

MITZVAH PROJECT RESOURCE SHEETS

To complete your *B'nei Mitzvah Mitzvah* Project requirement, you must complete the required activities and one elected activity from each of the three types of projects: *Torah* (Study), *Avodah* (Worship), and *G'milut Chasadim* (Acts of Loving-Kindness). When you have chosen the projects that you will work on, turn in "The Breet Sheet" to the Front Office. When you have completed all of the requirements of your *Mitzvah* Projects (at least one month before your service), turn in the "I Did It!" sheet with all reports, pictures, etc. attached. Call Heather or Janee at the Office (847-383-5017) or email admin@congregation-betham.org with any questions.

THE MITZVAH OF TORAH – STUDY

Required Activities

1. One of the responsibilities and obligations of becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is to be registered and actively participate in Religious School. Students must complete 4 years of Hebrew School (through *Daled*), attend Religious School during the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* year, and pledge to continue to study formally and/or informally. All students are encouraged to attend Religious School through 12th grade.
2. Study your *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions with your family and the Rabbi, and write a *D'var Torah* on your portion so the congregation will understand their message.
3. Complete Prayer Proficiency Class.
4. Study with your tutor to prepare your *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions and other participation in the worship service.

Elective Activities (Choose at least 1)

1. Start your own Jewish library. Add a book of Jewish content to your personal collection. Read it and write a brief report.
2. Watch two programs of Jewish interest on television. Write a brief written report on each one.
3. Read a Jewish magazine (We have many in the Beth Am library). Write brief reports on two articles.
4. Write a report on a Jewish subject that interests you.
5. Study about Jewish culture. Learn to play a piece of Jewish music or create a piece of Jewish artwork. Turn in a copy (or picture of) your artwork, and write a brief report about the experience.
6. Write a report on a famous Jewish person.
7. Write a report on an important event in Jewish history.
8. Do a taped interview with a grandparent about Jewish life when he/she was 13 years of age. Write a report about similarities and differences between your life and theirs.
9. Write a detailed report on the customs and traditions involved in a Jewish life cycle event.
10. A name often reflects something about one's personal history. Find out the meaning of your Hebrew name and why your parents gave you this name. Write a brief report on your name and its history in your family.
11. Trace your roots by designing a Family Tree. Prepare a report on your ancestors and their Jewish experiences. (Children from intermarried families may trace both Jewish & non-Jewish roots)
12. Bake a *challah* from scratch and share it with your family on *Shabbat*. Write a report on your experience baking the *challah* and on your family's *Shabbat* experience (was it different because you baked the *challah*?)
13. Holocaust remembrance projects:
 - a. Remember the Holocaust, etc. – research a person who perished during this terrible time in our people's history, a young person who did not have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Honor their memory in this way.
 - b. Read a book pertaining to the Holocaust and write a report on what you learned: (Possible choices include Number the Stars; The Book Thief; The Golems of Gotham; Second Hand Smoke; The Diary of Anne Frank; I Never Saw Another Butterfly (poetry of children of Terezin); Night)
 - c. Watch a movie about the Holocaust (Life is Beautiful; Schindler's List; The Devil's Arithmetic, etc.) and write a report about it.

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THE MITZVAH OF AVODAH – WORSHIP

Required Activities

1. Attend at least 10 *Shabbat* worship services with your family (12 months prior to your *simcha*).
2. Lead the congregation in prayer on the day of your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* worship service.
3. Read or chant the *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions and their blessings before the congregation.

Elective Activities (Choose at least 1)

