

Machberet Mitzvah

A Notebook to Keep Track of your Mitzvah Project

מחברת מצוה



TEMPLE SINAI

— WASHINGTON DC —

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The world is sustained by three things: by Torah, by worship, and by loving deeds.

-Pirkei Avot

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is about more than reading from the Torah and Haftarah. It's about growing up, taking your place in the adult Jewish community, and assuming more responsibility. These responsibilities include study, prayer and doing mitzvot.

There are two ways to fulfill the community service requirement for your Bar or Bat Mitzvah. One way is by completing the 13 Mitzvot Plan. The second way is to focus your energy on one ongoing project.

For the 13 Mitzvot plan, the *Machberet* (notebook) *Mitzvah* has a list of different types of projects you can engage in from within each of 13 categories we have provided. These ideas are intended to help you understand how the range of Jewish values can be an important part of your personal, family, and community lives.

Please also note that you are not limited to the ideas listed in this *machberet*. Be creative!

Part of the 13 Mitzvot Plan is answering a series of questions after successfully fulfilling each mitzvah. Discuss your answers with your family, and answer the questions on the pages provided. There is also a list of deadlines on page 14 to help ensure that you don't leave these projects to the last minute.

The other route you can take to fulfill your community service requirement is an ongoing project. This can be accomplished in many ways: something close to home, or even something connected to an organization far away. On page 15 of this booklet, we have listed some organizations that are welcoming to 12 and 13-year-olds. We would like you to keep a log of your experiences using the model questions provided, which can be found on page 18, so that we can discuss them with you at various appointments leading up to your Bar or Bat Mitzvah. You should have at least 10 log entries completed by your Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Whether you choose to do the 13 Mitzvot Plan or one ongoing project, you will also be required to fulfill an additional mitzvah - that of *T'filah* (prayer). We want you to attend at least eight services during the year, including a minimum of three B'nei Mitzvah services. This will enable you to get to know the different services Temple Sinai has to offer, so that your year of preparation is also one of religious growth for you and your family. We have also provided space for you to record your service attendance on page 7 to assist you in fulfilling the mitzvah of *t'filah*. Please note the date, type of service (erev Shabbat, Shabbat morning, holiday, etc.) and some of your thoughts about your experience at the service.

Whether you choose to do the 13 Mitzvot Plan or an ongoing project, we hope that fulfilling these mitzvot will enhance your year of preparation and that you will continue to fulfill mitzvot throughout your life.

And remember, if you need anything along the way, we are ALWAYS here to help!

בהצלחה

B'hatzlacha – to your success!

Service Attendance Requirement and Log

All students are required to attend at least **eight** Temple Sinai services, including a minimum of **three** B'nei Mitzvah services. Using the chart below, please record the date, type of service (erev Shabbat, Shabbat morning, holiday, etc.) and some of your thoughts about your experience at the service.

Date	Type of Service	Comments
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Mitzvah Categories

תלמוד תורה

I. **Talmud Torah – Jewish Learning**

Torah study is a commandment emphasized in Jewish tradition not only to sharpen our minds, but also to help guide us. The idea is that when we take Torah study seriously, we will most likely choose the right path for our lives. This is why Torah study outweighs all other commandments.

גמילות חסדים

II. **Gemilut Chasadim – Acts of Loving-Kindness**

Personal daily acts of loving-kindness show that we care and are concerned about the well-being and feelings of those with whom we share our days. We perform these unselfishly and our reward is the feeling of satisfaction we receive as a result.

חיים בעלי צער

III. **Tzaar Baalei Chayim – Being Kind to Animals**

The Torah is filled with stories teaching us compassion for animals because we believe that God's wisdom is extended to all living creatures.

ביקור חולים

IV. **Bikkur Cholim – Visiting the Sick**

We all know that it's no fun to be sick. It's even more difficult to be sick when you are alone. We visit the sick to demonstrate our love and concern for those who are not well, with hope that our presence will make them feel better.

