



WHERE YOUNG LIVES
TAKE SHAPE.

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Parents' Guide to BBYO



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B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, Inc. (BBYO)

The Gift of Opportunity for Your Teenager

The world's leading trans-denominational Jewish youth movement, BBYO has been helping Jewish parents raise confident, engaged, well-prepared teenagers for more than 80 years. How? By providing safe and enriching programs that the teens design themselves, fostering independent thinking and leadership abilities. By bringing together thousands of Jewish teens from all over the world, from the most traditional to non-practicing Jewish backgrounds, to share experiences that build character as they build friendships for life. By exposing teens to Jewish culture, history, and practice and introducing new ways to help them apply Jewish principles to contemporary life.

BBYO offers fun activities and meaningful involvement in a Jewish environment, providing teens with enriching Jewish experiences that encourage them to determine for themselves what being a Jew means. Teens who participate in BBYO develop leadership skills and learn the importance of community, thus preparing them for college and other adult endeavors.

Through BBYO, you can provide your children with a unique experience that will deeply influence the people they become and the world they inherit. Ultimately, the future of the Jewish people depends upon this process of promoting the continuity of our culture and traditions. And no organization offers the breadth of involvement and the depth of commitment found in BBYO's 15,000+ international members in more than 40 regions in North America, Israel, Europe, and Australia. Helping Jewish teens take their place in the adult world has been BBYO's mission—and success story—for more than 80 years.

"Melanie's mother and I were amazed with the information she gained from attending the Kesher L'Yisrael [Connection to Israel] program. Once again BBYO has proven that it is the leader in providing teenagers with quality programs." - Bruce Holzbard, BBYO parent, Bellaire, Texas

Many Chapters, One Story

From travel opportunities to community service experiences to college tours, BBYO offers many different ways for teens to learn and grow. At BBYO's core are gender-based chapters (AZA for males and BBG for females) that promote self-confidence, social action, athletic competition, community service, support of Israel, and Judaic enrichment in a reassuring context of acceptance and solidarity. The diversity of programming, the strong bonds of friendships formed, and the life skills imparted in these chapters make the BBYO experience one that cannot be duplicated by any other youth organization. College and university admissions offices know this, and view BBYO involvement as a real plus.

Since 1924, **Aleph Zadik Aleph** has instilled leadership qualities and a sense of camaraderie in generations of young men, emphasizing the importance of the well-rounded individual. AZA's wide-ranging programming includes social events with the B'nai B'rith Girls and other AZA chapters, community service projects, sporting tournaments, and Judaic enrichment.

"BBYO has really been Ashley's anti-drug. Serving as regional president has provided Ashley with the opportunity to develop leadership skills that she will use in college and beyond." -Angie Wolf Sanders, BBYO parent, Knoxville, Tennessee

The **B'nai B'rith Girls** has been offering young women an array of activities and programs for more than 60 years. Through social, leadership, and Judaic events and community service projects, teenage girls build a positive self-image, leadership potential, and their own Jewish identity, while forming friendships that last a lifetime.

While BBYO membership is open to ninth- through twelfth-graders, the experience can begin as early as seventh grade with **Teen Connection**, an opportunity for younger teens to be part of the fun and formative activities that make BBYO so valuable in shaping young lives.

Programs with Profound Effects

Central to the BBYO experience is the wide spectrum of programs that are designed and implemented by the teens themselves, with the support and encouragement of more than 100 professional staff members and some 750 volunteer advisors.

Year-round programs include planning and participating in social activities like movie nights, dances, and sports tournaments, as well as major undertakings like initiating community service projects. BBYO members organize Shabbat and Havdallah services within their chapters. Those in leadership positions also coordinate programs at the regional and international levels, such as weekend leadership training institutes and conventions.

Each year, an extensive menu of **summer programs** offers teens exciting choices for a life-changing BBYO experience. In-depth leadership training, outdoor adventure, urban community service and Jewish learning—the programs are as varied as the interests of your children. BBYO's **Israel travel programs**, collectively called Passport to Israel (P2I), provide several meaningful trip options. Whether your son or daughter is a first-time visitor to Israel, an outdoor adventurer, or someone seeking spiritual enrichment, a BBYO trip to Israel will prove to be a worthy investment that will pay dividends throughout your child's lifetime. BBYO also offers other **travel opportunities** for youth to see the world. For instance, BBYO's Ambassadors in Bulgaria Program brings together Jewish youth from around the world to discover the diversity and commonality among the Jewish people.

*"BBYO teaches, it enriches, it fulfills life." - Rachel Robinson,
BBYO member, West Bloomfield, Michigan*



A Personal Path

Just as there is no one path to Jewish involvement, there is no one path to BBYO involvement. BBYO allows teens to immerse themselves in planning and participating in programs of many kinds, limited only by their own time and energy. We recognize that some teens are simply looking for new and different experiences with their peers, without a significant level of commitment. All are welcome at BBYO—to put into it as much as they wish; to get out of it as much as they can. Based on our 80-plus years of helping Jewish teens safely grow into confident, committed adults, we can assure you that your teenager will look back on his or her BBYO experiences as some of the very best times of life.



"Through BBYO, we learn leadership skills, come to understand and embrace Jewish values and make friendships that last a lifetime. Ultimately, we are turned on to Judaism, community service and political action, and we become young men and women who work to shape the future of our world." -Rachel Schwager, 2004-05, BBG International President, Tucson, Arizona

"I never went to services before I joined BBYO. BBYO shows Jewish teens the path toward defining their own Jewish identity whether they belong to a certain synagogue or movement or to no Jewish facility at all. Being a trans-denominational youth organization makes BBYO the premier outlet for Jewish teens of any level of involvement." -Stephen Glatter, 2004-05, AZA International President, Langhorne, Pennsylvania



Do you want to learn more about BBYo and its programs? Reconnect with thousands of BBYo alumni? Volunteer as a BBYo advisor? Give to BBYo? Visit www.bbyo.org.