

# Kadima B'nei Mitzvah

## Handbook

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## **I. Your *Bat* or *Bar Mitzvah* Student at Kadima**

Kadima believes that both secular and religious Judaism can be deeply spiritual and satisfying. Our membership reflects this diversity. We are one of the first Jewish schools in North America to offer *b'nei mitzvah* education to secular Jews as well as to those who are more religiously observant. As a reflection of our diverse membership, the Kadima *siddur* (Shabbat service prayer book) offers both theistic and nontheistic variants of the service components.

Our *b'nei mitzvah* program is a flexible, responsive course of study leading to a ceremony designed by the student, his/her parents and the student's *madrich/ah* (teacher or mentor). The ceremony represents the achievement of a specific set of skills that enable the student to have an inspiring, successful *bat* or *bar mitzvah* service. We see this ceremony as a stepping-stone to lifelong Jewish learning.

The process is designed to meet several goals:

- With a Kadima service, welcome students into their new, adult relationship within the Kadima community.
- Expose students to the worldwide, local, and historical community of Jews, reflecting the diversity of modern Jewish options.
- Be relevant to modern Jewish experience, reflecting progressive ethical and activist values of Kadima while allowing a diversity of viewpoints about Judaism.
- Provide a chance for students to discover for themselves those elements of Jewish life that are meaningful to them.
- Develop a sense of community among classmates.
- Give students the opportunity to perform meaningful community service within the Jewish context of *tikkun olam*.
- Become familiar with Jewish religious activity, such as synagogue use and ritual, the primary prayers of the Shabbat service, and specific holiday traditions.

Kadima hopes that this experience will provide inspiration to continue Jewish education and to become increasingly active in *gimilut chasadim* (acts of loving-kindness) and *tikkun olam* (repair of the world). Students and their parents are strongly encouraged to continue as active members of the Kadima community after the *bar/bat mitzvah* year.

## II. Traditions and History

Kadima highly regards the concept of *tikkun olam*, repair of the world. *Tikkun olam* springs from an old Chassidic tale, wherein the purpose of humanity is to work by positive actions in partnership with God to make the world whole.

### What is a *Mitzvah*?

Judaism is a way of life based on positive actions and *mitzvot*. *Mitzvot* (singular: *mitzvah*) are commandments, deeds that confer blessing on the doer and help make the world more complete. Each *mitzvah*, as well as other positive actions, serves to further the task of *tikkun olam*.

*Mitzvot* come in different forms. There are obligations to God and obligations to other people. Jews also have a sense of obligation to benefit other creatures and our planet. No matter how observant the Jew, *mitzvot* directed toward God are always subordinate to those directed toward other people. For example, one cannot ask forgiveness from God on *Yom Kippur* until one has first asked the forgiveness of people one has wronged during the past year. Some *mitzvot* are conditional: you wait for an opportunity to perform the *mitzvah*; others, such as peacemaking, are unconditional. According to Torah, we must seek the opportunity to perform *mitzvot*, whatever our circumstances.

### What is a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*?

*Bar* and *bat mitzvah* translate into “son” and “daughter” of the *mitzvot*, respectively. A *bat* or *bar mitzvah* is a person who has reached the age at which she or he is expected to assume the obligations of an adult Jew. At this age, the young person’s parents are considered no longer responsible for the young person’s moral and religious behavior.

The *bat* or *bar mitzvah* service is an important symbolic milestone in the journey toward a life filled with a love of learning and celebration of Jewish identity. It occurs at adolescence, as children reach a new stage of self-awareness and responsibility.

### History of *B’nei Mitzvah*

The origins of the *bar/bat mitzvah* celebration are ambiguous. The Torah does not mention a coming-of-age ritual or give an indication that any specific age was a demarcation between childhood and adult responsibilities. By the first century CE, the age of 13 for a boy and 12 for a girl was recognized as the point when young people were required to fully observe the *mitzvot*, and to participate in community rituals. However, historically, if a boy was advanced enough in religious studies to take part in services before 13, he was encouraged to do so. Young people were expected to live up to the commandments and religious precepts as soon as they could understand them, so there was no need for a special ceremony. By 13, a boy was held to his vows, his word was acceptable in a court of law, he was expected to fast on *Yom Kippur* like an adult, and he would be counted as one of the required ten adults in a *minyan*, the minimum number needed to hold religious ceremonies.

