



# *MitzvahMatters!*

DEVELOPING GREATER MEANING FOR  
*HAFTARAH* WHILE 'DOING JEWISH!'

# HISTORY OF HAFTARAH

- ▶ “Conclusion” of sacred readings
- ▶ Selections come from The Prophets
- ▶ Many theories of how this additional reading arose
  - ▶ Custom, not required
  - ▶ Selected texts were quite variable for generations
  - ▶ Overall purpose was to add meaning to the weekly Torah portion (*parashah*)

## WHY MAKE A CHANGE?

- ▶ Current status:
  - ▶ Rote learning of these texts
  - ▶ Traditional *Haftarot* are less relevant for students
- ▶ Connects to our Strategic Plan: Involve families more in the process

## OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ The Prophetic message is that the stakes are high for how we act in the world.
  - ▶ The stakes are still high today.
- ▶ Original purpose of *Haftarot* still present—
  - ▶ Connect with important Jewish values
  - ▶ Make sacred texts relevant
- ▶ Connect doing *mitzvot* with the social justice and value-based ideas of the Prophets

## 8 MITZVOT

- ▶ *Bikur Cholim* – Visiting the sick
- ▶ *Hachnasat Orchim* – Welcoming strangers and guest
- ▶ *Tzedek* – Righteousness
- ▶ *Kibud Av Va'em* - Honoring parents
- ▶ *Talmud Torah* – Learning and study
- ▶ *Hiddur P'nei Zakein/Zikaron* – Honoring the elderly/Remembrance
- ▶ *Sh'mirat Shabbat* – Engaging with Shabbat and Jewish ritual
- ▶ *Sh'mirat Hateva* – Protecting the Creation and Nature



## HOW IT WILL WORK

- ▶ Students receive a detailed write up of the *MitzvahMatters!* program in Torah Corps
  - ▶ Review periodically in Torah Corps classes as a group
- ▶ Reminders sent to parents in monthly Torah Corps newsletter
- ▶ Family to discuss *mitzvot* together –
  - ▶ Have top three choices selected
- ▶ At Scheduled Meeting with Cantor –
  - ▶ Discuss choices
  - ▶ Finalize decision
  - ▶ Get assignment of connected prophetic text

# HOW IT WILL ALL WORK

- ▶ Shabbat afternoon, twice a year
  - ▶ Fall and Spring
    - ▶ May 2, 2020, 3-5 p.m.
  - ▶ Families gather to learn about all of these *mitzvot*
  - ▶ Havdalah
  - ▶ Handout for those who miss either or both of these programs
- ▶ Additional way to connect families to the process-
  - ▶ Reminder sent to families to come to Shabbat on the same Torah portion in the year prior to *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*

## FAMILY PART OF THE PROCESS

- ▶ Family chooses *mitzvah* work together
- ▶ Family activity for *mitzvah* chosen together
- ▶ Participate in ongoing activity for the student to reflect this *mitzvah*
- ▶ A family member could chant the *Haftarah* verses instead of the student, if so desired

## WHAT'S NEXT

- ▶ Students will come home with written detailed description and instructions in February
- ▶ Begin to think about which *mitzvot* most speak to you
  - ▶ Family conversations
- ▶ Enjoy the **MitzvahMatters!** journey with your child!