הכנסת אורחים

V. **Hachnasat Orchim – Hospitality**

Throughout history, Jews knew first hand what it meant to be a traveler and a stranger. Performing this mitzvah demonstrates our personal and community concern for travelers, guests, family and friends.

צדקה

VI. **Tzedakah – Righteous Giving**

The word *tzedakah* is often mistranslated to mean "charity." The actual word comes from the root *tzedek* meaning "righteous" or "just." This teaches us that charitable giving is not only the right thing to do, but it also helps fight injustice in the world.

כבוד אב ואם

VII. Kibud Av V'Em – Honoring Your Parents

With the support of our parents, we have reached this moment; that's why it's so important to honor them. This mitzvah is included in the list of the 10 Commandments, and is one that we can perform every day.

בל תשחית

VIII. Bal Tashchit – Do Not Destroy or Waste

There is a midrash that God spoke to Adam and Eve asking them to recognize and appreciate the beauty of creation and to take care not to destroy God's world. (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13) It is our responsibility to protect the earth and the environment.

חסד של אמת

IX. Chesed Shel Emet – Honoring the Dead and Comforting Mourners

This is one of the more difficult, yet more important mitzvot. Honoring the dead enables us to remember loved ones and keep their memory with us after they are gone. We can remember them by learning about their lives and following their ways.

הידור פני זקן

X. Hiddur P'nai Zaken – Honoring our Elders

We learn much about our history from our elders. We can learn simply by being with them, and we can learn from their life experiences.

ואהבת לרעך

XI. V'ahavta L'rayecha – Loving One's Neighbor

This mitzvah can be taken literally to mean the neighbor who lives next door, but more often refers to the importance of caring for our neighbors world-wide.

שמירת שבת

XII. Sh'mirat Shabbat – Observing Shabbat

Shabbat is the most important holiday in the Jewish calendar, and we are fortunate that it comes every week. We are taught to "remember" and to "observe" the Sabbath. There are many ways to do this at home and at the Temple.

אהבת ישראל

XIII. Ahavat Yisrael – The Love of Israel

This mitzvah not only refers to our love for the land and people of Israel, but also the Jewish community worldwide.

Mitzvah Project Examples

We know it's possible that many of the mitzvot listed here are things you already do in your home and community, which is awesome! But just in case, we've provided some ideas below. We hope that you will continue to fulfill mitzvot throughout your lives, and that the experience of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah teaches you the value of these deeds.

תלמוד תורה

Talmud Torah – Jewish Learning

- Go with your family or friends to a local place of Jewish interest, like the Jewish Historical Society.
- Create your own Jewish family scrapbook.
- Research and document your family tree.
- Research the origin and meaning of your Hebrew name.
- Come to Torah study at Temple Sinai on Shabbat mornings.
- Read three articles from a Jewish website like *URJ.org*, *Washington Jewish Week*, or *Tabletmag.com*.
- See a Washington Jewish Film Festival movie with your friends or family, and have a discussion about it.

גמילות חסדים

Gemilut Chasadim – Acts of Loving-Kindness

- Volunteer to work with someone who is physically or mentally challenged.
- Organize a collection of canned goods, blankets, or toiletries in your neighborhood, and donate them to local homeless shelters or food banks.
- Help a homebound neighbor or relative with shopping, cleaning, or other tasks.

צער בעלי חיים

Tzaar Baalei Chayim – Being Kind to Animals

- Offer to walk, feed and/or care for pets in your neighborhood.
- Take care of a neighbor's pet while they are away.
- Donate your time, pet supplies, or money to an organization that cares for animals.

ביקור חולים

Bikkur Cholim – Visiting the Sick

- Create an activity kit that includes puzzles, stories, projects, etc. and give it to a friend or relative when they are ill.
- Visit a patient in a local hospital or a resident of a nursing home.
- Design, create and distribute your own get-well cards.
- Go to a nursing home and volunteer to give a performance or organize a concert for the residents.