Some time between the 14th and 16th centuries CE, the *bar mitzvah* celebration became closer to its modern form in that it became a more clearly defined boundary between childhood and adult responsibilities. It was felt that boys younger than 13 were too immature to take an adult role in religious ceremonies and so the practice of having younger children participating in the service was discouraged. This increased the significance of reaching *bar mitzvah* age: the first time a boy was called to the Torah, the first time he wore a *tallit* (prayer shawl), and put on *tefillin* (phylacteries). The parents of the *bar mitzvah* would hold a feast to honor their son, inviting family and friends to their home. The boy would sometimes expound on the day’s religious text for the guests. This developed

slowly into the “speech” (the *d’var Torah* or “lesson” of the Torah) that is included in modern ceremonies.

The most significant change has been in the area of the *bat mitzvah* ceremony for girls. For many centuries, a woman’s primary roles in Jewish society were as wife, mother, homemaker—but not in synagogue—so no female coming-of-age ritual existed. However, about 200 years ago, some Jewish families and communities saw the need for a demarcation of girls’ passage into adulthood and adult responsibilities. Since girls matured a bit earlier than boys, their “coming of age” was set at age 12. This ritual acknowledgment of a girl’s reaching adult or marriageable age was observed at home. The first community-observed *bat mitzvah* service was for Judith Kaplan, daughter of Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, Judaic scholar and developer of Reconstructionist Judaism, in 1922. Today, in most non-Orthodox communities, the *bat* and *bar mitzvah* services are of equal importance.

Over the years, five major facets of the *bar/bat mitzvah* service/celebration have evolved. The first three are part of a regular religious service.

- Tallit and tefillin (prayer shawl and phylacteries). This is the first time the young person is permitted to wear phylacteries (small boxes containing Torah prayers worn on the forehead and wound around the arm) and usually the first time he/she wears a *tallit*.
- Aliyah (the blessing over the Torah). The young person is called up to recite the Torah blessings. Depending on the congregation or community, she/he may read the day’s Torah portion, the *haftarah* (the prophetic portion of the week), the *sidrah* (the entire biblical portion), or none of these. The young person may lead all or part of the service.
- D’var Torah (speech). The young person prepares a *derasha* (*drash*) or *d’var Torah*. This is a speech concerning the portion read, a point of Jewish law, or an aspect of Jewish identity.
- Parental blessing. The blessing symbolizes the fact that a new phase is about to occur in the young person’s life. The young person is now responsible (in theory, at least) for his/her own actions.
- Se’udah (feast). This is a festive meal honoring the young person’s achievement.

In a certain sense, there really is no need for a *bar/bat mitzvah* ceremony, because one is automatically considered to be adult once one attains the age of 13. However, the occasion when a youth first comes up to the *bima* and reads from the Torah marks full participation of the youth as a welcome member of the Jewish community. The youth is included in a regular service—as participant, leader, and teacher. Many communities are working to counteract a trend toward “performance” by fostering youth as full community participants.

### III. B'nei Mitzvah Program

#### Two-Year Program Overview

Kadima has developed a two-year *b'nei mitzvah* study process that we believe provides an excellent foundation of Jewish study to prepare the *bat/bar mitzvah* student. The program includes Judaic study, group activity, *tzedakah* (charitable giving), community service, Hebrew study, a *mitzvah* program, individual study, and the ceremony, which reflects knowledge gained from the other seven areas. This two-year program is roughly divided into a “year of service” where much of the requirement to perform *mitzvot* will be fulfilled, and a “year of ceremony” which encompasses the process of understanding the *siddur* (prayer book) and learning the Hebrew readings for the service.

The first year of study includes beginning Torah study, introduction to the *siddur*, and coordinated social events for all the families and their students. Parents and guardians are encouraged to meet monthly to plan events such as *Havdalah* services (*Havdalah* marks the end of the Sabbath), potlucks, and the group fundraiser. These occasions provide the students with a chance to meet some of their 18 *Mitzvot* program requirements (see Section VI) together through group planning. All students are required to participate in one group fundraiser. Families are crucial to the support of this “year of service.” Suggested group fundraising ideas are contained within the description of the 18 *Mitzvot* program.

The second year continues further study of Torah and includes the advance study of the *siddur* and the history and concept of prayer.

The second year also begins the process of working with the *madrich/ah* and learning the elements of the Kadima *siddur* that the student will use as the basis for the service. The student concentrates on learning the relevant prayers she/he will lead, learning her/his Torah portion, and formulating her/his speech. Students are also highly encouraged to learn trope, the cantillation for their Torah portion.

