ARK Centre B’Nei Mitzvah Program

**About ARK Centre:**

ARK Centre’s mission is to provide Authentic Orthodox Judaism in the Modern World. In everything we do we are committed to providing relevant and meaningful avenues for members of the community to engage with their Judaism and spirituality.

Through our openness and inclusive approach to Judaism, ARK Centre has redefined the 21st Century synagogue with a greater focus on community needs, with our multi-purpose space, that provides a home for enrichment and engagement. The whole community is welcome to come together to participate in all we have on offer.

Over seven years in East Hawthorn, and three years at Cato St, ARK Centre has grown to be more than just a meeting place, or a shule – it is the centre of Jewish life in our area, stretching out to hundreds of Jewish families who are looking for somewhere to feel free to express their Jewishness in their own unique way.

Fundamentally, we’re delivering to a need that exists in our community. We pride ourselves on not being like everyone else. To learn more please see our FAQs at: <https://thearkcentre.org.au/about-us/>

**Approach to B’Nei Mitzvah Program:**

ARK Centre’s B’Nei Mitzvah Program has run successfully for many years. We have refined our program and are excited to deliver a new and improved version for 2018.

The Program has been designed to be inclusive, educational, interactive, relevant and a lot of fun!

Those who participate cement and forge friendships with people from different schools and backgrounds as well as exploring their own identity – that is their Jewish identity and as a young person in today’s world. And they do so through creative and engaging sessions that are very different to how they learn at school.

The key elements of this Program are as follows:

* **Led by Rabbi Gabi Kaltmann, Rabbi for Programs and Engagement.** Rabbi Gabi is young and enthusiastic with significant experience in conducting youth programs. He delivers each session with energy and approachability and very quickly students find, in him, someone who is not just a religious leader and mentor but someone they can engage with, have fun with and respect.
* The **Program has been designed to strike a balance between religious and humanist components.** It is designed to help these young adults explore what is relevant and meaningful to them, consider the world from different perspectives and learn about some aspects of religious life that will become increasingly important as they become Bar and Bat Mitzvah.
* **Sessions are a mix of learning and experience.** Participants will be encouraged to think creatively, have a lot of fun and explore what is meaningful to them as Jews and as citizens of the world.
* **Sessions are age-appropriate.** Participants are not treated like little kids nor like University students. Learning is not conducted in a classroom environment rather via creative, fun activities and ways of exploring interesting and relevant topics.

**Outline of Sessions:**

* Sessions take place in Terms 1, 2 and 3 with a Graduation ceremony in Term 4. We follow the Jewish school calendar.
* Within each term there are a mix of sessions designed to keep the participants engaged and interested throughout the Program.
* Sessions throughout 2018 will include…
  + Guest speakers including … Aboriginal elder, refugees, Victoria Police, a shochet (kosher butcher), a sofer (scribe);
  + Excursions including... mikveh (for the girls), Kosher shopping trip, Tikkun Olam activities (e.g. visiting homeless / less fortunate and elderly);
  + Sessions on Jewish learning including… about the Torah, Jewish law, spirituality in Judaism;
  + Cooking for Shabbat and Chagim including… cheese cake for Shavuot, challah baking, hamentashen for Purim
* While not expressly part of the Program, a reason for conducting the sessions on Friday afternoons is because it leads into the weekly Kabbalat Shabbat service. Participants bring in Shabbat by joining Rabbi Shneur and Rabbi Gabi on the bimah. By participating with their friends in the weekly service, they feel welcome and at home in shule.

**Who is the Program Suited To?**

* **Age / Year Level…** The Program is open to girls entering Grade 5 or 6 in 2017 & boys entering Grade 6 or Year 7 in 2017 (i.e. year before, or of, Bar / Bat Mitzvah). The ARK Centre Program typically attracts students in Grade 6 and Year 7.
* **Attitude…** Looking to expand their minds, thoughtful, curious, fun.
* **Religious Beliefs…** No requirements. Anyone who is open to thinking and learning is more than welcome

**Sessions and Logistics:**

* Commencing in February
* Fridays 4:00pm – 6:00pm
* Term 1, 2 and 3 (30 sessions over the year) with Graduation Ceremony in Term 4.
* Snack provided
* Participants and their families are encouraged to stay on for Kabbalat Shabbat service when possible (a minimum once per month is strongly encouraged)
* Participants and their families are encouraged to come to the monthly Shabbaton. Once a month ARK Centre provides a sit-down lunch after the Shabbat morning service. Dates are available via the weekly newsletter.
* Some activities require participants leaving ARK Centre premises. Parents are always advised when this is.
* Signed and completed enrolment form (including permission slip) and code of conduct are required prior to the commencement of the first session.

**Program Fees:**

It is fundamentally important that we cater to a broad range of our community. If you have ARK Centre Family Membership, there are benefits when you undertake the Program: a reduced rate for the B’Nei Mitzvah Program and 50% deduction from the standard cost of your Bar / Bat Mitzvah.

If B’Nei is of interest but membership isn’t right for you then you’re more than welcome, of course.

B’Nei Mitzvah is invoiced on a term-by-term basis and payment for each term is required prior to the first session of that term.

Member Prices:

$250 per term + 50% reduction in Bar / Bat Mitzvah fees for those who complete three terms of B’Nei.

Non-Member Prices:

$350 per term.

It is a policy of ARK Centre that no one should miss any of our programs due to financial their situation. If you require special consideration please contact the office on 8658 4044 or office@arkcentre.com.au.

**Next Steps:**

**Questions…**Please contact the ARK Centre office – 8658 4044 or office@arkcentre.com.au

**Enrolment…** Please complete and return the Enrolment Form and signed Code of Conduct via email to the office at office@arkcentre.com.au. These can both be found on our website: https://thearkcentre.org.au/whats-on/bnei-mitzvah/