

B'Mitzvotav



Temple Beth Israel

B'nei Mitzvah program
Temple Beth Israel

Sections 2 and 3 inspired by and adapted from
KK B'nai Yeshurun/Isaac M Wise Temple B'nei Mitzvah program

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B'NEI MITZVAH PROGRAM SUMMARY SHEET

SECTION 1: MIDDOT JEWISH VIRTUES

You must select two or three of these five items. At the end of this B'Mitzvotav project you must write an ethical 'Menu.'

- Australia Day
- ANZAC Day
- Indigenous Communities—Supporting the healing
- School Communities—Attentiveness and being a good listener
- Jewish Australians in the spotlight

SECTION 2: PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVOT ACTIVITIES

Select at least one activity from each category

- Personal choice mitzvah #1: Honour mother and father
- Personal choice mitzvah #2: Performing acts of loving kindness
- Personal choice mitzvah #3: Attend the house of study regularly
- Personal choice mitzvah#4: Welcome the stranger
- Personal choice mitzvah #5: Visit the sick
- Personal choice mitzvah #6: Rejoice with bride and groom
- Personal choice mitzvah #7: Comfort the mourner
- Personal choice mitzvah #8: Pray with sincerity
- Personal choice mitzvah #9: Make peace where there is strife
- Personal choice mitzvah #10: And the study of Judaism is equal to the mitzvot, because our study leads us to do the mitzvot

SECTION 3: REQUIRED MITZVOT ACTIVITIES

REQUIRED MITZVOT

1. To attend the House of Study regularly
2. To pray with sincerity
3. To perform acts of loving kindness
4. Study of Judaism

ATTENDING THE HOUSE OF STUDY REGULARLY

- a. Attend Matan or a Jewish Day School
- b. Attend B'nei Mitzvah class
- c. Attend individual B'nei Mitzvah tutoring beginning 12 months before your service, and individual study with the rabbis before becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

PRAYING WITH SINCERITY

PERFORMING ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS

- a. Contributing money to the charity of your choice.
- b. Contribute money to MAZON, 'Nothing but Nets' program through the UPJ

THE STUDY OF JUDAISM

These are the obligations without measure

Whose reward, too, is without measure:

To honour father and mother

To perform acts of loving kindness

To attend the house of study regularly

To welcome the stranger

To visit the sick

To rejoice with the bride and groom

To comfort the mourner

To pray with sincerity

To make peace where there is strife

And the study of Judaism is equal to the mitzvot

Because our study leads us to do the mitzvot.

This teaching from the Talmud (Shabbat 127a), represents some of the enduring Jewish values that shape our sense of joy and responsible Jewish living. The ten responsibilities listed above, from which you will discover your own insights as you prepare for becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, have been taught to Jews since ancient times. They are responsibilities and obligations so vital to our lives as Jews that their value cannot be measured. And in your own personal experience, hopefully you will come to understand that their rewards — joy, fulfilment and meaning — are also too great to be measured. For Jewish life is a lifelong experience of both responsibility and joy.

Throughout this experience, the Hebrew for which we will describe Jewish responsibility will be *mitzvah* or *mitzvot*. For some that is known as an obligation, for others, commandment, and for still others, good deed. It can have any of these meanings depending on how we want to see it. But from any perspective, *mitzvah* means approaching the world with willing or joyous responsible Jewish living.

The work we do to become both a good Jew and a good person is referred to as *middot*, Jewish virtues (values). You will develop an appreciation and understanding of how *middot* can make you feel responsible for your own Jewish life. You have something extra to add to those around you in your everyday life. In terms of your relationship with God you will learn to enrich that connection as you explore *middot*.

As you prepare for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah it is important that you begin to participate in all the different activities which are so much a part of being Jewish and leading a good and meaningful life. These are the joyful obligations for every Jew that makes being Jewish so relevant to the way we live. Now as you prepare to take your place as a responsible Jew, this program will allow you to experience new levels of understandings.

STEP ONE

Share this time with your parent(s) as you read through this booklet together. You will notice that the booklet is divided into 3 sections. The first section contains four required *mitzvot* selected from those on the previous pages. It includes a journal to describe your response to the *mitzvot*.

