**Goals:**

♫ To give students an opportunity to voice their opinions about the value of life.

♫ To give students the opportunity to learn more about the work that AFMDA does for Israel.

♫ To learn about the high regard in which Judaism holds life through Torah and Talmudic sources.

**Objectives:**

♫ SWBAT (students will be able to) distinguish and verbalize the most important people, places and things in their lives.

♫ SWBAT discuss the importance of saving a life in the Jewish tradition.

♫ SWBAT create a bumper sticker/slogan for Magen David Adom (MDA) which conveys what MDA does and why this work is important.
Themes and Ideas addressed in Lesson

★ Pikuach Nefesh
★ Kol Arevim Zeh Lazeh
★ Do Not Stand Idly By
★ Values clarification

☑️ Time: 60 min session

If you only have a shorter period of time (around 30 min), do Activity #1, Activity #3, and the beginning of Activity #4

Materials:

★ Paper
★ Pens
★ AFMDA / MDA background information
  Some information is provided on page 8. If you would like more information or would like brochures to distribute to your classroom, please call 866-632-2763.
★ Copies for the class of the scenario and questions on page 7
★ Copies for the class of MDA Volunteer reports on pages 12-14
★ Copies for the class of the bumper sticker template on page 15
These activities can be performed individually or in groups.
**Set Induction**

**Time: (7-8 min)**

- Instruct students to brainstorm a list of their top 10 most precious things in their life.

- Tell them to rank their lists from #1 to #10 in order of importance with #1 being the most important thing on their list. They can include people, places, and things.*

- Give them 4-5 minutes to write their list. Encourage them to think seriously about what they include on their lists.

- Ask for volunteers to share their lists (if you are limited on time, ask for the top 3 items).

- Have a short discussion about similarities/differences between lists.

- Ask students to count how many items on their list involve people. Put that number on the board.

- Ask the students why they think that it’s important to go through this exercise. (For example: It’s important to realize what we value in our lives and not to take things for granted.)

*Keep these lists handy for the concluding activity.
Activity #1

Time: (7-8 min)

Read aloud or post the following quote:

“Whoever destroys a single life is as though he had destroyed an entire world, and whoever saves a single life is as if he had saved an entire world.”

— Sanhedrin 4:5

This quote, taken from the Talmud, expresses the Jewish view of the importance of life.

What do you think? Do you agree?

Do you think this applies to just human life or animal life as well?

Judaism holds life in the highest regard. It even allows for times when you can “break” certain mitzvot/commandments in order to save a life.

What mitzvot/commandments can you “break” for pikuach nefesh?

All mitzvot except for murder, idolatry, and illicit sexual relations (sexual relations not permitted by moral or ethical law).

We are commanded to not be passive, not to stand by and let someone else die — but rather it is our obligation to actively help a person in need.
Optional

Below is one example from the Talmud of a mitzvah you can “break” to save a life:

Note: The next few sentences in italics are necessary only for classrooms where the majority of students are not Shomer Shabbat.

For our first example, we have to put ourselves in the mindset of very traditional Jews who keep all of the laws of Shabbat. For some people- one of the most important things on their list that we just compiled individually would be keeping mitzvot (shomer mitzvot). All of the laws regarding Shabbat are some of the most talked about mitzvot in the Talmud.

From the Talmud (Yoma 83a), we learn that you can break the laws and rules of keeping Shabbat to save someone’s life.

**Pikuach nefesh doche Shabbat**

Why do you think the laws of Shabbat can be broken to save a life?
**Activity #2**

**Time:** (17-18 min)

Break the class up into small groups

Pass out the following scenario- each group should pick someone or something from their personal list compiled at the beginning of class and fill in the blank of the person/thing to be saved. *(Handout for Students)*

A major storm just hit your city. The wind is heading up to 80 miles an hour, the rain is pounding down and is turning into hail.

Your ____ (dog, cat, brother, fill in one of your items from your list here!) was outside and was swept away in a flood. You see your ____ about 50 feet away. While you are running towards your ______, you hear the cries of a person (who you don’t know) who is pinned under a tree branch with another one about to fall on his/her head. Any second he/she will most likely be killed by the falling branch.

You need to make a decision this instant.

Who do you save?

If you chose to save your ____________________...

Why is your ____________________ more important than a stranger?

If you chose to save the stranger... how hard do you think it would be to give up something you loved to save someone else’s life?

What if that person stuck under the tree was your best friend?

What if it was your teacher?

What about an actor from your favorite TV show?

What if it was a family member?

Does changing the person make any difference in your answer?

Bring the class back together and discuss the difficult choices people have had to make in life. Any stories you might know from recent events? For example, Hurricane Katrina?
What makes us choose things we know over things we don’t know?

