



KEDEM'S B'NEI MITZVAH PROGRAMME - AN OUTLINE 2018

INTRODUCTION

Kedem's B'nei Mitzvah program was designed some years ago by Kedem families whose children were approaching their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. As we are a lay led community, without a permanent Rabbi, parents felt empowered to create a program that they felt optimized this unique opportunity to engage their children in a journey of Jewish exploration.

We encourage families to personalize their B'nei Mitzvah service, and we have many suggestions for how this can be achieved!

Kedem's B'nei Mitzvah program has evolved over the years, depending on parent input, but the essential goals remains the same:

1. To create age appropriate opportunities for our young people to explore issues related to Jewish:

- identity
- heritage
- literacy
- practice

2. For our young people to explore what it means to live as a Jew in Australia today

3. For our young people to see themselves as empowered to have agency in the world

We work towards these goals by giving B'nei Mitzvah youth the skills and tools to be competent and confident Jews in the synagogue, in the Jewish community at large and in the broader non-Jewish community.

We engage with text, Jewish liturgy, theology, history and thought.

We ask our B'nei Mitzvah youth to think about their personal and spiritual development and about how to be effective in the sphere of social action.

This is all framed by the context of being part of the Kedem community where B'nei Mitzvah youth are welcomed and valued as capable members of the community. We see the notion of Jewish practice being a communal activity, and our intention is that families will see themselves as being part of the Kedem community.

INTRODUCING KEDEM (Kehillat David Hamelech)

Kedem is a lay led Progressive Jewish community which was founded in 1994.

- We endeavor to create an inclusive, warm, creative, and joyous Jewish environment. We hold Shabbat morning services at The King David School, **Magid Campus, 517 Orrong Road, Armadale Victoria**, on: the 1st and 3rd Shabbatot of each month; a more meditative Jewish Renewal style Shabbat morning service in a private home on the 4th Shabbat of each month; and a Kabbalat Shabbat service and communal dinner on the 2nd Friday night of each month. In addition, we have services and celebrations for all Chaggim (Festivals).
- We support social action activities, we run a range of adult education and social functions and we provide lay leadership for life-cycle events (including funerals, minyanim and consecrations.)
- Our services and activities have traditionally been led by our members on a volunteer basis, and as such participation in the community life of Kedem is encouraged. Essentially Kedem can't run without member participation.
- In 2017 we employed a Jewish Life and Education Coordinator, Ruth Gross, to further support our Kehillah (Community). Visiting Rabbis also assist at various times.

B'NEI MITZVAH PROGRAM DETAILS

Generally Kedem B'nei Mitzvah students have two components to their preparation: individual and group learning.

Individual learning:

Goals are to:

1. Teach students to be able to co-lead a Kedem Shabbat morning service. How much they do depends on the student's capacity, so it varies from student to student.
2. Teach students to chant or read some of their Torah portion
3. Assist student to write a Dvar Torah which is delivered during the Bar/Batmitzvah service.

These goals are achieved by pairing the student with one or more Kedem mentors who can cover the learning areas as described. Usually this learning is spread out over a twelve month period with lessons held every week or two. We find that through this process we can tailor learning to students' individual needs, interests and abilities, and students can connect to the Kedem community as they build a rapport with Kedem mentors. Mentors can be adults or young adults.

Group learning:

When we have at least a few students doing B'nei Mitzvah over a 12-18 month period we run group learning sessions. These have taken different forms over the years and to some extent can be influenced by parents' and students' interests. There are also opportunities for parents to run short educational activities for the students which may occur during Shabbat morning services and demonstrate the ideal of life-long learning.

In general we have four blocks of group learning spread over a 12 - 18 month period with 3 - 4 sessions in each block. Meetings take place generally weekly for a given 3 - 4 week block and seem to involve pizza at the beginning or end!

The following are examples of what sorts of issues might be raised in the different topic areas:

1. What's a mitzvah? What does it mean to be B'nei Mitzvah? What's an appropriate way to celebrate/honour this occasion? What's growing up? Is it different if you are Jewish?

2. Tikkun Olam (repairing the world)

What is Tikkun Olam? Is it the same as social action? Repairing myself/ repairing the world.

Doing a Tikkun Olam project- individually, in pairs or as a whole group.

Sometimes Kedem B'nei Mitzvah students have participated in the Stand Up B'nei Mitzvah program for the Tikkun Olam component.

3. Spirituality and Prayer

"Can you SMS God?"

Keva and Kavanah- spontaneity vs fixed prayers. What's prayer anyway? Why pray in a language you don't understand? Is being spiritual the same as being religious?

4. Continuity and Change

Learning the basics about Progressive Judaism. How to be Jewish in the modern world.

What happens when traditional and modern views collide?

OTHER INFORMATION

Families are required to be/become members of Kedem and are expected to come to most Kedem Shabbat and Festival services in the 12 months prior to their Bar/Mat Mitzvah.

It is important that at least one family member accompanies the B'nei Mitzvah student to shule. Not only is this the best way to become familiar with the service, it's also a significant way for parents to demonstrate their support of their child's B'nei Mitzvah journey. It matters to Kedem that your family is part of our community.

COST

There is an up-front fee that contributes to administration and teaching costs.

You will also need a copy of the Mishkan T'filah siddur, (prayer book), which can be bought from the Kedem Office.

CONTACTS

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