



THE NEWSHUL

# Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook

2007-2008

5768

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Rabbi_____	3
The Bar/Bat Mitzvah_____	4
Question & Answers_____	5-7
Madrichim (Guides)_____	8
Requirements_____	9
Shabbat Service Outline_____	10-11
The Ceremony_____	12
Mitzvot_____	13
Resources_____	14 - 17





Dear B'nai Mitzvah Families,

The B'nai Mitzvah program at The New Shul is different, not just in its form, but also in its approach. The preparation period is one of great anticipation and excitement. While it does involve hard work on the part of each student, it is also fun and rewarding, a time to bond with fellow students in and out of the classroom. Yet a child does not “have” a Bar or Bat Mitzvah—he or she *becomes* one. The moment of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah marks the first step of Jewish maturity and responsibility. It is for this reason that we treat the experience as a process of inner transformation, not simply a ceremonial event.

The New Shul wants to put the spiritual and creative components into what has become, in many instances, merely an excuse for a party. That is why we have developed a B'nai Mitzvah program that is so engaging and multi-faceted. In addition to the school commitment and tutoring, I will have three meetings with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and/or family (see page 6 for details on these meetings). With the support of the parent/s, we will work together on an experimental regimen of religious behavior and an experiential approach to Jewish life that will help our children make their own important, personal decisions about practice and observance. Parents are strongly encouraged to serve as role models for their children by practicing mitzvot themselves. One of the most important Jewish mitzvot is generously giving tzedakah to your congregation and making it possible for your child to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah as well as sustaining the community for others. We encourage you to do so in honor of your child.

We are an intimate enough community that we believe we can maintain Jewish standards while still being able to meet the needs and abilities of each student. Not every Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony at The New Shul will be identical, and not every experience preparing for it will be the same. Our goal, however, is that all will be rewarding, all will be causes for great and joyful celebration, and all will be enriching - not climactic conclusions, but catalysts for an even more exciting and vibrant Jewish life to come.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Niles Goldstein

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office: 212 284 6773 [www.newshul.org](http://www.newshul.org)

# The Bar / Bat Mitzvah

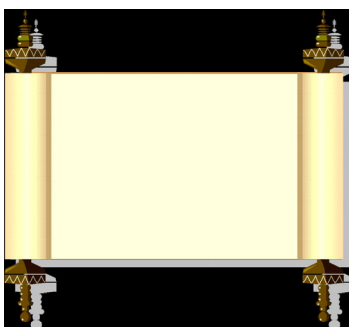
***“Bar and Bat Mitzvah is about ritual maturity. It is about growing up as a Jew. It is about becoming a fuller member of the Jewish community. But it is also about moral responsibility, about connecting to Torah, to community, to God.”***

***(Putting God on the Guest List, Jeffrey K. Salkin, p. 11)***

**Bar Mitzvah** means “son of the commandment” in Aramaic and Hebrew. **Bat Mitzvah** is the feminine form, when a girl becomes a “daughter of the commandment.” These terms can be understood as “a male/female to whom the commandments pertain.” The Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah is the ceremonial occasion that marks the time when a young person is recognized as an adult in the Jewish community and is responsible for performing mitzvot (commandments). Historically, at the age of thirteen, a Jewish boy or a girl has the right to take part in leading religious services, to count in a *minyan* (the minimum number of people needed to perform certain parts of religious services), to form binding contracts and to testify before religious courts.

A Jewish child automatically becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah upon reaching the age of thirteen. No ceremony or reception is needed to assume these rights and obligations. The ceremony is not required as it does not fulfill any commandment in the Torah nor is it mentioned in the Talmud (Jewish code of law). The B’nai Mitzvah ceremony is a relatively modern innovation, developed during the late Middle Ages as a ceremony which was integrated into the service at the synagogue and then followed by a social celebration. In Europe during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Bar Mitzvah evolved so that the service and ceremony was followed by *s’udat mitzvah* (festive meal) at which the boy would give his commentary on the weekly Torah portion and would then receive religious gifts such as books and *tefillin* (phylacteries).

The Bat Mitzvah, developed in Italy and in France, was first mentioned in a 19<sup>th</sup> century book of Jewish law. The first modern American Bat Mitzvah occurred on May 6, 1922 in New York City, when the eldest daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism) became a Bat Mitzvah. Very few Orthodox congregations have formal Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. Today, Liberal, Reform and Conservative Jewish congregations in the United States and around the world encourage young women and men to become a Bat or Bar Mitzvah at age 13, marking their symbolic entry into Jewish adulthood.