Considering the mitzvah of kol yisrael arevim zeh lazeh—“All Jews are responsible for one another,” do you consider Israelis to be your brothers and sisters (or like family?)

**Activity #3**

**Time:** (15 min)

**Magen David Adom**

According to pikuach nefesh, a person must do everything in their power to save the life of another, even donate bodily organs.

Magen David Adom fulfills this mitzvah every day.

What is Magen David Adom and what do they do?

In order to answer this question, what do you think the Red Cross does?

**Explain MDA and AFMDA to the students:**

American Friends of Magen David Adom, formerly known as ARMDI, is the authorized, tax-exempt fundraising organization in the United States supporting the life saving efforts of MDA in Israel. Magen David Adom (MDA) provides the nation’s pre-hospital emergency medical needs, including medical, disaster, ambulance and blood services. MDA has over 100 Emergency Medical Stations and 11 dispatch stations throughout Israel. Thanks to AFMDA/ARMDI supporters, 700 MDA ambulances and Mobile Intensive Care Units are on call 24/7, taking care of nearly half a million patients annually. The MDA National Blood Services Center provides 100% of the blood requirements of the IDF and 97% of the nation’s blood needs.

The men and women of Magen David Adom volunteer for MDA because they believe in the following passage from the Torah:

“You shall not stand idly by while your fellow’s blood is being spilled.”

— Leviticus 19:16

Let’s learn about why people risk their lives to volunteer and work for MDA through personal first-hand accounts.
Instructions
Divide your class into three groups. Each group will receive a volunteer story and questions (see page 12-14). They will then report back interesting reflections to the main group after 6 minutes of discussion.

Alternative activity
If your class is too small to break up into large groups or you would like your students to think about the answers individually. Post the three stories around the room and let the students go from story to story and write the answers to the following questions on a piece of paper.

Questions to address:

★ What do you think it means to “save a life?”
★ Does saving a life only mean pulling someone from a burning building?
★ Why do you think these volunteers feel a sense of dedication and responsibility to do what they do?
★ Does it make a difference to you to know that MDA is helping to save Jewish, Arab, Christian and Muslim lives as well as other residents of Israel?
★ How is the mitzvah of kol arevim zeh lazeh exemplified in these stories? (All Jews are responsible for one another)
Activity #4

Time: (15 min)

Since many of us might not come across and opportunity to save a life in the way that the men and women of Magen David Adom do every day, what can we do to help fulfill the mitzvah of pikuach nefesh?

**Brainstorm a list**

Besides giving tzedakah to American Friends of Magen David Adom, the organization in the United States that collects money to help MDA, let’s think about ways in which we can teach others about the mitzvot that MDA fulfills.

If you were going to teach the value of pikuach nefesh to others, how would you promote this value through the work of Magen David Adom?

**Slogan writing**

When you see a bumper sticker, what makes you stop? Think? Feel a sense of pride?

If you were to create a bumper sticker for your car to teach people about Magen David Adom and saving a life, what would you write to make people stop, think, or feel a sense of pride?

Think about what would happen is MDA did not exist. Who would save lives in Israel?

Research what you think is the most important thing that AFMDA does...and let others know!

Hand out bumper sticker templates to each student.

Give the students 8-10 minutes to create their slogan and sticker. *Groups are optional.*
**Conclusion**

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

So now, let’s return to the lists you made at the beginning of class. Now you can see the sacrifice the MDA workers and volunteers make every time they go out into the community.

If you were in their same position and had an opportunity to save lives knowing you had to give something up to fulfill this important mitzvah, what could you give up?

Ask for a few volunteers to share – make sure to ask the question of how they came to their decision about what to give up.

Thank the students (if appropriate) for their seriousness and honesty while discussing this important organization and the mitzvot they perform.
“We’re very moved that the young ones care”

Source: Ynet – Thursday, August 17, 2006 –
(Excerpt-Translation)

Senior citizens returning to Kiryat Shmona were surprised to find that MDA Youth volunteers had cleaned their homes and filled their refrigerators with food. “It’s great to come home to the Kiryat Shmona as we remember it before July 12 and quiet again since August 14,” said an elderly resident, who was visibly moved.

Eighty local MDA Youth volunteers, helped by colleagues from other cities initiated the campaign. Shimon Abutbul, Regional Director for the MDA Kiryat Shmona station: “During the fighting, MDA transferred some of the senior citizens to care facilities and parents homes in the center of Israel, and now we’re busy cleaning their homes and distributing food packages for their homecoming.”

Eli Yaffe, MDA Volunteers Coordinator: “A few months ago, MDA joined the International Red Cross, and as a humanitarian organization it is essential that we carry out this voluntary humanitarian campaign in Kiryat Shmona.”