הכנסת אורחים

Hachnasat Orchim – Hospitality

- Invite friends or neighbors over for Shabbat dinner.
- Reach out to new students in your school; invite them to hang out with you and your friends.

צדקה

Tzedakah – Righteous Giving

- Create your own tzedakah box, keep it in a visible place in your house, and encourage your family to use it. Remember that a great time to give tzedakah is before you light the Shabbat candles on Friday night.
- Donate a percentage of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah monetary gifts to your favorite organization.
- Run or walk the Tricia Davis Sinai House 5k.
- In your B'nei Mitzvah invitation, ask your guests to bring a non-perishable food item or toiletries, and donate them to a local food bank or shelter. **IMPORTANT:** Check with food banks and shelters before you collect items since some may have special needs.
- Arrange to have the leftover food from your reception picked up by DC Central Kitchen.
- Instead of regular table centerpieces, make them books or other items you can donate after the reception.

כבוד אב ואם

Kibud Av V'Em – Honoring Your Parents

- Prepare a meal for your family.
- Write a letter of thank you to your parents.

תשחית בל

Bal Tashchit – Do Not Destroy or Waste

- Take charge of the recycling in your household. Contact your local department of sanitation to get information about good recycling habits and educate your family about how you can reduce, re-use, and recycle in your own home.
- Use recycled paper when creating your invitations or for other printing needs.
- Consider using potted plants instead of cut flowers or balloons when decorating for your reception.

חסד של אמת

Chesed Shel Emet – Honoring the Dead and Comforting Mourners

- Visit a Jewish funeral home.
- Visit a cemetery and place stones on the gravesite of deceased relatives.
- Have a family discussion about relatives who have died or your ancestors.
- Write a story or create a memory book about them.

הידור פני זקן

Hiddur P'nai Zaken – Honoring Our Elders

- Visit an older person, and learn their story.
- Contact Sinai Cares to see if someone is looking for a friendly visitor.
- Volunteer to help out an older person in your neighborhood by helping around the house, shopping for them, or spending time with them.

ואהבת לרעך

V'ahavta L'rayecha – Loving One's Neighbor

- Volunteer to rake leaves or shovel driveways in your neighborhood.
- Volunteer to babysit for a neighbor or work as a mother's helper.
- Take part in Praying with Our Feet at A Wider Circle or another organization.

שמירת שבת

Sh'mirat Shabbat – Observing Shabbat

- Make Shabbat more meaningful in your home by adding something to your observance (e.g. light candles, say Kiddush, eat a meal with your family and discuss what you did that week.)
- Choose a Shabbat daytime activity (e.g. attend services, take a nature walk with your family, or reach out to family members who aren't local.)
- Experience Shabbat *m'nucha* (rest) by turning off your smart devices (phone, iPod, tablet, etc.)

ישראל אהבת

Ahavat Yisrael – The Love of Israel

- Plant a tree in Israel for everyone who will have an aliyah.
- Read two books about Israel.
- Consider a donation to Jewish organizations worldwide.
- Attend an event, like a demonstration, organized by the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.
- Visit WUPJ.org and learn about a Jewish community somewhere else in the world using the congregation search tool.

13 MITZVOT PLAN (SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE)

Please answer the following questions at the completion of a mitzvah, and discuss your experience with your family.

I fulfilled the Mitzvah of: _____

How did you fulfill this mitzvah?

How do you feel about having fulfilled this mitzvah? Explain your answer.

How does it connect to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

Will you continue to do this or similar mitzvot in the future? Why or why not?

What have you learned from this experience?

