

Grab 'n' Go Lesson Food Forward

Good People Grab 'n' Go Lessons are designed to provide educators with all of the education materials needed in one document to teach a 60-90 minute lesson on a specific topic. Some Grab 'n' Go Lessons will require photo copies while others will require internet access and a projector and speakers; some will require markers while others will require post-it notes each one is unique. We encourage educators to adapt the materials to their environment and learners. (Note: All stock graphics are free on <http://www.freedigitalphotos.net>)

SUPPLIES: various unique fruits and vegetable tasters (note: if someone in your group has food allergies, avoid these foods), napkins, toothpicks, small plates, a check-sheet with the name of each fruit/vegetable with a comment line, pens/pencils; projector/audio/screen/laptop/internet; copies of the Good Person Profile; text sheet copies; optional: poster board and markers

8-15 minutes

Arrival Activity

1. Place out a variety of unique fruits and vegetables (about 6-8 varieties) with small pieces for tasting (Put a whole fruit/vegetable in the center of a plate with small taster sized pieces around it).
2. Place toothpicks, small plates and napkins around so people can easily access them for their tasting experience.
3. As they arrive, hand them a check sheet with a pen/pencil. Explain that they should go through and taste each item they are comfortable with and then write some notes next to the item about how it tasted, what was the consistency, etc.

Discuss:

- Were there any fruits/vegetables you had never tasted before? What were they? What was your experience in encountering them?
- Which new fruit/vegetable was your favorite? Your least favorite?
- Why do you think you haven't had the chance to ever try some of these before? (geographic access – doesn't readily grow in your climate? Limited supply in stores? Cost?)
- What fruits and vegetables do you eat most often?
- Do you grow any fruits or vegetables in your own garden?
- What would it be like if it was difficult for you to access these items you were used to eating all the time? (because of cost? Geographic access – live in an area where it's hard for produce to grow? Etc)

2-5 minutes Set Induction

Explain to your participants that today, we are going to learn about an organization that helps people get access to fruits and vegetables when they might otherwise not be able to get them – because of poverty (cost), or geographic distance to grocery stores, or because of an over-demand in a low-supply situation (like Food Banks, soup kitchens, etc).

Be sure they understand certain concepts like:

- Perishable (food that goes bad quickly rather than shelf-stable food)
- Shelf-stable (food that lasts a long time without refrigeration)
- Food waste (what happens to left over produce from local restaurants and markets they might frequent?)
- What kinds of foods are typically given to food pantries (when they have donated food in the past – it is likely all shelf-stable, non-perishable food).
- So then consider - how do those who shop at food banks get fresh, perishable produce?

8-12 minutes The Good People Profile: Rick

Read aloud (and/or distribute copies) of The Good People Profile (handout located at the end of the lesson).

Sometimes just taking a walk can open up your eyes to the most astounding things. That's what happened to Rick Nahmias, a professional photographer, filmmaker and writer as well as a formally trained chef.



Every day Rick and his dog Scout, a “senior” Labrador Retriever, would take long walks through his Los Angeles neighborhood. As Scout aged he walked more slowly and that was when Rick began to notice his surroundings — like his neighbors’ abundant fruit trees which were dropping tons of ripe oranges, grapefruit, lemons and tangerines on their lawns, only to rot. This didn’t make sense to Rick. Wouldn't hungry people enjoy and benefit from the healthy produce? Wouldn't that fresh fruit be a welcome addition to the other items distributed by local pantries and food banks?

Some of Rick's most successful work focuses on people living marginalized lives, often struggling to get ahead. Social justice is very much a part of who he is. But — let's get back to that walk and how it changed Rick's life (and so many more people's lives as well.) Rick's "a-ha" moment led him to start Food Forward in 2009. This growing organization is fueled by a huge volunteer corps whose efforts began with private backyard gleaning of citrus fruit. What followed from there was something that could only happen in a state like California where fresh fruit and vegetables are in such abundance.

Always a creative thinker, it didn't take Rick very long to come up with even more ideas about how to rescue all of this bounty. There are more than 120 Farmer's Markets scattered throughout Los Angeles County. Food Forward has volunteers who visit 11 of these markets each week to gather leftover produce from the vendors before closing. Each month, those 11 markets produce more than 25,000 pounds of rescued food that is immediately turned over to local agencies that distribute it to their needy clients.

Having covered backyards and Farmer's Markets, next on Rick's list were the many *wholesale* terminal markets found primarily around the Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market. *The Wholesale Market Recovery Program* rescues tons of perfectly good produce, more than 90 different varieties and a good percentage of it organically grown, from the area's many wholesale vendors and directs it to local agencies.

In terms of impact, Food Forward provides food to more than 100,000 hungry people and in 2015, gleaned more than 8,800,000 pounds of juicy fruit, vegetables and other healthy food. Just think — it all started when walking Scout. What ground-breaking idea could *you* come up with if you had to walk a dog every day and took the time to notice all that is around you?

After reading The Good Person Profile, discuss:

- What was Rick's primary motivation for starting Food Forward?
- If you consider the concept of "supply and demand," how did Rick change the distribution situation of fresh produce?
- Consider the growth of Food Forward – what resources did they first tap into, and how did they grow the resources they accessed?
- Think about a time when you had something "extra" and gave it to someone who might not have any or enough.
- How did a sense of "being thankful" impact Rick and the creation of Food Forward?

15-25 minutes Getting to Know Food Forward

Check out these resources and see if your learners can determine some unique facts about Rick and Food Forward. Consider the numbers of people impacted; the amount of food that has been collected to date; issues and ideas that motivate Rick, his staff and the volunteers; as well as how markets and restaurants feel about this project:

Watch this video (6:55): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4N9pZMOdO8>

Read these articles (can be printed and distributed):

- <http://slowfoodla.com/2012/12/guest-post-terre-madre-delegate-rick-nahmias/>
- <http://www.latimes.com/food/dailydish/la-dd-food-forward-farmers-market-produce-20150408-story.html>
- <http://www.supermarketguru.com/articles/food-forward.html>

If you have access to computers, cell phones or tablets and the internet, you can have the group do some research about Food Forward by looking at these references:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/foodforwardla>
- Website: <https://foodforward.org/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/foodforward/>

One fun exploration is to have the group participate in an **Instagram Scavenger Hunt:** <https://www.instagram.com/foodforward/>

- Assign them to find the following kinds of images and either print them, or screen capture them, or shout out the description/tags for these photos:
 - A person eating fresh food
 - Rotting/spoiled food
 - Food in the shape of something else
 - People gathering/collecting produce to donate
 - A store or market
 - A fruit/vegetable they are unfamiliar with
 - Food in a cartoon or caricature
 - Food still on the vine/tree/bush

20-35 minutes What's Jewish About Rick's work and Food Forward?

Included in this Grab 'n' Go is a Text Study sheet for your use.

Depending on the age of our participants, you may want to choose one text to explore via a projector, a few texts via posters, or provide them with the entire multi-page text sheet. For advanced learners, you may want to provide them with a *Tanach* for access to some of the original texts.

You will notice that the texts for this Grab 'n' Go are divided into three sections:

1. Blessings for Food
2. Tithe/Peah
3. Feeding the Hungry/Eating to Satiation

(NOTE: You will notice another section marked Advanced Texts for the exploration of Shmita - the resting/Jubilee year.)

One method for engaging these texts:

1. Divide the class into three groups (one for each of the themes).
2. Have each group spend some time going through each of their texts, rephrasing them for their own meaning and understanding.
3. Then have the group come to consensus on which text is the most important of them and makes the biggest connection to Food Forward and its work.
4. Give them a poster board and have them write the text in the middle of the poster board and then illustrate around it – interpreting its meaning and the connection to food forward.
5. Bring the group back together and have each group share their text and their interpretation as well as the connection to Food Forward and Rick.

Some questions for consideration:

1. Why might the texts provided be divided into these three categories? What does each one have to do with Rick and Food Forward?
2. Are there other categories of texts/values you think you might be related to Rick and Food Forward that you would want to know more about? (If time, have them look some of these up.)
3. One of the texts tells us that if a hungry person steals food, that s/he is not punished for stealing. If one of the 10 Commandments is to not steal, why might stealing food for satiating hunger override this “big” commandment? (the value of saving a life – *pikuah nefesh* – overrides all other commandments)
4. What can blessing our food teach us about the human tendency to take things for granted?
5. One text even calls it sacrilege to eat without making a blessing (be sure the learners know what sacrilege is) and one text considers it stealing to eat without making a blessing. What can these two texts tell us about the need for us to be thankful?
6. Have the learners consider how grateful someone would be if they rarely (if ever) got fresh produce to eat – what kind of gratitude might they want to show and to whom?
7. The concept of tithing/peah is significant in Judaism and appears several times in our texts and stories. Why do you think this provision was made in our ancient texts? (it gives dignity to the hungry that they may ‘pick’ their own food even if they can’t own land.)

8-12 minutes The Good People Making a Difference with Food Forward

The Good People Fund began working with Rick and Food Forward shortly after he began his food rescue work. We love Rick’s story about suddenly seeing all of that fruit falling to the ground and deciding something must be done about it. What makes the story even more exciting and proves that one person can really change the world with an idea, is that Food Forward has grown so significantly and along the way the Good People Fund has been able to help with that growth. In the organization’s earlier years, having good computers for the small staff was an important need we were able to fulfill. As things progressed we helped them develop educational materials for schools so that kids could learn about gleaning, hunger and how they could help.

Visit these links to learn the other ways Good People Fund has supported Food Forward’s growth and ability to get food to hungry people.

- <http://www.goodpeoplefund.org/a-million-pounds-and-going-strong/>
- <http://www.goodpeoplefund.org/it-was-all-because-of-scout/>
- <http://www.goodpeoplefund.org/news/food-forward-sees-one-mans-fruit-another-mans-meal/>
- <http://www.goodpeoplefund.org/press/good-people-los-angeles/>
- <http://www.goodpeoplefund.org/we-love-our-new-macs/>

Getting to Good

Depending on the time you have, this can either be a short conversation about some options to get involved or can be a hands-on project adjusted to your needs.

- Research organizations in your area that are involved in food rescue. Arrange to go on a ride-along for food pickup (can be a one-time event or a few times over a longer period of time).
- Contact local farmers' markets and small groceries and ask them if they donate the unused produce at the end of each day. Arrange to help get the food from them and into a local shelter or food pantry.
- Research where local farmers who have fruit or vegetable crops are. Contact them and ask them if they are involved in tithing/peah with the local community. If they don't know what it is, educate them on the concepts. Help them find local shelters to partner with where the shelters can bring residents to glean.
- Plant a vegetable garden with a plan to donate the growth to a local shelter or invite a local shelter to bring residents in to glean from it.
- Take your group to a fruit picking farm (apples, oranges, peaches, strawberries, etc.) and donate 95% of what you pick to a local food pantry/shelter. Use the last 5% to teach blessings to people in your organization by giving them the piece of fruit but first reciting the blessing with them.

Your group's tzedakah donations can be contributed to The Good People Fund and earmarked for our with food rescue groups we support.

<https://www.goodpeoplefund.org/mitzvah-donate/>

Why donate to The Good People Fund to distribute your tzedakah?

Shulhan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 249:6

One able to motivate others to contribute, receives greater reward than the giver.

Shulhan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 249:7

A person should not contribute to a tzedakah fund unless he knows that its management is reliable.

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 256:1

Every Jewish community is obliged to appoint charity administrators, respected and reliable individuals who will collect from each person what they are able to contribute ...and give to each poor person sufficient for their needs for the week.

Mishnah Peah 8:7

A public fund needs to be collected by no less than two people, and distributed by no less than three people.

For a copy of our Annual Report, visit: http://is.gd/GPF_2015AnnualReport

THE GOOD PERSON PROFILE

Rick Nahmias

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started when walking Scout. What ground-breaking idea could *you* come up with if you had to walk a dog every day and took the time to notice all that is around you?

BLESSINGS

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 35a

Our Rabbis have taught: It is forbidden to a person to enjoy anything of this world without a blessing, and if anyone enjoys anything of this world without a blessing, that person commits sacrilege.

Babylonian Talmud, Brachot 43b

Rabbi Judah said: When a person goes out during the days of [the Jewish month of] Nissan and sees trees that are in bloom, say "Blessed is the one whose world lacks nothing and created in it good creations and good trees for the benefit of humanity."

Mishna Brachot 6:1

How does one recite blessings for fruits? For fruits growing on a tree, one says, "...Who creates the fruit of the tree," Except for wine; For wine, one says, "...Who creates the fruit of the vine." For fruits growing from the earth, one says, "...Who creates the fruit of the ground," Except for bread; For bread, one says, "...Who brings forth bread from the earth." For vegetables, one says, "...Who creates the fruit of the ground." Rabbi Yehudah says: One should say instead, "...Who creates various types of herbs."

Tosefta Brachot 4:1

A person should not taste anything before blessing, as it says "To God is the land, and God fills it." One who benefits from this world without blessing has stolen from God, until [one performs] all the commandments which permit the food to that person. A person should only use their face, hands, and feet for the honor of the Creator, as it says, "All acts of God are for God's sake."

Tosefta Brachot 4:4-5

If they brought before one types of desserts, one recites over them the blessing, 'Creator of types of sweets;' over edible seeds one recites, 'Creator of types of seeds;' and over other herbs one recites, 'Creator of types of herbs;' and over greens one recites, 'Creator of the fruit of the ground.' Rabbi Judah says: [One recites,] 'Blessed are You Whose word the earth sprouts.'



Grab and Go Lesson Food Forward Text Resources

TITHE/PEAH

Deuteronomy 24:19-22

When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow -- in order that Adonai your God may bless you in all your undertakings. When you beat down the fruit of your olive trees, do not go over them again; that shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow.

Deuteronomy 26:12-13

When you have set aside in full the tenth part of your yield -- in the third year, the year of the tithe -- and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, orphan, and the widow, that they may eat their fill in your settlements, you shall declare before Adonai your God: "I have cleared out the consecrated portion from the house; and I have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow, just as You commanded me; I have neither transgressed nor neglected any of Your commandments:

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

At the end of three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall lay it up inside your gates... and the stranger, and the orphan, and the widow, who are inside your gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Mishnah Demai 3:1

One may give demai (questionably tithed) [produce] for food to the poor and to passing troops (wayfarers). Rabban Gamliel used to give demai for food to his workmen. As for collectors of charity, Beit Shammai say: They should give tithed [produce] to persons who do not tithe and untithed [produce] to persons who do tithe. It will thus result that everyone will be eating [produce] that has been set right. But the Sages say: They may collect indeterminately and distribute indeterminately, and whoever [of the recipients] wishes to set right (i.e., tithe) [his portion] may do so.

Leviticus 19:9-10

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the corners of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am Adonai your God.

Ruth 2:2, 2:14-17

Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "I would like to go to the fields and glean among the ears of grain, behind someone who may show me kindness. At mealtime, Boaz said to her, "Come over here and partake of the meal, and dip your morsel in the vinegar." So she sat down beside the reapers. He handed her roasted grain, and she ate her fill and had some left over. When she got up again to glean, Boaz gave orders to his workers, "You are not only to let her glean among the sheaves, without interference, but you must also pull some [stalks] out of the heaps and leave them for her to glean, and not scold her." She gleaned in the field until evening.



Grab and Go Lesson Food Forward Text Resources

FEEDING HUNGRY/EATING TO FEEL SATIATED

Deuteronomy 10:18-19

[God] upholds the cause of the orphan and the widow, and befriends the stranger, providing him/her with food and clothing. -- You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 55:1-3

Every one who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money; come, buy, and eat; come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure loving promises of David.

Babylonian Talmud, Derech Eretz 7:25

Always be happy when you are sitting at your table and those who are hungry are enjoying your hospitality, in order to lengthen your days in this world and the World to Come.

Mishna, Pesachim 10:1

On ... Passover... Even a poor Jew may not eat until he or she reclines. They should not provide the poor person with fewer than four cups of wine, even if it comes from the soup kitchen.

Isaiah 58:7-11

It is to share your bread with the hungry, and to take the wretched poor into your home; When you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to ignore your own kin. Then shall your light burst through like the dawn and your healing spring up quickly; Your vindicator shall march before you, the presence of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then, when you call, the Lord will answer; When you cry, the Lord will say: Here I am.

Proverbs 22:9

One with a good eye will be blessed, for that person has given of their bread to the poor.

Proverbs 25:21

If your enemy is hungry, give bread to eat; If your enemy is thirsty, give water to drink.

Proverbs 6:30

A thief is not held in contempt for stealing to appease his hunger.

Psalms 145:16

You give it [food] open-handedly, feeding every creature to its heart's content.

Genesis 42:2

"Now I hear," he (Jacob) went on, "that there are rations to be had in Egypt. Go down and procure rations for us there, that we may live and not die."

Advanced Texts: Shmita

Leviticus 19:23-25

When you enter the land and plant any tree for food, you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden for you, not to be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit shall be set aside for jubilation before the Lord; and only in its fifth year may you use its fruit- that its yield to you may be increased: I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 25: 1-7

The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. ‘Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. ‘Your harvest’s aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year.