

# BIG IDEAS

FOR JEWISH LEARNING

A Guide from  
Behrman House



## **Introduction**

With the help of educators Lesley Litman and Ellen Rank, we have identified three BIG IDEAS that encompass the key values and purpose of part-time Jewish education programs.

Within these big ideas, there is room for flexibility and community-specific choice of subjects, personal exploration, and desired outcomes.

***A BIG IDEA transcends grades and is an organizing idea or theory that guides us to see connections among disparate facts.***

*We have identified three BIG IDEAS that encompass the key values and purpose of part-time Jewish education programs. Within these big ideas, there is room for flexibility and community-specific choice of subjects, personal exploration, and desired outcomes.*

**The three BIG IDEAS are:**

1. **Deep Connection to Our Sacred Texts.** By developing deeper connections to our sacred texts we discover the values of our tradition and find meaning for our lives. (TORAH)
2. **Belonging to a Spiritual Community of Practice.** Jewish life is often lived in community. Communities enable us to connect at times of joy and sadness and to benefit from the compassion, support, and gladness that is part of communal life. Through communal prayer and ritual celebrations, Jews build community. (AVODAH)
3. **Living Our Values.** The values of our tradition provide guidance as we move through our lives seeking meaning and purpose and help us to experience deep connection to one another, to the world, and to God. (GEMILUT CHASADIM)

**The foundation of these ideas is the notion that *life is a holy endeavor.***

Therefore, many of the experiences that we construct for our learners have undergirding them the idea that learners can increase holiness in their lives and in the world in an ongoing way. For example, when we study text we gain clues about how to live our lives in ways that have purpose. Learning about holidays and rituals points us

to the potential of finding moments of holiness such as stopping to be together on Shabbat and bringing the literal and figurative light of the Shabbat candles into our lives, and building and rebuilding relationships through teshuvah between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

In order to advance these Big Ideas, we need to guide learners in a thoughtful, personal exploration of open-ended (“essential”) questions in a variety of content areas, including Israel, Hebrew, Jewish Values, Bible, and Life Cycle. Essential Questions are key questions that recur throughout learners’ lives and that help learners to make sense of complicated ideas and information. Examples of Essential Questions are: In what ways does performing mitzvot add holiness to our lives? And, How does prayer help make me feel part of a community?

To prepare for effective learning, the educator should create a learning plan. The learning plan includes the Big Ideas, the Essential Question(s), goals for learner outcomes, and how the learning will take place (venue, activities, materials, etc). The educator can assess learners’ progress by planning for *evidence of learning*. The learning plan should enable learners to *demonstrate evidence of learning* and/or the questions with which they are grappling. So, educators establish learner outcomes—what learning will look like—in alignment with the Big Idea and Essential Questions, and then create a learning plan that incorporates opportunities for assessment. Ideally, assessment will take place in the form of a final project that is authentic and public.

### ***The charts included here present:***

1. **Three Big Ideas** for a part-time Jewish education program
2. **Essential Questions** for personal exploration of the Big Ideas, divided into: (i) Young Learners  
(ii) Elementary Learners  
(iii) Middle School Learners
3. **Evidence of Learning**, divided into:  
(i) Several examples of “Evidence sought”  
(ii) ONE “Sample methodology” for gathering that evidence
4. **Suggested for Behrman House Materials** that support the Big Ideas and can be used in structuring your learning plans. Ideas for learning plans can also be drawn from Teacher’s Guides and Lesson Plan Manuals for specific materials.
5. **Project ideas** to stimulate your thinking.

**BIG IDEA #1: Deep connection to our sacred texts**

**YOUNG LEARNERS:**

Essential Questions	Evidence of Learning	Materials
<p><b>Who are some of the important characters in the Bible, what are their stories, and why are they important in my life and in my family's life?</b></p> <p>How am I like the people in the story and how am I different?</p> <p><b>What values can I learn from these characters?</b></p>	<p>Learners know the names of the Bible characters and their stories, are able to convey how they identify with the characters, and identify values they learn from them.</p> <p>Learners demonstrate values through daily actions in class, and can name a biblical character who also demonstrated this value.</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u>  <b>Story creation</b>                      Learners write and illustrate a story about what they want to tell one of the characters if they were to meet them, and why they think they could be friends or not.</p>	<p><u><a href="#">Teach Me Torah (gr K-1):</a></u>                      Learners encounter 16 illustrated Bible stories (Adam and Eve, Noah, Tower of Babel)—each in its own folder—that closely adhere to biblical text retold in simple language written in a large font. Learners explore the value within each story through meaning-making activities.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Let's Discover the Bible (gr 1-2):</a></u>                      Learners read (or hear) 16 illustrated Bible stories written in language appropriate for 6- and 7-year-olds—one folder per story—then complete activities such as puzzles and fill-in-the blanks.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Let's Discover Mitzvot (gr k-2):</a></u>                      These boldly alluring 4-page folders help young children discover the place of the mitzvot in their lives. Eight mitzvot – one in each folder – are explained in terms children can readily grasp.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Let's Discover Kindness (gr 1-2)</a></u>                      Help young children explore kindness and the character traits that contribute to kindness, such as empathy, gratitude, and respect, through a Jewish lens. Students will use role-playing, mindfulness activities, personal reflection, and more.</p>

