

Golden Kippah Program

"The world stands upon three things - upon Torah, upon divine service, and upon acts of kindness." (Pirke Avot 1:2)

על שלושה דברים העולם עומד-על התורה,
ועל העבודה, ועל גמילות החסדים

Dear Bnei Mitzvah Students,

What an exciting time for you as you begin the process of becoming a Jewish adult. A Bnei mitzvah is not a one-time event. You don't "get bar/t mitzvah-ed." You are always a Bnei mitzvah (a son or daughter of the commandments) once you begin this holy journey of learning, prayer, and acts of compassion.

In order to fully understand the power of *mitzvah* (commandment, or good deed) and of being a responsible Jewish adult, we present the **Golden Kippah Program**. This program, while not required, will enhance your connection to our people, our God and our synagogue community.

Mitzvot

Attached to this letter, you will find a brief description of the program and the text that the this program is built upon. **We ask you to fulfill 5 items in each of the listed categories.**

When you complete the requirement, we ask that you write a one-page reflection about all the projects/ mitzvot/ duties you fulfilled. Please describe your experiences with the different requirements, your Community Service project(s), why you chose them, how they affected you, etc. Some of you will write this as an essay, while others will use other visual media to describe this experience. We invite you to express yourself in a way that feels authentic and meaningful to you!

The Religious School office staff will help guide your progress through the Golden Kippah binder and your reflections. We will contact you with an enthusiastic *Mazal Tov* when you have completed this holy process.

Program Requirements

If you choose to participate in this special program, please inform our Religious School Director, Ellie Laycook, and she will prepare the appropriate materials for you.

Timing



To receive a Gold Kippah at your service celebrating Bnei mitzvah, **all mitzvot must be performed during the year prior to your celebration.** While *mitzvot* performed more than a year before the date are desirable, they do not count toward Golden Kippah requirements. **All requirements must be completed one week prior to your celebration and one-page write-up must be sent to the Director, elaycook@unisyn.org .**

If you are unable to finish the process by the date of your bar/bat mitzvah service, that's ok! You are encouraged to continue to do mitzvot in order to qualify for your Golden Kippah anytime after you become Bnei mitzvah. We will award you with a Golden Kippah at a Family Shabbat service, all-school assembly or Tichon dinner when all of the Golden Kippah program requirements are completed.

Religious School Attendance

Students must be enrolled and have good attendance (**present 75% of the time**) at Religious School to qualify for the Golden Kippah program. If you have special circumstances that prevent you from regularly attending class, please speak to the Director.

Beyond Bar and Bat Mitzvah

Golden Kippah recipients participate in High Holy Day services and are considered role models among our younger students. This award will let all those around you know that you have completed this special program.

Gold cannot tarnish, but its outer layer can become damaged. As a Golden Kippah recipient, we hope that you will continue your Jewish journey here at University Synagogue. The Golden Kippah is a sign that you will remain connected and committed not just to Judaism, but Judaism here at University Synagogue.

Your clergy and education team will all be available to assist you in every stage of this project, and we look forward to working with you.

Golden Kippah Program Opportunities

Each student must complete (5) items in each category at University Synagogue during the year prior to his/her ceremony.

All Mitzvot should be performed following the strictest of health and safety standards. We've listed some suggestions and inspiration for each category. Some Mitzvot listed are not able to be completed during stay at home orders, plan accordingly.

Torah – Form a connection to Torah and pursue a deeper knowledge of Judaism

- Attend a Torah Study opportunity at UniSyn
- Attend a Shabbat Morning Services
- Select a Jewish book, biography or short story that is of interest to you
- Explore (in-person or Virtually) that highlight an exhibit dealing with Jewish life and learning

Gimilut Chasadem – Act of Kindness

- Send a card to someone who is sick
- Honor an elder
- Organize a family day
- Cook a meal for your parents
- Plan a family picnic
- Do extra chores around the house
- Cook a meal for congregants who are recovering or recently had a baby.
- Volunteer to baby-sit or do simple chores around the house for a congregant in need.
- Send a well-wishes card to the family.

Avodah – Social change

- Reach out to elected officials
- Participate in a postcard campaign
- Create a space/webpage for teaching others about a social/environment issue
- Teaching and fundraising for a cause
- Recruit people for a blood drive