

# Remember Us

The Holocaust Bnai Mitzvah Project



## PARENT GUIDE

### *Invitation to parents*

MEMORY IS THE LIVING CORE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. The Hebrew root word for memory occurs more than any other word in the Torah. Your support as your child prepares for bar/bat mitzvah is—in itself—the transmission of Jewish memory to the next generation.

**Remember Us: The Holocaust Bnai Mitzvah Project** is a simple program to deepen your child's experience of Jewish memory, and to take on a meaningful role in perpetuating it.

With your permission, your child is invited to remember a child who died in the Holocaust before having the opportunity to be called to the Torah. Your child is requested to keep the lost child in mind during his/her own study, and to remember the name and memory of the child from the bimah during the bar/bat mitzvah.

By this simple act of remembrance, your family helps to utterly defeat the fate that had been planned against us. Your child is the source of this quiet triumph by simply bearing witness to a lost life. Your child takes his/her place as *a significant vessel of Jewish memory* and as an active participant in the redemption of the Jewish past.

### *Your role in the program*

First, be assured that this program does not make additional work for you or your child. We recognize that the children (and parents) have already committed to extensive preparation. Read over this Guide, then let the rabbi, cantor, or teacher know it is okay for your child to participate. Here's how the program works:

- 1 Your child will receive the name of a lost child and a written invitation to participate.
- 2 Your child is invited to keep the remembered child in mind however she/he chooses. Support this intention by encouraging web research, library visits, and family conversations. Creating a context helps develop meaning.
- 3 When your child does a mitzvah, it is an opportunity to do it *b'shem* — in the name of — the child whose memory he/she is carrying. You can help by reminding him or her about this connection.

- 4 We recommend that your child speaks the name and memory of the remembered child when standing on the bimah, in whatever way that he/she chooses. Help your child with preparation of his/her remarks. It is a significant moment when your child stands as a model for Jewish memory.
- 5 Help your child develop an on-going commitment to the memory of the remembered child. One way is to undertake future study in the name of the child. Another is to make a binding commitment to remembrance annually. Good days each year would be Yom Hashoah (the day Jews everywhere remember the Holocaust), or Yom Kippur, or the anniversary of the bar mitzvah.

## *Benefits to your child*

Through these simple acts, done in the normal course of bar/bat mitzvah preparation, your child will be helping to redeem the memory of a lost Jewish child. He/she will benefit in deep ways.

- Participation in **Remember Us: The Holocaust Bnai Mitzvah Project** provides an opportunity for each one to learn that he/she has a significant role to play in the preservation and transmission of Jewish memory.
- Your child is welcomed to a meaningful, age-appropriate Jewish task: the tikkun of remembering. This capacity to remember blossoms when it is nurtured—it is a gift to be cultivated.
- Your child is endowed with new stature in the community through the public act of remembering from the bimah, becoming one who remembers.
- Participating in **Remember Us** is a life-affirming way for your child and family to relate to the Holocaust, with care and positive action.
- By participating, your child has the opportunity to *grow from a learning experience to Jewish commitment.*

## *What to do now*

This practice of remembrance is designed to be as simple as possible. The heart of the matter is encouraging your child to remember and honor the memory of a lost child. You can also use this as a moment for teaching and action. Take a minute now to fill out the next page. There are three suggestions connected to the bar/bat mitzvah: Limud (teaching), Tzedekah (righteous giving), and Kavod (honoring). If you would like to act on any or all of these suggestions, mail the form to the Remember Us Project. Also, if you would like to know about post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah programs based on participation in Remember Us, please check the box on the back page.

Thank you for partnering with us for this practice of Jewish transmission and redemption.

**Remember Us: The Holocaust Bnai Mitzvah Project** is supported by family foundation grants and voluntary donations from families like yours.

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