



## **KEDEM'S B'NEI MITZVAH PROGRAMME - AN OUTLINE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kedem's B'nei Mitzvah program was originally designed by Kedem families whose children were approaching their B'nei Mitzvah, at a time when we were a completely lay-led community. Parents felt empowered to create a program to engage their children in a unique journey of Jewish exploration.

Kedem's B'nei Mitzvah program has evolved over the years and continues to evolve. We encourage families to personalize their B'nei Mitzvah learning and service, and we have many suggestions for how this can be achieved! Our essential goals have remained:

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 predominantly lay-led Progressive Jewish community which was founded in 1994.

- The Kedem community makes connecting with Judaism dynamic and joyous. We welcome people from diverse backgrounds, ages and lifestyles. We are committed to equality and progressive ideas.

- We hold Shabbat morning services three times per month. On the first and third Saturdays our services are held at The King David School, Magid Campus, 517 Orrong Road, Armadale Victoria. Service for the Soul, on the fourth Saturday of each month, is held in a member-family's home.
- We hold services and celebrations for all Chaggim (Festivals) and monthly Kabbalat Shabbat communal dinners on Friday nights throughout the year
- We support social action activities, we run a range of adult education and social functions and we provide lay leadership and civil celebrant 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 valued and encouraged.
- In 2017 we employed Ruth Gross as the Jewish Life and Education Coordinator, 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. How much they do depends on the student's capacity, so it varies from student to student.
3. Assist students to write a Dvar Torah (a reflection on their Torah portion) which is delivered during the service.

These goals are achieved by pairing the student with teachers and mentors who can cover the three learning areas as described above. Lessons take place during a year of learning, prior to the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony. We try to find teachers and mentors from within the Kedem community, however we may need to find mentors from outside Kedem, or you may have family members you wish to take some of these roles.

#### *Group learning:*

When we have a few students going through the B'nei Mitzvah program at the same time, we can run group learning sessions. These have taken different forms over the years and we welcome parent and student involvement in the planning and running of the sessions.

The following are examples of what sorts of issues might be raised in group learning:

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

“Is God on social media?”

“Kevah” 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 members of Kedem for twelve months prior to their B'nei Mitzvah ceremony and are expected to come to most Kedem Shabbat and Festival services in that time. 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 Shabbat morning 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**

Kedem’s B'nei Mitzvah fee is made up of an administration component that goes towards the work that Rosi and Ruth do behind the scenes, and a component to cover the cost of tutors and mentors.

You will also need a copy of the Mishkan T’fillah siddur, (prayer book), which can be purchased from the Kedem Office.

## **CONTACTS**

Feel welcome to be in touch with any questions. We will be with you throughout this wonderful journey.

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