These two years combine to form a strong foundation for the culmination of the *bat/bar mitzvah* service itself.

Kadima provides a program mentor for each student, known as a *madrich* (male) or *madrichah* (female), secular or religious, to prepare the student and family for their ceremony/celebration. Families are required to choose Kadima-approved *madrichim*. This is discussed fully in “The Roles of the *Madrich/ah* and the Torah Tutor” later in this section.

The B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator will arrange meetings so that informed decisions regarding choice of mentor can be made.

Additional tutelage is required for learning the trope to chant one's Torah portion, learning the chanting of the Torah portion itself, and learning to chant prayers. This is not covered in Kadima's Hebrew program. The B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator can help refer you to appropriate tutors; again, see “The Roles of the *Madrich/ah* and the Torah Tutor” later in this section.

At Kadima, students will have as similar a *bat/bar mitzvah* experience as is practical, regardless of family background or the nature of that family's Jewish practice. The only area of divergence for the students will be in each student's individual preparation for the ceremony itself, and the design of the service, based on the theistic or non-theistic character or desires of the student and family.

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During this important time, families are expected to be involved in Kadima activities, as much as their family situations allow. It is especially important to attend the *bat* and *bar mitzvah* ceremonies of Kadima schoolmates that occur during the student's two-year *b'nei mitzvah* program.

## Study Elements of the Program

The program's eight elements are addressed in Judaic Studies class (Sunday School), Hebrew class, *b'nei mitzvah* class, and the 18 *Mitzvot* program.

### Judaic and B'nei Mitzvah Study

In addition to the regular Kadima course work in Judaic Studies class, students attend an additional *b'nei mitzvah* class for two years. The course of study in this class reflects:

- Reviewing *bar/bat mitzvah* from a variety of perspectives.
- Viewing the Torah as the central document of the Jewish people, focusing on:
  - skills in critical thinking
  - knowledge of Jewish tradition and analysis
  - ethical, spiritual, and ritual problems, including conflict resolution
  - social action and confrontation of injustice in the Prophetic tradition
- Basic discussion of religious and secular Judaism, including examination of various "movements" within the Jewish community.
- Study of spirituality and ritual, especially as expressed by Shabbat prayer.
- Helping individuals and communities through *mitzvot*.
- Encouraging participation in community observances.
- Encouraging mutual support for each student's ceremony.

### Language Study

Hebrew has been the unifying language for Jews around the world and it is the language of Israel and much of Jewish spiritual life. It is the gateway to other Jewish languages, including Yiddish and Ladino. Kadima ceremonies are expected to have some Jewish language component. The goal of the Hebrew classes is to enable students to easily use Hebrew skills during their ceremonies and to have a richer Jewish identity.

The Hebrew program is designed to create proficiency in writing and reading the Hebrew alphabet and providing an understanding of basic vocabulary terms. The *b'nei mitzvah* program and Hebrew classes are open to all students, regardless of whether they intend to have a *bar/bat mitzvah* ceremony. If a student already has knowledge of Hebrew at the required proficiency as determined by the Education Director, the classes may be waived. All Kadima students who intend to have a ceremony must attend regular Kadima Hebrew classes. Any exceptions must be approved by the Education Director.

### Individual Study

Each student and her/his family will work with a *madrich/ah* in preparation for his/her ceremony. The student's individual study will develop a deeper understanding of the material offered in the classroom. Some of the elements of the 18 *Mitzvot* program (see Section VI) include components for the student to do on her/his own or within the family. Parents are encouraged to join their children in this learning process.

Students usually study the Torah portion for their *bar/bat mitzvah* service. The Torah portion may be read, chanted, or a combination of both. (This learning component is not covered in Kadima's Hebrew program; see "The Roles of the *Madrich/ah* and the Torah Tutor" later in this section.)



## The 18 *Mitzvot* Program

This is a series of required activities, which demonstrate Jewish and universal ethical values. The number “18” in Jewish numerology represents the word "*chai*" or life (*chet* is the eighth letter in the Hebrew alphabet; *yod* is the tenth). Some of the requirements below will be done by the student alone and others will best be accomplished within the *b'nei mitzvah* class *havurah* (friendship circle) as group activities. All of the requirements need to be completed by the end of the student's seventh grade year at Kadima or the end of the second year of *b'nei mitzvah* class.

