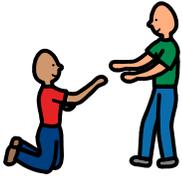


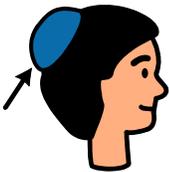
# Bat-Mitzvah Vocabulary



**Mitzvah** means “commandment” in Hebrew. Mitzvot are things God tells us to do in the Torah. Usually when people talk about mitzvot, they refer broadly to good deeds such as treating others nicely and giving to charity.



A **Bat-Mitzvah** is a ceremony celebrating that a young woman is old enough to observe God’s commandments. In Hebrew, Bat-Mitzvah means “daughter of the commandments.” At a Bat-Mitzvah, a young woman says the blessings over the Torah for the first time.



A **kippah**, or **yamulka** in Yiddish, is a small cap. It is a custom for Jewish people to cover their heads as a way to show respect for God. Many non-Jewish people choose to wear a kippah while in a synagogue out of respect for this custom.



A **tallit**, or **tallis**, is a prayer shawl worn by Jewish adults. The tallit has fringes attached to each corner. In the Bible, God tells people to wear fringes on four corners of a garment to remind them to follow the commandments.



A **siddur** is a prayerbook. Prayers in the siddur are written in both Hebrew and English. A siddur opens in the opposite direction of an English book, since Hebrew is read from right to left.



The **bimah** is a small stage at the front of the synagogue. The bimah allows all people in the synagogue, even those in the back, to see and hear the prayers and the Torah reading.



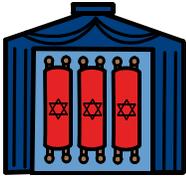
The **Torah** is a scroll containing the Five Books of Moses. Each Torah scroll is hand-written in Hebrew calligraphy on parchment. The Torah is the holiest object in Jewish life, and is treated with great respect.



A **Rabbi** is the spiritual leader of a congregation.



The **cantor**, or **chazzan** is a clergyman who leads the congregation in song.



The **ark**, or **aron hakodesh**, is a special cabinet where the Torah scrolls are kept. The ark is often placed along the eastern wall of the synagogue, the wall closest to Jerusalem.



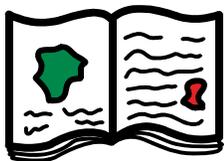
The **eternal light**, or **ner tamid**, is a lamp above the ark. This light is never turned off. It represents God's never-ending presence in our lives.



The **chumash** is a book containing the five books of Moses and selections from the book of Prophets in both Hebrew and English. This book helps people to follow along during the Torah and Haftarah reading.



The **Haftarah** reading is a selection from book of Prophets. Since Roman times, the weekly Torah reading has been accompanied by a reading from the book of prophets. Sometimes the theme from the Haftarah reading corresponds to the week's Torah reading



Each week a different section, or **parsha**, of Torah is read in synagogue.