

# Upon Becoming a B-Mitzvah

## AN INTERGENERATIONAL WATER-POURING CEREMONY

A B-Mitzvah ceremony is a coming-of-age celebration of all the teen has learned and accomplished as they step forward into Jewish adulthood. This ritual celebrates the intergenerational experience of a B-Mitzvah teen and the support the entire family has provided in reaching this moment.

### WATER

Water is a central theme in Jewish life: from the primordial waters of creation to the blessings for rain and dew, to the traditional washing the hands at the Passover seder and full body immersion in a mikveh, the Jewish people recognize the power of water. This water-pouring ceremony invites each generation to pour from one cup to the next, celebrating and affirming the constant movement of life forward.

### WHO TO INVITE

We suggest having the parents, grandparents, and B-Mitzvah teen as the sole presences during this ritual, to support, center, and honor the teen and their accomplishments. We encourage you to welcome — and perhaps plan and co-host the ceremony with — the other grandparents who may be Jewish or of a different or no faith and are helping to raise your Jewish grandchild.

*Created by Mayyim Hayyim for the Jewish Grandparents Network*



## RITUAL PREPARATION

Decide where you want to conduct the ceremony. You might consider a space in a home that feels right for all who are participating in the ceremony (grandparent[s], parent[s], and grandchild), a space outside that feels sacred, or inside the sanctuary of a synagogue.

This ceremony could occur the day the grandchild turns twelve or thirteen, the night before they first read from the Torah, or any time in the weeks leading up to the B-Mitzvah that is convenient for the family.

Upon conclusion of the ceremony, celebrate with a festive snack or meal, toast one another with your favorite beverages, and/or share hugs or other demonstrations of affection. You may also like to share personal thoughts and expressions of gratitude with one another.

Each person participating in the ritual will bring a cup or vessel that holds meaning or significance to them. Some examples may be a Kiddush cup, an heirloom goblet, a cup from the participants' own wedding, or a gift purchased specially for this ceremony.

Have a towel ready.

Both grandparents and parents will fill their cups with water. The grandchild's cup should remain empty until the start of the ceremony, as it will be filled during the ceremony.

Before the ceremony, wash your hands with your favorite soap and water.

Take a moment to offer gratitude and care to one another before you begin.



# Ritual Steps

## **Opening kavanah for grandparent to say:**

I give thanks for the moment in which you, my beloved grandchild, become a B-Mitzvah and for the years of growth and learning that have preceded it. As you affirm your commitment to the ideals and mitzvot of Judaism, my soul is joyful and my heart overflows with excitement for your future.

I pour *mayyim hayyim*, living waters, into this vessel, to mark the continued growth of our next generation.

*Grandparent pours water into the grandchild's cup.*

*Option: Grandparent pours water over grandchild's hands, beginning with the right hand and then the left.*

## **Opening kavanah for parent to say:**

As you become a B-Mitzvah, you take your place as a full member of our Jewish community.

May you continue to learn Torah, turning it and turning it, preserving it while making it your own, finding everything in it.

I pour *mayyim hayyim*, living waters, into this vessel to celebrate your Jewish journey and the blessing that these waters may always accompany you, nourish you, and serve as an eternal presence in your life.

*Parent pours water into child's cup.*

*Option: Parent pours water over child's hands, beginning with the left hand and then the right.*



**Opening *kavanah* for grandchild to say:**

In gratitude, I celebrate becoming a B-Mitzvah.

I give honor to my parents and grandparents, who have helped me along the way, and give thanks for their supportive presence and love.

I pour *mayyim hayyim*, living waters, as an act of transition, from past to future, from student to lifelong learner and teacher, from Jewish childhood toward a new state of responsibility and privilege in the Jewish community.

May I be filled with renewed energy and direction to continue my Jewish path.

May I find within myself strength, courage, wisdom, and peace. Amen.

*Option: Grandchild pours water from the cup over each hand three times. Be generous with the water and feel it running over your fingers and your hands completely.*

**Closing *kavanah* for grandchild to say:**

May my decisions and behaviors help to make the world a better place.

I commit myself to contributing my time, my talents, and the best of myself to doing *tikkun olam*, repair of the world. Amen.



## CONCLUDING BLESSING

### All recite together:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּים, וְקִיָּמָנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵן הַזֶּה. *Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam  
shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Holy One of Blessing, for giving me life, sustaining me,  
and through one miracle after another, bringing me to this moment.<sup>1</sup>

*Parent and grandparent each pour water into the grandchild's vessel,  
close to overflowing.*

## ATTRIBUTIONS

This ceremony was adapted from two Mayyim Hayyim ceremonies, Upon Becoming a B-Mitzvah and Parent of a B-Mitzvah. It was adapted by Rabbi Amalia Mark for Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Paula Brody & Family Education Center and the Jewish Grandparents Network.

1: Interpretive English translation by Matia Rania Angelou, Deborah Issokson, and Judith D. Kummer