# Bar / Bat Mitzvah at The New Shul

## Questions & Answers

### **Who can become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at The New Shul?**

All children of members of The New Shul are encouraged to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah following their 13<sup>th</sup> birthdays. In order to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at The New Shul, your child must be enrolled in Rishonim by 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Students are then required to continue with their studies at the B'nai Mitzvah Academy, which meets on Monday afternoons. To be fair to all children, every student is required to make a commitment to completing the entire three-year program from 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, regardless of when he/she becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

### **Who is entitled to celebrate their Bar/Bat Mitzvah with The New Shul?**

The New Shul and its clergy and professional staff will joyfully celebrate B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies of any students who are members of our community, who attend our religious school programs, and who are not otherwise committed to, or participants in, a rite of passage program of any other faith.

### **What are the other requirements for becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

As an expression of commitment to the Jewish tradition and The New Shul community, and as a way to become familiar with the services, its contents, melodies, and meanings, each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student is expected to attend *all* Saturday morning Shabbat Services and as many of the other services (Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat and/or holidays) throughout the year as possible.

### **How are the Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates determined?**

Generally, dates are assigned in order of birth date. However, if a student needs additional time for preparation, the ceremony may be held later. Dates are assigned approximately a year in advance.

### **Where will services take place?**

All B'nai Mitzvah services with The New Shul are held at Village Community School (272 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street). This room can accommodate approximately 300 people. All Shabbat morning services begin at 10:30am and end around 12:15pm. If you are interested in hosting a larger one in the cafeteria, please contact VCS directly to discuss the contract and space availability.

### **Who will lead the service?**

The Shabbat morning services will be led by Rabbi Niles Goldstein. In keeping with our spirit of participation, The New Shul has musical directors instead of invested cantors. Music will be led by Melanie Sylvan.

### **Who will train my child?**

The New Shul has a team of gifted *madrichim* (guides) who prepare our children. Amy Eichenwald Golding and Melanie Sylvan will match your student with the tutor best suited to his/her interests and learning style.

### **What does tutoring cost?**

*Madrichim* receive \$70 per hour. Your child will study with his/her *madrichah* once a week for 10-12 months (depending on the student's needs) before the ceremony. In addition, there may be costs for books or study materials.

### **What is Rabbi Goldstein's role?**

There will be three meetings with the rabbi over the year leading up to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

10 – 12 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Rabbi Goldstein will meet with the family and the student at the office (111 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor) to talk about what it means to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and the spiritual journey taken to reach the rite of passage. The ritual and ethical mitzvot will also be explained and discussed (see page 13 for a sample list of these mitzvot). Melanie Sylvan will contact you to schedule this meeting.

6-8 months before the service, a session with the rabbi exclusively for parents to discuss their child's *parasha* (Torah portion) and learn more about the d'var Torah writing process. Niles will give a copy of the *parasha*, contrasting commentaries, a personal interpretation, midrash, and more. The text provided and the discussions had during this meeting will provide insight to the Torah portion and will inspire parents to be active participants in the B'nai Mitzvah experience. This study session will give parents a solid base of information with which to help students analyze the *parasha*. The Rabbi will also talk about the *aliyot* and specific honors given to family members during the service, but no decisions need to be made at this meeting. You will be contacted by Melanie to schedule this meeting, which will be held at the office.

1-2 months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Rabbi Goldstein will join one of the weekly tutoring sessions with the student and the *madricha* to discuss the d'var Torah. The student and *madricha* will have already begun exploring the *parasha*, and will have come up with themes or issues from the portion that the student is interested in exploring. It is our hope that the parents will also have conversations with the student about the Torah portion, after their second meeting with the Rabbi. Niles will bring text and commentary exploring each of the themes to this third session. The Rabbi, *madricha* and student will discuss the themes and will start to create an outline for the d'var. This meeting is set up by the *madricha* and Rabbi Goldstein and will be at the student's home.

2-3 weeks before Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the d'var Torah draft will be sent by the *madricha* to both Rabbi Goldstein and Melanie Sylvan for comments and editing.

1-2 weeks prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Rabbi Goldstein will contact the family to finalize and get the exact names for the *aliyot* (see page 12) and other honors during the service.

### **What *Tanach* (Bible) should I purchase for my child?**

We recommend that you purchase any one of these three version of the Torah: [Etz Hayim Chumash: Torah and Commentary](#) published by United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, [JPS Hebrew-English Tanach: The Traditional Hebrew Text and the New JPS translation](#), or [The Living Torah](#) by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan.

