



# **B'NAI MITZVAH STUDENT JOURNAL**

**10.13.16**

## 13 MITZVOT JOURNAL

(13 Mitzvot To Which I Commit as I begin to assume responsibility for my own Judaism and being part of the Jewish community)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. With your parents, choose 6 mitzvot to do and reflect on them using the journal questions (you may handwrite in your journal using these pages, type your journal or record (voice or video) it).
2. With your m'amein (tutor), choose the next 6 mitzvot to do and reflect on them using the journal questions.
3. Choose two from each section: Torah, Avodah and G'milut Chasadim.
4. You will discuss your journal with the rabbi at a meeting a few weeks before your bar or bat mitzvah.
5. Your 13<sup>th</sup> mitzvah will be something to which you commit after your bar or bat mitzvah. Be thinking about this one.

#### Rules:

1. You can't do a mitzvah you already do. For example, if you already help your family build a sukkah, you can't choose that one.
2. You are not limited by the list at the back of this journal. If you have other ideas, check with your m'amein.
3. Once again, the journal can be: handwritten using the following pages, electronic, video or voice. You will share it with the rabbi.

Name of Bar or Bat Mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah \_\_\_\_\_

The first 6 mitzvot which I will complete are: (Describe each mitzvah in a few words)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

The second 6 that I will complete are (to be determined with your m'amein).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

The 13<sup>th</sup> to which I commit post b'nai mitzvah (to be determined on your own):

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# Entry #1

(To be completed after the Shabbaton)

1. How did you go about deciding which mitzvot to choose as a family? Who made the final decision?

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2. What was something you learned about mitzvot?

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3. What was something you learned about what is important to your parents?

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4. Based on this exercise, if you had to explain “mitzvah” to one of your non-Jewish friends at school, what would you say?

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Entry #2 (MITZVAH 1)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #3 (MITZVAH 2)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #4 (MITZVAH 3)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #5 (MITZVAH 4)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #6 (MITZVAH 5)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #7 (MITZVAH 6)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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## Entry #8 (The Next 6 Mitzvot)

(To be completed after choosing the next 6 mitzvot with your m'amein)

1. How was this experience different than choosing mitzvot with your family?

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2. If part of taking on responsibility as you become bar/bat mitzvah requires that you don't always rely on your parents, what did this process teach you about responsibility? When do you think you still will want your parent's help or the help of someone like your m'amein?

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Entry #9 (MITZVAH 7)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #10 (MITZVAH 8)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #11 (MITZVAH 9)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah  
 Avodah  
 G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #12 (MITZVAH 10)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah
- Avodah
- G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #13 (MITZVAH 11)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah
- Avodah
- G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #14 (MITZVAH 12)

1. What mitzvah did you do?

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2. What category was it in? (Check one)

- Torah
- Avodah
- G'milut Chasadim?)

3. Describe the experience and how you felt about it.

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4. Is this a mitzvah you think you will do again? Why or why not?

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Entry #15 (on the 12 you have completed)

(After all you have completed the 12 mitzvot and are ready to determine your 13<sup>th</sup>)

1. Which mitzvot did you find most fulfilling? Why?

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2. Which ones did you feel were the most important to do? Why?

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3. What did you learn about being Jewish in the process?

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4. What did you learn about yourself?

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5. What is a question you would like to discuss with the rabbi as a result of doing all these mitzvot?

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6. What are you thinking about for your 13<sup>th</sup> Mitzvah?

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## LIST OF SAMPLE MITZVOT AND SOURCES

### TORAH

- Attend Har HaShem Torah Study on Saturday morning. (Exodus 20:8)
- Do a family tree. How has Jewish practice changed throughout the generations? (Exodus 1:1)
- Study the 4 questions from the Hagadah. Write your own 4 questions (or 4 answers to why this night is different). Use them at the seder you attend and record those in your journal. (Exodus 13:8)
- Go to another place of worship. Describe in your journal how that experience differs from your experience at Har HaShem. What did it, if anything, help you understand about your Judaism? (Mishkan T'filah, page 84)
- Add a Jewish book to your library and read it. Reflect in your journal about what that book taught you about Judaism or the experience of being Jewish. (Mishkan T'filah, p. 84, top blessing).
- Record an interview with a grandparent about what Jewish life was like when he or she was 13. (Leviticus 19:32)
- Learn to play a piece of Jewish music. (Psalms 96:1)
- Watch a documentary or film about a Jewish topic. (Mishkan T'filah, p. 84, top blessing).
- Go to Israel with your family (Genesis 17:8)
- Attend the Har HaShem middle school retreat (Deuteronomy 31:12)
- Read an article or blog post about a Jewish topic or Israel and discuss it with your family or another b'nai mitzvah student daily for a week. (Deuteronomy 6:6)
- Study a Jewish artist and create your own piece of Jewish art. (Mishkan T'filah p. 60)

### AVODAH

- Celebrate a Shabbat un-programmed and unplugged from Friday night dinner to Saturday havdalah. (Exodus 20:8)
- Make your own tallit and learn how to tie tzitzit (Numbers 15:37)
- Attend a shiva minyan. (Isaiah 40:1)
- Buy or make a mezuzah and hang it on your bedroom door or another door-frame in your home. (Deuteronomy 6:9)
- Create a Shabbat meal and experience for your friends. Document the experience with photographs. In your journal, address what it was like to be responsible for your own Shabbat. (Exodus 20:8)
- Lead Havdalah for your family. Write up in your journal what the experience was like and how you feel like your bar/bat mitzvah is like a separation. (Mishkan T'filah p. 610)
- Recite the shema before bed for 13 consecutive nights. (Deuteronomy 6:7)
- Make a ritual object (Yad, Chanukah, challah cover, etc.)
- Help build a sukkah with your family and decorate it. (Leviticus 23:34)
- Fast on Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16:29)
- Help set up for BOHO one of the nights Har HaShem host homeless guests (Isaiah 40:1)
- Light the candles and say the Kiddush at a family Shabbat dinner every Friday for a month (Exodus 20:8)
- Observe the dietary laws during the entire week of Pesach (Exodus 13:6-8)

## G'MILUT CHASADIM

- Reach out to an elder in your community and interview that person about their life. Ask the person to tell you how Judaism was part of their life? Ask them what advice they would give you as you are becoming bar/bat mitzvah. (Exodus 20:12)
- Give 3% of the cost of your bar/bat mitzvah celebration to Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger. [www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org) (Isaiah 58:7)
- Pick a justice issue about which you can advocate and write your congressman or representative, including why Judaism teaches you that you must speak out about the issue. (Isaiah 58:7)
- Make and deliver food to someone who is sick. (Isaiah 40:1)
- Contribute some tzedakh every Friday night for two months before Shabbat into a family tzedakah box. Decide as a family where the money will go. (Leviticus 23:22)
- “Adopt” a resident of a nearby nursing home and send them cards and/or visit them regularly. (Exodus 20:12)
- Do something to help the environment (Psalms 24:1)
- Go out of your way to be nice to someone very different than you. (Deuteronomy 15:7)
- Respond to the Syrian refugee crisis by an action suggested by HIAS ([hias.org](http://hias.org)) or the RAC ([www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)) (Leviticus 19:34)