

Pursue Justice

Grades 4–12

Objective

Students will identify and research a need in their community. They will then develop a collective plan of action to create positive change.

Materials — [Worksheets available on Google Slides](#)

- “Agents of Change” worksheets
- “Self-Reflection” worksheet (optional)

Class Activity

1. If you haven’t already, review the “[Welcome to the Skirball](#)” introduction, which features collection items that relate to this lesson, as well as information about the Skirball and its permanent exhibition, *Visions and Values: Jewish Life from Antiquity to America*.
2. Distribute the “Agents of Change” worksheets to students, individually or in groups, and discuss the idea of *tzedakah* (pronounced “suh-dah-kah,” the Hebrew term for “justice”).
3. Invite students to brainstorm and discuss issues they notice within their community and would like to change. These issues might include single-use plastics and their impact on the environment; the challenges faced by unhoused people; or the demands of public health professionals and essential workers during the pandemic.
4. Encourage students to select one cause and research the topic using a variety of sources. Ask them to find out who the local changemakers are within their community and share their discoveries with the class.
5. As a class, develop actionable ways to make change and contribute to *tzedakah*. Ideas may include writing and delivering a speech to their peers or school community; creating visual art to represent how to effect change, such as a video or public service announcement, mixed media art, or a protest banner; or writing to or calling local government officials.

Student Instructions

Use the “Agents of Change” worksheets to identify your personal strengths and use them to create a positive impact with and for your community!

Share Out

Present the final project to your school and local community.

Curriculum Connections

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA: SL.1, 3, 4, 5; W.7, 8, 9

California Arts Standards: VA:Cr1.1, VA:Cr2.1, VA:Cn10

Resources

[Check out this virtual map](#) to identify local community partners or organizations in Los Angeles County that are making a difference. Explore their available educational resources or reach out to them to find out how you and your class can support their mission.

Get to know inspiring young changemakers from around the world by reading **Amnesty International's** ["Ten Young Activists Shaping the World They Want."](#)

See student storytellers in action. Explore the projects of the [Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes](#).

Learn more about the Jewish tradition and history of [tzedakah boxes](#) from the organization **My Jewish Learning**.

Connect with Us

Our educators are here to help! If you have questions about this curriculum or would like to share your students' writing or artwork with us, please email teacherprograms@skirball.org.

Agents of Change



One of the core values at the Skirball Cultural Center is **pursue justice**, or in Hebrew, *tzedakah* (pronounced “suh-dah-kah”). The idea of *tzedakah* is often associated with small boxes like the ones pictured here. Jewish people traditionally use *tzedakah* boxes to collect loose change on the sabbath and other occasions to donate to people in need. But *tzedakah* is a much more wide-reaching term, emphasizing the importance of caring for others.

To learn more about some of these *tzedakah* boxes, see the primary sources in the [“Welcome to the Skirball”](#) introduction.



What does justice mean to you? At the Skirball, it means fairness, respect, and caring for one another and the earth. People of all ages can use their strengths, compassion, and everyday actions to build a more just world.

Use the following prompts to reflect on ways you can continue to be an agent of change.

1. Things I am good at:
2. Things I like to do:
3. My community needs:
4. Ways I can use my strengths to help my community:
5. Resources (such as books, websites, organizations, or people) that can support me in taking action:

Name:

Agents of Change

Create an action plan with your class.

Here are the steps we will take to make positive change together:

1.

2.

3.

Name:

Self-Reflection

Reflect on your experience with the activity you completed and share what you learned about yourself, your values, your traditions, or your community.

Three things I learned about myself:

One thing I am curious to learn more about:

My greatest challenge with this activity was:

After completing the activity, I am most proud of:

A lasting impact I hope to have on my community is: