

# **TOOLKITS FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS**

## Rise and Respond

In the face of rising Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, the Sisterhood has created a step-by-step guide so chapters can both respond to incidents of hate and proactively create educational programs in the community. The Guide is available on our website: <https://sosspeace.org/rise-and-respond-guide-to-responding-to-islamophobia-and-anti-semitism/> - <https://sosspeace.org/rise-and-respond-guide-to-responding-to-islamophobia-and-anti-semitism/>. The Guide is instructive for every level of involvement, from behind-the-scenes writing cards to victims, to large-scale activism. It is a road map for how to join existing community efforts (recommended) and, where none exist, lays out concrete steps for action. We encourage you to download and read the Guide *before* an incident, so you will be prepared to respond quickly and effectively.

## Earth Day Service Project

The first Earth Day took place in the US in 1970. Since then it has become a worldwide event that takes place every April. We all share the earth and we all live by grace of the gifts of clean air, clean water, and fertile soil. Our faiths teach us to appreciate these gifts, care for the Earth, and work to protect each other from the harms caused by environmental injustice. As awareness of climate change has grown, Earth Day has become more important than ever. We have created a Guide so that your chapter can plan and implement your own Earth Day Service Project. We recommend that you set aside two chapter meetings for this purpose - a planning meeting in February/March, and a service project in April.

In the guide you will find information, recommendations and suggestions regarding:

- I:** Spiritual Roots of Environmental Stewardship
- II:** Agenda for Feb/March Chapter Meeting for Inspiration and Planning
- III:** Planning an Earth Day Service Project
- IV:** Logistics
- V:** Outreach: Social Media & Press
- VI:** Tips for a Successful Day

You will find the Earth Day Service Project Guide at: <https://sosspeace.org/resources>.

These Guides are filled with interesting resources and concrete tools so that your chapter can plan events, programs, and projects in your community. If you choose to take part, we hope they will enhance your Sisterhood experience, creating additional value beyond your regular meetings.



## Guide to Planning Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day

### Overview

Dear Chapter Leaders,

The values and practices of service, social justice, and acts of loving-kindness run deep in the Muslim and Jewish traditions. Through joining together in service on or around December 25, the Sisterhood can support our Christian sisters and brothers as they celebrate Christmas in the U.S. and Canada. We welcome your participation in this important program and appreciate your leadership.

Many Jewish and Muslim communities hold annual days to encourage community service. For example, many American Jewish communities have Mitzvah Days on their communal calendars on an annual basis. We in the Sisterhood have gained inspiration from our sisters in the United Kingdom and their Sadaqah Day. You can learn more about their program from their website <http://mysadaqaday.org/> and their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/sadaqaday/>.

We chose Christmas Day (December 25) for our Sisterhood of Salam Shalom Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day because of the increase in need for community service on this day. It is a time when staffing in social service organizations is lower and many people feel especially discouraged by being alone, homeless, hungry, or working and away from festivities. We are hopeful that our service addresses both actual needs, while expressing care, gratitude, and appreciation.

In this guide you will receive information, recommendations and suggestions regarding:

- Part I: Shared Language and Values: Teachings about the Islamic concept of Sadaqah and the Jewish concept of Tzedakah
- Part II: Decision-Making
- Part III: The Planning Process
- Part IV: Creating a Schedule

- Part V: Logistics
- Part VI: Social Media
- Part VII: Planning for Reflection
- Part VIII: Final Planning, Implementing & Wrapping Up

Please feel free to contact us with questions or consultation as you develop and plan your Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day activities.

In Sisterhood,

Sheryl Olitzky  
Co-Founder & Executive Director

**Be inspired by these photos from previous Sadaqah-Tzedakah Days!**



## Part I: Shared Language and Values: Islamic Teaching about Sadaqah and Jewish Teaching about Tzedakah

### Sadaqah / صدقة

In Islam, **Sadaqah** is voluntary charity and a virtuous deed. The word derives from the Arabic root *sadq*, meaning “truth.” Sadaqah is considered as a proof of one’s *eeman* (faith). *Sadaqah* differs from *Zakat*, which is like a religious tax or obligatory contribution based on wealth. In the Quran, in surah (chapter) Al-Baqarah, Allah describes “Those who spend their wealth (in Allah’s Cause) by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.” (Quran 2:274)

