

TEMPLE BETH HILLEL - BETH EL
Mitzvah Project Handbook for
Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah Students

1001 Remington Road
Wynnewood, PA 19096

MITZVOT

THE MITZVAH PROJECT

Becoming a Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah is a very important time in a young Jewish person's life. It is a rite of passage marking the coming of age as a Jewish adult. The day on which you are called to the Torah is a joyful religious occasion you will share with your family and friends. Our rabbis teach that the world is upheld by three things – Torah (study), Avodah (worship), and Gemilut Chasadim (acts of loving-kindness). Almost all the mitzvot (God's commandments) can be categorized in one of these three areas. When you become a Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah, you gain certain rights and responsibilities in Jewish law and, from that time forward, you become responsible for fulfilling the mitzvot. In preparing for the ceremony marking your Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah, we expect all our students to take part as leaders in all three of these areas. You spend months studying your Torah portion preparing both to give a teaching (study) and to read from the Torah (worship). It is also important to start taking on the responsibility for making our world a better place, through acts of gemilut chasadim. This is the goal of participating in the Mitzvah Project. We ask that you pick one Mitzvah that you find meaningful and create a project through which you will demonstrate your new responsibilities as a member of the Jewish people.

Recent B'nai Mitzvah Projects

Please note that the following list is a partial list of recent projects to give you a sense of the range of projects that you can do. Most students are happy to speak to you about their project if you would like more information.

Clothes Pin Project

Encouraged Acts of Kindness Among Her Peers

The Dinner Club of JFCS

Cooked with adults with disabilities

Abu Tor Good Neighbor Project

Raised funds for joint Palestinian/Jewish initiatives

Penn Hillel

Gave out food to homeless people

WHAT IS THE MITZVAH PROJECT?

You will choose a particular mitzvah that you find meaningful and design an ongoing project that you will participate in for a minimum of 13 hours. You may choose any mitzvah that appeals to you and find a way in which to perform it. Giving tzedakah (monetary donations) can be a part of your project, but it should also include hands-on participation in the mitzvah itself. Your Mitzvah Project can be in the area of social action, education and/ or Jewish observance and should reflect a new practice for you and/or demonstrably benefit other people.

HOW DO I CHOOSE WHAT KIND OF PROJECT TO DO?

It helps to start by thinking about what you like to do and whom you want to help. For example, if you like baseball and are interested in helping children, you may want to collect baseball equipment for children in low-income areas. If you are a talented musician, you may want to organize a concert at a home for older adults. The possibilities are endless! By choosing a project that involves something you like doing, our hope is that you will find ways to continue your involvement even after you have fulfilled the requirements for this Mitzvah Project. It is a good idea to talk with your parents, teachers and rabbis to help figure out the best way to do your project.





Abramson Center

Participated in activities
with the elderly

MVP/Friendship Circle

Buddied/had fun with
children with disabilities

Providence Animal Shelter

Worked with animals

Castle Home

Ran clothing drive to
help people with mental
health issues

www.treehousebooks.org

Israeli soccer program

Partnered with Philadelphia
Union to donate
portion of sales

Friendship Circle

Worked with children with
disabilities

HOW DO I LET YOU KNOW WHAT I AM DOING?

Enclosed you will find a form in which you describe the project that you are planning to do. We ask for those forms to be turned in one month after your journey's session on Mitzvah Projects. The Rabbi and/or Education Director will review the project and let you know if there are any concerns. In addition to the initial form, we also ask you to keep a journal and a time log so that you will have a keepsake for your own memories and be able to provide us with a record of your work. Your journal will also serve as a helpful reference if you choose to discuss your project as part of your speech at your Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah.

TIMELINE

We ask you to make every effort to complete the 13-hour requirement for the project by the end of 6th grade. However, we understand that certain projects may not be able to be fulfilled in this time frame. All projects must be completed at least one month before your Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah celebration. Knowing everything that you must do in the final weeks before your celebration, we strongly recommend that you don't leave this for the last minute. Please feel free to continue with your Mitzvah project on an ongoing basis, even after completing the 13-hour requirement.



ALS Assoc. of Greater Phila.

Phillies Phestival
Volunteer/Visit with ALS patient.

Made a family cookbook with grandmother.

Upcoming Events Pillows for Patients

Made pillows to distribute for American Heart Association.

Child's Play Charity

Provided toys, games and books to children's hospitals.

Main Line Meals on Wheels

Delivered meals to people who are homebound.

Helped elderly neighbor clean out home/hold a yard sale to raise money.

Upward Basketball

Played basketball with children who have disabilities.