### **What is expected of the family?**

The family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may choose to create a Shabbat handout for the service. The handout is a wonderful educational tool, which includes the outline of the service and personal messages. A template is available on our website at [www.newshul.org](http://www.newshul.org).

It has become tradition for the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to host the community kiddush following the service on the day of the ceremony. Whether modest or elaborate, the kiddush provides a wonderful way for the entire community to celebrate this joyous occasion together. Families have also chosen to order flowers to be placed on the bimah. Flowers may be delivered at 9:30am on the day of the service.

Each family that is celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is asked to act as “Shabbat Mensch” for one Saturday morning Shabbat service and one Friday night service during that year. On your date you are asked to arrive early to help set up, greet community members and guests, pass out prayer books and then stay after the service to help put things away.

All financial obligations must be met at least one month before the Bat/Bar Mitzvah (membership and B’nai Mitzvah Academy dues). The New Shul does not require any additional payment for B’nai Mitzvah. It is customary, however, for families to make a gift to the shul in honor of their child’s coming-of-age and to demonstrate appreciation for and commitment to their community. Gifts have ranged from \$500 to \$2,000, but any amount is greatly appreciated.

Additional gifts given to The New Shul have been *kippot* (yarmulke) and *tallitot* (prayer shawls). If you would like advice or information on what to purchase for the shul in honor of your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please call the office.

We also encourage the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrant to contribute some portion of the gifts that s/he receives to charity. Tzedakah is a fundamental teaching of Judaism and a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an excellent occasion to emphasize its importance (see page 16 for a list of websites).

### **Who do we invite?**

We want to encourage students to invite their B’nai Mitzvah Academy classmates and their families to the service and kiddush at The New Shul. It is up to each individual family to decide if they want to extend an invitation to the BMA classmates to the party following the service.

### **Can we photograph and videotape the Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

Photography is only allowed during the service from the designated area centrally located in the balcony. There is no flash photography allowed during the service. Photos may be taken before and after the service as long as it does not interfere with set-up / clean-up and is cleared with The New Shul office in advance. Videotaping follows the same guidelines as still photography. Video cameras should remain stationary on a tripod in the designated area in the balcony. Unnecessary noise and distraction during the service will result in photographer or videographer to be asked to leave the premises. Please call the office with any questions regarding this issue.



# The New Shul *Madrichim*

The year of study and preparation to become a B'nai Mitzvah is one of growth and exploration. There are many people in our community who lead the students on this journey to Jewish adulthood, but none as important and present as your child's B'nai Mitzvah *madrich* (*madrichah*).

The word *madrich* (or *madrichah* for a woman) means "guide." We have decided to use this title because our role far exceeds the job description of a "tutor." A *madrichah* is the student's primary teacher in the B'nai Mitzvah process, giving your child the tools to learn how to read Hebrew, chant from the Torah, participate in the Shabbat services, interpret their Torah portion and create a personal teaching based on the text.

**This is a long and oftentimes challenging process, but will be one of the most rewarding and memorable experiences in the life of your child and your family. Many parents have told us how much their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher was missed after the ceremony. "She became part of the family," one mother said.**

The *madrichim* of The New Shul are warm, intelligent, and creative teachers with years of teaching experience. Together with Amy Eichenwald Golding and Rabbi Goldstein, they have developed a B'nai Mitzvah curriculum, which can be adjusted, based on each student's individual needs and talents. This personalized approach to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation allows our students to develop their critical thinking skills and gives them the opportunity to flex their creative muscles while writing their d'var Torah (speech). The *madrichim* use various teaching methods to ensure that each child will be able to read and chant the Hebrew text of the Torah on the day of their B'nai Mitzvah ceremony.

The New Shul has set up a B'nai Mitzvah tutoring policy to make sure each student receives the most thorough preparation possible in the months leading up to his or her ceremony. **There is a minimum of ten months of private tutoring, with one of The New Shul *madrichim*. The *madrich* given to your family is paid \$70 per week, four sessions per month. Please talk to your *madrich* to set up a method of payment. Two sessions a week may be required based on your child's Hebrew level. There is a 24-hour cancellation policy for both student and tutor. Missed lessons should be rescheduled for that or the following week. Your *madrich* may require the student to have a small tape player/recorder to practice the songs and melodies needed to be learned for her/his B'nai Mitzvah. Daily practice of the B'nai Mitzvah material is a necessary component of this learning process. Please encourage your child to study their prayers and portions as it will make the sessions with the *madrichim* more productive and their experience becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah more rewarding.** The B'nai Mitzvah students are also required to attend as many Shabbat services as possible.

