

Eilu-Devarim:
These are our Obligations...



Thirteen Mitzvot Program

Temple Sinai of Roslyn

Dear Student,

Welcome to the EILU DEVARIM THIRTEEN MITZVOT PROGRAM!!!! As you prepare to become *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, it's really important that you participate in Jewish decision-making. There are certain responsibilities that go along with becoming a Jewish young adult. This program is designed to help you experience activities that ask you to make Jewish decisions and take on Jewish responsibilities. The rabbis of old taught, "It's not enough to study Torah, you must strive to BE TORAH!"

In order to get ready for these new responsibilities, you must fulfill different types of *mitzvot*. Many of the 13 *mitzvot* will be fulfilled through Religious School. The rest you will do on your own or with your family. Because fulfilling a *mitzvah* with your parents is especially valuable, parent participation in a Religious School or other type of *mitzvah* project will count for 2 *mitzvah* projects instead of just one. Parental extra credit will be given up to three times. Remember that all the *mitzvot* fulfilled for credit in this program must take place within 18 months before you become *bar/bat mitzvah*.

So, to get ready, do the following:

- 1] Sit down with your parents and read through this booklet together.
- 2] You will find 10 different types of *mitzvot*. You must choose to participate in at least 1 activity in each category, for a grand total of 13 *mitzvot*. The three additional *mitzvot* may be taken from any category. (You may create your own *mitzvot*, if you like. However, they should be *mitzvot* that you would not ordinarily be doing!!)
- 3] As you fulfill each of your chosen *mitzvot*, first, fill in the chart found on page 2 of this booklet, and second, complete the response form on the page after the category description.
- 4] During your 7th grade classes, you will need this booklet for discussion and review. Be sure to have it available at all times.
- 5] Bring your completed booklet to your meeting with the Rabbi (about 2 weeks before you become *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*).

The categories are based upon the *Eilu Devarim* prayer, which is traditionally recited each morning:

| | |
|---|---------|
| 1. <i>Kibbud Av Va-eym</i> – Honor your Parents | page 3 |
| 2. <i>Gemilut Chasadim</i> – Acts of Loving Kindness | page 5 |
| 3. <i>Hashkamat Beit Hamidrash</i> – Attend Synagogue Regularly | page 7 |
| 4. <i>Hachnasat Orchim</i> – Welcome the Stranger | page 9 |
| 5. <i>Bikkur Cholim</i> – Visit the Sick | page 11 |
| 6. <i>Hachnasat Kallah</i> – Rejoice at Milestones | page 13 |
| 7. <i>L'vayat Hamayt</i> – Comfort the Bereaved | page 15 |
| 8. <i>Iyun T'filah</i> – Pray with Sincerity | page 17 |
| 9. <i>Va-hava'at Shalom Bein Adam La-chavero</i> – Make Peace | page 19 |
| 10. <i>Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam</i> – Study of Torah | page 21 |
| Appendix 1: Places to Give <i>Tzedakah</i> | page 27 |
| Appendix 2: Agencies that Accept Clothing or Furniture | page 30 |

Mitzvah Chart

Name _____ **Date You Started Your Mitzvot** _____

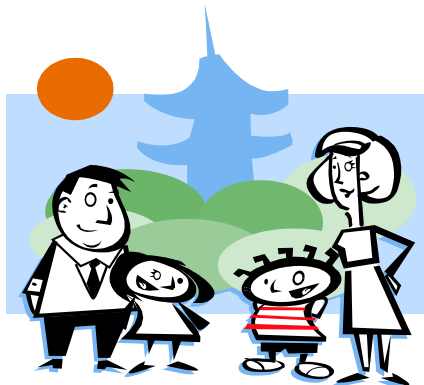
| Categories | Mitzvah Fulfilled | Location | Date | *With 7 th Grade? | *With a Parent? | *Positive Experience? |
|--|-------------------|----------|------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>1. Kibbud Av Va-eym</i> Honor Your Parents | | | | | | |
| <i>2. Gemilut Chasadim</i> Acts of loving Kindness | | | | | | |
| <i>3. Hashkamat Beit Hamidrash</i> Attend Synagogue Regularly | | | | | | |
| <i>4. Hachnasat Orchim</i> Welcome The Stranger | | | | | | |
| <i>5. Bikkur Cholim</i> Visit The Sick | | | | | | |
| <i>6. Hachnasat Kallah</i> Rejoice At Milestones | | | | | | |
| <i>7. L'vayat Hamayt</i> Comfort The Bereaved | | | | | | |
| <i>8. Iyun T'filah</i> Pray With Sincerity | | | | | | |
| <i>9. Shalom Bein Adam L'chavero</i> Make Peace Between People | | | | | | |
| <i>10. Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam</i> Study Of Torah | | | | | | |
| 11. | | | | | | |
| 12. | | | | | | |
| 13. | | | | | | |