Muhammad al-Bukhari was a Persian Islamic scholar born during the 9th Century of the Common Era in Buharia in what is known today as Uzbekistan. He authored the hadith collection (saying of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) known as Sahih al-Bukhari, regarded by Sunni Muslims as one of the most authentic of all hadith compilations. Here is one teaching about sadaqah:

Abu Musa narrated that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said, “Every Muslim has to give in sadaqah (voluntary charity).” The people asked, “O Allah’s Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him.)! If someone has nothing to give, what will he do?” He said, “He should **work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity** (from what he earns).” The people further asked, “If he cannot do even that?” He replied, “Then he should **help the needy who appeal for help.**”

Then the people asked, “If he cannot do that?” He replied, “Then he should **perform all that is good and keep away from all that is evil** and this will be regarded as charitable deeds.” (Bukhari Vol. 2, Book 24, Hadith 524)

Muslims also attribute to Bukhari recording the teaching from The Messenger of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him) that “**to smile in the company of your brother** is charity.”

### Tzedakah / צדקה

In Judaism, the **tzedakah** derives from the Hebrew root *tz/d/k* and literally means “justice.” The word can refer both to obligatory giving and giving beyond the mandated level. One rabbi in the Talmud (a collection of rabbinic teachings from the years 200-500 CE), Rabbi Assi, considered that “Tzedakah is as important as all the other commandments combined.” (Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra 9a). Another Jewish concept closely associated with Tzedakah is **gemilut hasadim** (acts of loving-kindness). The Hebrew bible contains numerous statements commanding one to treat others with love and care:

- Love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18)
- Love the stranger, for you were strangers (Deuteronomy 10:19)
- Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

In an additional teaching in the Talmud about charitable giving, a rabbi and his wife pray for rain at a time of drought. The prayers are successful and it begins to rain. The rabbi is asked: “Why, Master, did the clouds appear first in the corner where your wife stood and only afterwards in your corner?” He replied, “Because my wife stays at home and gives bread to the poor.” (Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 23).

By contrast, the English word “**charity**” is derived from the Latin root *caritas*, meaning love, dearness and “**philanthropy**” comes from a combination of two Greek roots, *philia*, meaning love, and *anthropos*, meaning humanity. A more in-depth comparison between Sadaqah and Tzedakah can be found at

<http://www.judaism-islam.com/tzedakah-zakah-sadaqah-the-laws-of-charity-in-islam-and-judaism/>

## Part II: Decision-Making

### *Focus on Your Chapter and Your Community*

When you begin to organize for your event, start by thinking about your chapter and your community. Has your chapter engaged in community service before? What did you learn from that experience? What are the needs of your local community? What are feasible projects?

Hold a brainstorming meeting with your chapter members and identify potential projects. As chapter leaders, it will be helpful for you to do preparatory research and bring some recommendations to the group. You can also invite community activists to your meeting to discuss community needs and answer questions about what your chapter’s project could look like. You might reach consensus and make a decision about your project during your first meeting or follow-up research might be helpful.

If you don’t already have contacts with a community service organization, it will be important to make a personal connection and possibly conduct a site visit. You will want to learn as much about the logistics of the project in order to determine if it is a good match for your chapter and what you will need to do to prepare. **A core value in community service is to provide service that not only is meaningful to the volunteers but that also addresses a real need and desired contribution.**

### **Some ideas:**

1. Cook and / or serve meals at a shelter or soup kitchen
2. Conduct a food drive and donate to a local soup kitchen
3. Conduct a drive for food, clothing, books, toys, or toiletries and donate to an appropriate organization

4. Bake cookies or prepare food for staff working at a local hospital
5. Prepare food for family members of hospital or hospice patients
6. Assemble toiletries packages with supplies already purchased

**A few words of advice:**

- You will most likely not be able to visit patients in the hospital due to strict policies hospitals have nowadays for patient privacy (based on the HIPAA law) and clearances procedures for volunteers. That said, hospital staff and families can be under-supported and under-appreciated, so if you'd like to visit patients, be sure to check guidelines at a local hospital or nursing home before you begin planning.
- If you want to donate items that you collect, purchase or make, it is important that you contact the organization ahead of time to make sure that they can use the items and that they approve. It would be a shame to go through all of the effort and not be able to donate them.
- Some Latino communities exchange gifts on January 6<sup>th</sup>, El Día de los Reyes (literally, "The Day of the Kings,"). It's also known as The Epiphany and the 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas. You can organize an activity (e.g. a toy drive) on the Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day on Dec. 25 in anticipation of this holiday and celebration.

