The Mitzvah Behind the Symbol

Magen David Adom
SAVING LIVES IN ISRAEL

for 4th and 5th Grade
Lesson Planner
by Stacey Frishman Delcau, RJE
Goals:

★ To help the students understand the variety of ways in which the Magen David Adom helps people around the world.
★ To teach students about the value/mitzvah of responsibility to others (arevut).
★ To help students understand the meaning behind symbols in our lives and what the MDA symbol stands for.

Objectives:

★ Students will be able to (SWBAT) verbalize why the symbol of Magen David Adom is a Red Star of David.
★ SWBAT place pre-printed MDA & Red Cross facts in the appropriate column on the board.
★ SWBAT determine and verbalize why MDA helps people around the world by explaining the value/mitzvah of arevut and kol yisrael aravim zeh lazeh.
Summary of Themes and Ideas

- Jewish Symbols - What Do Symbols Mean?
- Kol Yisrael Aravim Zeh Lazeh - All of Israel is responsible for one another
- Community
- Responsibility
- Accomplishment
- MDA Facts/Red Cross Facts - how we make a difference in the world?

Time: 40-50 min session (can be adapted to shorten if necessary)

Materials:

- Blackboard (or a space to write on)
- Tape
- Cut up paper strips of MDA/Red Cross facts
- Picture of MDA symbol (preferably in color)
Set Induction

**Time:** (5-7 min)

Draw a stop sign on the board. Ask students to tell you what this sign means, why it is important.

- Ask them what happens if people don’t follow the sign.
- Ask 1-2 students to come up and draw symbols on the board. Discuss why each of their symbols are important to our everyday lives.
- Why might you think symbols are important?
- What do symbols accomplish? What is their purpose?
  - (to bring us together as a community, to give us community rules, etc…)
- How do symbols affect your lives?

**Activity 1:** (5-7 min) ✓

**Ask**

What is the symbol for The Red Cross? Ask one student to come up to the board and draw it.

Why is it internationally known?

The equivalent to the Red Cross in Israel is called Magen David Adom.

If you were to come up with a symbol for Magen David Adom- what would it be?
In order to figure out what their symbol would be, let’s brainstorm the major Jewish symbols - things you think Jews around the world will recognize.

Star of David
State of Israel
Israel’s Flag
Torah
Menorah
Mezuzzah
etc...

Let’s narrow it down to our top 3 recognizable Jewish symbols.

Try and trace their final top 3 symbols back to the Star of David.

For example, if the students come up with Torah - take them one step further to ask them to describe what is in the Torah, characters in the story, leaders, rulers, kings...

Eventually, lead them to the story of King David (ie: what kings are mentioned in the Tanach? Magen David - On David’s shield was the star we now call Magen David (essentially-all roads lead to the symbol of Magen David – think through)

After a few minutes of discussion, draw a picture of the Magen David Adom’s symbol on the board. This is a symbol that represents Jews around the world – but is the lifesaving organization in Israel.

Why do you think the MDA symbol is a Star of David?
Why do you think the MDA symbol is red?
Activity 2: (15-20 min)

A. Make a chart on the board with two columns. One column should say American Red Cross and one column should say Magen David Adom.

B. Pass out cut out slips of paper to each student with a piece of tape with the “facts” listed. (You can make copies of the attached slips and pass out one per child or pass out all slips depending on how much time you have or how many students you have)

C. Each student will decide if their piece of paper belongs in the column under Red Cross or Magen David Adom and tape it in the correct column.

D. Tell them that you do not expect them to know the answers to these questions, but try and give it their best guess.

E. Read each fact aloud and then...

F. Place the incorrectly placed facts in the correct column. Make sure they know that both organizations are involved in many similar projects, but for our exercise today - this one belongs in this column.

Discuss:

🌟 What kinds of things does MDA do? The Red Cross?
🌟 How do you think the two organizations are similar? Different?
🌟 How & why is the work they do important to the world?

June 22, 2006 – In a historic moment, Magen David Adom (MDA) was admitted as a full member into the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Society.

