So you’re planning a simchah...

As you plan a special event, please keep in mind that your celebration also has an impact on our environment. This guide is a starting point to help you align your values and increase your positive impact on the world as you celebrate the significant milestones in your life.

Please note that this brochure is not a comprehensive guide, but a beginning on your “green simchah” journey.

Contact seal@hazon.org for more information.
INVITATIONS/THANK YOUS
- Consider eliminating paper invitations altogether and using an online invitation app such as Evite, PaperlessPost, or GreenEnvelope. You can use these for the main event, for events surrounding the main event, or as a “save the date”.
- Print invitations on recycled paper & find a printer that uses low-toxic dyes or soy-based ink.
- Print double-sided whenever possible.
- Encourage guests to recycle invitations.
- Avoid foil-lined or plastic envelopes as they cannot be recycled.
- Consider postcard-style invitations.
- Ask for replies via phone or email rather than including a separate reply card.

BOOKLETS
B’nai mitzvah booklets are often used to provide event details and to recognize important people. Consider printing on recycled paper with soy-based inks. Print only enough for each guest to reduce waste and recycle leftovers.

DECORATIONS/CENTERPIECES
- Consider centerpieces which can be donated or re-used: toys, books, sports equipment, games, art supplies, or food to be donated to local community centers.
- Use plants instead of pre-cut flowers so they can be given to guests.
- If using flowers, before your event arrange a place to take them such as nursing homes or senior centers.
- Consider reusable table linens first, paper next. Avoid plastic or choose plastic made with recycled content.
- If using balloons, consider latex first. Make sure balloons are responsibly discarded after use.

FOOD
Food is often the main attraction! The fear of running out of food often leads to an overabundance of leftovers. Work with the caterer to order only enough.
- Work with your caterer for the leftovers to be donated to organizations or local food banks.
- Recycle everything that can be: cans, cartons, plastic bottles, glass, organic waste as compost.
- Buy local and/or organic food.
- Consider using reusable plates/utensils.
- If you choose not to use reusable place settings, consider using biodegradable products including such as paper, corn, or sugar cane-based materials. Please do not use Styrofoam.
- If using paper products, consider using products with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.
- Reduce the amount you need. Do you really need plates for the hors d’oeuvres, or will napkins suffice?
- Skip menus/course listings on each table.
- Bring containers or baggies to take the leftovers home, or send with the guests. Why cook tomorrow?

KIPPOT
Buy kippot made from recycled materials or fair trade sources. Take a look at Fair Trade Judaica, Fair Trade Kippot, or ZaraMart.

FAVORS
- Skip the favors or consider an environmental alternative with a message, i.e., reusable water bottles.
- Make a donation in guests’ names to a personally meaningful cause, or plant a tree in their names.
- Edible favors are another way to go. Consider chocolate, candies, even homemade pickles – things that are eaten and not thrown away.

TRAVEL
- Encourage carpooling.
- Purchase or provide the information for your guests to purchase carbon offsets for the travel to your event. The JNF Go Neutral program is one source to offset your carbon emission.

WASTE MANAGEMENT
- Recycle as much as possible.
- Ask if your hosts and caterers are adhering to local recycling rules and taking action to minimize waste.
- This means that:
  - All paper, cardboard, plastics, and glass are placed in recycling bins
  - Food waste is separated and collected for composting (if available).

ACTIVITY
B’nai mitzvot often involve an activity. Consider the values of your child when planning. Here are some ideas:
- Go outdoors.
- Use food to create a meaningful activity like pickling, herb planting, makeup balm, candles, etc.
- Avoid activities that make waste.