The 18 *mitzvot* are grouped into seven categories:

*Tzedakah* - sharing resources (2 required)

*Tza'ar ba'alei cha'im* - empathy for other living things (1 required)

*Mishpacha* - family and self (3 required)

*Gimilut chasadim* - deeds of love and compassion (2 required)

*Kehillah* (community) building - for a strong, active, local Jewish community (3 required)

*Tikkun olam* - world repair, including pursuits of peace and justice (1 required)

*Bein adam l'makom* - acts of spiritual mindfulness (1 required)

Among these categories, there are twelve required elements (denoted by \*\*\* in the checklist in Section VI of this handbook), plus additional optional elements. The student will choose an additional six from these categories to complete the 18 *mitzvot*. To help the student and family to ensure that all of the requirements are met, the *mitzvot* are presented in checklist form at the end of this handbook, along with space for the student's signature indicating completion.

### Typical Education Toward Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Age	Judaic Studies Class	Hebrew Class	B'nei Mitzvah Prep
Pre-K to 2nd grade	Sunday school		
3rd grade	Sunday school	Hebrew <i>Aleph</i>	
4th grade	Sunday school	Hebrew <i>Bet</i>	
5th grade	Sunday school	Hebrew <i>Gimmel</i>	
6th grade	Sunday school	Hebrew <i>Dalet</i>	<i>B'nei Mitzvah Aleph</i>
7th grade	Sunday school		<i>B'nei Mitzvah Bet</i> Work with <i>madrichim</i> Torah study*

\* Torah study tutor is arranged privately; see “The Roles of the Madrich/ah and the Torah Tutor” later in this section.

#### Determining Costs

Standard fees are applied for Judaic Studies class and *b'nei mitzvah* class. These costs do not include Torah tutoring, or any separate celebration costs, such as catering and facility rental, that are associated with the family event.

To help families plan for celebration costs, Kadima keeps a resource notebook in the library. Families of other students, especially those in the prior year, are also very helpful. Some facilities offer discount rates to Kadima. Before making a reservation, check with the office to see if Kadima can help reduce your costs.

Kadima is committed to providing resources to all families enrolled in the program. Access to *bar/bat mitzvah* preparation at Kadima will be provided regardless of family income. Families should take all costs into account in determining whether they need to apply for a scholarship. The Kadima Discretionary Fund is available to ensure that **any** family can participate in the full *b'nei mitzvah* program.

#### Monthly Time Commitment

Within the *b'nei mitzvah* program, the approximate time commitment per month is:

8 hours combined Judaic Studies class and *b'nei mitzvah* class

4 hours Hebrew class

2 hours (approximate) community service or 18 *Mitzvot* program fulfillment

Total: 14 hours per month approx.

This time estimate does **not** include field trips, summer activity, meetings with the *madrich/ah*, Torah tutoring, or any additional tutoring the student might need.

### ***Approximate Planning Timetable***

1st year of study	Plan group activities to accomplish many of the required <i>mitzvot</i> .
18 to 12 months ahead	Choose date, <i>madrich/ah</i> , and Torah tutor. Kadima will reserve the Kadima Torah for your date.
12 to 9 months ahead of service/ceremony date	Prepare guest list. Reserve ceremony location. Begin meetings with <i>madrich/ah</i> and Torah tutor. Begin tutoring sessions for Torah portion, prayers, and <i>d'var Torah</i> .
8 to 6 months ahead	Plan music.
6 months ahead	Plan food.
3 to 2 months ahead	Start sending out-of-town invitations.
2 months	Send rest of invitations (make RSVP for 3 to 4 weeks ahead of event). Arrange announcement in Kadima Weekly Update. Reconfirm facility, food, music. Plan flowers, decorations. B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator will assess progress with <i>madrich/ah</i> .
1 to 2 months ahead	Place "Jewish Transcript" announcement and photo (if desired). Decide on content for the supplement to the <i>siddur</i> .
1 month ahead	Have content approved by the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator.
1 month to 2 weeks ahead	Tally RSVPs, finalize all arrangements. Print service program, supplement.
Week before the event	Arrangements for picking up Torah, ark, and other ritual items. Schedule at least one practice session with the Torah, if student is reading from the Torah.
Day of event	Set aside a place at the ceremony location for Kadima materials. Set aside a place at the ceremony location for gift collection.