It is not a coincidence that the B'nai Mitzvah happens during the 13<sup>th</sup> year, a time of physical and emotional change. The B'nai Mitzvah process will make your daughter or son a stronger, more self-confident young adult. It is the job of the *madrichah* to start your child on the path of discovering what it means to be a Jew.

If you have any questions please contact Melanie Sylvan, the *Madrichim* Coordinator, through The New Shul office at 212-284-6773.

# For B'nai Mitzvah Students

## Minimum and Maximum Requirements

**Torah Chanting:** Our *minhag* (custom) is for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to chant in Hebrew, 12-15 verses from the Torah; this can be adjusted by the *madrich* (guide) depending on the student's ability and in consultation with Rabbi Goldstein. The Torah chanting is preceded and followed by the appropriate Hebrew blessings.

**Haftarah:** Our *minhag* is for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to, at a minimum, chant the Hebrew blessings that precede and follow the Haftarah passage; ideally, the student will also chant several verses in Hebrew from the Haftarah itself and then read a representative selection from it in English.

**D'var Torah:** This usually takes the form of a speech intended to convey the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's understanding of the Torah and/or Haftarah portion. The length of this speech is normally in the five-minute range. It is developed and finalized with the help of the student's *madrich* and Rabbi Goldstein. With prior approval, it is also possible to present a d'var Torah in a non-conventional way, such as through a poem, a song, or some other means. Please see sample New Shul student D'veri Torah on our website: [www.newshul.org](http://www.newshul.org).

**Special Additions:** Our *minhag* is to make The New Shul worship experience as meaningful and joyful as possible for your family and others, while removing the "proprietary" feeling that is all too common at today's typical Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. We therefore do not have the student lead the entire service, but rather take a leading role during the most key sections of it. Nevertheless, a student may *add* to his/her responsibilities by, for instance, leading the community in a prayer or a song, or developing and presenting a creative interpretation of the Torah translation. Any additional elements must be proposed *well in advance* to the *madrich* and approved by Rabbi Goldstein.



# THE NEW SHUL SATURDAY SHABBAT SERVICE

**Service Begins: 10:30 am**

**Service Concludes: *Approximately* 12:15 pm**

## **Order of Service:**

Opening song/*niggun* (wordless melody)

Welcome

Song or *niggun*

*Elohai Neshamah* (Hebrew/English prayer, p, 63)

*Birchot Ha-Shachar* (Hebrew/English prayers, p. 65)

Psalm 150 (Hebrew song, p. 100)

*Chatzi Kaddish* (Hebrew prayer, p. 106)

*Barchu* (Hebrew chant, p. 107)

*Yotzer Or* (Hebrew prayer, p. 107)

Prayers recited on one's own (Hebrew or English, pp. 107-110)

*Ahavah Rabbah* (Hebrew/English prayer, p.111)

*Sh'ma, V'ahavtah* (Hebrew chant, p. 112)

Prayers recited on one's own (Hebrew or English, pp. 112-114)

*Mi Chamochah* (Hebrew song, p. 114)

*Amidah* (Hebrew chant and prayer, pp. 115b-120)

*Oseh Shalom* (Hebrew song)

Torah Service Begins (p. 139)

Opening Hebrew Prayers (songs, p. 139)

*Sh'ma* (p. 141)

Passing of Torah (at b'nai mitzvah only—*optional*)

Torah Processional

Brief descriptions of Torah and Haftarah portions

Torah Chanting with *Aliyot*

*Mi Sheberach* (Hebrew/English prayer, p. 144)

Lifting of Torah, *V'zot ha-Torah* (Hebrew song, p. 146)

Haftarah chanting/reading (blessings on pp. 146-147)

D'var Torah

Rabbinic Charge (at B'nai Mitzvah only)

Presentation of Gifts (at B'nai Mitzvah only)

Returning Torah to the Ark (prayers and songs, pp. 153-154)

*Musaf Amidah* (p. 156b)

*Duchanan* Ritual (The Ancient Priestly Benediction, p. 160)

*Esa Einai* (Hebrew song, p. 328)

*Ein Keloheinu* (Hebrew song, p. 182)

*Aleinu* (Hebrew prayer, p. 183)

Reading of Names/Mourner's *Kaddish* (Hebrew prayer, p. 184)

*Kiddush and Ha Motzi* (Hebrew blessings)

*Adon Olam* (Hebrew song, p. 187)

The Shabbat service is followed by a Kiddush.