The second section contains all ten categories of *mitzvot* that you see listed on the previous page. Select one activity from each category and begin working to complete them between now and two months before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. These *mitzvot* are relevant to the ways in which one is part of a family, the way in which one is a friend, a student, a citizen and simply a good human being. These are *mitzvot* that we do all the time, but becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we see these acts are part of our Jewish life, which is our everyday life. These deeds are part of our Covenant, our personal relationship with ourselves, our community and our God.

The third section includes *middot* – Jewish virtues. Complete 3 of these activities. They are challenges for you to think about the ways you interact with each other, with yourself and with God.

STEP TWO

As you perform each *mitzvah*, keep a record of what you did and how you felt about it. Complete each page of both journal sections — the required *mitzvah* activities and the personal choice activities of *mitzvot* from which you will choose one activity per category.

STEP THREE

Bring your complete work to your first meeting with the rabbis or the Education Director for review. The rabbis and director are interested in what you did and how you responded to the experience of each of these *mitzvot*.

That's all there is to it! Of course, you are welcome to do more than the minimum one activity for each of the *mitzvot*. We would ask you, however, to complete at least one activity for each of the *mitzvot* and three *middot*. If you have any questions, just ask. Your parent(s), your tutor, your teachers, the education director, and your rabbis are here to help you. *Mazal Tov* as you prepare for such a special experience and wonderful moment in your life — not only for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service itself, but the many moments of discovery and insight. These are the kind of moments of which great Jewish memories are made.

SECTION 1

Middot: Jewish Virtues

Middot (Jewish Virtues) are important to us because the type of person you are is made up of the ideals you live in your life. Your beliefs. The way in which you see yourself as part of your community is an essential part of how you see yourself as a *tzadik* — a Jew of good character.

As a B'nei Mitzvah student you will find ways in which you can help your school, community and country. In that way you can have a say and be heard.

Task:

You must select two or three of these five items and present either a project board which has digital photos of your experience and text, a PowerPoint presentation or a Word document in a book or pamphlet format.

At the end of this B'Mitzvah project you must write an ethical 'Menu'. They are road maps to good behaviour. This is a moral message about what you have learnt throughout this course. What are the Jewish virtues, *Middot*, that you like or that you think someone in your family might now want to adopt. There are two ways from which you may choose in order to complete this task. One is to set it out as a restaurant order and the other is to set it out using graphics in the form of an iPod scroll down menu. You may develop your own ideas. Just let the rabbi and the education director know what your ideas are and make sure you have the okay to go ahead.

Australia Day

'Adonai Elohim took Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden to work and tend it' (Gen. 2:15).

We are in partnership with God to work on concrete tasks that create great places for us to live and for families to be raised safely. This is important for you, both as an individual and as a part of a group. Participate in *Clean up Australia Day* and get a group together. You may undertake to contact your local council, school, library or an organisation of your choice if the Australia Day date isn't well placed for your project.

Anzac Day

To 'Renew our strength' (Isaiah 40:31) and find courage is something we have to do each day but how do we do this? What are the ethical issues in going to war? Soldiers demonstrate bravery which is not a virtue but courage is. Include responses to these issues. Friends can help us to gain more courage and help us feel strong. Interview a person who has fought for our country (you may want to interview a soldier from Israel) and find out how friendship helped the soldiers become more courageous and stronger. OR Go to the dawn service. OR Find out about Jewish soldiers who fought for Australia. OR make Anzac biscuits and distribute them to Emmy Monash or an aged care facility of your choice. Select one of the choices to help answer and respond to the questions and thoughts above.

Indigenous Communities—Supporting the healing.

'The saving sun with healing in its wings' (Malachi 3:20). The sun can help people heal as it has Vitamin D. The Aboriginal flag also displays a sun. What is the significance of the Indigenous 'Sorry Day' for you? Contact Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and ask them to help you set up a visit to your school to run a fundraiser/ social outreach ideas/ get material for pin boards. OR create a poster/flyer for a book drive, as North Shore Temple Emanuel did, to support Djarragun College. The school still needs books. You may like to support the same school or find a similar indigenous school to support.