Check-in Schedule for 13 Mitzvot Plan

For those of you who choose the 13 Mitzvot Plan, the following timeline will enable you to make sure that your projects won't get left to the last minute. We will ask to see your Machberet Mitzvah each time we meet with you to discuss your progress and verify that you have been keeping up with the requirements, **so don't forget to bring your *machberet* with you!!**

<u>Deadline</u>	<u># of Projects Completed or Underway</u>	<u>Clergy's Initials</u>
12-week appointment	7	
8-week appointment	9	
4-week appointment	11	
Final Rehearsal	13	

Volunteer Opportunities in Our Community

The following is a list of organizations in the greater Washington DC area that are welcoming to 12 and 13-year-olds.

Seniors and Nursing Homes

Iona Senior Services

Volunteers can work with seniors one-on-one or in group activities. (Some programs require an orientation before starting volunteer service.) Students may also be interested in organizing a food or product drive for our low-income clients: <https://www.iona.org/get-involved/sponsor-a-food-or-product-drive/>

Contact Information:

Email Ms. Tania Sechriest, Volunteer Program Manager: volunteer@iona.org
(202) 895-9419
www.facebook.com/IonaSeniorServices
<http://iona.org>

Seabury Resources for Aging

Volunteers are offered opportunities such as providing yard work, IT support, or entertaining older adults.

Contact Information:

<http://www.seaburyresources.org/srj/index.php/volunteer-give/volunteer>
Seabury at Friendship Terrace: (202) 244-7400
Seabury at Springvale Terrace: (301) 587-0190

Hebrew Home of Greater Washington

Volunteers can give their time in many different ways including visiting residents on a weekly basis, providing assistance with shopping or other activities, escorting residents to their activities, and more.

Contact Information:

http://www.hebrew-home.org/site/PageServer?pagename=volunteer_students
(301) 770-8333

Feeding the Hungry

Manna Food Center

Volunteers provide food services to residents of Montgomery County.

Contact Information:

<http://www.mannafood.org/volunteer-with-us/>
(301) 424-1130

Martha's Table

Volunteers can help prepare food for distribution to those in need. Volunteers can also sort, hang, and fold clothing for sale at the on-site thrift store. This organization also offers the opportunity for volunteers to support younger students through homework help.

Contact Information:

Food and Clothing: <http://marthastable.volunteerhub.com/events/index>
Homework Help: Contact Francisca Alba at falba@marthastable.org or call (202) 328-6608

Food and Friends

This organization works to feed impoverished DC citizens, as well as those living with HIV/AIDS. Volunteers can help prepare food in the kitchen, and/or make home deliveries.

Contact Information:

<http://www.foodandfriends.org/site/pp.asp?c=ckLSI8NNIdJ2G&b=7565475>
(202) 269-2277

DC Central Kitchen

Volunteers can prepare food in the kitchen or even harvest fresh produce from local farms. These services benefit homeless shelters, transitional homes, and nonprofit organizations.

Contact Information:

<http://dccentralkitchen.org/volunteer/>
(202) 234-0707

Common Good City Farm

Volunteers tend to the outdoor urban vegetable garden and harvest the food when it's ready. The healthy food benefits low-income DC families. The farm is open from spring to fall.

Contact Information:

<http://commongoodcityfarm.org/getinvolved>
(202) 559-7513

Heifer international

This organization provides training, tools and projects that empower families with animals, so that their byproducts can be used to improve nutrition, income, education, entrepreneurialism, gender equality and much more.

Contact information:

<https://www.heifer.org/>
(855) 948-6437

Tutoring

Growing Together Tutoring

Volunteers can help strengthen math, reading, and writing skills of young children at area public libraries on a weekly basis.

Contact Information:

Email theresaknudson@gmail.com

http://www.growingtogethertutoring.org/volunteer_to_be_a_tutor0.aspx

(202) 374-5152

Environment

Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE)

Volunteers engage in a range of activities from park cleanups to attending meetings to learn about taking action against climate change.

Contact Information:

<http://www.arlingtonenvironment.org/volunteer/volunteer/>

(703) 228-6427

Rock Creek Conservancy

This organization offers projects such as trash cleanup or invasive plant removals, as well as community outreach activities.