**Project Idea:**

**“My Torah”** – Using Popsicle sticks, felt, ribbon, and any other inspiring materials help students create their own Torah. On the inside of the felt, glue in the specific texts that students choose that show them connection to the characters and values.



**BIG IDEA #1: Deep connection to our sacred texts**

**ELEMENTARY LEARNERS:**

Essential Questions	Evidence of Learning	Materials
<p><b>Why do we study Torah text?</b></p> <p>How do we make personal meaning of Torah text?</p> <p><b>What does Torah text tell us about how we might live?</b></p> <p>How can the Torah help me in my life when I am not sure what to do?</p>	<p>Learners have skills to study and engage with the text and online commentary.</p> <p>Learners can cite specific texts where they make direct connections to their own lives.</p> <p>Learners reflect on the values derived from Torah and how these values apply to their own lives.</p> <p>Learners tell/write or illustrate about a time when they made a choice based on a value learned from Torah.</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u>  <b>Text study</b>                      Learners create and lead for the class a 1015 minute study of the text (in pairs) that speaks to them in their lives and, using examples, help their classmates understand why they consider it important.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>The Explorer’s Bible 1 (gr 3–4):</u></a> True-to-text English translations of 18 Bible stories give learners an authentic Bible experience. Text is literal with commentaries and midrash clearly separated out.</p> <p>Learners are asked to put themselves into the shoes of characters in the stories (e.g., “Noah, how did you react when God told you about the flood?”). Learners compare their own behaviors to the characters’ (e.g., “Think about a time when you, like Moses, tried to avoid responsibility. Why did you do so?”)</p> <p><a href="#"><u>The Explorer’s Bible 2 (gr 5–6):</u></a> Continues where Explorer’s Bible 1 leaves off— starting with the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites entry into the land of Canaan, then selected chapters from prophets and Writings (18 chapters total).</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Jewish Values in Genesis: If I Could Ask Abraham (gr4-5):</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Jewish Values in Exodus: If I Could Ask Miriam (gr5-6):</u></a> Text study and reflective journaling help students explore their personal relationship to Torah.</p>

**Project Idea:**

“Who am I?” – Students will create characters from the Bible using plastic bottles, foam, and other fun, inspiring materials. Students can show off their character giving one character value as a clue for other students or family members to guess their character.



**BIG IDEA #1: Deep connection to our sacred texts**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNERS:**

Essential Questions	Evidence of Learning	Materials
<p><b>What do our texts tell us about acting upon the demands of competing values?</b></p> <p>How do our texts help us make difficult decisions among several truths?</p> <p><b>How can texts that illuminate competing values help us through complicated situations?</b></p>	<p>Learners can cite a specific value conflict they are facing in their lives, state why both values are right, and use texts to support how they will resolve the conflict.</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u></p> <p><b>Interview</b></p> <p>Learners interview and video teen and adult leaders in the community about times they faced these value conflicts and how they used the conflict and texts to decide how to act. Learners edit the video, adding narrative about what they learned, then post the videos on the synagogue website or on YouTube.</p>	<p><u><a href="#">Judaism’s Great Debates (gr 6–7):</a></u> Ten classic debates awaken in learners the spirit of argumentation and debate and challenge them to critically examine decisions made by Bible characters, and our sages and philosophers. For example, in the story of Nathan and David—with its competing values of Courage vs. Talebearing—learners debate the right to free speech vs national security demands for secrecy.</p> <p><u><a href="#">The Prophets: Speaking Out for Justice (gr 6–7):</a></u></p> <p>Through the lives of 7 prophets (Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jonah) learners explore how they too can speak out in the name of justice. Especially appropriate for learners preparing to become b’nai mitzvah, those who will be reading a haftarah, and for preparing a d’var Torah.</p> <p><u><a href="#">A Topical Bible (gr 6–7):</a></u></p> <p>Uses biblical texts to guide learners as they wrestle with real-life social and ethical problems. Each chapter presents a major contemporary issue and examines it through the lens of the Bible; for example, Repairing a Damaged Relationship: Jacob's Reconciliation with Esau; Joseph and His Brothers.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Jewish Values Challenge Cards (gr 6-12):</a></u></p> <p>Help students develop a better understanding of 58 Jewish values in a playful environment using card-based games created by Robyn Faintich.</p>

