

1. For A Son

We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son grow day by day, week by week, year by year. For the health and strength You have given him, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him, for his ability to elicit and return love - for all these precious gifts, we thank You.

Watch over him, O God, on this special day and every day. Grant him a growing understanding of the true significance of this occasion and deepening loyalty to everything which it represents. May the teachings of our heritage guide him throughout life; and may he lead a life worthy of Your blessings. Amen.

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שֶׁהֵחַיְנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi'anu lazman hazeh*

Blessed are You, *Adonai* our God, ruler of time and space, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this moment.

2. For A Son

O God, gratefully I thank You for the joyous privilege of seeing my son attain this milestone. On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. On this day new dreams and new hopes are born. I pray that Your protecting and loving care will accompany him wherever he goes and in all that he does. Help him to become all that he is capable of being. Give him strength to do all the good things that are within his reach. Keep him loyal to the best that he has been shown, and to the noblest Jewish teachings he has been taught. May his deeds find favor in the eyes of all and be worthy of Your blessings.

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3. For Our Daughter

Lord our God, gratefully we thank You for the joyous privilege of seeing our daughter attain this milestone. On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. On this day new dreams and new hopes are born.

We pray that Your protection and loving care will accompany her wherever she goes and in all that she does. Help her to become all that she is capable of being. Give her strength to do all the good things that are within her reach. Keep her loyal to the best that she has been shown, and to the noblest Jewish teachings she has been taught. May her deeds find favor in the eyes of her fellow creatures and be worthy of Your blessing. Amen.

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4. For A Daughter

On this Shabbat when our daughter becomes a Bat Mitzvah, we have come with her and our loved ones to join in worship and to offer our prayer of thanksgiving.

We are grateful, O God, for the privilege of passing along the gift of life which You gave us, that we might share with You in the miracle of creation. We are grateful also for the thirteen years of nurturing this life, for the unnumbered joys and challenges which these years have brought us.

Bless our daughter, O God; watch over her, protect her, guide her. Help her to continue to grow in body and mind, in soul and character. Keep her loyal to our people and to the teachings of our Torah. May her life be rich and rewarding. May all her deeds bring pride to us, honor to the house of Israel, and glory to Your name.

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5. For A Daughter/Son

What I wish for my daughter/son, I wish for all our children. I wish for you to be a person of character, strong but not tough, gentle but not weak. I wish for you to be righteous but not self-righteous, honest but not unforgiving.

Wherever you journey, may your steps be firm and may you walk in just paths and not be afraid. Whenever you speak may your words be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build and your heart preserve what is good and beautiful in our world. May the voices of the generations of our people move through you, and may the God of our ancestors be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people to whom you belong and, because of our sacred heritage, you are connected to all who dwell on earth. May the stories of our people be upon your heart and the rhythm of the Torah dance in your soul.

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6. For A Daughter/Son

In gratitude and joy we celebrate our child's Bar Mitzvah. We thank you for the blessing of parenthood and for reaching this moment we dreamed of many years ago. May it signal a life of Jewish commitment for our daughter/son.

Lead our daughter/son to live the values of Torah. Guide him/her in the path of faithfulness to our people. May she/he enjoy a life of health and accomplishment, fulfillment and peace.

May God make you like Efrayim and Menasseh, /or/ May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, a Jew of wisdom and strength, compassion and peace. Amen

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7. For A Daughter/Son

We are very proud of the person that you are becoming. On this your Bat/Bar Mitzvah day we have special hopes for you:

We hope that you always remember that you are part of a wonderful heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. You are connected to the Jewish people, to God and to Torah. You need the Jewish community and the Jewish community needs you.

We hope that you will continue to learn and mature. You will find that the world is not always a fair place, but do what you can to make it better. Do not let others sway you from what you know to be right and just, and always believe in your own abilities. Remember you are a unique individual and the most important thing is to be the best that you can be.

We hope that you always know that no matter what problems you face you will always have the help, the support and the love of your parents. You have brought more joy and happiness to your mother/father and me than you will ever know just in being yourself and giving us the pleasure of watching you blossom into the beautiful young lady/man who stands before us today.

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8. For A Daughter/Son

(Name), you make my heart sing with pride and wonderment. You have far surpassed our every expectation. This is my blessing, my hope for you—

That you never be afraid to fail; that you always remember that if you give something your all, everything you have, it doesn't matter whether you win or lose as long as you've done your best. Next, I always want you to remember that the Rabbi and Cantor are here to guide you, to teach you about Judaism. That the synagogue is here as a framework, a place for you to come to worship; a place for you to renew your faith; a place for you to confirm your Judaism. But in the end, your religion--your humanity--will be judged by how you live your life.

