

FAMILY B-MITZVAH PROJECTS

A Family Mitzvah Project is a fun way to engage your child and, potentially, your whole family in some of the most important values of Judaism – repairing the world (*tikkun olam*) and compassion for others (*v'ahavta l'rayecha kamocho*). Here is a list of some things you can incorporate into your family's B-Mitzvah experience.

Gemilut Chasadim: Acts of Loving-Kindness

- Visit or call someone who is ill, fulfilling the mitzvah of bikur cholim (visiting the sick).
- Learn games, magic, clowning, or balloon-animal-making skills to do for kids in the hospital.
- Arrange to have leftover food from the B-Mitzvah celebration taken to a place that feeds the homeless and the hungry. Check out MAZON (A Jewish Response to Hunger) at www.mazon.org.
- Give 3% of the cost of your B-Mitzvah or 3% of the monetary gifts you received to a charity.
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen for the homeless.
- Ask guests to bring canned food to the B-Mitzvah celebration for distribution to the less fortunate.
- Write to an elected official about an important social or political issue.
- Participate in a clothing drive for the needy.

Tzedakah: Sacred Giving

- Choose a worthy organization and donate a gift of money to help people.
- Give tzedakah every Friday night before Shabbat and collect it in a family tzedakah container. Decide as a family how the money is to be donated.
- Set aside time each week for a socially redeeming purpose.

Hidur Penei Zakein: Honoring the Elderly

- Call, write, or visit an elderly relative or friend.
- Deliver flowers to a nursing home before the start of Shabbat.

Zikaron: Memory

- Know your Hebrew name and the person for whom you were named.
- Find out if your ancestors used to have a different family name. Remember it always.
- Find out the name of the town that your family was from and learn something about the town and what it gave to the Jewish world.

Shabbat: Honoring the Sabbath

- Have as many Shabbat dinners as you can in your home. Lead the family in candle lighting, Motzi, Kiddush, and Birkat Hamazon (the blessing after the meal).
- Invite friends to share your Shabbat dinner.
- Help cook a traditional Shabbat meal or holiday dish.
- Avoid commercial transactions such as engaging in business and shopping on Shabbat.
- Attend synagogue services as a family.
- Spend Shabbat afternoons with family or friends.

Kedushat Halashon: The Sanctity of Speech

- “Guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile” is a Jewish ideal expressed in our prayers. Be careful about what you say about other people. Discuss a time when you did not observe this Jewish value and what you could have done differently.

Tza-ar Ba'alei Chayim: Non-cruelty to Animals

- Become involved with an organization that deals with animal welfare.
- Give money to the local animal shelter.
- Adopt a dog or a cat.