

Rambam's Tzedakah Levels

This is an activity to get teens think about the different ways you can do a mitzvah.

Motivation and attitude are also factors in the performance of a mitzvah.

Instructions

Print off the 8 levels and make groups (ideally of 8) but teens can pair up or take more than one card.

Ask teens to work together to put the levels in order.

Facilitate the discussion.

The order is (best to worst)

1. Give a loan
2. Giver and receiver unknown to each other
3. Receiver does not know giver, giver knows recipient
4. Giver is known, recipient is unknown
5. Gives before he is asked directly to recipient
6. Gives after being asked
7. Gives less than he should but cheerfully
8. Gives unwillingly

One who knows to whom he gives, without the poor knowing from whom they receive. For example, in olden days, our ancestors brought gifts into poor people's homes and left without being seen.

The one who gives cheerfully, and as much as one can, but only after being asked.

Prevent poverty by giving someone a gift or a loan or finding work for him/her so that he/she will not need to appeal for help.

The poor person knows from whom he/she takes but the giver does not know the receiver. For example, there were men who tied money in the corners of the cloaks they wore, so that the poor might take it without being seen.

One who gives charity to the poor without knowing to whom he/she gives and without the poor knowing from whom they take.

The one who gives only because he/she is forced to do so. This is the gift of the hand but not of the heart.

The one who gives before he/she has been asked, but who puts it into the poor person's hand, embarrassing the poor person.

The person who gives less than he/she should, but with a smile.