Contact Information:

Cleanup Projects: Email Karen Zeiter - kzeiter@rockcreekconservancy.org

Public Outreach: Contact info@rockcreekconservancy.org

<http://www.rockcreekconservancy.org/get-involved/volunteer>

(301) 579-3105

Anacostia Watershed

Different events are hosted to contribute to the goal of making the river swimmable again by 2030.

Contact Information:

<http://anacostiaws.org/get-involved/volunteer-stewardship>

(301) 699-6204

Casey Trees

Casey Trees restores, enhances and protects the tree canopy of the nation's capital.

Contact Information:

<https://caseytrees.org/volunteer/group/>

Jewish National Fund

Trees will be planted in Israel for sponsors, who can choose to have it done in someone's name.

Contact Information:

<http://www.jnf.org/support/tree-planting-center/>

(888) JNF-0099

General

A Wider Circle

A range of activities is offered, including Neighbor-to-Neighbor, where volunteers provide furniture for people transitioning out of shelters, or Public Housing Wellness, where volunteers enhance the lives of seniors and disabled individuals living in poverty.

Contact Information:

volunteer@awidercircle.org
<http://awidercircle.org/get-involved/volunteer/>
(301) 608-3504

DC Diaper Bank

Volunteers can work at the warehouse where they will sort and pack diapers, which will be distributed to underprivileged families in the DC area.

Contact Information:

info@dcdiaperbank.org
<http://www.dcdiaperbank.org/get-involved/>
(202) 656-8503

Bikes for The World

This organization takes bike donations to distribute to low-income people and select institutions in developing countries.

Contact Information:

Contact Yvette@bikesfortheworld.org
<http://bikesfortheworld.org/donate-a-bike>
703-740-7856

Sinai House

Students can spend time with the kids at Sinai House, a transitional housing program for families in Washington, DC, engaging in fun activities such as museum trips, reading to toddlers, kickball games, or amusement park trips. Students can also find creative ways to raise money for Sinai House.

Contact Information:

Contact Walde Diabate at sinaihouse@gmail.com
<http://sinaihouse.org/get-involved.html>

Yachad

Students can volunteer in groups to have a Mitzvah Party, where they engage in a hands-on experience repairing a home or community center for those in need.

Contact Information:

info@yachad-dc.org
<http://www.yachad-dc.org/mitzvahparty.php>
(202) 296-8563

Remember a Child B'nei Mitzvah Twinning Project

Students remember a child who perished in the Holocaust and was not able to celebrate a bar or bat mitzvah. With a donation, you will receive a certificate and information about a young Holocaust victim to honor. Additional information is in the temple office or use contact information provided here. Donations can be made directly to: The Generation After, Inc., PO Box 5854, Derwood, MD 20855

Contact Information:

Barbara Brandys
7606 Westlake Terrace
Bethesda, MD 20817
Phone (home): (301) 365-1716 (cell): 240-687-4034
Phone (work): (301) 594-6203
Fax: (301) 365-5317
e-mail: brandysb@mail.nih.gov; brandysb@verizon.net

NACOEJ B'nei Mitzvah Twinning Project

Students support a Jewish Ethiopian 'twin' living in Israel. With a donation, a gift is made to your twin's school to buy school supplies. Students can also send letters to their twin and even send gifts such as bags full of Jewish items.

Contact Information:

mitzvah@nacoj.org
<http://www.nacoj.org/get-involved/be-a-twin>
(212) 233-5200 ext. 227

Birthday Club at the JCC's Friendship Circle

The Birthday Club is a monthly birthday party for children with special needs that is staffed by Bnai Mitzvah volunteers. Each party is held at a different venue as we celebrate the children's birthdays that fall during that month. Full information at:

https://www.fcnd.org/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/3015368/jewish/6th-7th-Grade-Volunteers.htm

Contact: www.fcnd.org

Sports

DC Scores

DC SCORES creates neighborhood teams that give kids in need the confidence and skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom, and in life.

