



HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Mitzvah Project Ideas

for Your Bar and Bat Mitzvah



Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a significant time in a Jewish child's life. That's why Heifer International offers the following ideas and resources to help you create a unique Mitzvah project and add meaning to your celebration.



How One 13-year Old Made A Difference.

One 13-year-old showed wisdom and kindness beyond his years by raising money for struggling families through Heifer International. Brett Goodfriend of Malibu, Calif., used his Bar Mitzvah to teach families and friends about world hunger and poverty and encourage them to do something about it.

A longtime fan of Heifer, Goodfriend and his family have given many Heifer animals as Bar and Bat Mitzvah gifts over the years. For his Bar Mitzvah, Goodfriend set up a Heifer display and invited a Heifer volunteer to come talk to other young people at his synagogue about Heifer International. As a result, one friend organized a fundraiser

Heifer International is a nonprofit organization working to end hunger and poverty while caring for the Earth. It was started by Dan West, who recognized the worth of all people—no matter how humble—in an effort to provide hungry families with a source of food rather than short term relief. Now, more than 65 years later, Heifer is still providing the gifts of livestock and training in their care to help people rise out of poverty and move toward self-reliance. At the heart of Heifer's work is the notion similar to the Jewish notion of Tzedakah: that it is our duty to help those with genuine need.



MITZVAH IDEAS

- Introduce Heifer International to classes and student clubs in a presentation or speech. Learn more and find materials about Heifer at www.heifer.org.
- Coordinate an educational activity in your school or Synagogue using Heifer Programs like Read to Feed® or Get It! Materials and more information on these programs are available at www.heifer.org/schools.
- Pick an animal that Heifer gives, and learn about the projects that use that specific animal and why. Heifer uses animals suitable to climates and needs, like alpacas in Peru and yak in China and Nepal.
- Organize a Heifer display at a local fair or farmer's market and talk to visitors about Heifer's sustainable work in the field, including kitchen gardens.
- Work in a community garden to understand the benefits of growing your own food, and being able to sustain yourself.
- Talk to your school about organizing leftover food from lunches, snacks or other school events to be donated to local shelters.

for Heifer at her high school, and another donated money she received at her Bat Mitzvah.

Goodfriend kicked up his level of support when he decided to forgo traditional Bar Mitzvah gifts and instead asked for help in raising an Ark—a \$5,000 donation that will pay for pairs of goats, sheep, oxen, water buffalo, llamas, pigs, camels and other animals for poor, hardworking people.

“It is easy to write a check and be disconnected from the knowledge of how the money is utilized,” Brett said in a speech to friends and family. “But Heifer International doesn’t deliver money to struggling, poverty-stricken families. It delivers self-reliance, food, a source of income, dignity and the means to help someone else.”

The speech encouraged people to donate more than \$4,000, but Brett was still shy of the \$5,000 goal. He made up the difference, taking \$838 out of his own savings.



MORE IDEAS TO PASS ON YOUR GIFTS

- Offer to do “chores for change.” Help an elderly neighbor rake leaves, or walk someone’s dog. Consider donating the money you collect from the chores to Heifer.
- Collect pennies in large, clear containers. Offer a small prize to the person guessing the number in the jar. Think about sending the pennies to Heifer (counted and wrapped, please).
- Set up a Team Heifer page. You could hold a walk-a-thon, bike race or dance marathon. Collect pledges for each mile walked or hour danced. To set up your team, track and collect donations online, go to www.heifer.org/team.
- Change the world, two by two. The Heifer Ark gives hope worldwide to families who are poor and hungry—in the form of two of every animal, like Noah’s story in the Bible.
- Request that your Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts be given in the form of honor gifts to Heifer International. You can set up an online gift registry at www.heifer.org/registry.
- Choose where your gifts go! Through Fund A Project, you have the opportunity to direct your gifts to a project or country important to you. Go to www.heifer.org/project to see a complete list of projects.

CELEBRATION AND DECORATION IDEAS

- Serve food from countries where Heifer works – like Guatemala, Poland, India or Uganda.
- Or serve food produced by some of the small farmers Heifer helps: honey from Honduras and coffee from Central America. Products are available for order by calling **1 (800) 422-0474**.
- Decorate using small plastic animals—maybe two of each kind on each table, especially if you’re trying to raise an Ark. Or order t-shirts, mugs, water bottles, tote bags, and other Heifer products by calling **1 (800) 422-0474**.
- Put globes around or maps up and pinpoint where in the world Heifer works. Or highlight your favorite countries and project areas.
- In the spirit of feeding the hungry, donate the excess food after your Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration to a local shelter.

God is hiding in the world. Our task is to let the divine emerge from our deeds.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God In Search of Man*