

Temple Shaaray Tefila Mitzvah Project Planning Guide

Name: _____

Date of B'nei Mitzvah: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Email: _____

What is the Mitzvah Project?

- At Shaaray Tefila, it is a significant step on the path to becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
- The Mitzvah Project is centered on Gemilut Chasadim - acts of loving-kindness. It is based on hours of volunteering, not a monetary tzedakah donation to a charity.
- Students will plan and execute a project that is at least **18 hours in total**. This project can begin one year before you become Bar or Bat Mitzvah, but must be completed at least one-to-two months before the ceremony.
- Students and families should aim to build a close relationship with certain service organizations, rather than volunteer with many organizations. We recommend two at most.
- Students will select a type of Mitzvah Project from one or more of these three categories:
 - Category A: TST Social Action Project** - volunteer with our in-house projects that support the work of our synagogue's social action and social justice initiatives.
 - Category B: Community-Based Project** - volunteer with organizations that support our local community. Some of our previous B'nei Mitzvah students have volunteered there in the past.
 - Category C: Custom Project** - create a design a Mitzvah Project that connects with your passion or with a community service organization not listed here.
- Students will complete Step One through Step Five on the Mitzvah Project Planning Guide and submit it to Rabbi Litwin before the Mitzvah Project begins.
- When you completed Step Six with the log of your hours and a signature verifying your hours, please submit that page to Rabbi Mosbacher or Rabbi Reines at your D'var Torah Meeting #4, approximately one month before the ceremony.
- With any questions, please email mitzvahprojects@tstnyc.org.

Step One: Understand Your Jewish Values

What are the Jewish values that will guide your Mitzvah Project? Think of the values that most important to you and your family. Put a check mark next to one, two, or three values.

___ Ahavat Hager - Loving the Stranger

___ Rodeph Shalom - Pursuing Peace

___ Ahavat Yisrael - Supporting Israel

___ Shmirat Ha'adamah - Protecting the Earth

___ Hiddur Pnei Zaken - Honoring the Elderly

___ Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim - Caring for Animals

___ Ma'achiel Harevim - Feeding the Hungry

___ Tzedek - Justice

___ Migvan - Diversity

___ Zikaron - Remembrance

___ Pikuah Nefesh - Saving a Life

Step Two: Select your category of mitzvah project. Put checkmarks next to one or more of these categories:

___ Category A: TST Social Action Project

For example...

- Volunteer with Backpack Buddies
- Volunteer at Sandwich Saturday
- Volunteer at Mitzvah Day

For all dates and times, visit www.shaaraytefilanyc.org/volunteer

For more information, contact Carol Crossen, carol.crossen@gmail.com

___ Category B: Community-Based Project

For example...

- Volunteer with the elderly through DOROT; contact Shai Rosenfeld, srosenfeld@dorotusa.org
- Volunteer with special needs children through Friendship Circle; visit www.friendshipcirclenyc.org
- Volunteer at the food pantry at Little Sisters Association; contact Trish Gough, tgough@lsafhs.org
- Volunteer to serve meals with NY Common Pantry; contact volunteer@nycommonpantry.org
- Volunteer as a tutor at the Stanley Isaacs Center; contact Gigi Verkaik, gverkaik@isaacscenter.org
- Volunteer with animals at Bideawee Animal Hospital; visit www.bideawee.org/volunteer
- Volunteer to cook a meal with JCC Community Cooks; visit www.jccmanhattan.org/volunteer
- Volunteer with children at Spence-Chapin; contact volunteer@spence-chapin.org
- Volunteer as a dog walker to support Israeli Guide Dogs; visit www.israelguidedog.org

___ Category C: Custom Project

Here's how...

- Create a project that incorporates your Jewish values
- Find an organization that is connected with your passion
- Understand how you will impact those in need
- Log your hours

Step Three: Select and Confirm Your Organization(s) and Cause(s)

What is the name of the organization(s) or project(s) of your Mitzvah Project?

Organization/Project #1: _____

Organization/Project #2: _____

Contact Person: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email or Phone Number: _____

Email or Phone Number: _____

Step Four: What is the Mitzvah Project?

In two to three sentences, describe the volunteer work you will be doing and who you will be helping.

Step Five: Understand Who You Are Helping

What are the causes or people supported by your project? Who are you helping?

- Animals
- Arts and Culture
- Children
- Education
- Elderly
- Emergency Response
- Environment
- Healthy Living
- Jewish Living
- Special Needs
- Poverty and Hunger
- Other: _____

Step Six: Log Your Community Service Hours - This Form is Due at D'var Torah Meeting #4

It is up to you to determine how you will complete your 18 hours for your Mitzvah Project. You can space it out however you want in the months leading up, just be sure to plan ahead! Log your hours on this sheet, then have the staff or volunteer coordinator(s) from your organizations also sign this sheet.

- 12 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 11 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 10 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 9 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 8 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 7 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 6 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 5 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 4 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 3 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 2 months before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____
- 1 month before your B'nei Mitzvah
What did you do? _____ How many hours? ____

Total Hours (must be at least 18 hours): _____

By signing below, I affirm that I completed these hours of community service for my Mitzvah Project:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Organization #1 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Organization #2 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Step Seven: Mitzvah Project Reflection

Once you have completed your Mitzvah Project, please answer these reflection questions and bring this sheet to D'var Torah Meeting #4.

1. What was the overall experience like for you?
2. What was a highlight from your Mitzvah Project experience?
3. How did you feel once it was completed?
4. Do you plan to continue volunteering with this organization? Why/why not?
5. Would you recommend this project to a future student for their Mitzvah Project?