Beyond Zoom-Mitzvah: A conversation for clergy about the 2020-2021 year

July 22, 2020
Who Are You?

- Name
- Organization and it’s location
- What is the most creative or meaningful thing (big or small!) that you have seen a family do at a b’nai mitzvah since the pandemic began?
What is our mission?

MOVING TRADITIONS emboldens teens by fostering self-discovery, challenging sexism, and inspiring a commitment to Jewish life and learning.
Moving Traditions: What do we do?

• We research and design informal Jewish educational experiences that reflect insights from social-emotional learning and positive youth development models, and pilot test them to ensure that they work in different contexts.

• We train educators, volunteers, and others who work with adolescents to re-create these experiences.

• We study the impact of these experiences and help build the field of informal Jewish education.
Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies

- **Self-Management**: Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals
- **Self-Awareness**: Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations
- **Social Awareness**: Showing understanding and empathy for others
- **Responsible Decision-Making**: Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior
- **Relationship Skills**: Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict

Moving Traditions
Positive Youth Development

- **Connection**: A feeling of safety, structure, and belonging; positive bonds with people and social institutions.
- **Confidence**: A sense of self-worth and mastery; having a belief in one’s capacity to succeed.
- **Competence**: The ability to act effectively in school, in social situations, and at work.
- **Character**: Taking responsibility; a sense of independence and individuality; connection to principles and values.
- **Contribution**: Active participation and leadership in a variety of settings; making a difference.
- **Caring**: Sympathy and empathy for others; commitment to social justice.

Tasks of Adolescence

1. Adjusting to sexually maturing bodies and feelings
2. Developing abstract thinking
3. Learning about human relationships
4. Refining skills to cope with conflict
5. Exploring identity
6. Grasping complex emotions
7. Forming authentic friendships
8. Fulfilling responsibilities
9. Identifying values - both personal and communal
Our Programs

B’hai Mitzvah
Rosh Hodesh
Shevet
Tzelem
Kol Koleinu
12 Year-olds...

- Struggle with sense of identity
- Can be enthusiastic at some times; lethargic at other times
- Friendships beyond same-gender friendships become important - Inclusion/exclusion; height of cliques, seek to belong
- Complain that parents interfere with independence
- More likely to express feelings by actions than words
- Peer vocabulary (slang) important
- Less overt affection and attention shown to parents, with occasional rudeness; test limits
- Impulsive, unaware
- Experience extremes of emotions, moodiness
- Experimenting with behavior, roles, appearance, self-image
- Difficulty with decisions but need to be able to make some choices for themselves
- Demand privileges, but may avoid responsibilities
- Feel unique; believe that no one else has ever felt the way they do; suffered so much, or been so misunderstood

Moving Traditions
Our Philosophy About B’nai Mitzvah

- **B’nai Mitzvah as a transition moment – from childhood to teenager.** A psychological, developmental milestone that requires careful thought and guidance.
- Our goal is to generate conversations between parents and their children around this crucial life cycle transition.
- Clergy and educators can help families talk about the interpersonal challenges of the b’nai mitzvah celebration itself– family dynamics, being the center of attention, the role of friends, social and gender codes, etc.
- In doing so, clergy and educators can help families with the social and emotional issues of becoming and parenting a new teenager and provide them with a supportive community context.
Yehudah ben Teima used to say:
Five years is the age for the study of scripture, Ten is the age for the study of Mishnah, Thirteen is the age for observing the mitzvot, Fifteen is the age for the study of Talmud, Eighteen is the age for the wedding canopy, Twenty is the age for pursuit, Thirty is the age for full strength, Forty is the age for understanding, Fifty is the age for giving counsel, Sixty is the age for mature age, Seventy is the age for a grey head, Eighty is the age for superadded strength, Ninety is the age for a bending stature, One hundred is the age at which one is as if dead, passed away, and ceased from the world.
(Pirkei Avot, 2nd century, Israel)

What is our modern-day version of this text?
What People Have Said:

“People came together – and left more satisfied and happy than with most of the things we do. The Moving Traditions family session hit a sweet spot, at the exact moment people needed it.”
– Education Director, Los Angeles

I liked how me and my mom communicated about what we think is important as a host to remember and bonded talking about how we agree and found we have much in common about what we think is important “
– Preteen, Chicago

“As a result of the session, we decided to change my daughter's Hebrew name to one that we decided together was more meaningful. We wouldn't have done that if we hadn't had the group discussion about the meaning of everyone's name!”
– 6th grade parent, New York
Parent Evaluations

N= 664

75% said “This session helped me understand adolescent issues as part of the b’nai mitzvah experience”

85% said “Today's session helped me feel like I am a part of a Jewish community that supports me as a parent”

80% said “I would recommend this program to other families going through b'nai mitzvah”
## Preteen Evaluations

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<tr>
<th>N=520 (20% said “I don’t know”)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66% said “This session helped me understand how b'nai mitzvah is connected to becoming a teen”</td>
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<td>70% said “Today's session helped me feel like I am a part of a Jewish community that supports who I am”</td>
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<td>62% said I would recommend this session to other people having a B'nai Mitzvah</td>
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Program Overview

- Our program model asks for partners to run a minimum of 2 family sessions and 4 preteen sessions per grade.

- Each Family Session ....
  - Is written as a 1 hour program online (or 90 minutes in-person)
  - Has time where parents/preteens are together and time where they are separated
  - Minimum of two facilitators are needed (1 for parents, 1 for preteens or more if it is a larger group)

- Each Preteen Session ....
  - Is written as a 1 hour program (online or in-person)
  - Requires a facilitator that is good with generating conversation with this age group
# Program Outline: The Full Model

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>6th Grade</th>
<th>7th Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Session 1</strong></td>
<td>B’nai Mitzvah: Why am I doing this?</td>
<td>Fitting in &amp; Standing Out: How will I navigate the teen years?</td>
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<td><strong>Family Session 2</strong></td>
<td>“Today you are an adult”: What does it mean to become a teen?</td>
<td>“You just don’t understand”: How do parents and teens talk to each other?</td>
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<td><strong>Family Session 3</strong></td>
<td>Repairing the World: What’s a Mitzvah?</td>
<td>Now what?: Deepening friendships and creating community</td>
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<td><strong>Family Session 4</strong></td>
<td>How to Connect when you’re never apart</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preteen Session 1</strong></td>
<td>Growing up</td>
<td>Teen Stuff</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preteen Session 2</strong></td>
<td>Center of Attention</td>
<td>Making Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preteen Session 3</strong></td>
<td>Looking Good, Feeling Good</td>
<td>Life Online</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preteen Session 4</strong></td>
<td>Simcha: Where’s your joy?</td>
<td>Money &amp; Gifts</td>
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2020 Online B’nai Mitzvah Training

• Mark your calendars now for training
• Decide who else needs to be at this training
• We STRONGLY encourage you to have as many people as possible attend the training. This includes yourselves as well as the classroom teachers.

Training will take place on the Zoom platform. There are two session options:

**Session 1: Tuesday, August 25th**
2:00pm-5:00pm EST / 11:00am-2:00pm PST

**Session 2: Thursday, September 3rd**
12:30pm-3:30pm EST / 9:30am-12:30pm PST

For our partner sites, the cost is $75 per site, for all participants.
Questions?