* Answer with a Yes or a No

1. KIBBUD AV VA-EM

Honor Your Parents

- a) The 5th of the Ten Commandments is to honor your father and mother. Ask your parents how they honor(ed) their parents and how they hope to be honored by you. Then do one thing to honor each parent.
- b) Almost every senior citizen was once a parent. They don't always have children nearby to perform acts of *kibbud av va-eym*. Perform acts that show them honor like their children would.
- c) Go on a Jewish tour of your home. Find all of the Jewish objects in your home. Get a history from your parents about 5 of their favorite objects.
- d) Call, write or visit two times with a grandparent, aunt, or uncle whom you do not ordinarily see.
- e) Create a family history or genealogy.
- f) Do something that you **would not ordinarily do** to be helpful to another member of your family.
- g) Find a way to let your parents know that they are appreciated and loved.
- h) Before Moses died he blessed the children of Israel by stating his hopes for their future. This is much like an ethical will. For this mitzvah, ask your parents to write you an ethical will, while you write one to leave to your children. Here are some excerpts from an ethical will written by a famous rabbi, named Rambam: Speak with kindness. Always be humble. Regard every person as greater than yourself. Study Torah . . .
- i) Participate in the special *Kibbud Av Va-em* parent/child program at Religious School.
- j) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!



Mitzvah #1

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

2. GEMILUT CHASADIM Acts of Loving Kindness

- a) If you receive money as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah gift, you may want to consider a certain percentage to *tzedakah*. Decide on the percentage and choose a charity that supports a cause that is meaningful to your family. Consult Appendix I for some of the Social Action Committee's favorite organizations.
- b) Participate with your family in the MAZON program by contributing 3% of the cost of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah party to MAZON, a Jewish organization which feeds the hungry. You received an envelope with their contact information in your folder at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Seminar.
- c) Include a note in your invitations saying: "It would honor me if you would make a donation to _____, my favorite *tzedakah* fund . . ." WITH an explanation of how you are supporting this fund.
- d) Choose an organization you would like to support with a collection. Call the organization to ask for a wish list. Then, ask your guests to bring a specific item from the organization's wish list (canned goods, kids' books, winter clothes, toiletries, baby products, toys, cosmetics) to your service or party, which you and your family will deliver. Or make donations on your own by cleaning out your playroom and bringing your old toys to a children's hospital like Schneider Children's Hospital or Ronald McDonald House.
- e) Use books, baskets of food, or toys as centerpieces for your tables, then donate them to the social service agency of your choice.
- f) Plant a garden/trees in Israel! As invitations for your ceremony, use JNF certificates (you know, what you get when you buy trees for Israel). Call 561-9100 for a brochure on this lovely way to do a mitzvah!
- g) Donate your centerpieces and flowers or balloons to brighten a Nursing Home or rehabilitation center such as Parker Geriatric Institute at L.I. Jewish Medical Center (718) 343-2100.
- h) Volunteer some time at a social service agency. (i.e. Nursery school, hospital, home for the aged ..)
- i) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!!



Mitzvah #2

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

3. HASHKAMAT BEIT HA-MIDRASH SHACHARIT V'ARVIT Attend Synagogue Regularly

- a) Lead Friday night blessings (candles, wine, bread) at home for one month.
- b) Attend Friday evening or Shabbat morning services at least two weeks in a row. Do this twice during the year for a grand total of 4 times.
- c) Cook or bake two traditional dishes for a Holiday or Shabbat meal and enjoy it with your family on that holiday.
- d) Volunteer three hours of service to the Temple at the Israel Fair, the school office, a Temple fundraiser, or some other similar project.
- e) Fast for a full day on Yom Kippur.
- f) Keep Passover (no bread or bread products) for all 7 days
- g) Take time to do the *Havdalah* blessings (candle, wine, spices) on two Saturday nights in one night.
- h) Affix a *mezzuzah* on the door of your house or of your room. Use *On the Doorposts of Your House* or ask a rabbi or teacher for the blessing.
- i) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!



Mitzvah #3

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

4. HACHNASAT ORCHIM

Welcome the Stranger

- a) Invite others to a Shabbat or Holiday dinner in your home and perform the Shabbat rituals with them.
- b) Build a *sukkah* and invite guests to a *Sukkot* meal.
- c) Mark the occasion of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah by participating in a twinning ceremony with an Ethiopian Jew. (https://www.nacoej.org/bar_bat.htm) Write a letter to your twin. Prepare a pre-addressed, stamped postcard of congratulations to your twin. Distribute these to your guests so that they may send their congratulations, too. Alternatively, you may want to mark your special day by twinning with someone who perished during the Holocaust. (http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/visiting/explore_50/Opportunities.html)
- d) Have a conversation with 2 different people you've never met before at a 7th grade *mitzvah* program.
- e) Befriend someone new in your school and invite him/her to join you in an activity. Help this person get used to life in our community.
- f) Welcome members of the Long-Island Multi-Faith Forum to Temple Sinai when they come to speak to our seventh grade class.
- g) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!