As the poet wrote:

To take what comes of good or ill
And cling to faith and honor still;
To be the same when I'm alone,
As when my every deed is known.
To live undaunted, unafraid
Of any step that I have made;
To be without pretense or sham,
Exactly what people think I am.

Whatever you may or may not remember of this day, remember forever that I love you.
Remember forever, that we love you.

9. As you travel along the path that will be your life, may you walk on firm ground, with the wind at your back and the sun shining gently on your face.

May your mind, body and hands be strong, and may their work be guided by both the wisdom of your soul and the compassion of your heart.

May you draw from the strength and wisdom of our tradition, and those who came before you.

May you have beautiful dreams which inspire you, and may your pursuit of those dreams be fulfilling.

May your successes be many, and, when you don't succeed, may you learn and grow from the experience, and go on.

May you always give yourself the gift of learning something new.

May you have the courage of conviction and patience to fight for what you know to be right. Make sure you are right...then go ahead.

May you laugh often.

May you always go to sleep at night with that feeling of satisfaction that comes from a day well lived.

May you always have peace in your home and in your heart.

May you know unbridled joy, and may your sorrows be few and far between.

May you find true, enduring love, and may you be blessed with children as wonderful as you.

May you always have good friends.

May you always feel the love of family and friends that embraces you today.

As you take your place among the Jewish women/men of your generation, may God grant you a long, healthy, happy, and peaceful life, and may God help you to be the change you want to see in the world.

Know that we love you, and that wherever life takes you, we are always here for you.

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10. We are so proud of you and everything you accomplished today! Often when we thought about this moment tears came to our eyes. So we wanted to share with you why your reaching this milestone makes us feel so much.

1. We cry because there are special people that we love and desperately miss who we wish were sitting here with us today.
2. We cry because it is one of the few times in your life where nearly everyone who cares about you will be in the same room, at the same time.
3. We cry because your innocent childhood years are gone, and because we remember all of the foolish things that we did when we were teenagers, and we pray that you are smarter and safer than we were.
4. We cry because we wasted time stressing about the details of your bar/bat mitzvah party (and of course worrying about what to wear), even though we knew all along that this is the moment that really mattered.
5. We cry because we want to leave the world to you in a better condition than we found it, and we're not sure that is achievable.
6. We cry because we are grateful that we live in a country that allows us absolute religious freedom.
7. We cry because even though we spent hours thinking about what we would say to you at this moment, we really just want you to understand how much you are loved and how proud you make us.
8. And if we are lucky enough to sit in the front row seats reserved for grandparents at your child's bar or bat mitzvah, we will cry again too.

Congratulations, we love you.

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11. We are so proud of you and everything you accomplished today. Your having reached this milestone makes us feel so much.

We remember that there are special people that we love and desperately miss, who we wish were with us today.

We cherish that it is one of the few times in your life where nearly everyone who cares about you will be in the same room at the same time.

May you have beautiful dreams that inspire you and may your pursuit of those dreams be fulfilling.

May you succeed, but, when you don't, may you keep trying and trying and learn from the experience.

May you fight for what you know to be right.

May you always be the kind and creative person that you are.

May you laugh often.

May you always have good friends, and feel the love of family that embraces you today.

May you always go to sleep at night with the feeling of being loved and with excitement for the new day.

May you take trips, watch sunsets, eat lots of good food, and find contentment believing that all will be okay.

Although we spent hours thinking about what we would say to you at this moment, we really just want you to understand how much you are loved and how proud you make us.

You can't possibly comprehend why this day is so compelling when you stand on the alter, until you talk to your own child many years from now.

Congratulations. We love you.

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12. (child's name)_____ you came into this world like a bright, shining light and you have been that way ever since. You have taught us about love in a way for which nothing could have prepared us. While there must be some mistake, because we can't possibly be old enough to have a 13 year-old daughter/son, there is no longer any denying that you are a teenager. And as you start your journey towards adulthood, these are the things we wish for you:

Always remember that you come from an amazing heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. You are part of something larger than yourself, so although at times you may feel it, you are never alone.

Know that there are special people, many of whom we love and miss, who helped get you here today. You have a responsibility to honor them by giving back to your community whenever and however you can.

We hope you will continue to show compassion, generosity, and tolerance towards others and that you will stay funny, confident and kind. The way you make people laugh is a great gift; it will see you through some of the challenges life will surely throw your way.

Remember to always see what's good around you, and feel grateful.

We hope that you will live your life with the same delight and joy that you always have. Never lose your sense of adventure, your infectious spirit, or your passion for _____ and _____. Most importantly, keep finding things you love and do them with all your heart.

This is one of the few times in your life when nearly everyone who loves you will be in the same room at the same time. Take a moment and breathe it in, because, even when it's over, you can draw strength from it for years to come.

From the moment you made us parents, we have been yours. Know that no matter what, we will always be here for you, and we are so proud of you. We love you.

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