***Who will you invite to participate?***

Discuss and decide as a chapter if your activity will be done solely by the members of your chapter or if it will include family members or other members from your broader Muslim and Jewish communities. Some chapters include teen members. If you decide to do multiple activities, you can also decide if you want the programs to be intergenerational or want a specific program for the teens.

***How many projects?***

Make sure your project can accommodate the number of people who want to participate. It can be stressful if you don't have enough participants. Conversely, make sure everyone can participate in a meaningful way. You don't want people to show up and have nothing to do!

***Location(s):***

Some projects will take place at the site of a community organization (e.g. a soup kitchen), and others can take place in the home of a Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom chapter member (e.g. baking cookies or making sandwiches to donate). If you have multiple activities taking place at multiple locations, we recommend designating one central location for the Opening and the Closing. Gathering together as one group, at the beginning and the end, promotes relationship building within your chapter, and if others are involved, between our Muslim and Jewish communities. It also allows you to consider the significance of community service as a reflection of the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom.

***Decide if you will want to include time for prayer***

You will want to assess the religious needs and desires of your participants for the day. They will be determined by the time of day of your program, as well as the practices of your participants.

***Decide what you want to do to make sure that you have a component of fun and celebration for the chapter members (as well as other members of the Muslim and Jewish community if you involve them).***

Once you have decided what activity (ies) your chapter will do, **email Samantha** ([samantha@sosspeace.org](mailto:samantha@sosspeace.org)) **with the details**. She will share photos and projects through our social media channels.

### Part III: The Planning Process

#### *Create a Timeline for Your Planning Process*

<b>Task</b>	<b>Person(s)</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Check When Completed</b>
Participate in Co-Leaders' Conference Call	Co-Leaders	November	
Discuss Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day and brainstorm ideas with chapter members			
Contact relevant community/organizational leaders to coordinate			
Finalize activity			
Let the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom office know your activity(ies)			
Confirm participation of volunteers			
Fundraise (if appropriate)			
Assign roles			
Purchase necessary items			
Contact the media			
Send reminder to volunteers			

#### ***Assign Roles for Participants***

Identify the action items you'll need to complete to have a successful event. For example, if you are volunteering at a soup kitchen, there will be roles for set-up, purchasing ingredients, cooking, serving, and clean-up. In addition to the roles that are specific for your event, if your event is open to the public, consider the following additional roles.

**List of Roles**

<b>Greeters:</b> If your event includes family members or community members, have greeters welcome them as they arrive and direct them to registration.	
<b>Registration:</b> For a larger event, set up a table and have at least one person checking people in, telling them their role and where to go, and asking them to make a name tag.	
<b>M.C.:</b> Most likely one or more co- leaders will play the role of M.C./announcer. Welcome everyone, give a brief orientation to the Sisterhood, and set the tone for the day.	
<b>Photographer/Social Media:</b> Designate at least one person to take pictures and also to post to the Facebook page.	
<b>Debrief:</b> Designate a person to facilitate a conversation and share personal experiences at the end of the day.	
<b>Optional: organizers/leader for Muslim Prayer</b>	
<b>Optional: organizer/leader of Hanukkah Candle Lighting</b>	
<b>Clean Up:</b> Sometimes organizers designate this as a role in advance and sometimes they let everyone know to expect to stay and clean up together.	
<i>Fill in Specific Role</i>	

**Volunteer Registration Sheet**

Create a registration sheet organized alphabetically by the volunteers’ name so you can easily sign them in.