**Project Idea:**

“**This or That**” – In small groups ask each child to write down a specific value conflict they are currently facing. Give each student a card with a value on it. When the child shares their conflict with the group they can choose two students whose values will help resolve their conflict and explain why. Students can then develop this activity into the script for a video project.

**BIG IDEA #2: Belonging to a spiritual community of practice**

**YOUNG LEARNERS:**

Essential Questions	Evidence of Learning	Materials
<p><b>What is a Jewish community?</b></p> <p>What do Jews do when we gather in community?</p> <p><b>How and why do we celebrate as Jews together?</b></p> <p>What is Shabbat and how does it make our lives richer and help us feel connected to one another?</p> <p><b>How does the idea that Jews everywhere celebrate the same holidays and pray the same prayers connect me to the Jewish community?</b></p> <p>What is prayer?</p> <p><b>How does prayer help make me feel part of a community?</b></p>	<p>Learners are able to describe and perform rituals associated with Shabbat and state how Shabbat can help people feel connected to one another.</p> <p>Learners are able to identify and recite two prayers (Shema and Bar’chu) and two blessings (Shehechyanu and Motzi) and articulate that Jews around the world say the same blessings and prayers as they do.</p> <p>Learners can express how prayer makes them feel and give two reasons why they or others might pray.</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u>  <b>Personal siddur</b>                      Learners create a personal siddur that includes, for example, two blessings, two prayers, two of their favorite Jewish songs, a personal prayer, illustrations of these, and a time they like to say or sing them. They can use their siddurim each time class meets and at home.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Let’s Discover Holidays (gr K–1)</u></a>: Sixteen 4page folders (in two sets—fall and spring holidays—bring the holiday to life through large, contemporary photos. Ideal to send home for family use.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Let’s Discover Shabbat (gr K–1)</u></a>: Eight 4page folders introduce young children to the traditions and rituals of Shabbat. Includes stories to bring personal meaning to readers and non-readers.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Let’s Discover Israel (gr K–1)</u></a>: Eight 4-page folders connect young children to Israel through photos and core concepts about biblical ties, cities, and the diverse population.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Jewish Holiday Treasure Trail (gr K–1)</u></a>: A fantasy holiday adventure story—in book format—in which learners discover how different communities celebrate Jewish holidays and rituals.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>My Jewish Year (gr 2-3)</u></a>: A basic introduction to the holidays with each holiday’s rich traditions, rituals, and stories.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Let’s Explore Being Jewish (gr 1–2)</u></a>: Seven 16-page magazines, each address one major area of Jewish identity and communal life, such as mitzvot, the Bible, Israel, and the Synagogue.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Siddur Mah Tov (All ages)</u></a> A family-friendly siddur that inspires participants to think what the prayers mean to them, to create their own mental prayer images, and to share their vision with their families. Available in Reform and Conservative editions.</p>

**Project Idea:**

**“Shabbat Symbols”** – Have students create their own Shabbat scenery. You can provide precut Shabbat symbols as well as a variety of free form, interesting and fun materials for students to make their own symbols. Add stickers for extra decorations.



