

Theme Mitzvot



You can help to feed a hungry world!

Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah gives you opportunities to help feed hungry people in your neighborhood and around our world.

For specific project ideas and information, contact:

Naomi@goodpeoplefund.org

973 761-0580

We are blessed with abundance in the midst of a world of need.

- As a family look at: www.goodpeoplefund.org - click on the 'Education' tab, then 'for Families' from the dropdown menu. Scroll down to 'What would the Rambam Say?' and find out!
- Be certain that providers (caterers, hotels or restaurants) that supply food to your celebration donate the leftovers from all of their work.
 - Ask your synagogue leadership and administrator to put a donation provision in the synagogue contract form.
 - Research contact information on local soup kitchens and post that information in your synagogue kitchen so that congregants that are preparing for special events can donate easily.
- Invite your friends and family to work at a local soup kitchen or food pantry with you.
- Find out what local bakeries and fresh fruit and vegetable markets do with edible unsaleable items. If they are willing to donate their merchandise, find places in your community that can use the food and speak to your rabbi and/or social justice/*tikkun olam* committee chair about getting volunteers to pick up and drop-off donated items. You can't be the driver, but you can be the organizer and contact person!

- Organize a 'Virtual Food Drive' (*instructions follow*) and invite your friends and family to support your project with donations. Your gift to each of them might be a 'gift certificate' that indicates your purchase in each of their honor.
- Decorate your synagogue *bima* (with permission!) and your celebration tables with baskets of staple food items for donation. You might also provide empty decorated boxes as centerpieces that you ask guests to fill.
- Make a donation of 3% of your party's cost to *Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger* (<http://www.mazon.org>). Provide your guests with *Mazon* informational materials.
- As a gift for your guests, adopt a chronically hungry American family through Family-to-Family (<http://family-to-family.org>) and let your guests know that their gifts will be helping that family through a particular month of the upcoming year. You might mail your guests a reminder during 'their' month and remind them that they can sponsor a family themselves.
- Make a donation to variety of hunger-fighting organizations (check the Good People Fund site) and feature one at each of your celebration tables. Create centerpieces that reflect the country where each organization operates or that are thematically related to their work.
 - Some examples:
 - Support the *savtas* (grandmothers) of Beit Frankforter who provide sandwiches for hungry children in Jerusalem and make a peanut butter pyramid as a centerpiece. Donate the p.b. (and maybe some j. too!) to a local food pantry.
 - Decorate a table with pictures of the Statue of Liberty and the Lower East Side of New York City and make a donation to Project Ezra (www.projectezra.org), which enables the frail elderly to make ends meet by providing vouchers for use at the butcher and also communal Shabbat dinners.
 - Support the Bagel Brigade and make a centerpiece out of bagel pictures (no playing with real food!); then purchase and donate bagels to a local feeding program for next Sunday's breakfast. You might invite your friends to help serve the guests at the program (and bring birthday cake too!).
 - Honor those who survived the Holocaust - both Jews (www.bluecardfund.org) and Gentiles who rescued them - by providing for their food needs in their vulnerable elder years.
 - Make a donation to the Forgotten People Fund (www.fpf.org.il) and specify that it be used for baby food. Make a baby food centerpiece (use cereal boxes - not glass jars!) and decorate it with Israeli and Ethiopian flags. Donate the baby food to a local family shelter.

- Support Rock and Wrap it Up (www.rockandwrapitup.org) with a donation to further their work in getting food donations from concert venues, film shoots, corporate and athletic events, etc.
- Make 'gift certificates' for your guests that specify how you honored them - feeding hungry children in Jerusalem, feeding a baby for a week at a local shelter, providing food money for an Ethiopian family in Netanya, Israel; purchasing supermarket script so that a family can enjoy a wonderful Shabbat, etc.
- Support Family-to-Family's (www.family-to-family.org) project, Seeds for Life, by purchasing seeds for the residents of the counties around Myra, Ky. In an area of our country where most people are not employed and did not graduate from High School, seeds will provide fresh vegetables in season. The remainder of the summer crop will be canned to provide nutrition well into the winter. Think of what lovely centerpieces you can make with seed packets. Then honor your guests by making them partners in this effort!

- THE 'IT'S-NOT-ABOUT-FOOD... *but it really is*' FOOD MITZVAH

Food Stamps can not be used to purchase non-food items such as paper products, personal hygiene, soap and household supplies. Therefore food stamp recipients must spend their own cash on these items, money that might have gone to adding more food to the family's table.

Collecting these items at your Bar/Bat Mitzvah can indirectly provide more food for the hungry.

Next time you are at the supermarket, note how many items that are vital to your family are not covered by food stamps. Also note that one can buy baby formula with food stamps, but not baby bottles.

With your family's agreement, you might try living on the current food stamp allocation (roughly \$1.00 per person per meal) for a period of time and donating the difference between that amount and your normal food expenditure to tzedakah.

Here's a great way that your Bar/Bat Mitzvah guests can support your food collection effort without hauling grocery bundles to your synagogue!

RUN A 'VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE' to support a local food pantry or soup kitchen

- Contact the pantry or soup kitchen you want to support.
- Ask them what items are in particular need.
- Go to the supermarket with the list of needed items and find an average price for each item.
- Make a donation list - listing the items and their cost.
- Send the list to your friends and family with a letter of explanation, asking for their support.
- Your guests provide a list of items they wish to purchase and a check to cover the costs.
- You do the purchasing with the donated funds or send the check to the organization you are supporting. If you choose to purchase the items and donate them after your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, invite some friends to be shopping partners and then use the food purchased on the *bima* or in decorated baskets on your party tables. That will allow your guests to see all that you have accomplished together!