School Communities—Attentiveness and being a good listener

We say the *Shema* several times a day and it means 'hear' as well as 'listen'. What is the difference between listening and hearing? Prepare a speech to present to your class or a school assembly about the *B'nei Mitzvah* process you are undergoing. If you are at a Jewish Day School you should prepare a piece which outlines your Progressive Jewish life and the experience of being Bar/Bat Mitzvah at a Progressive *shul*. After the presentation ask your class what they have heard. Were they listening? Did they absorb and feel motivated by what they heard? Share question time so that other cultural/religious/levels of observance groups may be examined.

Jewish Australians in the spotlight

Create a who's who of famous Australian Jews. *Derech Eretz* is being decent and ethical in all that we do. Find two contrasting examples of Jewish Australians who have been public figures and used their knowledge for good reasons. Do you consider them to be good role models? Explain your answers. Create a magazine cover article about the two personalities. You can select any stages in history.

SECTION 2

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVOT ACTIVITIES

Select at least one activity from **each** category

HONOUR MOTHER AND FATHER

Honouring Father and Mother is not only among the Ten Commandments, it is an essential Jewish value. In fact, Judaism has always emphasized the importance of family. The home and the family is known as the *mikdash me-at*, a miniature sanctuary to give us strength, love, understanding, and a sense of purpose in life. For that reason, working toward wholeness in the circle of family is not only a nice thing, it is a Jewish responsibility. Activities to consider for this *mitzvah*:

- a. Ask your parent(s) to teach you something about Judaism that you do not know.
- b. Do something that you would not ordinarily do to be helpful to a member of your family.
- c. Twice each month, call, write or visit with a grandparent whom you do not ordinarily see.
- d. Help your mother or father in doing a large household chore.
- e. Create a family history or genealogy.
- f. Bring flowers to your parents and give them a note telling them why you are grateful they are your parents.
- g. Create a prayer about your mother and father that you can say at the Shabbat table.
- h. Ask your parent(s) to teach you something you do not know about your family.
- i. Go through a family album or video with your parent(s) and have them share stories about the people you do not know.

Student's suggestion :

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #1

MITZVAH: To honour mother and father

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

PERFORMING ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS

This *mitzvah* is about caring for others beyond the circles of ourselves, our friends, and our family. It is about our caring involvement in the world of which we are a part. Often these deeds of loving kindness are things for which we cannot be ‘repaid’. And yet, we find that we may get even more out of what we do for others than they get by our deed, because of the ‘reward that is without measure’. This is the sense of fulfilment and goodness that we feel for giving something of ourselves to others beyond our own narrow circles.

Suggestions:

- a. Visit a retirement home.
- b. Do something special that you would not ordinarily do for someone you love.
- c. Break one bad habit that has a negative effect on others.
- d. Volunteer at a Homeless shelter.
- e. Volunteer your time at social service agency.
- f. Ask your Bar or Bat Mitzvah guests to bring canned goods to the service, which you and your family will deliver to a local hunger shelter.
- g. Donate your floral centrepieces to a senior citizen’s home.
- h. Clean out your drawers and closets and donate the old clothing, toys, books or games
- i. Support your local recycling project by taking at least one month of your family’s glass bottles or cans to an appropriate drop off centre.
- j. Go with your parents to volunteer for a few hours at a support service
- k. Ask the rabbis for the name of one elderly person that you can periodically visit and spend some time with.
- l. Instead of floral centrepieces, create centrepieces out of Jewish books which will be donated to our Temple library.
- m. Give a homeless person a meal.
- n. Do something special that you would not ordinarily do for someone you do not necessarily like or don’t know very well.
- o. Organise your family or friends to bring Chanukah and/or Purim gifts for those less fortunate.

Student’s suggestions:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #2

MITZVAH: Perform acts of loving kindness

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

ATTEND THE HOUSE OF STUDY REGULARLY

This *mitzvah* is about the many reasons we come to the synagogue to nourish our Jewish lives beyond those that you might already understand such as prayer and religion school. The synagogue has three essential purposes: it is a ‘House of Study’, a ‘House of Prayer’, and a ‘House of Assembly or Community’. Participation in all three of these areas of synagogue life is what enriches us as Jews: intellectually (study), spiritually (prayer), and emotionally (friendship and community). Activities to consider for this *mitzvah* can relate to any purpose for which you may not usually come to TBI, so that you might come to have a better understanding of the synagogue as the centre of your Jewish life now and through your adult years, as well.