## BIG IDEA #2: Belonging to a spiritual community of practice

### ELEMENTARY LEARNERS:

Essential Questions	Evidence of Learning	Materials
<p><b>How can time be uniquely Jewish?</b></p> <p>How does a sense of Jewish time connect Jews across the globe?</p> <p><b>What makes a community Jewish?</b></p> <p>How can being part of a community support me in my life and enable me to support others in their lives?</p> <p><b>What role has and does Israel play in the lives of Jews and what role does it play in my life?</b></p> <p>How has Israel shaped and been shaped by the story of the Jewish people?</p> <p><b>How does Israel shape my Jewish story?</b></p> <p>What is prayer and how do I pray?</p> <p><b>How do prayers help me connect to community, to myself and to God?</b></p> <p>How does my relationship with God affect my prayer?</p>	<p>Learners can name three elements that make a community uniquely Jewish.</p> <p>Learners can tell the story of an Israeli or an event in Israel from the present or past and share why this individual or event intrigues them.</p> <p>Learners can describe one other Jewish community in the world, identifying what makes them both Jewish communities.</p> <p>Learners can share questions and ideas they have about God and where they see different images of God in the Shabbat liturgy.</p> <p>Learners name examples of Jewish time and explain how Jewish time connects us to Jews around the world.</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u>  <b>Jewish life in my community:</b>                      The class creates an online guide to the Jewish community in their area, including synagogues, JCC's and other Jewish organizations describing what is makes their Jewish community unique.</p>	<p><a href="#"><i>Welcome to Israel (qr 4-5)</i></a>: A comprehensive tour of Israel including its geography, political, commercial, and cultural life. Learners will also hear about Israelis their own age, what their community is like, and what they do for fun.</p> <p><a href="#"><i>Jewish Holidays, Jewish Values Journal (qr 4-6)</i></a>: Explores how Jewish values are rooted in our holiday traditions and stories. Helps learners connect Jewish traditions with their lives.</p> <p><a href="#"><i>Hineni—Hebrew Series (qr 4-6)</i></a>: In this 3volume series, learners explore the Shabbat morning service and selected prayers in the Friday evening service. In a more structured way, learners learn prayer grammar and examine the themes of each prayer and their underlying connection to the larger Jewish community.</p> <p><a href="#"><i>Hebrew in Harmony (qr 4-6)</i></a>: Rooted in music, this multi-modal approach to Hebrew encourages participants to create meaning from personal prayer and make emotion connections through communal prayer.</p> <p><a href="#"><i>Siddur Mah Tov (All ages)</i></a> A family-friendly siddur that inspires families with children ages 5–10 to think what the prayers mean to them, to create their own mental prayer images, and to share their vision with their families. Available in Reform and Conservative editions.</p> <p><a href="#"><i>Building Jewish Identity Series (qr 3-5)</i></a>                      Introduces learners to core knowledge that is essential to developing a strong connection to Jewish community. Using a journal/activity book format that invites personal reflection, these four books give learners an understanding of a distinctively Jewish worldview including Jewish time, sacred texts, Jewish community, and its history. The series is designed to be used in four units over two years.</p> <p><a href="#"><i>Israel...It's Complicated (qr 6-7)</i></a>                      Provides both an overview of the Jewish historical connection to the land and a portrait of today's modern Israeli culture: its innovation, its entertainment, its place in the world, its food. At the same time, this text refuses to shy away from the nuance and complexities that Israel navigates.</p> <p><a href="#"><i>Make, Create, Celebrate! (qr 4-6)</i></a>                      This text uses art as a way to help students connect with the underlying values of the holidays in a personal way, free from explaining the how-tos of each holiday.</p>

### Project Idea:

“Do You Want to Build a Community?” – Write Jewish Values on Lego blocks and pass them around to your students. Have your students build a village using the values to describe what makes a community Jewish. Display your “values village” for families.





