

# Temple Shaaray Tefila Mitzvah Project Planning Guide

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

Date of B'nei Mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## What is the Mitzvah Project?

- At Shaaray Tefila, it is a significant step on the path to becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
- The Mitzvah Project is centered on Gemilut Chasadim - acts of loving-kindness. It is based on hours of volunteering, not a monetary tzedakah donation to a charity.
- Students will plan and execute a project that is at least **18 hours in total**. This project can begin one year before you become Bar or Bat Mitzvah, but must be completed at least one-to-two months before the ceremony.
- Students and families should aim to build a close relationship with certain service organizations, rather than volunteer with many organizations. We recommend two at most.
- Students will select a type of Mitzvah Project from one or more of these three categories:
  - Category A: TST Social Action Project** - volunteer with our in-house projects that support the work of our synagogue's social action and social justice initiatives.
  - Category B: Community-Based Project** - volunteer with organizations that support our local community. Some of our previous B'nei Mitzvah students have volunteered there in the past.
  - Category C: Custom Project** - create a design a Mitzvah Project that connects with your passion or with a community service organization not listed here.
- Students will complete Step One through Step Five on the Mitzvah Project Planning Guide and submit it to Rachel Kaplan before the Mitzvah Project begins.
- When you completed Step Six with the log of your hours and a signature verifying your hours, please submit that page to Rabbi Mosbacher or Rabbi Reines at your D'var Torah Meeting #4, approximately one month before the ceremony.
- With any questions, please email [mitzvahprojects@tstnyc.org](mailto:mitzvahprojects@tstnyc.org).

## Step One: Understand Your Jewish Values

What are the Jewish values that will guide your Mitzvah Project? Think of the values that most important to you and your family. Put a check mark next to one, two, or three values.

\_\_\_ Ahavat Hager - Loving the Stranger

\_\_\_ Rodeph Shalom - Pursuing Peace

\_\_\_ Ahavat Yisrael - Supporting Israel

\_\_\_ Shmirat Ha'adamah - Protecting the Earth

\_\_\_ Hiddur Pnei Zaken - Honoring the Elderly

\_\_\_ Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim - Caring for Animals

\_\_\_ Ma'achiel Harevim - Feeding the Hungry

\_\_\_ Tzedek - Justice

\_\_\_ Migvan - Diversity

\_\_\_ Zikaron - Remembrance

\_\_\_ Pikuah Nefesh - Saving a Life

**Step Two: Select your category of mitzvah project. Put checkmarks next to one or more of these categories:**

**\_\_\_ Category A: TST Social Action Project**

For example...

- Volunteer with Backpack Buddies
- Volunteer at Sandwich Saturday
- Volunteer at Mitzvah Day

For all dates and times, visit [www.shaaraytefilanyc.org/volunteer](http://www.shaaraytefilanyc.org/volunteer)

For more information, contact Carol Crossen, [carol.crossen@gmail.com](mailto:carol.crossen@gmail.com)

**\_\_\_ Category B: Community-Based Project**

For example...

- Volunteer with the elderly through DOROT; contact Shai Rosenfeld, [srosenfeld@dorotusa.org](mailto:srosenfeld@dorotusa.org)
- Volunteer with special needs children through Friendship Circle; visit [www.friendshipcirclenyc.org](http://www.friendshipcirclenyc.org)
- Volunteer at the food pantry at Little Sisters Association; contact Trish Gough, [tgough@lsafhs.org](mailto:tgough@lsafhs.org)
- Volunteer to serve meals with NY Common Pantry; contact [volunteer@nycommonpantry.org](mailto:volunteer@nycommonpantry.org)
- Volunteer as a tutor at the Stanley Isaacs Center; contact Gigi Verkaik, [gverkaik@isaacscenter.org](mailto:gverkaik@isaacscenter.org)
- Volunteer with animals at Bideawee Animal Hospital; visit [www.bideawee.org/volunteer](http://www.bideawee.org/volunteer)
- Volunteer to cook a meal with JCC Community Cooks; visit [www.jccmanhattan.org/volunteer](http://www.jccmanhattan.org/volunteer)
- Volunteer with children at Spence-Chapin; contact [volunteer@spence-chapin.org](mailto:volunteer@spence-chapin.org)
- Volunteer as a dog walker to support Israeli Guide Dogs; visit [www.israelguidedog.org](http://www.israelguidedog.org)

**\_\_\_ Category C: Custom Project**

Here's how...

- Create a project that incorporates your Jewish values
- Find an organization that is connected with your passion
- Understand how you will impact those in need
- Log your hours

**Step Three: Select and Confirm Your Organization(s) and Cause(s)**

What is the name of the organization(s) or project(s) of your Mitzvah Project?

Organization/Project #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Project #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email or Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email or Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step Four: What is the Mitzvah Project?**

In two to three sentences, describe the volunteer work you will be doing and who you will be helping.

**Step Five: Understand Who You Are Helping**

What are the causes or people supported by your project? Who are you helping?

- Animals
- Arts and Culture
- Children
- Education
- Elderly
- Emergency Response
- Environment
- Healthy Living
- Jewish Living
- Special Needs
- Poverty and Hunger
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step Six: Log Your Community Service Hours - This Form is Due at D'var Torah Meeting #4**

It is up to you to determine how you will complete your 18 hours for your Mitzvah Project. You can space it out however you want in the months leading up, just be sure to plan ahead! Log your hours on this sheet, then have the staff or volunteer coordinator(s) from your organizations also sign this sheet.

- 12 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 11 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 10 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 9 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 8 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 7 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 6 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 5 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 4 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 3 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 2 months before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_
- 1 month before your B'nei Mitzvah  
What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_ How many hours? \_\_\_\_

Total Hours (must be at least 18 hours): \_\_\_\_\_

**By signing below, I affirm that I completed these hours of community service for my Mitzvah Project:**

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization #1 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization #2 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Step Seven: Mitzvah Project Reflection**

Once you have completed your Mitzvah Project, please answer these reflection questions and bring this sheet to D'var Torah Meeting #4.

1. What was the overall experience like for you?
2. What was a highlight from your Mitzvah Project experience?
3. How did you feel once it was completed?
4. Do you plan to continue volunteering with this organization? Why/why not?
5. Would you recommend this project to a future student for their Mitzvah Project?