#	Name	Phone #	Email	Role
1				
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## Part IV: Creating a Schedule

Create a schedule for the day that is realistic for the activity you are planning. If you are working with a community organization or other group, make sure to get their input. Here is a sample schedule:

- 4:00 Meet at central location (such as a chapter member's home, or Soup Kitchen),  
Have participants register and make name tags  
Do a group Welcome, Introductions and Orientation led by the M.C.

*If you are volunteering at a social service organization (e.g. soup kitchen), ask if a member of their staff would also like to speak.*

- 4:15 Set tables and prepare food
- 5:00 Serve food to Soup Kitchen guests
- 6:00 Clean-up
- 6:30 Hold evening prayers/Hanukkah celebration
- 7:00 Debrief event: what went well; what can we learn for next year

## Part V: Logistics

- **Assess and plan for the dietary needs of your participants.**
- **Assess and plan for prayer needs of your participants.**
- **Confirm location(s).**
- **Confirm Point Person from Organization** (for the planning process and for the day of the event).
- **Develop Contingency Plan** in case of inclement weather.
- **Secure Resources.**
- **Make a list and plan for all items that need to be brought or purchased.**
- **Raise funds or receive donations of products and services** (if appropriate).
- **Plan Giveaways:** Each chapter can decide on its own if it would like to develop any giveaways (T-shirts, stickers, etc.). Remember to include the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom logo on all giveaways and the hashtag **#|year|GivingDay**.
- **Take Safety Precautions** (If you are concerned about safety, contact your local police department).
- **Media** – see next sections!

## Part VI: Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day Media Guidelines

### Social Media

Social media is a great way to let people know about the work being done by the Sisterhood of

Salaam Shalom. We hope everyone will share their photos, videos and stories of Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. For all your social media posts, please use the hashtag:  **#(fill in year)GivingDay**

If you post on any of the platforms where the Sisterhood has a presence, please tag us when you post your Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day updates:

- [facebook.com/sisterhoodsalaamshalom](https://www.facebook.com/sisterhoodsalaamshalom)
- [twitter.com/sosspeace](https://twitter.com/sosspeace)

We will be collecting photos to share on the Sisterhood website. If you have photos to share, please send them to [samantha@sosspeace.org](mailto:samantha@sosspeace.org).

IMPORTANT: Please remember to get permission and signed media releases before you post photos of anyone in your group online (see attachment).

### **Local Media (Television, Radio, Newspaper)**

Christmas Day tends to be uneventful for news, so local television, radio and newspaper reporters are often on the lookout for interesting stories to cover. This is a great opportunity to share the project being done by your chapter.

We recommend contacting local media no more than one week in advance of your project. Write a formal press release that outlines the location and details of your activities. A customizable press release form has been included in this guide.

Any and all questions about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom as an organization should be directed to our executive director, Sheryl Olitzky, who will be available to give interviews. Sheryl may be contacted at: [sheryl@sosspeace.org](mailto:sheryl@sosspeace.org).

If your group receives any local news coverage, send an email with a link to the media to: [nadia@sosspeace.org](mailto:nadia@sosspeace.org).



## Media Release Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom to use my name, statements and likeness, without charge, for promotional purposes on the organization's official website, and in promotional messages using video, web, new media, or other formats.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**If you are under the age of 18, your parent or legal guardian must also sign:**

Parent or Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## Press Release Boilerplate

Fill out the sections of this press release with the specific information about your group and your project.

Contact Information:

Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

[Group co-leader names]

[Contact phone and email]

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Presents **Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day (fill in year)!**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[City, State] – The local chapter of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom will be taking part in a national event that is happening in dozens of cities across the United States and Canada. In a show of solidarity, American Jews and Muslims are joining together to perform acts of kindness together on Christmas Day.

Our local chapter has selected [project name] as our project for this year's event. On December 25th, our chapter members will be joined by family and other members of our faith communities to [describe your project including location].

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom [Chapter Location] was formed in [date] and is comprised of [number of members] Muslim and Jewish women. We meet together regularly with the aim of building bridges across religious and cultural lines, to explore one another's faith traditions, to form relationships and to work together to put an end to acts of hate.

Our chapter is part of a North American movement of Muslim and Jewish women, led by co-founders Sheryl Olitzky (Executive Director) and Atiya Aftab (Board Chair).

