

paths as a beautiful, cohesive group. Three of them had chosen to become Jewish in the last couple of years; three had become b'nai mitzvah once before in their lives, and wanted to do it again in a deeper and more meaningful way; several had kids who are becoming b'nai mitzvah and wanted to experience the ritual alongside their children; all were open, wise, dedicated and thoughtful throughout the 18 month process. I was blown away at their service, living over and over again the teaching from Pirkei Avot 1:6: aseh l'cha rav, find yourself a teacher, acquire for yourself a friend, and judge each person according to their own merits. They are all my teachers.

One of my favorite parts of being in such an immersive ritual experience is how present it requires you to be. There was not one moment in the service that I thought about my to-do list, work stresses, family dynamics—none of it. All I thought about was this magnificent group of people choosing to do something brave and true, something that brought joy and pride and meaning to every person in the room. It is so rare to have that experience these days! We are so easily distracted, so quickly tempted to go to our phones and

my shout out to adults who maybe weren't ready to invest the next generation with the power I was sure was ours to take.

Of course, Jeremiah, not so much. The voice in this text is God chastising Jeremiah for trying to duck his prophetic call because he was “still a boy” (1:6). Scholars guess that Jeremiah was somewhere between the ages of 10 and 20. Like most of our prophets, he did not receive his call with enthusiasm. But God reassures him, putting God's hand on Jeremiah's mouth and saying, “Here - I put my words into your mouth” (1:10). It is hard to say “no” after that.

Lucky for us the response of teens to our call to join the newly created Jr. Board this year was a resounding, “Yes!” And our eighteen Jr. Board members, ages 11-18, have been rocking it all year long. They sorted who and what a Jr. Board can be and launched two initiatives, a mixed-age buddy program for the religious school (piloted this spring and set to take off this fall) and an exploration of strategies to ease B'nai Mitzvah anxiety. When the related teen leadership retreat didn't happen, the Jr. Board enthusiastically embraced the possibility of