# The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony

## **Possible Honors**

During the Shabbat morning service in which the Bar or Bat Mitzvah occurs, there are several opportunities for families to distribute honors to family members and friends. These will be worked out with Rabbi Goldstein usually one week prior to the service during the rehearsal with the family and tutor. Below are some suggestions for honors that may be filled by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family.

## **Chanting an *aliyah***

During the Torah service, *aliyot* are given to the family. An *aliyah* is the honor of “going up” to recite the blessings before and after the reading of a section of Torah by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is customary for the last *aliyah* to be given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Other *aliyot* may be given to parents, grandparents, older siblings, and other Jewish relatives and friends, based on the size of his/her Torah portion and into how many sections the portion is split. Three has been the norm. If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is planning on having four or more *aliyot*, we ask that at least one of the honors of blessings the Torah be given to a member of The New Shul.

## **Dressing and/or undressing the Torah**

This honor happens during the Torah service.

## **Sitting with the Torah**

This occurs during the student’s Haftarah and d’var Torah, after the Torah is dressed.

## **Passing the Torah**

Before the Torah service, the immediate family (grandparents, parents, older siblings) come up before the congregation and physically *pass* the Torah from one generation to the next until it reaches the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, at which point the *hakafah* (procession) begins.



# Mitzvot

As an important experiment in Jewish observance, every B'nai Mitzvah student is *required* to commit to the following 13 ethical and ritual mitzvot, in recognition of their turning 13 years old and entering early Jewish adulthood. Each mitzvah, or Jewish spiritual practice, is observed in a different way and with a different time commitment, but all must be completed prior to the date of the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony:

## Ethical Mitzvot

1. **Honor your parents by doing something to ease their work load for one week, such as cleaning your room or putting away the dishes.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Console the bereaved by either volunteering, with your parent/s, at a hospice, or by comforting those known to you who may have experienced a death in their family, for a total of 10 hours.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Visit the sick by volunteering, with your parent/s, at a local hospital for a total of 10 hours.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Protect the widow and the orphan (care for those in need) by visiting someone who is alone, elderly, or home-bound at least 6 times.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Practice tzedakah (just giving) by volunteering, with your parent/s, at the social justice organization of your choice for a total of 10 hours.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
6. **Feed the hungry by volunteering with your parent/s at a soup kitchen on three different evenings.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ritual Mitzvot

7. **Light Shabbat candles every Friday evening for one month (4 times), with your family, and say the blessings over wine and challah.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
8. **Say a blessing of gratitude (Ha-Motzi) before each meal for one week.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
9. **Observe kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) by refraining from eating pork, shellfish, and meat and milk combinations for one week.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
10. **Recite the Sh'ma, in Hebrew and English, before going to bed and when waking up every night and morning for two weeks.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
11. **Observe Shabbat (Saturday) for one month by either attending a worship service each Saturday morning (4 times) or by spending at least one hour reading a book of Jewish significance on that day (4 hours).**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
12. **Read the weekly Torah portion for one month during the month of your choice, for a total of 4 different Torah portions.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
13. **Select one of the 3 major Jewish festivals (Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot), do research on it, and list 10 of its most distinctive features as well as observe it.**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Bar & Bat Mitzvah Book & Website List

## Recommended Books for Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Diam, Barbara: *Bat Mitzvah: A Jewish Girls Coming of Age*

David, Judith: *Whose Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is This Anyway?*

Moskovitz, Patti: *The Complete Bat/Bat Mitzvah Book*

Leneman, Helen: *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Basics: A Practical Family Guide to Coming Together*

Seifer Sage, Linda: *The Complete Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planner*

Salkin, Rabbi Jeffrey K.: *For KIDS – Putting God on Your Guest List: How to Claim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Bar or Bat Mitzvah*

Salkin, Rabbi Jeffrey K.: *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah*

Epstein, Ellen & Jane Lewit: *The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planbook*

## Books for Writing a D'var Torah

Beiner, Stan J.: *Sedra Scenes*

Fields, Harvey: *A Torah Commentary for Our Times, (Vol 1-3)*

Goldberg Loeb, Sorel & Barbara Binder Kadden: *Teaching Torah: A Treasury of Insights and Activities*

