

Selecting/Crafting a Blessing for your Child

Parents are invited on the morning of their child's celebration to give their child a blessing just before they hand the Torah to their child. Feel free to speak to your child from the heart in a way that is prayerful, reverent, and that gives members of the congregation an opportunity to say "amen" at the end. For the sake of time and the flow of the service we ask that this blessing be brief. Please review the many blessings provided in this document and use them as you craft the words that you will deliver to your child.

We ask that you share a draft of your blessing with Rabbi Levy no later than two weeks prior to the service. Of course, your private celebration affords the opportunity to speak at greater length about your child's personal history and accomplishments if you so wish.

Rabbi Levy (klevy@bethisrael.org) looks forward to answering any questions or concerns as you prepare the words you will share with your child.

For parent of a bat mitzvah

I

On this Shabbat when our daughter becomes a Bat Mitzvah, we have come with her and our loved ones to join in worship and to offer our prayer of thanksgiving.

We are grateful, O God, for the privilege of passing along the gift of life which You gave us, thus sharing with You in the miracle of creation. We are grateful for the thirteen years of nurturing this life, for the unnumbered joys and challenges which these years have brought us. Praise to You, O Lord, for keeping us alive, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this day.

Bless our daughter, O God; watch over her, protect her, guide her. Help her to continue to grow in body and mind, in soul and character. Keep her loyal to our people and to the teachings of our Torah. May her life be rich and rewarding. May all her deeds bring pride to us, honor to the house of Israel, and glory to Your name. Amen

II

We thank You, O God, for the joyous fulfillment we feel as our daughter reaches the threshold of womanhood.

How privileged we feel that she is our daughter, and that she is bound to us by bonds of love, of memory, and of hope!

Praise to You, O Lord our God, who has kept us alive, and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this day.

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O God, accept our thankfulness for the thirteen years that have come and gone; bless our hope for the years that are yet to be. May Your mercy and guidance accompany this Bat Mitzvah at all times, in a life marked by reverence for Torah and love of all Your children. Amen.

III

Into our hands, O God, You have placed Your Torah, to be held high by parents and children, and taught by one generation to the next.

Whatever has befallen us, our people have remained steadfast in loyalty to the Torah. It was carried into exile in the arms of parents that their children might not be deprived of their birthright.

And now I pray that you, my child, will always be worthy of this inheritance. Take its teaching into your heart, and in turn pass it on to your children and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew, searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace. Thus will you be among those who labor to bring nearer the day when the Lord shall be One and God's name shall be One.

For parent of a bar mitzvah

With gladness and thanksgiving we praise You, O Lord our God, for having kept us alive, and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this day.

We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son grow day-by-day, week-by-week, year-by-year. For the health and strength You have given him, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him, for his ability to elicit and return love – for all these precious gifts, we thank You.

Watch over him, O God, on this special day and every day. Grant him a growing understanding of the true significance of this occasion and a deepening loyalty to everything which it represents. May the teachings of our heritage guide him throughout life; and may he lead a life worthy of Your blessings. Amen.

II

Lord our God, author of life and source of all blessings, we praise You for keeping us alive, and sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this day.

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Gratefully we thank You for the joyous privilege of seeing our son attain this milestone. On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. On this day new dreams and new hopes are born.

We pray that Your protecting and loving care will accompany him wherever he goes and in all that he does. Help him to become all that he is capable of being. Give him strength to do all the good things that are within his reach. Keep him loyal to the best that he has been shown, and to the noblest Jewish teachings he has been taught.

May his deeds find favor in the eyes of his fellow-men and be worthy of Your blessings.

III

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