

Torch Award Entry from Club 642

### **Part I. Identification Information**

Submission Identifier Code: **137**

Entry Title: **B'nai Mitzvah Parents Assistance Program**

Entry Category: **FJMC Programs**

Contact Person to be listed on Torch Award CD: **Sandy Victor**

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Club Name & Club Number: **Congregation Beth Judea Men's Club 642**

Number of Club Members: **75**

Synagogue Name, city and state: **Congregation Beth Judea, Long Grove, IL**

Club President Name (at time of entry): **Marc Chappe**

Club President Name (at time of convention): **Marc Chappe**

Person preparing entry: **Sandy Victor**

Email address of person preparing entry: [sandy.victor.midwest.fjmc@gmail.com](mailto:sandy.victor.midwest.fjmc@gmail.com)

Date of entry submission: **March 23, 2007 Updated April 10, 2007**

### **Part IIa. Summary Information**

Have the families of B'nai Mitzvah children been given an honor at the service and not have a clue on what to do or how to do it? This can be a great embarrassment to the individual and upset the service. To avoid this potential problem, the Men's Club of Congregation Beth Judea devised its B'nai Mitzvah Parents Assistance Program. The program is offered and explained to each B'nai Mitzvah family and the use of the program is voluntary. This multifaceted program has served to a benefit to the families, the synagogue and provides exposure of Men's Club activities.

A number of facets of this have been made part of the program. First, copies of the FJMC *Torah Service* video will be lent to the family. We will also lend the family a copy of the FJMC video *The Ties That Bind*. We also provide the Torah blessings and instructions in a large font for use as a study aid. We have also worked with our Cantor to create a set of CDs with the Torah blessings and more significantly, the majority of the prayers that will be said during the service. So that extended family members will be acclimated to our services. It also allows him to introduce new melodies as part of the *Passionate Davening* program in the synagogue. Lastly, if the families desires, a rehearsal is organized on the Thursday or Friday before the B'nai Mitzvah. The rehearsal walks the participants through their alliyot, how to say the blessings, how to open the ark, how to lift and dress the Torah, etc. Men's Club volunteers conduct the rehearsal.

The second facet is to provide a customized services guide to help guests attending the service. The Men's Club can provide a personalized Visitor's Guide to Shabbat Services to explain what it means and some of the rules and etiquette to be observed during the service. A small charge for this guide helps offset the costs of the program.

Third facet is to provide an opportunity to obtain a *Sefer Haftorah* scroll through the FJMC as a permanent memento of the occasion. The Sefer Haftorah program information is provided to the

parents for those that would like to buy a scroll from the FJMC. The Men's Club uses the club's Haftorah scroll from Men's Club Shabbat as an example of what they will be getting.

FJMC Programs Connection:

*Torah Service Video*

Sefer Haftorah Program

Passionate Davening

*Ties That Bind Video*

### **Part IIb. Press Release Body with Title**

Congregation Beth Judea's Men's Club was honored at the 2007 Biennial Convention of the Federation of Jewish Men's club with a Torch Award. The club was honored for its program of supporting the parents and families of B'nai Mitzvah children. The program provides training for adults on their roles in the B'nai Mitzvah service. Also available are keepsakes as a personalized service explanation and a copy of the Haftorah portion that the child has read real parchment handwritten by a scribe in Israel.

### **Part III. Self Assessment of Entry**

1. The program has worked very well. It has expanded awareness of the Men's Club in a very positive light of working with member families. It is greatly appreciated by the clergy as picking up some of their training/question time.
2. The documents, both written and audio, provided to the synagogue members explains the program and is adequate to explain the program.
3. The program goals are mostly achieved. Not all of the families participates in the program, even though they sometimes should, due to time constraints or interest, but the "professionalism" of the services has improved. Also congregants and visitors are more aware of appropriate dress and behavior during services. The program is financially able to break even. We would make money if more families purchase a Haftorah Scroll.
4. The program certainly enhances the image of our club within the Congregation but is not really seen beyond that level other than by visiting members of other synagogues.
5. The outline of how the program works should allow other clubs to generate a similar program. Copies of the materials we used can be made available upon request.
6. This program involves a small group of individuals to generate the materials for mailing to families, create the visitor guides, and run family rehearsals. As needed, more members can be trained to handle these tasks. Rehearsal training takes a reasonable amount of knowledge of the Torah Service.
7. This program has no real impact on grooming new club officers.

8. This program came from the Synagogue's Ritual Committee that was discussing how to train families so when they are given honors during the Torah service (at a B'nai Mitzvah) they know what to do. Whether it be reading the blessings, lifting the Torah, opening the ark, etc. It was a complaint by several Gabbi that prompted the discussion. Men's Club volunteered to take on a corrective program.

9. The program was not part of a previous Torch Award entry as far as we know. It tries to utilize many bits and pieces of other FJMC programs (*Torah Service* video, *Ties that Bind* video, Sefer Haftorah program, etc).

10. This program is totally a Men's Club program with support from the Hazzan in creating training CDs of the various services.