## **BIG IDEA #2: Belonging to a spiritual community of practice**

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNERS:**

<b>Essential Questions</b>	<b>Evidence of Learning</b>	<b>Materials</b>
<p><b>Why pray?</b></p> <p>How do I connect to the prayers, especially when I don't totally understand them?</p> <p><b>How does prayer help me understand myself more fully?</b></p> <p>What makes prayer "work" for me?</p> <p><b>How do prayer leaders make prayer "work" for others? What defines a good prayer leader?</b></p> <p>What constitutes a Jewish community?</p> <p><b>What does it mean to be a member of a Jewish community?</b></p> <p>How are the multiple meanings of "Israel" (people, land, state) connected to one another and how are they connected to me?</p> <p><b>Why have the Jewish people been so focused on Israel for so long? How has this shaped who I am even though I don't live there?</b></p> <p>What is Israel's role in Jewish life and in my life?</p>	<p>Learners can describe three ethnic groups in Israel including their music, customs, foods and how they came to be in Israel. Learners reflect on which of these customs and rituals they would most like to experience.</p> <p>Learners can describe the flow of the Shabbat evening or Shabbat morning service, picking out the important themes and describing how they fit together to create a full prayer experience</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u></p> <p><b>Visual tefillah</b></p> <p>The class creates a visual tefillah for the younger learners, leads it, interviews the children who participated about their experience, and reflects on what it is like to create and lead a prayer experience for someone else.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Experience Modern Israel (qr 5-7)</u></a>: An easy-to-use resource book and online enrichment companion. From food to the arts, the environment, technological innovation, politics, and security, learners are immersed in all aspects of Israel and encouraged to develop a personal relationship with the Jewish homeland.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Israel Matters (qr 8-adult)</u></a>: An in-depth look at Israel's history and its security situation. Frankly deals with facts young people need to understand the complexity of Israel today, and to discover how Israel matters to everyone. <a href="#"><u>History of the Jewish People (qr 5-7)</u></a>: A vivid presentation of Jewish history from our earliest ancestors in the Land of Israel to the Jewish experience in America. Each chapter helps learners consider how their lives compare with the lives of our ancestors, and how each generation adapts Judaism to its time and place. Useful texts for research because of the wealth of information they contain.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Siddur Mah Tov (All ages)</u></a> A family-friendly siddur that inspires participants to think what the prayers mean to them, to create their own mental prayer images, and to share their vision with their families. Available in Reform and Conservative editions.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Visual Tefillah</u></a> (search "Visual Tefillah" in <i>Resource Libraries</i>) Lead learners toward a spiritual exploration of 20 key prayers in the Shabbat morning service with slide shows for <i>Kol Yisrael</i> and/ or <i>Hineni</i> Hebrew program. Ideal for kicking off a class with a group projection and discussion.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Israel...It's Complicated (qr 6-7)</u></a></p> <p>Provides both an overview of the Jewish historical connection to the land and a portrait of today's modern Israeli culture: its innovation, its entertainment, its place in the world, its food. At the same time, this text refuses to shy away from the nuance and complexities that Israel navigates.</p>

### **Project Idea:**

**"Sending a Prayer"** – Connect students idea of prayer with the soldiers of Israel. While discussing the Israel and Gaza conflict, ask your students: What are the soldiers fighting for? Who are they protecting? How can we pray for them? Students can write down their prayers and send them to soldiers serving in the IDF.

**BIG IDEA #3: Living Our Values**

**YOUNG LEARNERS:**

Essential Questions	Evidence of Learning	Materials
<p><b>Why does my behavior make a difference in the world?</b></p> <p>How do mitzvot help me decide how to act in the world?</p> <p><b>What makes a mitzvah uniquely Jewish?</b></p> <p>What behaviors do we share with the community around us?</p>	<p>Learners articulate the concept of mitzvah as commandment – things God and the Torah ask us to do.</p> <p>Learners share three mitzvot and how these mitzvot help them make decisions about how to act.</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u></p> <p><b>Poster</b></p> <p>Learners create a poster about healthy eating and exercise by cutting pictures from magazines of healthy foods and people exercising (or playing sports) and then mounting pictures onto a large poster board entitled <i>Shmirat HaGuf – Taking Care of Myself</i>.</p>	<p><u><a href="#">Let's Discover Mitzvot (gr K-2)</a></u>: Eight 4-page folders for early childhood groups focus on mitzvot such as visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, and welcoming guests. Each folder opens with a kid-friendly poem, ideal for beginning readers. Developmentally appropriate illustrations hold the interest of nonreaders too.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Let's Discover God (gr K-2)</a></u>: Eight 4-page folders include simple poems and easy ways for kids to talk about God. For example, children discuss good things they can do to show they are created in the image of God.</p>

**Project Idea:**

**“My Mitzvah Tree”** – Print out the pages from *Mitzvot tree and leaves* pages. Students will color their tree and paste the leaves that represent their daily actions. (Directions included on coloring pages.)

*Tree* – [www.behrmanhouse.com/sites/default/files/pics/Mitzvot-Tree.pdf](http://www.behrmanhouse.com/sites/default/files/pics/Mitzvot-Tree.pdf)

*Leaves* – [www.behrmanhouse.com/sites/default/files/pics/Mitzvot-Leaves.pdf](http://www.behrmanhouse.com/sites/default/files/pics/Mitzvot-Leaves.pdf)