“I’m really touched to see these young MDA kids care for us; cleaning our houses, bringing food, hugging, kissing and talking to us – so encouraging and supportive,” said Kiryat Shmona resident, Sara Elbaz.
VOLUNTEER STORY - B:

As Hezbollah Rocket Attacks Kill 15 in Northern Israel, An Israeli Red Cross Official Describes Haifa Under Siege

Source: Democracy Now Radio – Monday, August 7, 2006

AMY GOODMAN: Early this morning, we reached Erez Gellar, paramedic supervisor for the Israeli relief organization, Magen David Adom, in Haifa.

EREZ GELLAR: Obviously, people are exhausted. We’re working at least twelve hours a day. Yesterday, at approximately 7:48 p.m., we got an alarm in Haifa, and we had bombs all over Haifa and in the suburbs. We had fellings downtown and on the Carmel Mountain one street was hit by a bomb.

Now, basically, we had to send the teams outside, because we got another phone call to the emergency numbers, but we weren’t able to send them out, because [inaudible] having a bomb falling on Haifa. After two minutes, we had to send them outside. Everything was quiet. We had eight different locations, eight remote locations. And at the end of all the events, we had three casualties, two seriously wounded, four moderate, 38 minor wounded, and 44 with anxiety attacks. The number of the anxiety attacks went up to around 80 or 90 patients. And as we came back to the station, we spoke to the teams. A lot of guys were actually afraid, because some of the bombs fell less than 20 meters (approx. 65 feet) from the station. Everything moved in the station. They heard a big blast. They were very afraid.

And after, like, something like this, [inaudible] outside and treat, it’s very difficult. And the problem was that we had to treat four or five scenes that were located downtown in an old place, an old street with old buildings, and it’s very crowded over there and the streets are very small, very narrow. And it was very tough to bring all the ambulances inside with the police and the fire department, and we had fire over there and gas leaks and electricity wires on the street. So basically what we had yesterday is something very big, and this is actually the most difficult event that we had so far in Haifa.

If you provoke, the way they provoked us – kidnapped soldiers, start an attack on villages after few months of quiet, and not that everything is quiet, but it’s not a good quiet, it’s not a good silence. It’s – I don’t know, it’s something you shouldn’t start. So the minute they started their actions and they provoked us and kidnapped soldiers, Israel had to basically defend, so we had to act, and then it became something bigger. And I’m not a general or something, but after a few days, we found ourselves in the middle of the war. So, this is the first time Haifa has to deal with something that is so big, like yesterday or like three weeks ago.

We had crazy scenarios and we had a lot of simulations with the police and the fire department, but never -- if you asked me, like if you came to me a few years ago and asked me, “Do you think it’s going to happen? I mean, like rockets on Haifa?” I would have said, “Never.”

Copy this story for Activity #3
VOLUNTEER STORY - C:

When calm returned to the area, the inhabitants of the bombed North began to return to their homes. For certain people, the war started all over again. When left alone in their own houses, all by themselves, the difficult struggle with loneliness, the lack of supplies and failing health are the most conspicuous problems amongst the forsaken and lonely elderly people. During the war some of them were sent to the South, to protected and warm establishments, some were in the shelters with all the neighbors and simply were part of the crowd. When it was all over and each man returned to his own daily life and business, the elderly return to their own personal daily struggle.

The MDA youth volunteers have not forgotten these people.

An amazing group of about 50 young volunteers from the Yarden Region and the Lachish Region in the South, “took over” in Kiryat Shimona. They cleaned 36 houses belonging to the elderly in the town, - washed the floors, scrubbed the dishes, took out the rubbish and then filled the refrigerator and larder with food items that had been collected jointly with the “Blue Square” Co-op chain. During the day the volunteers gave out a further 280 packages to families in Tiberias, Ma’alot, Shlomi and Shear Yishuv in the North.

Mr. Oded Segal, who oversaw the whole project for MDA: “The youngsters were highly motivated and very keen to help, and asked to be involved and did everything with great care. One can only praise them for what they did and be proud of the wonderful youth that volunteer with us and give of themselves – not only with words- but also with actions – for the sake of others who need their help.”

“When we started projects to help in the community, there were those who were astonished by the relief brought by Magen David Adom, they thought that only life saving was our purpose” people in MDA say today.

“Today we can proudly declare that the wonderful projects that were carried out for the community during the war sprung from the field –from the youth volunteers, the adult volunteers and the workers at all levels. They saw the suffering, recognized the needs and took action to help with whatever was needed.”

Copy this story for Activity #3
This Lesson Planner can be downloaded at www.afmda.org.