



Why Mitzvot Are Our Best Friends

Submitted by Shauna Sadow

Fourth Grade Lesson Plan

Objectives

- Understanding of different kinds of mitzvot (ουενκ οστ τηX εϋρχφκ οστ τηX)
- Understanding of why mitzvot are like friends
- Understanding of why mitzvot are important to us

Introduction

- Mitzvot actually means commandments, not good deeds.
- Shoresh of mitzvah = שורש = binding, connection
- There are two kinds of commandments: ουενκ οστ τηX εϋρχφκ οστ τηX
(Explain as between us and G-d and between all humanity)
- Show 10 Commandments-which are which? (1-5 G-d, 6-10 humanity)
- *Think about it:* Which type of mitzvot are like your friends?



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Activities

- ❑ Discussion: What are some things that you do for your friends? That they do for you?
- ❑ Think about it: Why are mitzvot the most faithful friends a Jew has?
- ❑ Read *The Fable of the Three Friends* (attached)
- ❑ Explain this is a midrash where the king represents G-d, the 1st friend is money, the 2nd is family, and the 3rd is mitzvot.
- ❑ *Discussion:*
 - How is the third friend's friendship better than the families?
 - How are your values similar to or different from those in the story?
 - How can you increase the pleasure you get from performing mitzvot?



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Closure

- What type of mitzvot have we been discussing? Answer: ןרררר ןסר תרX
 - What does ררר ןרררר mean? Answer: friend, to his friends
 - Why is it called that in Hebrew? Answer: all humanity are our friends
- Why are mitzvot the most faithful friends a Jew has? Answer: They are always there to support us. When a person dies his mitzvot accompany him and speak to G-d on his behalf.

Materials Needed

- Chart of the Ten Commandments
- Lesson inspired and expanded upon from *Basic Judaism for Young People* volume two: Torah, chapter ten: Mitzvah.



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The Fable of the Three Friends

There was once a man who had three friends. Unfortunately, the man had the deepest feelings for the friend who loved him least. But one day he had the chance to test all three friendships. For on that day, the king summoned him to his palace.

The man was very much afraid. "Perhaps," he said to himself, "someone has spread false tales about me. If so, the king may want to punish me. I don't know what to do. I'll ask my best friend to come with me to the king's palace to help defend me."

The man went to the friend whom he loved best, and asked him to speak on his behalf before the king. How disappointed the man was when his friend found some excuse not to help him out.

The man approached his second friend. "I will be glad to go with you to the palace, but I am afraid I cannot defend you before the king," said this friend.

Disappointed in his other two friends, the man now approached his third friend. Although he had never regarded this friend very highly, he decided to ask for his help anyway. "Of course I shall speak on your behalf before the king," said this friend.



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And so it was that the man and his truest friend went before the king. The friend testified on the man's behalf, and no harm befell him.

- What does this story have to do with Mitzvot?

The king is God. All people are called before God when it is time for them to die.

- The first friend is the man's money.

You can't take it with you.

- The second friend is the man's family.

They can take you the grave, but can't go with you.

- The third friend is the mitzvot the man has performed during his life.

Your actions in this life are all that can accompany you to God's presence and speak on your behalf always.



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The Ten Commandments

1. I am the LORD your God, you shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain.
3. Keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.