**BIG IDEA #3: Living Our Values**

**ELEMENTARY LEARNERS:**

Essential Questions	Evidence of Learning	Materials
<p><b>How can I be my best self?</b></p> <p>How can I be a good friend?</p> <p><b>How can mitzvot and Jewish values help me to help others and be my best self?</b></p> <p>What does our tradition say that God wants me to do in the world?</p> <p><b>How can I make a difference for other people in my world?</b></p>	<p>Learners identify three Jewish values or mitzvot and explain how following these values or mitzvot can help them to be their best.</p> <p>Learners describe what holiness means to them and how they bring holiness into the world.</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u>  <b>A Holiness Code for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</b></p> <p>Learners create, act out, and video scenarios in which they make choices based on Jewish values or mitzvot.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u><i>Jewish Holidays, Jewish Values Journal (gr 4-6):</i></u></a>                      Explores how Jewish values are rooted in our holiday traditions and stories. Helps learners connect Jewish traditions with their lives.</p> <p><a href="#"><u><i>Partners With God (gr 3-4):</i></u></a>                      Learners acquire a vocabulary for talking about God. Stories from our tradition are just one tool for teachers to comfortably lead discussions about God, belief, and holiness.</p> <p><a href="#"><u><i>Living as Partners with God (gr 4-6)</i></u></a>                      Building on the concepts introduced in <i>Partners with God</i>, this second volume brings learners to an understanding of community and the Jewish people's covenantal relationship with God. Learners begin to understand how to behave as a partner to God.</p> <p><a href="#"><u><i>Living Jewish Values: Series (gr 4-6):</i></u></a>                      This 4-volume series introduces learners to sixteen of the most important—and sustaining—values of our tradition using a workbook/journal format that invites student reflection. Each 48-page book is devoted to a different topic: Be Your Best Self, Family Connections, Be a Good Friend, and Our Shared World.</p>

**Project Idea:**

**“Chain of Mitzvot”** – Cut strips of construction paper and pass out 3 pieces to each student. Ask each student to write one mitzvot on each paper. Have students share their mitzvot and create a chain with other students’ to show how they can connect to better the world.



**BIG IDEA #3: Living Our Values**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNERS:**

Essential Questions	Evidence of Learning	Materials
<p><b>How can mitzvot and Jewish values help me to help others and be my best self?</b></p> <p>What does our tradition say that God wants me to do in the world?</p> <p><b>How can I make a difference for other people in my world?</b></p> <p>Why is it important that I, in particular, try to make the world better?</p>	<p>Learners articulate Jewish values and mitzvot that can contribute to their understanding of an issue about which they are passionate.</p> <p>Learners reflect on an experience they had enacting Jewish values/mitzvot, articulating how they think others were affected by what they did and how they were affected.</p> <p><u>SAMPLE methodology for gathering evidence:</u>  <b>Community social justice project</b>                      Learners work with social justice leaders in their community, study texts about social justice and decide on and enact a social justice campaign/ project for the entire synagogue community. Learners reflect on their experience with the adults following the campaign/project.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Min Ha'aretz: Making Meaning from Our Food (gr 5-7)</u></a>: Our relationship to food has been a concern of Judaism from its earliest writings. <i>Min Ha'aretz</i> fosters discussion of the ways both contemporary and Jewish values help inform our choices about our food.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Our Place in the Universe Journal: Judaism and the Environment (gr 6-8)</u></a>: Through original biblical and rabbinic sources combined with a reflective journal format, learners explore connections between what they believe about their relationship with the natural world and how they live in it.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Count Me In (gr 5-7)</u></a>: Learners explore Jewish values by focusing on their everyday relationships and decision-making. How can the precepts of Judaism help them decide, for example, when to help a friend and when to care for themselves, what to do if they feel jealous of a sibling or classmate, and how to make sound decisions in difficult situations? <a href="#"><u>Today's Hot Topics (Teens)</u></a>: 17 complete resource packages to help lead a discussion about a complex issue from a Jewish perspective. Includes lesson plans, source sheets, stories, and a glossary of Jewish values.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>More of Today's Hot Topics (Teens)</u></a>: This second collection of <i>Hot Topics</i> will help you and your students discuss and debate difficult issues and respectfully hear the opinions of multiple sides.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Social Action Manual (gr 8-12)</u></a>: Six workshops in this handbook expand teens' understanding of why doing social action is important and show how to successfully plan, execute, and evaluate a social action project or initiative.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Make This Journal (gr 8-12)</u></a>                      This smart and hilarious journal is the perfect companion for the young person preparing for their bar/bat mitzvah.</p>

**Project Idea:**

**“Living the Mitzvah”** – Write the words “Heal the World” on the front board for the class. Have students brainstorm and list ways in which the world needs to be healed. In small groups have students share their list and come up with ways they can help (recycle, donate clothes, etc.) Have students keep a journal about their projects and create a marketing plan to involve the rest of the congregation in one of their projects.

---

*All questions and comments may be directed to:  
[customersupport@behrmanhouse.com](mailto:customersupport@behrmanhouse.com) 973-379-7200*

---