

Intergenerational B-Mitzvah Family Session (for Preteens and Grandparents): What Does it Mean to Become a Teen?

SAMPLE



Keep It Up” Balloon Game (10–15 minutes)

Facilitator’s Tip: For this activity, if you are concerned about balloons popping, consider subbing in beach balls.

DISTRIBUTE: Two large, light-colored inflated balloons and a permanent marker to each student. In addition, give each grandparent one balloon and a permanent marker.

SAY:

Students, write one word or phrase from the category “means a lot to me” on one balloon, and one word or phrase from the category “means a lot to my parents” on the other balloon.

Grandparents, write one word or phrase from the category “means a lot to my grandparent” on the third balloon. Then, grandparent, please hand your balloon to your grandchild, so they are now holding three balloons.

Students stand in the middle of the room, about an arm’s length apart, holding all three balloons.

Grandparents, please sit on chairs or stand around the perimeter of the room. Students with grandparents on screen, please place your devices on the chairs or in another safe place for this activity. All grandparents should be far enough away from the students so that you don’t get trampled during the game.

Students play a game of Keep It Up with the three balloons, trying to keep all three of their own balloons in the air at the same time. You can then transition into a larger game with everyone in a circle, trying to keep all the balloons in the air at once, if space allows.

Encourage grandparents to whoop it up, clap, and cheer, saying, “keep it up,” “you can do it,” “I believe in you.”

After students have played for a few minutes, tell them to let the balloons fall to the ground.

ASK:

- How did it feel trying to keep all of your own balloons up in the air at once? *(Possible answers: almost impossible, hard to do, quite fun)*
- What was it like trying to keep everyone’s balloons up at once? *(Possible answers: a little easier to do as a group, each person supporting one another)*

SAY:

Students, find your own balloons then please go stand in front of your grandparent or pick up your device.

Students hand the three balloons to your grandparent (symbolically if on a device) and say, “Thank you for cheering me on while I tried to keep up the balloons. Will you please support me as I prepare for my b-mitzvah?”

Grandparents, please respond to your grandchild with something supportive and affirming.

Grandparents, thank you for making an acknowledgement of support to your grandchild. Now take a few minutes and talk privately together. Tell your grandchild how you will support them during this important time in their lives. Talk about your values and your love for your grandchild or share personal reflections.

Collect the balloons for disposal. Large trash bags or big trash cans will work well. Balloons can be popped later for easy disposal.

ASK:

How do you think this game is related to preparing to become b-mitzvah? *(Encourage grandchildren and grandparents to share answers with the group.) (Possible answers: there can be a lot to juggle, keeping it all together can be difficult, but when we find others to support us, it is easier)*

SAY:

Just as it was tough keeping all the balloons up in the air during the game, it can sometimes feel overwhelming to juggle your family's values and their desires for your b-mitzvah experience with your own. And it can be frustrating because at your age you don't get to call all the shots. Students, know that your grandparents and your parents will be there to support you. When everyone works together, there is support, and the balloons, or values, will not be dropped as often. You will be there for each other.