The MDA has been working side by side with the International Red Cross for years. While nothing has changed for MDA in Israel, it will make their job easier in other parts of the world and allow MDA to fulfill the Jewish mitzvah of saving lives. While in Israel Magen David Adom will continue to work under the symbol of the Red Star, but when they are aboard they may or may not be asked by their host country to display their star in the newly accepted symbol for the International Red Cross, the crystal.
Conclusion: Kol Yisrael Aravim Zeh Lazeh
(7-10 min discussion)

There is an organization in the United States that helps raise money for Magen David Adom so they can have ambulances, blood banks, medical research facilities, and emergency centers. It’s called “American Friends of Magen David Adom.”

✶ Point to the facts on the board where AFMDA helped MDA (these facts will have a star on them*)

✶ Why should we care to raise money here in the United States to help this organization? Why does the American organization use the word “friends” in the title? (ask for student responses)

In Judaism there is a value called “arevut.” This means responsibility.

✶ What does that word mean to you? What are you responsible for in your lives? This value is also part of a saying, “Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Lazeh” meaning “All Jews are responsible for one another.”

✶ How do you fulfill this mitzvah?

✶ How does MDA fulfill this mitzvah?

✶ Why does MDA help people around the world?

✶ How can you help MDA and be a “friend?”

✶ AFMDA has donated over $90 million dollars to MDA in the past 5 years to provide urgently needed medical supplies, equipment, paramedic training and ambulances, blood donation facilities, and emergency medical stations. Why is support to AFMDA so critical?
**Teacher’s copy**

**Magen David Adom Facts**

______ (MDA) paramedics traveled to Romania to assist the local population following the disastrous flooding of the Danube River.

During 2006 - ______ (MDA) provided emergency aid training course to Bulgarian Red Cross. ______ (MDA) also assisted the Bulgarian Red Cross in developing its ambulance and emergency medical services. At the first stage, the service will be provided to the population of Sofia, Bulgaria’s capital. In 2005, ______ (MDA) contributed to the Bulgarian Red Cross five fully equipped and refurbished ambulances.

____________ (MDA) stationed over 4,000 of its volunteers and workers in front of supermarkets across ______ (Israel) to encourage the (Israeli) public to donate basic food items to assist tens of thousands left homeless in Sri Lanka from the 2004 tsunami.


When Hurricane Katrina hit the New Orleans and Louisiana areas in 2005, ______ (MDA) began an emergency mission named “United Brotherhood”.

* ______ (MDA) collected donations funds, clothing and other equipment for the 400,000 New Orleans survivors, who were left homeless.

As a member of the International Red Cross, a global network of more than 181 national societies, ______ (MDA) helps restore hope and dignity to the world’s most vulnerable people.

*In 45 Chapters and 24 Friends Groups across the United States, dedicated volunteers support the lifesaving efforts of ______ (MDA) through events, fundraising, community awareness and outreach.

*Supporters of this organization donated 209 ambulances in the past two years to give the country a total of over 700 ambulances.

*Supporters of this organization helped to build a national blood service center which supplies 100% of the blood needs for the national army and 95% of the blood that is needed by its citizens regardless of religious background or race.

Has over 10,000 volunteers (of which 1/2 are teenagers) the youngest volunteers are 15, the oldest 85)

*Helps people of all backgrounds, race, religion and color through funding the establishment of medical research centers.

(Facts taken from : www.israaid.org.il  The Israel Forum for International and Humanitarian Aid and AFMDA’s website www.afmda.org.)

* Denotes the work of American Friends of Magen David
Red Cross Facts

Offers a babysitting course where you can learn how to perform first aid, handle bedtime issues, and learn safe and appropriate games to use with children.

The _______ (American Red Cross), one of 20 Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies providing assistance, that worked tirelessly to aid the Indonesian Red Cross in its efforts to help those affected by the May 27, 2006 earthquake.

In the days and weeks following the December 2004 tsunami, the ___________ (American Red Cross) psychosocial support team visited dozen of schools in southern Sri Lanka to help children overcome their emotional trauma.

Through more than 800 locally supported chapters, more than 15 million people each year gain the skills they need to prepare for and respond to emergencies in their homes, communities and world.

Almost 4 million people give blood—the gift of life—through the _______ (American Red Cross), making it the largest supplier of blood and blood products in ______ (the United States).

The ____ (American Red Cross) helps thousands of ________ (U.S.) service members separated from their families by military duty stay connected.

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___________ sent paramedics to help people injured by an explosion in the US Embassy in Kenya, Nairobi.
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This Lesson Planner can be downloaded at www.afmda.org.