## The Roles of the *Madrich/ah* and the Torah Tutor

The *madrich/ah* is the person whom you hire to guide the student through the entire process of preparing for the ceremony. The family (may also) hire a separate Torah tutor who meets regularly with the student to teach the Hebrew of the portion and the prayers for the service.

### The *Madrich/ah*

The role of the *madrich/ah* is to:

- Prepare the student for the *bat/bar mitzvah*, instilling a strong sense of *kavanah* (direction) and *tachlis* (focus).
- Evaluate the student's readiness as the *bat/bar mitzvah* service date approaches.
- Work as an advisor to the student on the student's presentation (*d'var Torah*) to be given during the service.
- Strengthen and expand the experience for the family generally, and specifically work with the family on preparation of the *siddur* (prayer book) and sequence of the service (meeting a minimum of eight times (approximately 8-12 hours) with the family and student).
- Lead or facilitate the *bat/bar mitzvah* service.

Kadima recognizes the diversity of our community, and provides a list of *madrachim* who offer distinctive and varied perspectives. Some of the *madrachim* who have worked with Kadima over the years are ordained rabbis. Others are laypeople with broad Jewish knowledge and a commitment to Jewish life. All are selected for their ability to work well with students and their families.

You may make initial phone contact before setting up a time to sit down in person and meet with a *madrich/ah* on our list to learn more about the individual and his or her philosophies. You are interviewing the individual to see if he or she is a fit with your child and your family. Students are strongly encouraged to attend these sessions, because they will be working closely with their chosen *madrachim*, and personality or philosophical conflicts may otherwise arise. Differences in approach to liturgy and to God will be very apparent.

Each family selects the *madrich/ah* who best meets the needs and philosophies of the family and student. Once a start date has been agreed on, the *madrich/ah*, student, and family meet to design and organize the ceremony. The *madrich/ah* and student then meet regularly to prepare the parts of the service and the *d'var Torah*.

Each *madrich/ah* will have his/her own fee schedule, possibly including a separate fee for leading the actual service; be clear about any details prior to contracting for services.

### The Torah Tutor

In addition to working with a *madrich/ah*, families will typically also hire a tutor to help the student learn to read the various parts of the service that he/she is responsible for.

The role of the Torah tutor is to:

- Assist the student in learning his/her Torah portion (and *haftarah* portion, if chosen).
- Teach any Hebrew *tefillot* (prayers) and *brachot* (blessings) that remain to be learned for the service.

- For students who plan to chant part or all of their portion, teach the trope cantillation (the proper notes to sing) for the words of their portion.

Kadima has a list of tutors from which the families can choose. The B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator can advise families on the skills of each tutor. Families pay the tutor directly for the lessons. If the family chooses to use another Jewish language (Ladino or Yiddish), the Education Director can also help with finding those tutors.

### **Variations**

Depending on particular circumstances, variations on these arrangement can be made by a family. For example, a *madrich/ah* can also serve as Torah tutor if he/she is qualified and has the time to take on all these responsibilities. Some students might need extra time to prepare, and the Torah tutor could be asked to fill some aspects of the mentoring role. Alternatively, roles might be further divided. A Torah tutor might not be prepared to teach trope cantillation, for instance, necessitating an additional tutor for a short time; or a family might wish to have a qualified family friend officiate at the service rather than the *madrich/ah*. If you are considering such a variation, discuss it with the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator when you are determining your *madrich/ah*.

#### IV. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Service

The service is the culmination of all the hard work described above. It is planned by the student and family, with support from Kadima and the Kadima community. The service typically occurs as a Shabbat or *Havdalah* service. Torah may also be read on Mondays and Thursdays. Kadima *b'nei mitzvah* services are open to the community. Each family is strongly encouraged to extend individual invitations to the student's *b'nei mitzvah* classmates, as well as to the student's current and former Kadima teachers and Kadima staff.

The ceremony may be traditional or secular. Minimum requirements include:

- Celebration of Shabbat.
- A Torah reading by the student in Hebrew, appropriate to the nearest holiday or the Torah portion of the week of the service (as determined by the *madrich/ah* and student).
- Presentation of a project or speech reflecting the student's Jewish identity, the meaning of that Torah portion, a discussion of a *mitzvah*, or other appropriate content. (This may be done as a speech or using artistic expression of various appropriate applications.)
- Locations have to be accessible to our community and "appropriate" for a contemplative, Jewish service.
- The custom at Kadima is for participants to wear *tallitot* when reading Torah at the *bima*, and Jewish men would be wearing *kippot* (women also have that option).
- Use of the Kadima Machzor or an alternative that is approved by the B'Nei Mitzvah coordinator.