## Other Recommended Books

Borowitz, Eugene B.: *Liberal Judaism*

Buber, Martin: *Tales of the Hasidim*

Buxbaum, Yizhak: *Jewish Spiritual Practices*

Green, Arthur and Holtz, Barry W.: *Your Word is Fire*

Hertzberg, Arthur: *The Zionist Idea*

Heschel, Abraham Joshua: *The Sabbath*

Holtz, Barry W.: *Back to the Sources*

Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda: *The Jew in the Modern World*

Neusner, Jacob: *The Enchantments of Judaism*

Plaskow, Judith: *Standing Again at Sinai*

Pogrebin, Letty Cottin: *Deborah, Golda, and Me*

Sachar, Howard M.: *A History of Israel*

Sarna, Jonathan: *American Judaism*

Shanks, Hershel: *Ancient Israel*

Spiegelman, Art: *Maus I and II*

Strassfeld, Michael: *The Jewish Holidays*

Telushkin, Joseph: *Jewish Literacy*

Waskow, Arthur: *Seasons of Our Joy*

### **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Websites**

[www.bnaimitzvahguide.com](http://www.bnaimitzvahguide.com)

A very thorough resource and planning website

[www.bible.ort.org](http://www.bible.ort.org)

Navigating the Bible. An online Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor.

[www.jewschool.com](http://www.jewschool.com)

Jew School: Two Jews, Three Opinions

[www.jewz.com](http://www.jewz.com)

JewZ

<http://www.judaicaworldwide.com>

B'nai Mitzvah gifts and kippot.

<http://www.mitzvahchic.com/>

Website of the book on creating a “chic” Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

<http://www.mitzvahs.myevent.com>

Create your own B'nai Mitzvah website.

[www.my-bar-mitzvah.com](http://www.my-bar-mitzvah.com)

Torah and Haftarah portions. Submit or search for a speech/story on a particular Torah portion. Sample invitations.

[www.myjewishlearning.com](http://www.myjewishlearning.com)

My Jewish Learning: The Personal Gateway to Jewish Exploration

[www.ritualwell.org](http://www.ritualwell.org)

Ritual Well: Ceremonies for Jewish Living

[www.storahtelling.org](http://www.storahtelling.org)

Storahtelling: Jewish Ritual Theater Revived

[www.virtualjerusalem.com](http://www.virtualjerusalem.com)

A mega website that features a teen channel that includes articles of special interest, puzzles, jokes, and polls.

### **Social Action Websites**

[www.ajws.org](http://www.ajws.org)

AJWS: American Jewish World Service

[www.birthrightisrael.com](http://www.birthrightisrael.com)

Birthright Israel

[www.coejl.org](http://www.coejl.org)

COEJL: The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life

[www.deltasociety.org](http://www.deltasociety.org)

Delta Society

[www.dorot.org](http://www.dorot.org)

Dorot

[www.generationj.com](http://www.generationj.com)

Generation J

[www.geshercity.org](http://www.geshercity.org)

GesherCity: Bridging Young Adults to the Jewish Community

[www.hadassah.org.il/English](http://www.hadassah.org.il/English)

Hadassah Hospital

[www.hazon.org](http://www.hazon.org)

Hazon: New Vision, Inclusive Community, and Environmental Education

<http://mpdn.org/interns.htm>

Interns For Peace

[www.jewishbraille.org/](http://www.jewishbraille.org/)

Jewish Braille Institute of America

[www.jnf.org/](http://www.jnf.org/)

Jewish National Fund

[www.jufj.org](http://www.jufj.org)

Jews United for Justice

[www.kolot.org](http://www.kolot.org)

Kolot: Center for Jewish Women's and Gender Studies

[www.mayan.org](http://www.mayan.org)

Ma'yan: The Jewish Women's Project

[www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

[www.myriamsdream.org/](http://www.myriamsdream.org/)

Myriam's Dream

[www.nif.org](http://www.nif.org)

New Israel Fund: Promoting Equality and Social Justice for All Israelis

[www.nacoej.org](http://www.nacoej.org)

North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry

<http://www.pal-o-mine.org/index.php>

Pal-O-Mine Equestrian

[www.projectezra.org/](http://www.projectezra.org/)

Project Ezra

[www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

[www.shalomctr.org](http://www.shalomctr.org)

The Shalom Center

[www.shalva.org](http://www.shalva.org)

Shalva

<http://www.songsoflove.org/>

Songs of Love

[www.tevaadventure.org](http://www.tevaadventure.org)

Teva Adventure

[www.ujafedny.org](http://www.ujafedny.org)

United Jewish Appeal

[www.yadsarah.org/](http://www.yadsarah.org/)

Yad Sarah