



## B-Mitzvah Family Text Discussion Cards



Young people of B-Mitzvah age often question the purpose of their life, how they should engage with their immediate world and the larger world, and the kind of impact they want to have on their family, their community, and the planet itself.

These 18 text-based activities — two on each downloadable card — prompt B-Mitzvah teens to consider these questions by examining them through a Jewish lens, using thought-provoking texts from the Jewish tradition as activators. In addition, the cards may serve as a tool for rabbis, other spiritual leaders, and Jewish educators to involve families in B-Mitzvah preparation.

Each card includes a Jewish text, a prompt for discussion, a chance to share something personal, and an activity.

The prompts and activities on each card can also promote intergenerational engagement and discussion — between grandparent and grandchild, parent and child, all three generations, or anyone else who would like to participate. Families can explore core Jewish values, share experiences, and connect their own insights to the wisdom of Jewish tradition.

The text-based discussion cards also give grandparents something meaningful to talk about with their B-Mitzvah-age grandchild. Grandparents can be a guide, helping the grandchild conceptualize and make meaning of challenging texts.

*Cover photograph by Sadie Braunstein*

## How to Use the Jewish Grandparents Network-DOROT Text Cards

*Be sure participants understand the literal meaning of the text at the top of each card before they start on the discussion prompts.*

### Materials for Using Text Cards

- Pens or pencils, sheets of paper
- Card #2: Video recording device (phone, iPad)
- Card #4: Playing cards
- Card #5: Small strips of paper (about 2 x 4 in.) or Post-it Notes
- Card #10: Origami paper, devices to view online directions, or printed directions

### A. Individual Family Use

You can use the cards to stimulate meaningful discussion about Jewish texts and values with your family. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Table Talk:** Keep the cards near the dinner table or anywhere that your family might gather to talk. At an appropriate time, pull out a card and ask the teen to read the text aloud. Once everyone understands the literal meaning (*p'shat*, in Hebrew), use the prompts to discuss the text (*d'rash*, or interpretation). Decide if you want to complete the activity too. Do this regularly and include whoever is at the table, young and old. Adapt questions for younger kids. Distant grandparents can join via FaceTime or Zoom.
- **Grandparent and Grandchild Chevruta (study partners):** Set up a regular weekly time for the two to meet — in person or on FaceTime or Zoom. Grandparent(s) and grandchild take turns choosing a text card to complete together.
- **Group Gathering:** Invite another Jewish family interested in creating meaning around the B-Mitzvah experience to join you once a month. At each gathering, each family shares a card of their choosing for the group to discuss. Give participants the option to share personal reflections only as they feel comfortable.

## B. Clergy, Spiritual Leader, and Educator Use

You can use the cards to encourage meaningful discussion about Jewish texts and values with your B-Mitzvah students and their families. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Ask the student to choose a card (leader might preselect a few cards) that relates to their Torah portion. Ask the student to use the card with a parent and/or grandparents and report back on the discussion at your next meeting. The student might also like to use the cards to help construct their *d'var Torah*.
- In a small group or class of students, pair up to discuss a card and do the activity. Rejoin the bigger group to report on the discussion and share the activity. Keep in mind that teens may not always be comfortable sharing personal reflections in a group setting.
- Anytime there is a meeting of the B-Mitzvah families or just the parents, use one of the cards as the text study to open the meeting and set the tone for the gathering.
- Arrange a session for students in class with grandparents at a distance. Each student will need a device to connect to their grandparent and a quiet part of the room in which to do so. During this skip-gen class (just grandparent and grandchild), each student dives into a text card with their own grandparent. Be sensitive to students who do not have grandparents or for whom it would not be appropriate to connect. Consider opening the session to “grandparents and cherished (or significant) elders,” for example.

## C. Intergenerational Program

You can use the text cards for a full 45-minute program, with an optional 15-minute extension activity.

The program can be intergenerational (grandparent or significant elder, parent, and teen) or skip-gen (grandparent and grandchild).

The instructions below are a suggested guide for how to lead such a group program.

### Family Members at a Distance

In advance, invite participants to include grandparents and other family members who are at a distance. Ask participants to plan the best way for those family members to join (FaceTime, Zoom, other platform). Have families test the chosen mode of connection

before the session and bring devices, such as a tablet or smartphone. The devices should be fully charged. (Have spare chargers on hand.) Participants with family members on devices should arrive 15 minutes early. Be sure you have a strong wi-fi connection and wi-fi network name and password available.

### Setup and Materials

- Name tags and markers
- Tables for small groups, or something firm to press on when writing, such as clipboards
- Pens or pencils, sheets of paper
- Card # 2: Video recording device (phone, iPad)
- Card #4: Playing cards
- Card #5: Small strips of paper (about 2 x 4 in.)
- Card #10: Origami paper, devices to view online directions, or printed directions
- Copies of the sample text card you will show — one per participant if possible, otherwise one per family. **SUGGESTED CARD: #1**
- *Optional extension activity:* Choose 4–6 different cards and provide a few copies of each card so each group has at least one copy

### Duration

45 minutes (add 15 minutes for optional extension activity)

### Method

We recommend the following structure for your intergenerational workshop, using a card you, the leader, have chosen.

### Welcome (15 minutes)

As guests enter the space, ask them to put on a name tag.

Greet participants and thank them for coming. Remember to welcome grandparents and other family members who are joining you from a distance.

TEXT CARD

1

*Teach the child according to their way; even when they are old they will not deviate from it.*

—Proverbs 22:6

- What does “learning according to their (your) way” mean to you?
- Who is someone you learn from who teaches you according to your way?
- Share a time when you were asked to learn that was *not* according to your way.
- Everyone can be a teacher. Growing up means sharing the responsibility to teach others and help them grow. Based on your thoughts on the passage from Proverbs above, create a list of 3–5 tips for how to be a better teacher.



[www.jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org](http://www.jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org)



[www.dorotusa.org](http://www.dorotusa.org)

TEXT CARD

2

*I found this world planted with carob trees. Just as my ancestors planted for me, so too do I plant for my descendants.*

—Talmud, Ta'anit 23a

- It can be humbling to acknowledge the wisdom and generosity of those who came before us. What do you enjoy today that was here before you were born?
- What would you like to leave behind for the next generations?
- One of the traditional 613 mitzvot in Judaism is caring for the Earth. What's one thing you and others could do every day to care for the Earth? Create a video (use a phone or other device) presenting, in any way you want, how you might take care of the Earth and spread environmental awareness. In developing your video, you might think about disposing of trash and doing recycling, keeping your space clean, donating to an environmental cause you believe in, or anything else to generate awareness about how to care for the Earth and prompt others to take action as well. Post your video online as your family considers appropriate.



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