The family leads *kiddush* by providing wine and/or juice and *challah* (bread), and, along with the community, saying blessings over these ceremonial foods. Any other food provided is \*optional, but should be kosher style (no pork, shellfish, or dishes mixing meat and dairy together). It is customary for an *oneg Shabbat* or Sabbath ritual food to be provided for all guests following the ceremony.

\* Bar/Bat Mitzvah Event Food Policy:

If the *oneg*, *kiddush*, and/or meal directly follows the service and shares the same location space, the family hosting the event needs to adhere to the Kadima food policy in observance at that time. The family celebrating the bat/bar mitzvah is responsible for ensuring that any caterer utilized is shown and is familiar with the Kadima food policy.

If the *oneg*, *kiddush*, and/or meal are held at a later time and/or at a separate location from the Kadima bar or bat mitzvah service, then it may be considered a family event and not a Kadima event, therefore Kadima's food policy would not apply. However, it is strongly recommended that the family considers the food policy and its inclusive intent.

The Kadima Food Policy, 2011:

Food at any event is limited to Vegetarian/Dairy/Fish only, or Meat/no dairy (pareve) only. Events will be designated "Vegetarian" or "Meat" ahead of time to let families know what is appropriate. Meat meals will always have a vegetarian (nondairy) option available.

Families often plan additional parties, community events, or family gatherings after the *kiddush/oneg*. Your family may choose to invite only a subset of those you have invited to the service. To avoid

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awkwardness and misunderstandings, it is best to hold the reception or party at a separate location, other than where the ceremony takes place.

Kadima members honor their *madrach/ah*; consider thanking her/him with a gift or a donation in her/his name after the celebration is completed.

Consider making *tzedakah* (charity) part of your event.

### **Date Availability**

The date for your child's ceremony should be set as far in advance as possible, but please be flexible. Date assignments for the *bar/bat mitzvah* ceremony will be made in conjunction with Kadima. For the sake of the community and staff, dates will be scheduled with consideration of other students' *bar/bat mitzvah* dates. Kadima events, holidays, and other celebrations may interfere with your preferred date.

### **Photography Policy**

Kadima services are community gatherings whose purpose is grounded in spirituality and celebration. Services are not performances.

Photography will be allowed provided it is done in a discreet manner that honors the purpose of our services. The least intrusive way to do this is to ask your photographer (family, friend, or professional) to either set his/her video camera on a tripod and let it run throughout the service, or if taking still photos, to take a seat in the front row, and sit there and take the photos from one spot. Moving around and the use of flash bulbs cause distractions and interrupt the service and the mood of Shabbat and will not be permitted.

The family celebrating the bat/bar mitzvah is responsible for ensuring that any photographer utilized is shown and is familiar with the Kadima photography policy.

### **Involvement of Community in the Event**

Becoming *bat/bar mitzvah* means becoming involved in community practice. Kadima strongly encourages families to make efforts to involve the community in the service. Here are some suggestions:

- Additional Torah reader/s
- Community singing
- Responsive reading
- Kadima classmates sharing some of the readings, English or Hebrew
- Honoring some community members with a place on the *bima* (stage)
- Acknowledgments within the service
- Aliyah for Kadima teachers or classmates who are already a bar or bat mitzvah
- Other ritual practices

When these steps are taken, the natural anxiety and stage fright that might be felt by the *bar/bat mitzvah* can be reduced. He/she will gain and feel the support of friends, family, and community. The emphasis should not be on "performance," but on community.

### **Leftovers**

Food Lifeline (206-545-6567) can arrange to have leftovers picked up after your event. They will send a refrigerated van if you make arrangements **before** the event. Some homeless shelters and soup kitchens also accept leftover food. Make sure that whoever is handling procurement and preparation of



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the food understands the arrangement prior to the day of the event and agrees with your plans for leftovers.

**Other Tzedakah**

A national Jewish organization, *Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger* encourages families to donate 3% of the cost of their event to help feed the hungry. Contact *Mazon* at 310-442-0020, [www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org), or 1990 South Bundy Dr., Suite 260, Los Angeles, CA 90025.

