



TEMPLE EMANU-EL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
B'MITZVOTAV PROGRAM

Welcome to our B'Mitzvotav Program!!!

The B'Mitzvotav Program is a learning-through-doing program based on Rabbinic teachings. According to tradition, there are 613 mitzvot in the Torah. We learn from the verse in Pirke Avot:

“The world rests on three things: on Torah, on worship, and on acts of loving-kindness.”

The program was created around these three categories of mitzvot.

Students will fulfill a total of 13 mitzvot, four of which are selected from each of the three categories: Torah (study), worship (avodah), acts of loving kindness (g'milut chasadim). The 13th mitzvah is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Required and elective mitzvot are listed on the following pages. You are encouraged to formulate your own ideas for elective mitzvot which you can discuss with the religious school director. Please read the following pages and make your selections. You should also review these selections with your parents. The religious school director will meet with you periodically to review your progress.

It would be helpful to have photos of you performing some of these mitzvot to include with your reports on the poster of your work which will be displayed in the temple lobby on the day of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

THE MITZVAH OF TORAH – STUDY

STUDENT CONTRACT

Name: _____

Elective Activities (Choose 4)

- () 1. Start a Jewish library. Add a Jewish book to your personal collection. Read it and then hand in a brief report. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 2. Watch a program of Jewish interest on television, DVD or the internet (not one seen in class). Write a brief report. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 3. Read a Jewish magazine or newspaper. Select an article and write a report. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 4. Write a report on a Jewish subject that interests you. Research the project through the library or the internet. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 5. Study about a Jewish artist, musician, author or poet. Learn to play a piece of Jewish music, create a piece of Jewish artwork (not done in class) write a short story or a poem of Jewish content.(Complete Project Plan)
- () 6. Attend one Saturday morning Torah study class and write or orally present a description of what you learned. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 7. Write a report on a famous Jewish person who made a contribution to Judaism. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 8. Write a report on an important event in Jewish history. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 9. Do an interview with a grandparent or elder family member about Jewish life when he/she was 13 years of age. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 10. Write a detailed report on your Jewish hero and what impact this person has made on you. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 11. Read and write a report on a prayer of your choice which is recited during the Shabbat morning service. (Complete Project Plan)
- () 12. Write a report about preparing for your Bar/Bar Mitzvah and what it has taught you about yourself and your feelings toward Judaism.(Complete Project Plan)

THE MITZVAH OF AVODAH - WORSHIP

STUDENT CONTRACT

Name: _____

Required Activity

Attend with your family at least five Shabbat evening, five Shabbat morning services and the Selichot service during the year prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please keep track of the dates.

Elective Activities (Choose 3)

- () 1. Light Shabbat candles, and lead your family in kiddush and motzi every Friday night for at least four consecutive weeks as a way of beginning the practice of “making Shabbat” every week. Write how you felt about the experience and include your parents’ and other family member’ reactions as well.
- () 2. Recite the *Sh’ma* and *V’Ahavta* in Hebrew and English every night before going to bed for two weeks. Write down your feelings about this experience.
- () 3. Lead your family in *Hamotzi* before your main meal every day for two weeks as a way of bringing this ritual to your table on an ongoing basis.
- () 4. Attend with your family any special service (e.g., festival services, Yizkor service) between now and your Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony and describe in writing about your experience.
- () 5. Write a creative prayer for a sick friend or relative.
- () 6. Make and use a Jewish object such as a *mezuzah* case, Havdallah candle, *chanukiyah*, *challah* cover (not made in class) and describe its significance and use.
- () 7. Help build a *sukkah* at your or a friend’s home.
- () 8. Attend a life cycle event (*Brit Milah*, naming, wedding, funeral) and write a detailed report.
- () 9. Write about your family’s *minhagin* (traditions) for any Jewish holiday and how you participate in this celebration.
- () 10. Make a talit (prayer shawl). Learn how to tie the *tzitzit* (fringes) and the blessings.

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

STUDENT CONTRACT

Name: _____

Required Activity (Choose 1)

- 1. Help out your family by talking with your parents to figure out a new regular chore or task that will indicate your growing responsibility and maturity.
- 2. Volunteer at least ten hours of your time at the Temple or in the community.

Elective Activities (Choose 3)

- 1. Make a contribution to one of the Temple Funds in honor of/in memory of someone.
- 2. Pledge part of your gift money to the charity of your choice.
- 3. Clean out your closets and drawers and donate old clothing to charity.
- 4. Support a local recycling project by bringing in at least one month's worth of your family's old newspapers, bottles, or cans to the appropriate drop-off center.
- 5. Read the daily paper for a week and determine the issues affecting our community and the world. Write to an elected official about an issue of concern either in the community, the country, or to the Jewish people.
- 6. Help a classmate who is ill. Bring homework, library books, messages between home and school.
- 7. Show hospitality. Invite a new classmate or neighbor over for a Shabbat or Jewish holiday meal or a holiday celebration.
- 8. Perform a thoughtful deed for a member of your extended family.
- 9. "Adopt" an elderly person. Send them cards or visit them regularly.
- 10. Prepare and donate a food package to a needy family or center.
- 11. Comfort a mourner by paying a visit or sending a card.
- 12. Help an older adult who lives in your neighborhood by raking leaves, shoveling snow, or running an errand.
- 13. "Adopt" a pen pal in Israel and maintain at least four two-way communications (through writing or e-mail) as a way of beginning an ongoing friendship.

