

July 2017

Dear Grade 5, 6, and 7 Parents, שיחיו:

Without a doubt, one of the most significant events in your daughter's life is her **בת מצוה**. Your daughter's **בת מצוה** is not merely an occasion for an expanded birthday party; it is in fact her official "grand entry" into the world of living thoughtfully and responsibly as a Torah Jew. Hence, the event should be marked with activities that reflect the gravity and **חשיבות** (magnitude) of this auspicious occasion.

Eitz Chaim recognizes this milestone with a special, meaningful year-long curriculum. Each month, a theme pertaining to becoming a **בת מצוה** is introduced. The girls learn about a specific **מידה**, character trait, related to the monthly theme, and work on a project that further embodies and captures the subject. This program culminates at the end of the year with a beautiful mother-daughter celebration in school, featuring our **בת מצוה** girls. In addition, there is a **בת מצוה** gift program, organized by the Mothers' Association.

We recognize that many families also mark their daughter's **בת מצוה with their own celebration. We would like to share some ways that families have found to meaningfully mark the occasion:**

Just as when a boy becomes a bar mitzvah he may **לעשה** his **פרשה**, make a **סיום**, or give a **דבר תורה**, we encourage our girls to celebrate with an accomplishment as well. You may wish to extend your daughters an invitation to join you in becoming a lifelong learner. Find a **ספר** or book on Jewish values or Jewish wisdom and set aside a weekly time to learn and read a short section with your daughter, followed by a discussion. The **בת מצוה** celebration can become a **סיום** capstone to these learning sessions. Furthermore, an idea or a thought from the book can serve as the theme for the celebration, with activities revolving around the central theme. Always present

your daughters with opportunities to express the soulful aspects of their personalities.

In the months preceding the event, you may want to suggest ways for your daughter to give of her time to help others, to volunteer for worthy causes, and to channel her youthful enthusiasm positively. The מצוה בת party can be focused on her endeavors in that direction.

Another beautiful way to prepare oneself for this momentous occasion is through תפילה. Join your daughter in a daily תפילה or תהילים recitation campaign, and mark the festive day with a תפילה- or תהילים-related project.

No matter which approach you choose, make sure to guide and direct your daughter towards making her מצוה בת celebration an event which will be meaningful and memorable to her and her peers.

The following guidelines, excerpted from the Eitz Chaim Handbook, are noted below for easy reference when planning your upcoming שמחה:

The Jewish coming-of-age through a בר or מצוה בת is a significant event. While it is certainly one to be celebrated, it is also one that ought to be recognized with dignity and respect. The שמחה should primarily reflect the seriousness and holiness of the occasion. It is a time to remind the young man or woman that he or she is preparing for a future life of תורה and מצוה observance according to the highest תורה standards.

In more specific terms, any program or entertainment during the שמחה must reflect the השקפה (hashkafa) of Eitz Chaim. Therefore, the שמחה should take place at a Jewish venue, and music accompanying the שמחה should be Jewish music. If there are both men and women attending the שמחה and the girls will be dancing, there must be a מחיצה on the dance floor. No non-Jewish music, movies, shows, etc. are allowed.

Students participating at a friend's שמחה should be instructed in the proper way of conducting themselves. Remaining in shul or at the table and participating with decorum and דרך ארץ are only some of the courtesies expected of guests by their hosts. The parents hosting the שמחה should assume responsibility for supervising the students for the duration of the event.

Please make sure that all of your child's classmates are invited to the שמחה, so that no one is left out or excluded.

When you are planning a שמחה for your מצוה or -בר מצוה age child that includes his or her classmates, the הנהלה will be more than happy to assist you with any השהשקפה-related questions about your event.

Please acknowledge your understanding of Eitz Chaim's מצוה בת policy by signing and returning the form below to your daughter's מורה on the first day of school,

We thank you in advance for your cooperation regarding your daughter's milestone event. May you merit to see much Yiddishe nachas from all your children.

מדל טוב!

Mrs. Henya Schechter, Menaheles, Spring Farm

Rabbi Yuval Kernerman, Menahel, Viewmount

Rabbi Shlomo Schwartz, Head of School

I have read the Eitz Chaim מצוה בת policy letter.

Parent Signature

Date