## V. Expectations and Requirements

**Kadima Membership:** Students must be current members of Kadima and must have paid all relevant tuition fees or have a current payment agreement in order for the *bat/bar mitzvah* ceremony to occur. Students are expected to enroll in Kadima's Judaic Studies program, plus the additional *b'nei mitzvah* program, and other *b'nei mitzvah* activities detailed in this handbook.

**Family Involvement:** Families are expected to be involved in Kadima activities, as noted earlier. Families are asked to make the group events and their young person's Jewish education a priority during this process. It is especially important for *b'nei mitzvah* families to attend the *bat* and *bar mitzvah* ceremonies of the others that occur during the student's two-year *b'nei mitzvah* program, and to help other *b'nei mitzvah* families with tasks to be done before and on the day of the *bar/bat mitzvah* ceremony.

**School Enrollment:** New Kadima students enroll for a minimum of two school years, except when they have already demonstrated substantial Jewish educational experience. The Education Director determines the sufficiency of that experience. In the case of an exemption where the student demonstrates substantial Jewish educational experience, the student must complete two full school years of the Kadima Judaic Studies program, as well as the *b'nei mitzvah* program prior to her/his *bat/bar mitzvah*. Following their *bat/bar mitzvah*, all *b'nei mitzvah* students must continue their participation in these programs during the school year within which their *bat/bar mitzvah* service falls.

**Hebrew Class Enrollment:** Students typically begin Hebrew classes in the third grade, five years prior to their *b'nei mitzvah* year. Older students who are new to Kadima can explore tutoring if they want to catch up to their class level. Families who wish to have their student tutored outside of the normal scheduled Hebrew class times must have their tutor and situation approved by the Education Director. Otherwise, students are required to attend the Kadima Hebrew sessions.

**Homework and Attendance:** Students complete all homework assignments. Good attendance is required. At least 70% of all classes must be attended. In the event of absence, the student is required to make up assignments.

**18 Mitzvot Program:** All students participate in the program's community service projects.

**Madrichim:** All students work with a Kadima-approved *madrich/ah* a minimum of eight times.

**Service Attendance:** Students are required to attend at least five Shabbat or holiday services each year of the two-year program. This counts as part of the 18 *Mitzvot* program.

**Family Contract:** The parent or guardian, and the student, will read and sign the family contract.

**Inviting the Community:** Parents are strongly encouraged to extend individual invitations to each of the student's *b'nei mitzvah* classmates. An invitation to the whole Kadima community to join in the service will be published in the Kadima Newsletter, noted in the Weekly Updates, and posted on the Kadima website, [www.kadima.org](http://www.kadima.org). However, it should be anticipated that, as in a traditional synagogue service, some Kadima members who do not RSVP might appear at the service. They are welcome to attend the service and *Kiddush/oneg*, although they should not plan to attend any party held afterward.

**Kadima at Service:** Families are expected to make space available to display Kadima information at the service. It is encouraged that families include Kadima members as integral parts of the service. A short time must be incorporated at the end of the service for Kadima presentations of certificates, gifts, and announcements.

## VI. 18 *Mitzvot* Program Checklist

To help the student and family ensure that all of the requirements of the 18 *Mitzvot* are met, the *mitzvot* are presented here in checklist form. The eleven required elements are denoted by \*\*\*. The student will choose an additional six from the additional optional elements in these categories to complete the 18 *mitzvot*.

### ***Tzedakah* (Charitable Giving)**

- \*\*\*1. Over ten months, put aside *tzedakah* money (generally a coin a week into a special box) for #2 below.
- \*\*\*2. Research two organizations, one Jewish, one "general", both serving a diversity of people, as your *tzedakah* recipients. Before your ceremony, send each group half of your accumulated *tzedakah* money with a letter explaining why you chose them. (Keep copies of the letters.)

### ***Tza'ar Ba'alei Cha'im* (Respect for All Life)**

- \*\*\*1. Volunteer for a project meant to maintain or better the environment (recycling, clean-up, replanting, etc.) for a minimum of four hours.
- 2. Take sole responsibility for an animal (can be a pet) for a minimum of four weeks.

### ***Mishpacha* (Family and Self)**

- \*\*\*1. Learn your Jewish name(s) in Hebrew, Yiddish, or Ladino, as appropriate, or work with your family to choose one.  
  
Ask your parents how and why you were given your name(s) and find the meanings of your name(s). If you were named after someone, find out more about that person (pictures, stories).  
  