Contact Information

Lindsey Sharp - lsharp@dcscores.org
<https://www.dcscores.org/>
(202) 393-6999

Leveling the Playing Field

This organization provides donated sports equipment to youth sports organizations so that they can use the funds allocated for the purchase of

equipment for other important things. Volunteers can donate time in the warehouse, receiving, documenting, and sorting donated equipment.

Contact Information:

volunteers@levelingtheplayingfield.org
<http://www.levelingtheplayingfield.org/getinvolved1>
(301) 801-0738

The Miracle League

Volunteers can act as “buddies” to help participants in this baseball league for kids with disabilities.

Contact Information:

Email mlmcbb@gmail.com
<http://www.miracleleaguemocomd.org/join/volunteer/>

Special Olympics

Volunteers coach and support people with special needs, one-on-one through a wide variety of sports.

Contact Information:

(202) 408-2640 (DC)
(410) 242-1515 (MD)
For VA: Email Ellen Costlow at volunteers@specialolympicsva.org
(804) 346-5544 (VA)

http://www.specialolympics.org/Common/Special_Olympics_Program_Locator.aspx

Open Door Sports

High quality, high energy sports programs for children who are often missed—children with special needs and those financially constrained

Contact Information:

Sarah Albus
SAibus@opendoorsports.org
www.opendoorsports.org

Fun Bunch Soccer Volunteer with Devenio

Volunteer with youth with cognitive or developmental disabilities

Contact Information:

<http://www.devenio.org/volunteer.html>

Animals

People. Animals. Love. (PAL)

Volunteers can bring their pet to hospitals, nursing homes, libraries and other places in the DC area to bring comfort to and improve the lives of those in need. This benefits the elderly, sick, and underprivileged youth.

Contact Information:

Volunteer Coordinator: Jack Hillelsohn - jack@peopleanimalslove.org

<http://peopleanimalslove.org>
(202) 966-2171

Canine Companions for Independence

You and your family can raise a puppy under a year old who will later be trained as a support dog for people with disabilities. There may also be other volunteer opportunities available.

Contact Information:

<http://cci.org>
(1-800) 572-BARK (2275)

Star Gazing Farm

This is a sanctuary for retired animals, who are veterans of bad circumstances. Volunteers can lend a hand at farm chores, including mucking the barn, weeding the garden, and repairing fences.

Contact Information:

<http://www.stargazingfarm.org>
(301) 349-0802

Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind

This organization provides guide dogs to visually impaired Israeli citizens. Students can sponsor a dog by finding creative ways to raise money.

Contact Information:

Email mike@israelguidedog.org
<http://israelguidedog.org/Mitzvah-club/>
(215) 343-9100

Ongoing Project Plan

Using the space provided, please write an extended paragraph explaining what you intend to do for your project. Please show this paragraph at your 8-week appointment with your officiating rabbi, and have them sign their initials below.

Rabbi's Initials: _____

Sample Ongoing Project Volunteer Log

Please answer the following questions and keep a log as you make progress on your ongoing project. Try to answer these questions in the form of a log entry every time you have a new experience, learn something new, or when you complete a new phase of your project.

Date: _____

Time Spent: _____

Briefly describe what you did during this particular volunteer experience.

Did you have any specific observations or thoughts?

What did you learn from this experience?

How does this relate to your bar or bat mitzvah?

13 MITZVOT PLAN

Please answer the following questions at the completion of a mitzvah, and discuss your experience with your family.

I fulfilled the Mitzvah of: _____

How did you fulfill this mitzvah?

How do you feel about having fulfilled this mitzvah? Explain your answer.

How does it connect to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

Will you continue to do this or similar mitzvot in the future? Why or why not?

What have you learned from this experience?

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How did you fulfill this mitzvah?

How do you feel about having fulfilled this mitzvah? Explain your answer.

How does it connect to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

Will you continue to do this or similar mitzvot in the future? Why or why not?

What have you learned from this experience?

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