Suggestions:

- a. Come to a festival service you have never attended (Sukkot, Passover, Shavuot, Selichot, etc.)
- b. Fast for a full day on Yom Kippur.
- c. Volunteer two hours of service to the Temple. Ask the rabbis for suggestions.
- d. Participate in at least two TBI events.
- e. Participate in three Netzer activities.
- f. Volunteer to help at Mishpacha service for young children.
- g. Come to at least two Torah Study discussions.
- h. Come to Outreach Programs. The rabbis and /or education director will help suggest some ideas.
- i. Come to ‘Shabbat Alive’ Service.
- j. Volunteer at a homeless shelter.

Student’s suggestion:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #3

MITZVAH: Attend House of study regularly

ACTIVITY: _____

1. What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

2. What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this *mitzvah*?

3. What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

4. In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on this list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

WELCOME THE STRANGER

This *mitzvah* is about our hospitality and the way we welcome others. The Torah teaches that all humans beings are created in the image of God. Therefore, we show respect to God through this religious responsibility of welcoming even those whom we may not know. Abraham was a model for this in his hospitality to the strangers he greeted at his tent. And as Jews have often been considered 'the strangers' in different lands and ages throughout history, we know what it means to feel the loneliness of exclusion by others. Our tradition teaches: 'Remember, you were strangers in the land of Egypt'. For that reason, Jews should be welcoming, warm, and hospitable to individuals in our homes and in our synagogue. We should help other groups of people who feel like outsiders in this land or in any land. That is why Jews have always been involved in the causes of securing rights for others, as well as for ourselves.

Suggestions:

- a. Invite others to a Shabbat dinner in your home.
- b. Contribute time or money to JNF
- c. Make a special effort to be friendly to a new student in your class at school, showing him/her around, introducing him/her to friends, etc.
- d. Work with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria to plan a program for Matan.
- e. Help The Friendship Club members to create welcome baskets for new Temple members.
- f. Join with a friend to create a welcome present/greeting for new students to Matan.
- g. With your parents' permission, invite a new Temple member or someone new to Victoria to join you and your family for Shabbat /festival meal and services. Contact the rabbis' office for names.
- h. Invite a person or family who has no place to go for Passover Seder to join your family for Seder.

Student's suggestions:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #4

MITZVAH: Welcome the stranger

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on the list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

VISIT THE SICK

This *mitzvah* is about what we can do to help someone who is suffering an illness. Often such times are not only about the physical problems a patient experiences, but also the feelings of loneliness, isolation from friends, or worry about the future. Our ancient rabbis teach us that taking the time to visit those who are sick, telling them about the news of the world, of friends, of school, etc. is important part of the healing and recovery process. It helps them feel the things they can look forward to when they are better, and therefore helps lift their spirits and actually speeds their return to health. *Bikur Cholim*, visiting the sick, is more than doing a good deed; it is an essential recognition of how important it is to connect our lives to those around us.

Suggestions:

- a. Entertain at a hospital. Ask your teacher to help you set up an opportunity for your class to do so. You may play instrument and may like to visit a hospital with your family.
- b. Light Shabbat candles at a nursing home.
- c. Visit a nursing home or assisted living facility.
- d. Cook meals for someone who is ill.
- e. Clean house for someone who cannot do so for himself or herself.
- f. Help a classmate who is ill. Bring homework, library books, messages, etc., between home and school.
- g. Make cards or bring a game for patient at The Royal Children's Hospital.
- h. Come to Shabbat service with a friend who is recovering.
- i. Loan a book or DVD and bring it to a friend or relative who is ill.
- j. Create a written prayer for someone who is ill, and go and visit them, as well as read the prayer you have made. You can also contact the rabbi's office and ask that their name be read that week for the prayer for recovery, the *Mishebeirach* that we offer each Shabbat morning.

Student's suggestions:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #5

MITZVAH: Visit the sick

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as tyou performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on the list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

REJOICE WITH BRIDE AND GROOM

This *mitzvah* is about the importance of celebrating life's happiest moments. More than about wedding, it is about the responsibility of recognizing those special times in people's lives and giving thanks to God. Living with joy is a *mitzvah*, a holy expression of gratitude. In Judaism, we understand that life comes with its difficulties, but it also comes with its deepest moments of happiness, goodness, and wonder. It is our responsibility to embrace these moments as something sacred, and therefore to celebrate them with family, friends and community. In many ways, becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an expression of that religious obligation to mark the passage of time with celebration, to give thanks for the joy of living and of growth. Activities for this *mitzvah* should focus on ways that we can share someone's celebration.