Write at least one paragraph about what you have learned about your name.
- \*\*\*2. Create a family tree. Interview family members. Where did they come from? When were they born? Find stories and recollections about their youth, work, etc. If they emigrated from another country, try to find the circumstances about why they left their birthplace. What were the trends that influenced their lives? How do they/did they feel about their Jewish identities (if Jewish)? If not Jewish, how has having Jewish family members affected them?
- \*\*\*3. Participate in or lead at least four Jewish *seders* or rituals. (These can include Shabbat services, blessings after meals, or specific holiday observances.)  
  
 You can repeat this option once (an additional **four** rituals) in order to be counted as an additional *mitzvah*, if you wish.
- 4. Learn to prepare two traditional Jewish dishes.
- 5. Make one of your own: *challah* cover, *tallit* (prayer shawl), *tallit* bag, *matzah* cover, *tzedakah* container, *kipah* (head covering), or other Jewish art or creation.
- 6. Read a book about a Jewish person and write a short report.



**Gimilut Chasadim (Acts of Loving-Kindness and Activism)**

- \*\*\*1. Visit an elderly person, a homeless person, a new immigrant, or group at least two times. Assist with simple chores, read, talk, help with entertainment, etc. Write a paragraph about what you enjoyed and learned as a result of the visits you made.
- 2. Tutor another person for at least four hours in a skill that you know well. Write a paragraph explaining what the skill was and what you learned by tutoring someone else in that skill.
- 3. Become a Jewish pen-pal with a young person in another part of the world, writing once a month for ten months.
- 4. Make and deliver a *shaloch manot* (food or help basket) to non-family elderly or poor, or gather the equivalent cost for the Kosher Food Bank, or donate at least three hours time at a local food bank or soup kitchen. Write a paragraph explaining what you did and what you learned.
- 5. Meet and interview an activist in a Jewish organization serving the community (old age home, free loan society, social services, etc.). What is the goal of their group? What does the organization do? What problems and successes have they had? What is their need for volunteer help? (Can young people assist?) Write a paragraph about the organization and its needs, and how a volunteer might help.
- 6. Do the same as #5 for a "general" community activist group.

**Local Kehillah (Community) Building**

- \*\*\*1. Help with at least two *Kadima* community events.  
 (Each event counts as one mitzvah.)
- 2. Attend or participate in at least one Jewish event with young people from other parts of the Jewish community.
- 3. Attend a service at a congregation, synagogue, or the Jewish Secular Circle at least two times.
- 4. Attend a rally, class, lecture, workshop, or demonstration with a theme consistent with Kadima values and principles.
- 5. Help to staff a Kadima or other Jewish organization information table at an event.

**Tikkun Olam (World Repair)**

- \*\*\* 1. Participate in a fundraising effort on behalf of: a worthy cause in Israel; or oppressed Jewry (outside the U.S.); or local needy; or peace building.
- \*\*\* 2. Become actively engaged in a project which embodies the value of *tikkun olam*. Projects may benefit the Jewish community or the general community. Example of projects may include but not limited to: participate in a social or economic justice campaign, help organize a justice-related event/rally/meeting, start a collection drive of a specific item for a specific need of a specific community, make a poster to educate others about this cause; become trained as a Friendship Circle volunteer and join their Mitzvah Volunteer Program (MVP).

- 3. Get involved with, or start at your school, an anti-bullying club, a gay-straight-student alliance, or some other student oriented club that brings students together with compassion and understanding and a goal of educating others.
- 4. Write a letter to your state representative about a local issue that you would like to see corrected, or an issue you want to encourage your representative to vote on one way or the other.  
You may also begin a petition or a letter writing campaign about this issue.
- 5. Attend a Plant-for-the-Planet academy and become trained as a Climate Change Ambassador.
- 6. Some other idea not on this list.

***Bein adam l'Makom (Acts of Spiritual Mindfulness)***

- \*\*\*1. Take on an ongoing practice of a particular Jewish observance. For example:
  - A piece of Shabbat observance, such as lighting candles on Friday evenings, *Havdalah* on Saturday evenings, or not spending money on Shabbat.
  - A prayer practice, such as taking a short time for prayer or expression of gratitude in the morning or at night.
  - A food practice, such as saying some words of blessing or gratitude before eating, or taking on a piece of *kashrut* (examples are not eating shellfish or pork).
  - Some other idea not on this list!

I have completed all 18 *Mitzvot*:

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(Student's signature)

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(Date)