

2017 Confirmation Addresses

As I made my way into high school, school got more and more difficult, more and more extracurriculars came up, and my schedule was just about full. I started thinking about things that I could take off of my list to make life just a little bit easier, and honestly religious school came to mind. As I reflected, however, I scorned myself for even thinking about taking away my Jewish education. I thought of the pictures on the wall of all the generations of my family who have been confirmed at Sinai in years past (my Aunt Staci, my mom and just 4 years ago my brother, Ethan), and I thought about how I had made a promise 3 years ago at my Bat Mitzvah in front of Rabbi Rheins and the bimah, to continue through confirmation. I decided to stick to it and finish up religious school here, at Sinai. And I truly am glad that I did. My Jewishness has become a part of me. I have not only continued in religious school, but have taken on leadership roles in BBYO and I look forward to going to Israel with IST for my first time next year. I have learned that although Judaism IS a lot about family traditions and prayers, in some ways it is even more about being a good person. This is something that I will always strive to hold in the back of my head. As a Jewish woman, I feel that I have an obligation to the world that I live in to make the extra effort doing little things like holding the door open, complimenting someone, or even giving a protein bar to a person who is hungry on the side of the road. Or it might be giving to tzedakah, or spending my Sunday afternoon at Shalom Park. Rabbi Zwerin started my Jewish journey when he gave me my Hebrew name. Temple Sinai is where I found my true connection to Judaism and I am happy to have completed my *official* education here, although I know that this is not the end of my Jewish Journey. I now no longer only consider myself Jewish just because of the simple reason that my parents are Jewish. I am part of this larger Jewish community. I am taking this responsibility upon myself by doing my best to make the world a better place. I have found a connection to the stories in the Torah, and to the prayers that we sing at services. My picture as part of this confirmation class will join the many others before me on the Sinai wall, but more than this, I have found my pride, and I have found who I am in Judaism. For this, I am very grateful.

~ Molly Widoff

I have sat where you all are sitting watching my role models and friends stand up her as a religious school class for the last time. I watched these older members talk about the ending of religious school, but now I know that for each of them and all of us this is no ending but a new kind of beginning. Temple Sinai and the many years I have attended religious school at first seemed like a door, a short hallway that ended with confirmation. However throughout my time here this hallway has lengthened and is now filled with memories, special people, and the countless things I have learned throughout my time here. Now today I stand before you extremely proud and grateful of all the things that now make up my Jewish Hallway. I now know that the door at the end of the hallway that I am so close to is not the exit from my Jewish journey but the door that opens into a million different hallways each continuing to grow my Jewish knowledge and personality, whether inside or out of a synagogue the journey I was so sure would end, is now just lengthening. Temple Sinai has opened this door for me that leads to a wider Jewish community here in Colorado, one that crosses all over the country, and one that will just continue to grow as I explore the world next year with IST. Sinai will always be the center in the ever growing web of Jewish centers that I will learn, sing, develop in. Despite the fact that the walls of the buildings I began in have gone and rebuilt differently the one constant in these walls have been the love and support that I received from everyone here. The decisions that the people here have made, the knowledge they have imparted on me, and the feelings of support that I will continue to pass forward to the people I cross paths with in the future. The buildings, the people, the beliefs are what have made me who I am today. I am a person who has changed Judaism from a fact about me to a proud detail that impacts my life, decisions, and plans for the future. As I began to look for colleges this year it became extremely clear to me that a Jewish community is so important for me anywhere I go. The hallway may be ending but the door has just been open by friends and family here and it leads to the broader wider world of Judaism and what it means to me.

~ Miriam Weinraub

This week's torah portion is Emor and in it we find instructions and mitzvot and mitzvot concerning mitzvah, Yom Kippur, and the festivals. The three festivals are passover in the spring, sukkot in the fall, and in the early summer shavuot, which is the festival of the weeks. It is interesting to note that the reform judaism creation of confirmation was inspired by shavuot. Shavuot marks both the spring harvest and the gift of torah. What a perfect analogy for the confirmation, the harvest or in gathering, and the gift of torah relates to the coming of age for teenagers, us, as we realize more clearly what torah means in a young adult life.

Us as young adults, and our coming of age and maturing, we are growing up and receiving more privileges, whereas when we were younger our parents were our "decision makers". They controlled much of what we did, when we go to bed, almost anything we did. But as we grow up and mature our parents take a few steps back and rather than them telling you how to live and what to do, they begin to encourage and push us to do certain things and are more supportive and trusting. We receive more privileges and this relates right back to shavuot, the gathering, and in our cases it is privileges and our life experiences. One of my life experiences where I both received privileges and trust was when my father and I restored a 1964 ½ Ford Mustang. When we purchased the car in 2012 it was not in the best shape and many people would have thought the car had no value or that it was just like any other old car, but my father and I saw the potential the car had. Yes we knew it was going to be a lot of work but we knew the hard work would pay off in the end. The greatest privilege that I received was the bond I have with my dad, Through the countless hours that we have spent in the garage or driving or just walking around car shows. He teaches me new things every time we work in the garage and I every once in awhile can teach the old dog new tricks. Over the last 5 years the car has gone from barely running to being a head turner and an award winner. The trust factor came into play when we began working in the garage, to when I passed my drivers ED class and was ready to take my turn behind the wheel. My first go at driving was not all that successful. We luckily were in an open parking lot, but I never gave up because he was sitting there next to me guiding me to success. Once I got the hang of it there was a new level of trust, the open road. I have learned to not look at the downside of situations, but to look at the potential and what I can do to make the outcome the best possible.

Confirmation has allowed my friends and I to connect the dots. We have gone from childhood to adulthood. We have learned how to recognize potential and, through hard work, we have developed a special bond. We have gone from memorizing our Torah portions for our Bar and Bat Mitzvahs to engaging with the Torah to explore and learn more about the complex ideas in torah. This is a proud moment for each and every one of us!

~ Aaron Stasio

I am now at the end of my Jewish education here at Temple Sinai. I have learned many things in my eleven years attending religious school, and have basically grown up in this place! I have learned what it means to be a Jew, and have been impacted by the lessons taught by our rabbis, cantors, and teachers. One of the most surprising things that I have learned here at Temple Sinai was the resilience of the Jewish people. Our ability to survive through ancient times in Egypt, the Holocaust, and even modern day is one that is always on my mind when I step into this building.

I value our Jewish holidays and the heritage of my family. My brother, father, and grandfather all were Bar Mitzvahed and confirmed. I am now taking my place among them, and am proud to call myself a Jew.

An interesting fact took place a few weeks ago. My dad showed me the Chumash given to me by Rabbi Rheins at my Bar Mitzvah. The comments that were written in the front cover were about my broken wrist and the flu that I overcame to come to rehearsal. I had completely forgotten about these ailments and realized that I too had overcome some minor struggles to continue my Jewish education. They certainly weren't as big as the struggles of our ancestors, but they reminded me of my determination that I have inside of me on the soccer field or the time and effort that I put in to get to this day.

I realized one thing about Confirmation. This is really not the end of my Jewish learning but only the beginning. I can't wait to continue my Jewish learning in the future and ready for the challenges ahead.

~ Joey Feerer