

Sing Unto God A New Song
B'nei Mitzvah Readings of Honor

We feel blessed to join you in celebrating your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and look forward to welcoming your friends and family to our synagogue. One way in which you can honor your family and close friends during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is to ask individuals or small groups to offer special readings. Below is a collection of readings from which your honored guests may choose to recite from our *bima* ("podium"); They have been culled from Jewish sacred sources as well as an assortment of popular secular works. We are also happy to discuss offering readings that are not found in this document.

Reading of Honor 1

Each lifetime is the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.
For some there are more pieces.
For others the puzzle is more difficult to assemble.

Some seem to be born with nearly a completed puzzle.
And so it goes.
Souls going this way and that
Trying to assemble the myriad parts.

But know this. No one has within themselves
All the pieces to their puzzle.

Like before the days when they used to seal
jigsaw puzzles in cellophane. Insuring that
all the pieces were there.

Everyone carries with them at least one and probably
Many pieces to someone else's puzzle.
Sometimes they know it.
Sometimes they don't.

And when you present your piece
Which is worthless to you,

To another, whether you know it or not,
Whether they know it or not,
You are a messenger from the Most High.

~ "Jigsaw," Rabbi Lawrence Kushner

Reading of Honor 2

Eternal wellspring of peace – May we be drenched with the longing for peace
That we may give ourselves over As the earth to the rain, to the dew,
Until peace overflows our lives As living waters overflow the seas.

~ Marcia Falk

Reading of Honor 3

Giver of Peace,
Teach us to see ourselves in the face of the other.
That we may learn to be patient with fault,
Generous with love and sparing with anger.
Help us to understand that our little lives are potent with great good.
That we are healers in your image.
That reaching out, in need of You, to others more in need,
We find You.
Give us the grace simply to be kind.
Then peace must surely come to dwell among us.

~ "Oseh Shalom," Barbara Holender

Reading of Honor 4

We are gifts and we are blessings, we are history in song
We are hope and we are healing, we are learning to be strong
We are words and we are stories, we are pictures of the past
We are carriers of wisdom, not the first and not the last.

Looking back on the journey that we carry in our heart
From the shadow of the mountain to the waters that would part
We are blessed and we are holy, we are children of Your way

And the words that bring us meaning, we will have the strength to say:

L'dor vador nagid godlecha

L'dor vador... we protect this chain.

From generation to generation

L'dor vador, these lips will praise Your name.

~ "L'dor Vador," Josh Nelson

Reading of Honor 5

Every second, every minute, every hour, every day

Everything, every one, every place, every way

Where you walk, where you stand, where you love, where you pray

All of life is holy ground

Every he, every she, everyone, every who

It's in her, it's in them, it's in me, and it's in you

In the bitter, in the sweet, in the calm, in the storm

All of life is holy ground

When you hurt, when you heal, when you laugh, when you pray

When you hold and when you keep, when you give it away

Every second, every minute, every hour, every day

All of life is holy ground

We are one journey, one story, one tapestry we weave

One people, one glory, one legacy we leave.

Every second, every minute, every hour, every day

Everything, every one, every place, every way

Where you walk, where you stand, where you love and where you pray

All of life is holy ground.

~ "Holy Ground," Craig Taubman

Reading of Honor 6

We are grateful each morning for the fresh promise of a new day:
A day of new experience and of warmth and friendship.
A Day of new tasks undertaken, new fruits planted, efforts
Brought to fruition, of bountiful harvest reaped.

We are grateful each day for the creative and nurturing capacities we have been
granted:
For the compassion to sense those in fear, in hunger and in pain, for the opportunities
to share some of our bounty with those less fortunate.

We are grateful each evening for the rest of that comes after the day's tasks are done:
For the satisfaction of enjoying the fruits of our labors, and for the opportunity to share
this completeness with our neighbors.

~ Vetaher Libenu (prayer book)

Reading of Honor 7

Taking your place...in an enduring line.
This is the day that you stood up to say, "Our tradition is mine."
You have now read the Torah.
It's been passed onto you.
It's our law and our story...But each telling is new.

Taking your place...in a resilient line
This is the day that you stood up to say, "Our tradition is mine."
You have now held the Torah
Forged a link to the past
You're the face of our future,
and the reason we last.

It is said we stood at Sinai
And today, you know you're there.
You're the promise of a people, a blessing and a prayer.

Lalechet bidrachav v'lishmor mitzvotav kol hayamim.

May you walk in God's ways and may all of your days be blessings.

~ "Taking Your Place," Abigail Pogrebin

Reading of Honor 8

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi taught:

Great is peace; peace is to the world as leaven is to dough.

And thus we learn: Peace is not passivity, a state of restful inertia.

Peace is the fermenting energy, the source of creative and expansive growth.

When there is peace in the world, human talents may blossom and all are enriched.

When there is peace in a family, all members may grow to fulfill their potential.

When there is peace in our soul, we are free to express all the gifts within us.

~ *Mishkan HaNefesh*, p. 407

Reading of Honor 9

Don't stop after beating the swords
into ploughshares, don't stop! Go on beating
and making musical instruments out of them.

Whoever wants to make war again
will have to turn them into ploughshares first.

~ "An Appendix to the Vision of Peace," Yehuda Amichai

Reading of Honor 10

Listen, dear _____ ,
Remember to breathe,
Remember to fill your chest
With the sweet taste of living,
To fill your heart
With a gentle gift of peace.
The breath of God
Surrounds you.
Let it flow through you.
The pulse of the universe
Beats with you.
Let it enliven you.

Invite your inhale,
The willingness of this moment.
Release your exhale,
And surrender to being.
Fill your lungs.
Feel them.
Feed them.
Heal them.
And you will know,
The majesty of now,
And the mystery
Of forever.

~ "Breathe," Alden Solovy