Mitzvah #4

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

5. BIKUR CHOLIM

Visit the Sick

- a) Entertain at one of the area's hospitals or nursing homes.
- b) Cook meals for someone who is ill.
- c) Clean house for someone who cannot do so for him/herself.
- d) Help a classmate who is out of school for a long period of time due to illness. Visit with him/her and bring homework, library books, and messages between home and school.
- e) Visit a hospital, nursing home, or other appropriate agency and bring balloons, small gifts, or something you have made on your own.
- f) Participate in a program sponsored by Soaringwords (www.soaringwords.org)
- g) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!



Mitzvah #5

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

6. HACHNASAT KALLAH

Rejoice with Bride and Groom, and Other Joyous Milestones

- a) Participate in the planning of a *Brit Milah*, a naming ceremony, a wedding, and other significant moments.
- b) Attend one of the above.
- c) Attend a Consecration or Confirmation service.
- d) Help check coats, set up chairs, serve food, etc., at a wedding.
- e) Ask your parents or a family member to show you their wedding album, pointing out all the traditional Jewish things they had (i.e. *chuppah*, *ketubah*, breaking the glass.) Make sure to ask them what was meaningful about having a traditional Jewish wedding.
- f) Interview a Jewish family member or friend born in another country. How did Jewish customs in his or her family differ from your family's? What customs were similar?
- g) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!



Mitzvah #6

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

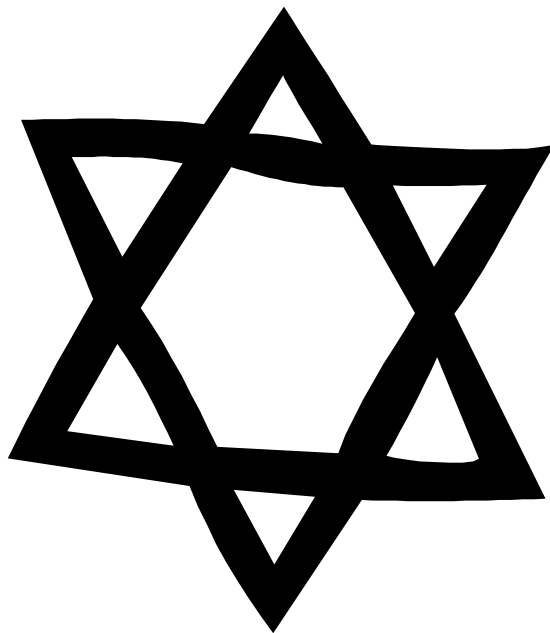
2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

7. L'VAYAT HAMAYT Comfort the Bereaved

- a) Attend a *minyán* at a house of mourning.
- b) Make a *shiva* call with your parents.
- c) Cook a meal or some baked goods for a family in mourning.
- d) Attend a memorial service.
- e) Recite *kaddish* at services for a loved one. Find out a bit about the person from someone who knew him/her well.
- f) Light a *yahrtzeit* candle and have a family member tell you about the person whose *yahrtzeit* is being observed.
- g) If you are named for someone, find out more about that person.
- h) On *Yom Hashoa*, Holocaust Remembrance Day, light a candle and tell the story of one person who perished in the Holocaust.
- i) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!



Mitzvah #7

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

8. I'YUN T'FLLAH Pray with Sincerity

- a) Write a short essay on the meaning of your favorite prayer. Include when the prayer is said, why it is important to you, and how you learned it.
- b) Say the *Shema* before you go to bed at night. Do this daily for two weeks.
- c) Say the *b'racha* (blessing) over bread (*ha-motzi*) in your home daily for two weeks and describe why this is important and how you felt after you were finished.
- d) Choose a prayer that you like and practice it until you feel comfortable with it. Then lead it in Junior Congregation. Contact the head of Junior Congregation to make these arrangements.
- e) Write a prayer or find one you like and say or sing it everyday for one week. Write a few sentences about how it made you feel. (Optional: Include the prayer in the packet when you hand it in to Rabbi White).
- f) Attend adult services for Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur and note 3 things that happen during High Holiday services that don't happen during the rest of the year.
- g) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!