Suggestions:

- a. Ask your parent(s) to share the feelings they experienced at your Brit Milah or Baby Naming ceremony.
- b. Write a paragraph on what you remember from a family or a friend's wedding.
- c. Describe in a paragraph the greatest celebration you have ever experienced.
- d. Write a letter of congratulations to a Temple couple who is soon to be married. (Check with rabbi's office for names) Even if you don't know them, explain that your letter is written because of the mitzvah of rejoicing with the bride and groom.
- e. Discuss with your parents or grandparents the kind of marriage ceremony that they had.
- f. Look at the wedding album or DVD of a friend or family member. Ask the couple to talk about their memories and impressions of their special day.
- g. Get a copy of the seven wedding blessings from your teacher or the Rabbis and read them carefully. Add an eighth blessing of your own. Attach it to this booklet.
- h. Talk to a couple recently married and ask them to share with you three most important promises they have made to each other. Write them below.
- i. Interview an older sibling, relative or Jewish friend about their memories of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Ask them what they felt like with everybody they loved being present at the service to celebrate with them.

Student's suggestions:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #6

MITZVAH: Rejoice with bride and groom

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as tyou performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on the list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

COMFORT THE MOURNER

This *mitzvah* is about the religious responsibility to be with someone in their time of sadness. For it is often at times of loss that people feel most lonely, and the need is great for friends to show them the way back to the circles of life and living. In fact, mourning is all about learning to accept loss of someone we love, and yet find the way to live again without them. Mourning is not something we do alone. Judaism teaches that we need people around us to help us find the path of life again. It is difficult to know what to say or do when we are with someone who is mourning. But it is not what we say that matters, but simply that we are there to listen, to hold a hand, to reassure them they are not alone. Activities for this *mitzvah* should focus on things you can do to help someone who has lost someone they love.

Suggestions:

- a. Attend a minyan service at the house of mourning.
- b. Help cook a meal for a family in mourning.
- c. Write a condolence note to someone your family knows who recently lost a love one. Discuss with your parents or with the rabbis, what one says in offering condolences.
- d. Make a contribution to the Temple in memory of someone you knew who is no longer living, as a meaningful way of expressing your condolences to the deceased's family.
- e. Ask your parent(s) if they have a ritual object passed down to your family. Ask your parent(s) to talk about the object and the person who passed it down.
- f. Ask your parent(s) to talk about the relative for whom you are named.
- g. Ask your parent(s) for your family's Yahrzeit dates and be sure to come to Temple on those days to honour those who have died and comfort those who are mourning or remembering.

Student's suggestions:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #7

MITZVAH: Comfort the mourner

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as tyou performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on the list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

PRAY WITH SINCERITY

This *mitzvah* is about making prayer meaningful to us. Prayer is not only the words on the pages of the prayer book. It is about the ways in which we connect the deep feelings of our heart and our souls to the presence of God in our lives. Prayer can be words of thanksgiving and gratitude when we realise just how fortunate we are, even for the little things. Prayer can be an expression of our need for strength, when we realise that we need help, when we are unsure of ourselves. Prayer can be the realisation that we need a new perspective, a change in the way we see things, a time to think about people we love. Prayer is the first step to growing beyond ourselves, and growing toward God. It is something we need regularly, even daily. It begins, however, with learning to feel the words we say in prayer, and to have those words come from meaning within the soul.

Suggestions:

- a. Write an essay on the meaning of your favorite prayer. Share it with the Rabbi during your study session.
- b. Practice communicating (talking) with God each day. End your five minute session with the *Sh'ma*.
- c. Make the saying of *Brachot* (blessings) at every meal at home a daily routine (for at least two weeks). For copies of blessings, call TBI.
- d. Help Matan teachers and rabbis lead T'fillah services.
- e. Create a new melody for a favorite prayer.
- f. Create a new version of a prayer from a traditional prayer found in the prayer book.
- g. Create a prayer about something important to you.
- h. Translate a Hebrew prayer into English (be sure to ask for help if needed).
- i. Make a *mezuzah* for your house. Obtain a copy of the prayer for hanging a mezuzah, and make it a family ritual.