MITZVAH PROJECT IDEAS

The list of mitzvot and projects below are intended to help you brainstorm ideas – they are not a limit of what you can do, but some suggestions to help you decide what you want to do.

Bal Tashchit-Do Not Destroy | Adopt a Highway • Start a Recycling Program • Help Neighbors Bag Leaves in Correct Bags

Tzar Ba'alei Chayim | Be Kind to Animals • Volunteer at a Pet Grooming Salon • Be a Volunteer Dog Walker/Sitter • Become a Foster Family for Seeing Eye Puppies • Volunteer at an Animal Hospital or Veterinarian

Hiddur P'nei Zaken | Respect the Elderly • Visit with a Home-Bound Person • Go Food Shopping with a Person who May Need Help • Rake Leaves for Elderly Neighbors • Perform at Nursing Homes • Interview a Person on their Life • Help an Older Neighbor Build their Sukkah (or Mow their Lawn or Shovel their Drive & Sidewalk)

V'ahavta L'reyacha Kamocha | Love Your Neighbor - Homelessness Start & Organize a Drive in Your School/ Synagogue for: Blankets, Clothing, Food, Toiletries, etc. • Volunteer in a Soup Kitchen Volunteer at the Jewish Food Bank

Bikkur Cholim | Visit the Sick • Collect Old Posters for Children's Wards • Send Get-Well Cards to Sick Congregants • Make Blankets to Distribute to Children's Wards at a Local Hospital



Hungry for Music

Collected Instruments to distribute to low-income schools.

Ada Mutch (Eldernet)

Collected cereal boxes for Food Pantry in Bryn Mawr.

Best Buddies

BCMS program working with children with disabilities.

Vermont Adaptive

Helped people with mental /physical disabilities play sports.

LMSC's Challenger League Soccer

Shabbat Challah delivery to individuals to brighten their day.

Taught swimming for children participating in Special Olympics.

V'ahavta L'reyacha Kamocha | Love Your Neighbor – Disabilities
Start a Campaign to Make a Building Accessible for People with Physical Disabilities • Tutor a Learning-Disabled Child • Help to Create Large Print Siddurs • Raise Money for Assisted Listening Devices

Tefillin & Tallit | Commit to Wearing Tallit & Tefillin and Saying the Sh'ma

Geniza | Respectfully Disposing of Texts with God's Name • Volunteer to Assist with the Burial of Geniza Material • Create Geniza Boxes • Repair Old Lightly Damaged Siddurim • Sort Geniza Boxes

Kashrut | Keeping Kosher Try Keeping Kosher for 2 Months • Kasher your Kitchen for Passover • Help a Neighbor to Clean for Passover

Shabbat | Keeping Shabbat Make Shabbat Dinner for Your Family • Make Candlesticks & Light Weekly • Keep Shabbat Each Week • Make Challah from Scratch (Bonus Idea: Distribute Them to People in Need)

Kibud Av v'Em | Honor Your Parents Make Dinner Once a Week • Wash the Cars Once a Week • Research Your Family History • Create a Special Family Tree

Shalom Bayit/Rodef Shalom | Keeping Peace in the Home • Keep Your Room Clean • Do not Fight with Your Siblings • Create and Keep a Schedule to Help with Simple Chores Around the House

Hachnasat Orchim | Welcoming Guests Make a Dinner for: A Friend and Their Family, Your Relatives, A New Kid in Your Class • Host a Welcome Party for a New Synagogue Family

Gemilut Chasadim | Acts of Loving Kindness Take Younger Sibling on an Outing • Organize a Family Night • Volunteer as a Babysitter • Give Your Time to Someone who Needs Help



INITIAL PROJECT FORM

Name (First, Last): _____

Date of Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah: _____

Please describe the project you plan to do:

Who will your project supervisor be?
(Preferably someone who works for the organization):

Supervisor contact information (email or phone number)

***The Rabbi and/or Education Director will review the project and let you know if there are any concerns. Thank you!**

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BAR/BAT/GIL MITZVAH PROJECT LOG

Name _____

Phone number _____

Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah Date _____

The 13-hour requirement of the Mitzvah project should ideally be completed during sixth grade, and absolutely no later than one month before becoming a Bar/Bat/Gil Mitzvah.
Please remember that 13 hours is a minimum - we hope your project will be meaningful to you and that you will continue with it. You may either do one project or several different projects to fulfill the 13-hour requirement.

DATE	MITZVAH PERFORMED/ NAME OF ORGINIZATION	# OF HOURS THAT DAY	REFLECTIONS/THOUGHTS

Supervisor’s signature: _____

Parent’s signature: _____

Student’s signature: _____

Upon completion, please submit this completed form to the Rabbi or Education Director.