

Making a Justice Box, *Specialty Track 3*

AUTHOR:	Daniel Abramson
SUMMARY:	Participants will learn how to explore the idea of Tzedakah (Justice) through the creation of a Tzedakah box using wooden boxes, and polymer clay. - <i>Submitted by Daniel Abramson</i>
TOPICS:	Jewish Values, Social Justice, Visual Arts
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	<p>This project demonstrates how the creative arts can be used to help make deep meaningful personal connections with hebrew text, ideas and values.</p> <p>הַיְדָרָה הַיְדָרָה הַיְדָרָה</p> <p>Participants will consider the difference between charity and justice. Further, they will think about what it would mean to actively pursue justice at camp and at home.</p> <p>The project can also foster the idea of mindful giving, and beautifying the mitzvah of giving Tzedakah.</p>
AUDIENCE:	The activity of creating a tzedakah box can be as relevant for the youngest campers at camp as it is for the older campers or staff. The depth and/or tone of the exploration of the texts referring to pursuing justice can be changed to suit the age and stage of the campers.
LENGTH:	30-60 Minutes
MATERIALS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the book "How Dalia Put a Big Yellow Comforter Inside a Tiny Blue Box" • Wooden boxes - 1 per participant http://www.deserres.ca/en-ca/search/wooden-jewel-box/77464/ • Polymer clay - approx 8oz per project (depends on box size), red, yellow, blue, black, white, green, brown, purple (or others) http://www.sculpey.com/product/super-sculpey-1-lb-box/ or http://www.sculpey.com/product/sculpey-iii/ • A roller for this clay can be super useful http://www.amazon.ca/gp/product/B000TMAVRG/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_dp_ss_2?pf_rd_p=1977604522&pf_rd_s=lpo-top-stripe-1&pf_rd_t=201&pf_rd_i=B001C4TZ2W&pf_rd_m=A3DWYIK6Y9EEQB&pf_rd_r=09APZER1MAK6YYX3MXEE • ALTERNATIVE: paint the boxes with acrylic craft paint, collage or almost any other medium. Use red, yellow, blue, black, white, green, brown, purple https://www.plaidonline.com/folkart-acrylic-colors-8-oz/39/product.htm

Session Description:

10 minutes - Read the book "How Dalia Put a Big Yellow Comforter Inside a Tiny Blue Box"

While reading the book does not change the process of making the tzedakah box, it is important in helping participants understand that Tzedakah is not essentially about the money, it is about justice. The idea that the act of giving can transform money into justice is key to building a personal commitment to the acts of Tzedakah.

5 minutes - (Making personal connections to the pursuit of justice)

Explain to participants that they will be choosing one cause that requires justice and think of a tool or object that will help achieve that justice. Facilitators should share their own personal examples of justice and an object so that participants can have a model to think about. For example, I am passionate about seeking justice for Indigenous people in Canada, it is an issue that is close to my heart. I think that the object that will achieve that justice is a garden of traditional medicines because

in First Nations culture these medicines are a symbol and vehicle for emotional healing. When I imagine the contents of my tzedakah box, I think about a garden with sage, cedar, sweetgrass, and tobacco growing in my yard as a tribute to First Nations culture.

Participants take a few minutes to quietly choose one thing in the world that needs justice, and imagine what thing could go in Dalia's box to help achieve that justice. It is important that participants try to choose an issue of justice that is important to their hearts because this is what will connect them with the feeling of necessity in pursuing that justice.

**Playing music in the background can help participants feel comfortable imagining. Further, some music might inspire certain ideas. For example, Midnight Oil's "Bed's are Burning" is all about environmental

Olam Chesed Yibaneh is probably my favourite song to play for this to create a reflective moment. Danny Nichols' "L'takein: the Nana Song" is also great and upbeat. Oseh Ma'aseh Vereshit by Noam Katz from the Cornerstone Album is a great one for reflecting on the wonder of creation.

30 minutes (making the box)

Facilitator explains that the participants are now going to make a tzedakah box. The idea is to decorate the outside of the box in a way that will remind you about justice and a cause that you are passionate about.

Participants will use polymer clay (Sculpey or FIMO) to cover the wooden box (available at craft stores and dollar stores) with one or more images of the chosen issue and/or the object or tool of justice.

Follow the package instructions to bake the clay until it is hard.

Participants can consider adding text, or quotes that speak to the issue that they are representing. They might also consider adding traditional Hebrew texts about justice, with or without translation.

***If your camp has a pottery program, this can be an amazing medium to do this project

Sample Texts in English & Hebrew

It is not up to you to complete the work, but you are not free to desist from it.

לא עליך המלאכה לגמור, ולא אתה בן חורין להבטל ממנה

Justice, justice you shall pursue

צדק צדק תירדף

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

וַיִּגַל כַּמַּיִם, מִשְׁפָּט; וַיִּצְדֶּקָה, כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן

God is present wherever men are afflicted. Where is God present now? - AJ Heschel

You give it [food] open-handedly, feeding every creature to its heart's content.

פִּתְתָה אֶת יָדְךָ וּמְשָׁבִיעַ לְכֹל חַי רִצּוֹן

**There are hundreds of materials and techniques that can be used to implement this project. It is however important to consider that if you want campers to build a real attachment to the box and to using it, it needs to be made from good materials. If it is made of “junk” it will always feel like it can be discarded. The box should be beautiful and permanent so that seeing it is a reminder of the necessity of addressing the issue of justice.

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

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Audience description

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