Student's suggestions:

PERSONAL MITZVAH #8

MITZVAH: Pray with sincerity

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as tyou performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on the list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

MAKE PEACE WHERE THERE IS STRIFE

This *mitzvah* is about the larger meaning of peace, for peace is not merely the absence of war. *Shalom*, peace, comes from the word *Shalem* for wholeness or completeness. For us Jews, it is our responsibility to make things more complete, whether that is in our family, among our friends, in our community, or in our world.

We are never content with the way things are, because they are not yet complete. Jews are involved in many causes, because making peace, or wholeness, is a religious mandate for us all. Making peace is not something for leaders of countries, it is a task for every person who is part of a family, who is a friend, who is part of a community, and who understands his/her role in being a partner with God in completing the work of Creation, by doing what we can to make things better.

Suggestions:

- a. Help someone who is in trouble.
- b. Listen to a friend who is upset.
- c. For two days, work on only speaking well of others, avoiding gossip, and getting others to follow your example.
- d. Become friendly with someone whom you did not like before.
- e. Help two enemies to become friends.
- f. Defend someone who is being teased.
- g. Include someone in your 'group' who is usually excluded.
- h. Become involved in an organization that helps others on a regular basis.
- i. Learn about peer mediation. Look into becoming a peer mediator at your school.
- j. Write a letter to the Prime Minister of Israel and Australia about why peace in Israel is important to you.

Student's suggestions:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH #9

MITZVAH: Make peace where there is strife

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as tyou performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on the list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

AND THE STUDY OF JUDAISM IS EQUAL TO THE MITZVOT BECAUSE OUR STUDY LEADS US TO DO THE MITZVOT

This *mitzvah* is about the deep Jewish value of learning. We are known as ‘The People of the Book’ because of our devotion to Torah and to learning more and more. For us Jews, learning never ends. We are always learning from our heritage and gaining new understanding about meaningful, joyous, purposeful ways to live, to become better people, to become better partners with God. Therefore, lifelong study and learning is essential to what we do. For in continuing to learn, we come to understand more about mitzvot, about how to live as Jews. Activities for this mitzvah should focus on helping yourself to understand that learning is not only about what happens in Matan and/or school, it is about the Jewish learning that we acquire in so many ways throughout all our lives.

Suggestions:

- a. For three weeks, make it daily practice to read Jewish books for at least fifteen minutes each day.
- b. In order to begin to develop your own Jewish library, add at least one Jewish book to your personal collection. Read it. Share it.
- c. Research a topic, relating to Judaism and design a power point presentation of what you have learned. The rabbis can offer suggestions.
- d. Learn one new way of observing every festival during the year.
- e. Teach a non-Jewish friend about a Jewish festival.
- f. Read a Jewish magazine.
- g. Visit three Jewish Web sites.

Student’s suggestions:

PERSONAL CHOICE MITZVAH # 10

MITZVAH: And the study of Judaism is equal to the mitzvot, because our study leads us to do the mitzvot

ACTIVITY: _____

What made you choose this *mitzvah*?

What was your reaction and the reaction of others as you performed this *mitzvah*?

What did you learn about yourself, about your family and about Judaism while doing this *mitzvah*?

In time, when you perform another *mitzvah* on the list, which one will you choose and why?

Additional comments:

THE STUDY OF TORAH IS EQUAL TO THE MITZVOT, BECAUSE OUR STUDY LEADS US TO DO THE MITZVOT

SECTION 3

Required Mitzvot Activities

All of these activities are required.

REQUIRED MITZVOT

1. To Attend the House of Study Regularly

Fulfil your religious studies requirements which include:

- A. Attend a Jewish Day School or Matan for two years prior to B'nei Mitzvah
- B. Attend B'nei Mitzvah Class
- C. Attend individual B'nei Mitzvah tutoring beginning 12 months before your service, and individual study with Rabbis before becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

2. To Pray with Sincerity

Attend Shabbat services with a parent(s) and/or your whole family, paying careful attention to the prayers and their meaning, so that you can lead them with sincerity and better understanding. Discuss some of the ideas and themes in the prayerbook with your parent(s) following each service.