1. Observe a full *Shabbat* meal at home with your family for at least two weeks. Light candles, lead your family in *Kiddush*, *HaMotzi* and *Birkat HaMazon*. Write a report on your experience and on your family's *Shabbat* experience (Was it more than you usually observe? Was it different because you led the prayers?)
2. Recite the *Sh'ma* and *V'ahavta* in Hebrew and English every night before going to bed for at least two weeks. Write a report on your experience (Did this have any effect on your days? Your nights?)
3. Write a creative prayer for a sick friend or relative. Turn in a copy of what you write.
4. Participate in *Tashlich* on *Rosh HaShanah*. Write a report on how this added to your experience in observing the holiday.
5. Fast until sundown on *Yom Kippur*. Write a report on how this added to your experience in observing the holiday.
6. Help build a *sukkah* at your home, a friend's home, or at Beth Am. Write a report on the rules for building a *sukkah* and how helping to build one added to your experience in observing the holiday.
7. On *Sukkot* we invite *ushpizin*, symbolic biblical guests (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David) into our *sukkah*. Which of these would you most like to invite to your *sukkah* and why? If you could talk to them, what would you ask them?
8. Design and build your own *chanukiya* (*Chanukah* menorah). You can make it out of clay, or any other non-flammable material. Use it at home for the 8 nights of *Chanukah*. Write a report on how this added to your experience in observing the holiday. Turn in the report with a photo of your lit *chanukiya*.
9. Write your own parody *Purim* song that tells the story of at least one of the characters from the *Purim Megilla*. Who knows? We may even include it in next year's *Purim Shpiel*!
10. Bake matza from scratch and share it with your family on *Pesach*. Write a report on the rules for making matza, your experience baking the matza, and on your family's *seder* experience (Was it different because you baked it?)
11. Lead your family seder this *Pesach*. Go around the table asking everyone to comment about what it means to be free. Write a report on how it felt to be the person conducting the seder.
12. Attend *Shavuot* worship at Beth Am. Write a report on the Ten Commandments. Which one has the most influence on you and your life and why?
13. At *Shavuot* we read from *Megillat Ruth*, the Book of Ruth. There are many themes in this book that we can relate to, such as *chesed* (loving-kindness), importance of friendship and family, welcoming the stranger, what it means to make a difference, facing life's challenges,. Find one theme that you can relate to and write what it means to you, as a young adult.

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THE MITZVAH OF *G'MILUT CHASADIM* – ACTS OF LOVING-KINDNESS

Elective Activities (Choose at least 1)

1. Feed the poor: Volunteer at the Beth Am Food Pantry at least 4 times- packing and sorting food for distribution or helping at the distribution on the last Sunday of the month. (contact Mrs. Cohen, (847) 478-9375 to schedule). You may also volunteer at a soup kitchen, PADS shelter, The Uptown Café, or other Food Pantry. Write a report on how this experience affected you.
2. Give *Tzedakah*: Use a *tzedakah* box at home for at least 6 months. Donate money at least once each week to the temple's *tzedakah* box. Decide where to send the money collected. Write a report on where you chose to send the money and why you chose this charity.
3. Organize a *Tzedakah* drive. Choose an organization that needs supplies (i.e. school supplies, books, sports equipment, etc.). Make posters and send letters to advertise your drive, collect donated supplies, and donate all donations to your chosen organization. Write a report (include photos) on how this experience affected you and how your donation helped this organization.
4. Help the Elderly: Adopt a “grandparent” at Symphony of Buffalo Grove, Lexington, or another nursing home (call first so the staff can help you choose a good match). Visit at least 6 times, read aloud, send cards, bring small gifts, but mostly just spend time together. You can also adopt an older adult in your neighborhood- visit them, help with yard work, housework, shopping, and small errands. Write a report (include photos) on how this experience affected you and your adopted friend.
5. Visit the Sick: Volunteer at least 4 times at the Pediatric Ward of a local hospital (call first so the staff can help you find an appropriate activity). Put on a puppet show, read to individual kids, help do an art project, donate a DVD for them to watch when you leave, etc. Write a report (include photos) on how this experience affected you.
6. Comfort the Mourner: Visit a family who is sitting *shiva* after a loss. Participate in the *shiva minyan* worship. Bring food to their home. Send a card of condolence. Make a donation in memory of their loved one. Write a report on how this experience affected you.
7. Pick an issue of concern to our community and the world. Write to elected officials, write letters to the editor of your local newspaper, organize a letter-writing campaign, make posters to educate people in your neighborhood and your school. Write a report on how this experience affected you, and tell of your successes. Include photos and copies of letters.
8. Participate in a Walk-a-thon (i.e. Walk With Israel, Walk for Aids, Relay for Life, etc.). Collect donations from family and friends to add to your own donation. Write a report (include photos) on how this experience affected you.
9. Volunteer for a camp or organization that works with chronically ill or disabled children (i.e. Buddy Baseball, Keshet, etc.). Write a report (include photos) on how this experience affected you and the children you worked with.
10. Think of your own project and get approval from the *B'nei Mitzvah* Coordinator. Get ideas from your *Parashat HaShavua* Weekly Torah Portion Study Guide or from www.juf.org/tov, the Jewish United Fund Tikun Olam Volunteer Network website, ziv.org (Danny Siegel's website), areyvut.org.