traits of the Holy Blessed One. Just as שַׁבָּא יְהוָה נֹהַר עָלֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר אָמַר ה' לאָם לָבֵן אֶת עֵלֶיהוּ שֶׁכִּי אָמַר ה' וַעֲלָם לָבֵן אֶת עֵלֶיהוּ לָבֵן הָנָּבִיאָה שֶׁכִּי אָמַר ה' (משנה ד, ד ט Mudra A)

BabagaNewz.com
According to this text, in what ways do we imitate God when we do social action?

**VAYIKRA 19: 18**

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Tell the following story: When someone who wanted to convert to Judaism asked the sage Hillel if he would describe the essence of Judaism while standing on one foot, Hillel answered that we shouldn’t do to others what we wouldn’t want done to us, the rest is commentary, go and study. How is this similar to and different from the Vayikra text above? For some added fun, ask a few students to answer this question while actually standing on one foot.

**DEVARIM 15:7-8**

If there is a needy person among you, one of your kin in any of your cities in your land that God, your God, gives you, do not harden your heart or close your hand against your needy kin. Rather, you must open your hand to the person and lend the person sufficient for whatever the person lacks.

Were you ever approached on the street to give someone money?

How did you feel?

What did you think?

In what others ways, besides money, do you think you could help that person?

3) Conclusion/Take Home Web Resource

Ask students: If you were trying to come up with a project to work on, how would you find one?

As a class, log on to babaganewz.com/activities/mitzvah-machine/. Ask a student to volunteer to be the example. Have that student answer the questions that the Mitzvah Machine asks. Review the results together. If there’s time, repeat the Mitzvah Machine program for a few other
students; or if there is more than one computer available, allow students time to each run the Mitzvah Machine. Alternatively, assign each student to run the Mitzvah Machine at home.

Find out ahead of time if your city has an organization that helps promote volunteerism by providing a searchable database of projects. If so, visit that site as a class. Show students how the site works by clicking through it. Talk about a few of the possible projects that appeared.

Have students think back to the opening activity and the projects they had to create.

How many of your projects involved gathering other volunteers?
How would you go about doing that?

Log on to http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com/. Show your class how to set up a “community” to recruit volunteers for a project or to organize people to help a family in need of support (such as when a family member is sick).

If time, log on to http://www.volunteerspot.com/. Set up a sample activity and show the class how to use it to organize volunteers. Consider using lotsahelpinghands.com or volunteerspot.com to organize a class project, class party, or bake sale.

**NEXT: Part 3: PHILANTHROPY AND FUNDRAISING**