3. To perform Acts of Loving kindness

Choose to extend yourself to the needs of others by:

- A. Contributing money to the charity of your choice. In Judaism this is one of the acts known as *tzedakah*. If you receive money as Bar/ Bat Mizvah presents you may want to contribute at least 10 percent to *tzedakah* or you may decide to choose to use some amount of your own money. Then decide which cause(s) and organisations(s) mean the most to you.
and / or
- B. Contribute money to MAZON (website www.mazon.org.au or telephone 02-9328-7833). A percentage of the cost of the celebration as your Jewish responsibility to *tzedakah* may be made to other funds such a 'Nothing but

4. Study of Judaism

The most important *mitzvah* is the study of Judaism, because our study leads us to do all the *mitzvot*. Studying can help you to grow to become a *mensch*, a person of goodness. Therefore, make a personal commitment to continue your lifelong learning as a Jew.

ATTENDING THE HOUSE OF STUDY REGULARLY

The first of your required mitzvot deals with attending the House of Study regularly. Fulfil your religious studies requirements which include:

- a. Attend Matan or a Jewish Day School
- b. Attend B'nei Mitzvah class
- c. Attend individual B'nei Mitzvah tutoring beginning 12 months before your service, and individual study with the rabbis before becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

SCHOOL (Jewish Day School or Matan)

What is the most important thing that you have learned so far at school?

In what ways do you apply that learning to your life?

HEBREW

Why is the Hebrew language important for the Jewish people?

B'NEI MITZVAH CLASS

Why is it important for Jews to participate in their Jewish community?

STUDING WITH YOUR TUTOR

What has this process taught you about yourself and the Jewish value of learning?

PRAYING WITH SINCERITY

The second of your required mitzvot deals with Praying with Sincerity. Attend three Shabbat services with a parent(s) and/or your whole family, paying careful attention to the prayers and their meaning, so that you can lead them with sincerity and better understanding. Discuss some of the ideas you realized are in the prayer book with your parent(s) following each service.

Please remember to give the rabbi your completed service attendance.

What did you expect to feel before you come to services?

How did you feel after services and what did you learn about yourself in services?

Discuss one idea that you found in the prayer book that you had not seen there before, as a result of your careful listening and full participation in the service.

Why do you think prayer is important to the Jewish people?

Describe a time when you prayed. What was the reason you prayed?

PERFORMING ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS

Choose to extend yourself to the needs of others by:

- a. Contributing money to the charity of your choice. In Judaism this is one of the acts known as *tzedakah*. If you receive money as Bar/Bat presents you may want to contribute at least 10 percent to *tzedakah*. You may decide to choose to use some amount of your own money. Then decide which cause(s) and organisation(s) mean the most to you.

- b. Contribute money to MAZON. This Jewish organization is response to hunger. MAZON takes contributions for happy occasions and honours the celebration by distributing *tzedakah* to organizations involved with hunger in Australia and throughout the world. MAZON suggests that families donate at least 3% of the cost of the celebration as their Jewish responsibility to *tzedakah*.

In what activity did you participate for your act of *tzedakah*, or your personal deed of loving kindness?

Describe how you chose to perform this mitzvah: what led to your decision to choose this cause?

What was your reaction to performing this mitzvah? How did it make you feel?

How did others react to you as you performed this mitzvah?

Describe ways in which you will follow-up or continue your act of loving kindness.

THE STUDY OF JUDAISM

The fourth of your required *mitzvot* deals with Study of Judaism which is the most important *mitzvah*, because our study leads us to do the *mitzvot*. Studying can help you grow to become a *mensch*, a person of goodness. Therefore, today you make a personal commitment to continue your religious education throughout your life.

Every B'nei Mitzvah student makes a personal commitment to continue their religious education after B'nei mitzvah. What, do you believe, is the reason for this, both from your perspective as an individual student and from the perspective of the Jewish community?

What part of Judaism do you still want to learn about?

How will the decision to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah affect you and others?

Which aspect of Judaism do you feel proud enough to teach to someone else?

Temple Beth Israel B'nai Mitzvah Program

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

Temple Beth Israel B'nai Mitzvah Program

B'MITZVOTAV CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

This certifies that

has successfully participated and has fulfilled
this discovery of the joyful obligations of a Jew
and will continue to study through the completion of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
With congratulations and respect do we officially acknowledge this accomplishment.

Rabbi

Rabbi

Rabbi

Date: _____