

Jewish Values and Adopt-a-Family

Adopt-a-Family is a very special community-wide program that provides holiday support to so many families in our local Jewish community. With all the excitement around the holiday and with the opportunity to participate in Community Day, it's easy to get involved and share this experience with your children, your friends and/or your colleagues. *But how can we connect this program to our Jewish values? How can we keep up the momentum throughout the year and continue to do good for our community?*

This quick guide was created by **George Kelley, M.Ed** (Education Director at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck) and **Rachel Katz** (Program Director at Jewish Family Services). We hope you find this guide useful to continue the conversation at home.

Activity Ideas for Home

1. Read through the 5 Jewish values and discuss what they mean. How might these connect to Adopt-a-Family? You can then read through the explanations and continue to discuss.
2. Get creative! Pick 1 of the 5 Jewish values and make a collage that represents what this Jewish value means to you. You can draw, use magazine clippings, printed images, pictures, etc. Discuss your art work. *Send us a picture! We'd love to see what you come up with!*
3. Set goals for 2020. How will your family continue to carry on these Jewish values throughout the year? The final page of this packet includes some volunteer opportunities at Jewish Family Services.

Value 1

Hakaim Takim Imo – הַקַּיִם תִּקְיֶימוּ עִמּוֹ
You shall surely lift up with him

*A law designed to encourage aid to one in distress, even one's enemy
(Exodus 23:4; T.B. Baba Metzia 32a).*

Explanation 1

When we provide the opportunity for families to celebrate Hanukah in a meaningful way that lifts up rather than cause them to make difficult financial decisions, we are honoring this value.

Throughout the year you can find ways to help those in need in our community and others. You can: Volunteer or Donate to a food pantry, offer a ride to someone who struggles to find transportation, or even share that extra ticket to an event with a program that can find a family who never can go. Small acts throughout the year can lift up.

Value 2

Halbanat Panim – הַלְבַּנַּת פְּנִים *Avoidance of humiliating someone in public*

The loss of personal dignity at the hands of others is considered one of the gravest wrongs in Judaism, akin to murder. (T.B. Moed Katan 9b; T.B. Baba Mezia 58bff.; Tractate Kallah, Minor Tractates of the Talmud).

Explanation 2

Sometimes we are asked why we don't bring the presents we purchase to the family, or even know the names of those we are helping. Our tradition cares for the dignity of people, we also value anonymous support. This value can be upheld but we can know we are helping members of our community.

We can extend this mitzvah by continuing to acknowledge the need in our community by supporting those institutions that act as a conduit to bring help to those in need.

Value 3

Arevut – עֲרֵבוּת

The concept that Jews have a special obligation to other Jews

A series of ideas and laws encouraging commitments of mutual aid and devotion among Jews (Sanhedrin 27b; Shevuot 39a).

Explanation 3

This is a direct value that encourages us to pull together as a community to help offer aid to others in our community. Adopt-A-Family is the community helping the community.

Every synagogue, learning institution and Jewish Federation/Jewish Family Services provides opportunities throughout the year to provide support for members of our community.

Value 4

Chesed, Rachamim – רַחֲמִים, חֶסֶד

Compassion, especially for those who are in need or vulnerable.

This is a mandate from God to act with mercy and compassion to all of humanity. (Zechariah 7:9; Hosea 2:21; Sabbath 151b; Bezah 32b; Sotah 14a).

Explanation 4

Adopt-A-Family is a way of living this value. We create a compassionate community when we help those who are vulnerable and in need.

You live this throughout the year, we can seek out ways to be compassionate to others in our community. As noted before there are many ways our Jewish community finds ways to help others.

Value 5

V'Shinantam L'Vanecha

וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבְנֵיךָ

And you shall teach your children

The mandate to teach and transmit the Torah to one's own children, one of the most important tasks of any Jewish parent. (Deuteronomy 6:7; Maimonides - Laws of Talmud Torah).

Explanation 5

Modeling is the best way to instill our values into the next generation. So often we ask children to do these mitzvot but doing them as a family we shows our children that it is important to us. Adopt-A-Family is a family program that lives out our Judaism through actions.

Throughout the year, you can share with your children when you make a donation (or even allow them to help make those philanthropic decisions), show or tell them when you volunteer your time, sign up as a family for programs like feeding the homeless on Christmas day. So often we do our actions in isolation; share with your family to teach your children.

JFS Volunteer Opportunities in 2020

Birthday Club

Become a “Birthday Boss” and sponsor a child in our local Jewish community on his or her birthday! Some kids ask for gift cards and others ask for presents or party-supplies – each request is individualized to best cater to the families we serve. Do it on your own or team up with friends.

Grocery Shopping for Popsie’s Pantry

Volunteers from the Jewish Federation’s Women’s Philanthropy Group will be organizing 4 special shopping days in 2020 for families to give back together. Dates include January 26, April 26, August 23 and November 15 (*subject to change*).

Organize a Food Drive for Popsie’s Pantry

Help organize a food drive at your local school, office, club, for a bnei mitzvah project, or simply amongst friends and family. You can even arrange a time to help stock the shelves at Popsie’s Pantry with your donated items.

Adopt-a-Family, Passover Food Drive, and Backpack Attack

Seasonal Campaigns at JFS help support for local Jewish families throughout the year. These are great opportunities for families to go shopping together and pick out items to donate to someone in need.

For more information or ideas on how to give back throughout the year, give us a call! We also suggest contacting your synagogue and other Jewish organizations in the area for more opportunities available for the whole family.

**CONTACT JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES’ PROGRAM DIRECTOR RACHEL KATZ,
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WEBSITE: www.jewishindianapolis.org/volunteer