*Women navigate the world through relationships. The relationships that are built by bringing together Muslim and Jewish women, who share so many practices and beliefs, are life-changing and can help put an end to anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment. We influence family, friends and the general public about our strength in coming together to build bridges and fight hate, negative stereotyping and prejudice. We are changing the world, one Muslim and one Jewish woman at a time!*

Contact: [Sheryl@sosspeace.org](mailto:Sheryl@sosspeace.org)

## Part VII: Planning for Reflecting

It is helpful and meaningful for participants and organizers to have a reflection session at the end of the event. This gives you the opportunity to: (1) recognize and thank participants; (2) process your individual and collective experience; (3) link the day to the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom; (4) provide feedback for future programs; (5) learn what was successful and what can be improved for future Sadaqah-Tzedakah Days; and (6) evaluate whether you achieved your goals.

The experience of reflection can build solidarity within your chapter and cultivate emotional connection and empathy. It's an opportunity for your sisters to know and be known by one another. By serving others, you help promote our core values of cultivating understanding and building pluralistic community.

Individuals often have different ways that they like to process. Some like to talk, and others like to write or express themselves artistically. Here are some guidelines on how to design and implement a processing session.

**Sample Opening Statement:** “Now we have the opportunity to reflect upon and share our thoughts, feelings, and stories from the day. Instead of talking about the people we served today and the larger social issues, now we can focus on our own experiences. Simply stated, it's a time for us to use “I” statements.”

Individuals often have different ways that they like to process. Some people are talkers and some aren't. Some like group discussion, others like writing, and others like artistic expression. Whichever method you use allows you to create space for each person's voice and expression of an aspect of her experience and story. You may have a sense of the personalities of your chapter members already and can plan a reflection model that suits them, though also keeping in mind that groups often have a mixture. Whether through discussion or artistic expression, below are some prompts for reflection:

- Describe what you did for Sadaqah-Tzedakah.
- If there were multiple activities offered: Why did you pick this activity?
- Who did you meet or get to know better today?
- What did you like most about the work you did?
- What surprised you today?
- What did you learn today?
- If Sadaqah-Tzedakah is an act of faith, in what way does the work you did help serve as an act of your faith?
- How would you apply what you learned or experienced today to your life going forward? Or to your chapter?
- What else would you like to do in the future for Sadaqah-Tzedakah work?

In your closing statement, remember to connect the day to the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. We are creating relationships and building community between Muslim and

Jewish women, and through our engagement, promoting peace. This day is one example of us actualizing our mission through community service within the broader American and Canadian communities.

## Part VIII: Final Planning, Implementing and Wrapping Up

### **A week before Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day, you should:**

1. *Communicate with volunteers.*
  - Details of the day (when and where to meet, etc.).
  - Remind about modest dress that is standard for Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom program.
  - Double-check about dietary and prayer needs.
2. *Confirm details with your point person/people from other organizations, if any.*
3. *Contact the media (see above).*

### **The Day of:**

It's the morning of Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day!

- If the program is starting off with a hectic feeling, don't worry, this is often the case.
- Have a clear plan. It helps reduce stress at the beginning of the program. Create a sense of order and calm by welcoming guests when they arrive. Invite them to make a nametag and mingle.
- Ask one person to keep track of time, so that you can start and end promptly.
- Make sure to post on the Facebook page.
- Don't forget to enjoy the day yourself. It is truly extraordinary what you are doing!
- If you have direct contact with the recipients of your service (such as guests at a soup kitchen or staff at a hospital), wish them well as seems appropriate. You can thank staff for working on a holiday, you can wish Merry Christmas to those who are celebrating, etc.

### **Wrapping Up Your Project:**

- Give ample time for reflection and celebration as a chapter
- Make sure to thank your planning team, the participants, the point people from the organizations
- Make sure you have others involved in cleanup
- From the reflection, gather feed-back and send it to Sheryl

### Conclusion Checklist

<b>Task</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Check When Completed</b>
Send photos and videos to Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom office			
Send brief summary of your event (description of activity, number of people participating, relevant data, memorable quotes, etc.) to Nadia (nadia@sospeace.org)			
Send thank-you email to Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom participants			
Send thank-you email to community organizations and leaders			