Mitzvah #8

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

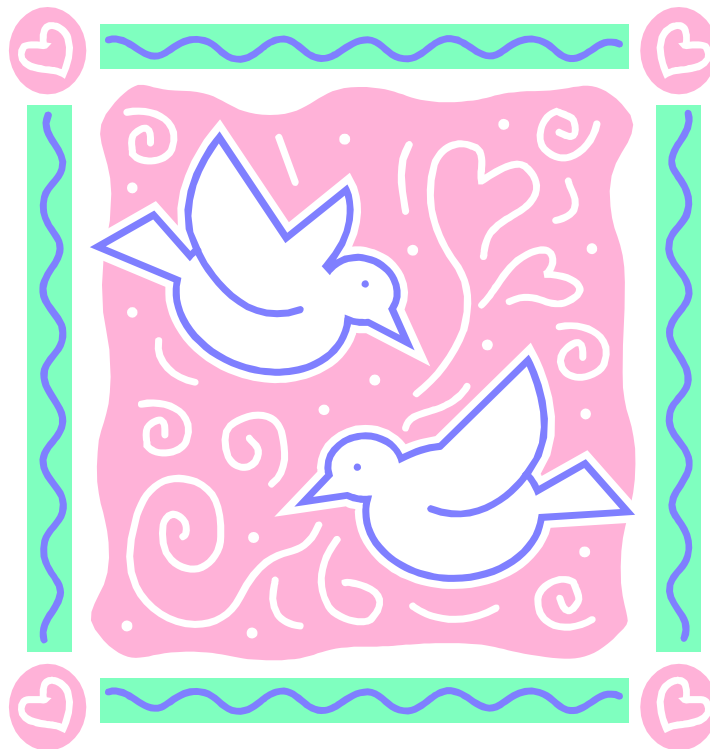
2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

9. VA -HAVA'AT SHALOM BEIN ADAM LA-CHAVERO Make Peace Where There is Strife

- a) For one week avoid speaking negatively about your family and friends.
- b) Help someone who is in trouble. Describe the situation and how you helped resolve it. How did it feel to be involved?
- c) Befriend someone to whom you were mean or ignored in the past. Why did you choose this person? Describe how it made you feel?
- d) Restrain yourself from “answering back” to parents and teachers for one week.
- e) Defend someone who is being teased or hurt.
- f) Each day for two weeks, find and read newspaper articles about the peace talks in Israel. Have a discussion with your family about what you learned about peace and about Israel.
- g) Volunteer at an event to support Israel or people in Israel.
- h) Custom-make your own *Mitzvah* for this category!



Mitzvah #9

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

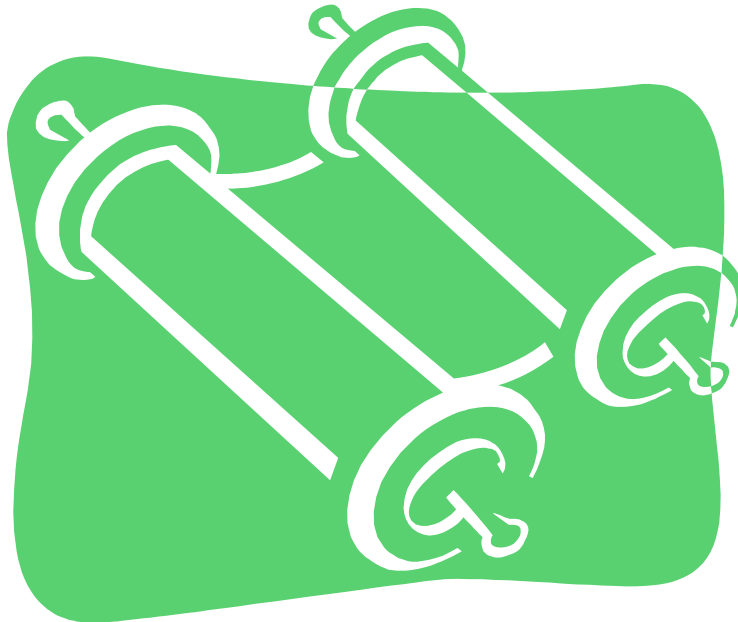
3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

10. TALMUD TORAH K'NEGED KULAM

The Study of Torah is Equal Them All - it Leads to Them All

- a) Learn a new Hebrew word every day for one week.
- b) Share with your class one issue raised by your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Torah portion.
- c) Reread one Bible story that has interested you in the past and compose a poem or illustrate it with a drawing or painting.
- d) Ask one of your teachers for extra information on a Jewish topic that interests you and read the materials.
- e) Teach a younger or older person something new about Judaism that they didn't know before.
- f) Choose one book with a Jewish theme, read it, then discuss why you chose it and what you learned. Alternatively, select and watch a movie with a Jewish theme and share what you learned.
- g) Learn one new way of observing a Jewish holiday of your choice.
- h) Custom-make your own *mitzvah* for this category!



Mitzvah #10

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

Mitzvah #11

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

Mitzvah #12

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?

Mitzvah #13

Category (please write it out) _____

Activity (please write it out) _____

1. Tell a memorable story of your experience:

2. Tell something you learned from performing this mitzvah:

3. Why do you think this is a mitzvah?

4. Why is this type of mitzvah an important part of Judaism?
