



הסוכנות היהודית
JEWISH AGENCY
FOR ISRAEL ישראל



PARTNERSHIP
2GETHER
THE JEWISH AGENCY
PEOPLEHOOD PLATFORM

Bar/Bat Mitzva With Friends

A Jewish Masa Around the World

Teacher's Guide



Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism

התנועה הרפורמית יהדות מתקדמת בישראל

RATIONALE

“Every person is just one letter of the alphabet, and only when he connects to another, a word is born....”

(Based on the book: “Benjamin’s Travels”)

Research studies indicate that during recent decades, the connection between Diaspora Jewry and Israel is becoming blurred and diminished. For many Diaspora Jews, the relationship with the Jewish collective is perceived as less meaningful. This situation is particularly salient among Jewish American young people, who did not experience the immigration of earlier generations and lack family ties to Jews who do not live in their close surroundings.

This experience is not unique to Jewish American youth. In Israel, Jewish youth feel distanced from American Jewish youth. Studies conducted in Israel indicate that 69% of those questioned believe that Jews in Israel and Jews from around the world are two separate nations.

The Jewish lifecycle features a number of stations that facilitate a meaningful connection to the Jewish people. Bar/Bat mitzvah is one of those stations. This is a time of personal and social declaration with regard to one’s affiliation and belonging to the Jewish people. This affiliation is not automatic for Jewish youth who live in the Diaspora. The program Bar/Bat Mitzvah with friends- the Jewish Masa around the world - considers the Bar/Bat mitzvah period to be a unique opportunity to develop, strengthen and expand the relationship and affiliation to the Jewish people, to Jewish peoplehood and to Israel through a living bridge between the youth.

The program Bar/Bat Mitzva with friends- A Jewish Masa around the world – enables participants to experience their bar/bat mitzvah together, to learn about the way each of them celebrates this event, to recognize their shared and individual responsibility as Jews living in different places around the world, and together, to build relationships from among the future generation of the Jewish people.

Program Goals

- A. Students will personally examine the meaning of belonging to the Jewish people.
- B. Students will examine the significance of their bar/bat mitzvah for their identity and their personal perception.
- C. Students will be introduced to the things that are similar and different between them and their peers in the Diaspora.
- D. Students will gain practical experience in a social justice – Tikun Olam – project.
- E. Students will celebrate their Bar/Bat mitzvah year in a meaningful fashion, while getting to know peers from Israel.

Program Structure

The Jewish Masa around the world offers an opportunity to learn about Jewish peoplehood, in three diverse units, each unit is comprised of two lessons.

First Unit – Jewish Identity

This unit deals with the issue of Jewish identity and its meaning, in general and specifically as it relates to the bar/bat mitzvah.

1st Session

The first session is the gateway to dealing with the subject of Jewish identity. Therefore, the session almost completely deals with the students' personal exploration regarding their affiliation to the Jewish people at bar/bat mitzvah age.

2nd Session

In this session, the participants expand their points of view and learn about the feelings of the students from Israel.

Second Unit – Individuals Who Become a People

This unit deals with the question of 'Who are the Jewish People?' 'Beyond our being individuals and families, what does our affiliation to a people mean?'

1st Session

The first session enables the students to cope with situations in which they act either as individuals or as a group, to examine the differences between the two situations and to discuss their significance. In addition, the participants will be introduced to the definitions and characteristics of the term - people.

2nd Session

During this session, the participants will examine what happens to a people as it forms and the significance of a physical place in the context of a people. We will ask them how they perceive the affiliation to the Jewish people for Jews living in the Diaspora and how the Israeli students perceive the affiliation of world Jewry to the Jewish people.

Third Unit – Partnership – Brotherhood

This unit deals with the joint responsibility of the two schools for Tikun Olam facing their bar/bat mitzvah.

1st Session

This session deals with the influence of individuals and groups working together and their contribution to the extended Jewish world.

2nd Session

During the session, these students will participate in a joint Tikun Olam project.

Video Conference Unit

A virtual session that will allow the participants to meet in real time and to further their acquaintance.

To explore the possibility of participating in the program, contact:

The Jewish Agency for Israel - email: schools2gether@jafi.org; Tel: 03-7453505

The Education Division at the Reform Movement: email: Hinuch@reform.org.il;
Tel: 04-8300560