PROJECT PLANS: TORAH-STUDY

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #1

Start a Jewish library. Add a Jewish book to your personal collection. Read it and then hand in a brief report.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Title and Author of Book
2. When did you read it? (list date)
3. A summary of the Book, including:
 - * Describing the plot or story
 - * The main characters, their struggles and successes
 - * Why you think this book was written and what message it tries to teach
 - * Your favorite part or part you think is most interesting
 - * And what ages and interests amongst students would find this book interesting

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #2

Watch a program of Jewish interest on television, DVD or the internet. Write a report on the program.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Title of Program or Video
2. When did you watch it? (list date)
3. A summary of the Program, including:
 - * Describing the plot or story
 - * The main characters, their struggles and successes
 - * Why you think this Program was made and what message it tries to teach
 - * Your favorite part or part you think is most interesting
 - * And what ages and interests amongst students would find this program interesting

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #3

Read a Jewish magazine or newspaper. Select an article and write a report.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Title of Article
2. When did you read it? (list date)
3. A summary of the article, including:
 - * Describing the plot or story
 - * The main characters, their struggles and successes
 - * Why you think this article was written and what message it tries to teach
 - * Your favorite part or parts you think are most interesting
 - * And what ages and interests amongst students would find this article interesting

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #4

Write a report on a Jewish subject that interests you. Research the subject through the library or the Internet.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Subject of Interest
2. Dates of Research
3. List at least three sources used, i.e. books, articles on Internet, etc...
4. A summary of your subject, including:
 - * Describing the new information you learned
 - * What was your favorite piece of information – what you found most interesting, surprising, etc.
 - * If it was about a person – the life struggles, successes, and contributions of that person
 - * What message or lesson you could teach others about this subject.
 - * And what ages and interests amongst students would find this topic interesting

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #5

Study about a Jewish artist, musician. Author or poet.. Learn to play a piece of Jewish music, create a piece of Jewish artwork, write s short story or a poem of Judaic content.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please describe the artist or musician of your choice:

1. Name of artist, musician, author or poet.
2. Dates of his/her life
3. Where he/she lived
4. What kind of music, art, story or poem did he/she create
5. Why did you select this piece? Why does it interest you
6. Would you recommend for others to learn about this artist, musician, author or poet and learn to create this type of artwork, play this piece of music, write this type of story or poem - Why

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #6

Attend one Saturday morning Torah study class and write or orally present a description or what you learned.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Torah Study Topic
2. Date you attended Torah Study Class
3. A summary of Topic, including:
 - * A description of the Torah portion including new information you learned
 - * What you found most interesting, surprising, etc...
 - * If it included any biblical characters, describe the life, struggles, successes, and contributions of that person
 - * What message or lesson could you teach others about this subject

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #7

Write a report on a famous Jewish person who made a major contribution to Judaism.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Person of Interest
2. Dates of Research
3. List at least three sources used, i.e. books, articles on internet, etc...
4. A summary of your Subject, including:
 - * Describing the new information you learned
 - * What was your favorite piece of information – what you found most interesting, surprising, etc...?
 - * What were some of the life struggles, successes and contributions of that person
 - * What message or lesson could you teach others about this subject
 - * And what ages and interests amongst students would find this topic interesting

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #8

Write a report on an important event in Jewish history and be able to explain why this event is so important.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Event of Interest
2. Dates of Research
3. List at least three sources used, i.e. books, articles on internet, etc...
4. A summary of the Event, including:
 - * When the event took place and what came before and after it
 - * What was the importance of this event in Jewish history
 - * What new information did you learn from doing this report
 - * What did you find most interesting, surprising, etc...
 - * What message or lesson could you teach others about this event
 - * Would any ages and interests amongst students enjoy learning about this event

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #9

Do an interview with a grandparent or elder family member about Jewish life when he/she was 13 years of age.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Name of grandparent or relative
2. Date of interview
3. When grandparent/relative was born, where he/she was born, and where he/she grew up and lives today
4. Summarize the conversation with your grandparent or relative. List questions and answers you discussed
5. What was the most interesting thing you learned about your grandparent's or relative's life
6. What was the most surprising thing you learned about your grandparent's or relative's life
7. What did you like best or feel proudest about learning from your grandparent or relative
8. Is there anything – information, story, object, recipe, etc... - which your grandparent or relative shared with you which you think you will use and enjoy using in your own life, with your family now, or when you grow up in your own home

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #10

. Write a detailed report on your Jewish hero and what impact this person has made on you.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Name of your Jewish hero.
2. Why did you choose this person?
3. Describe a particular situation that this person has had that interested you.
4. What was so intriguing about this situation
5. What impact has this person had on your life

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #11

Read and write a report on a prayer of your choice which is recited during the Shabbat morning service.

Report Outline:

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. Name of the prayer you chose
2. Why did you choose this prayer
3. Where in the service is it located? What meaning does it have
4. Describe the idea or principles associated with this prayer
5. What do you personally like best about this prayer

PROJECT PLAN – STUDY ELECTIVE #12

Write a report about preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah and what it has taught you about yourself and your feelings about Judaism.

On a separate sheet of paper, please complete the following information:

1. What did you think you would need to do to prepare for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah – what did you actually have to do that you didn't expect
2. What is the most important thing you learned about your Jewish self since you began your religious school journey
3. Has your commitment to Judaism changed since you began preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah - How
4. What has preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah taught you about yourself
5. What bit of Jewish wisdom would you give to someone just starting to prepare for their own Bar/Bat Mitzvah