



Mitzvah Project to Help Communities Struck by a Natural Disaster

Topic

Making gift card holders for disaster relief donations

Grade Level(s)

Jr. High and up

Goals for the Lesson/Activity

Students will

- Explore the meaning of “community” and the associated responsibilities
- Learn the meaning of *hiddur mitvah*
- Recognize that each person has the ability to give comfort and help to others
- Create gift card holders to send to people in need



Materials needed

- 2-inch width duct tape, assorted colors
- Scissors
- Adhesive dots (Velcro)
- Decorative stickers

Background for Teachers

In disaster relief situations, such as those that occur after massive flooding or hurricanes, gift cards from big box stores that sell food, clothing and cleaning supplies are oftentimes collected for distribution to those who are in immediate need. In instances where a community is devastated, gift card donations enable affected families to buy basic supplies while waiting for insurance vouchers or governmental relief to come through. Most communities do not want donations of clothing, food and water because it can be difficult to catalog, store and distribute. The distribution of gift cards, sent to the designated local township or to specified religious organizations, is more manageable.

Before collecting donations and crafting holders, be sure to check out the affected community's governmental website to review the types of cards needed, and where donations should be sent.



Mitzvah Project to Help Communities Struck by a Natural Disaster

If your synagogue or organization is going to mount a drive to collect gift cards to help communities hard hit by a natural disaster, encourage junior high and high school students to get involved by making duct tape card holders to house the gift cards.

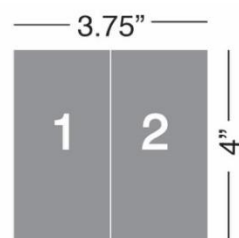
The concept of *Hiddur Mitzvah*, enhancing or beautifying a *mitzvah*, is derived by the Rabbis from Exodus 15:2, “This is my God and I will glorify Him.” It refers to adding a layer of beauty and intention to our actions (this is why we engrave Kiddush cups, for example). In this case, we are asking students to perform acts of *tzedakah* and *chesed* through collection and distribution of the gift cards. By creating the accompanying holders for the cards, we emphasize the need to bring forth beauty and color at times of crisis. You may want to encourage your students to write a little note of good wishes or prayer to include in the holder along with the gift card.

Description of Activities

1. The first step when making a gift card holder is to create a piece of non-sticky “fabric” out of duct tape. To begin, cut six 4-inch long pieces of duct tape. As you cut the pieces, hang them on the edge of the table so they do not become entangled.



2. Take one strip and lay it, sticky side up, on the table in front of you.



3. Lay a second strip of tape, sticky side up, right next to the first, with the longer edges touching. Overlap the 2 pieces of tape so that they form one larger piece of duct tape measuring $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 4 inches

4. Now attach a third row of duct tape. This large piece should measure approximately $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches by 4 inches. This completes one side of the duct tape fabric.



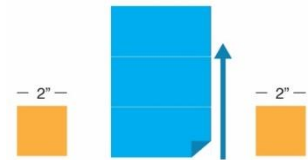


Mitzvah Project to Help Communities Struck by a Natural Disaster

5. Cover the sticky side of this fabric with the 3 remaining strips of duct tape, so that no more sticky areas are exposed. The finished piece of duct tape fabric should have the colored duct tape on two sides and still have an overall measurement of $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches by 4 inches. Trim the edges.



6. Using a different colored duct tape, cut two 2-inch pieces and set aside. Place the fabric in front of you so that the 4" edge is parallel to your body. Take that edge and fold it up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way. This will form the pocket that will hold the ID card. Use the two pieces of duct tape to seal the edges.



7. To create the top flap, fold the top over and secure with an adhesive dot.

8. Add decorations by cutting random shapes out of the duct tape, or use stickers, and put them all over the card holder.



9. Insert the card into the holder along with a short prayer or kind words to lend strength and comfort to the recipient.

