

### **Gigi's Bat Mitzvah Candle Lighting Poem**

**Once upon a time, just thirteen years ago,**  
I arrived in this world with plenty to know.  
A brand new adventure, a life to unfold,  
With people around me, both loving and bold.

**Tonight as I stand in this magical space,**  
I see every chapter that helped me find grace.  
And now, with each candle, I'd like you to see,  
The people who've all been part of my story.

### **Candle 1: Honoring Those We Have Lost**

This candle is for those who came before,  
Whose love still echoes forevermore.

**Great-Grandpa Norm**, with a steady grin,  
Whose quiet strength still lives within.  
**Great-Grandpas Ruby, Al, Harry** too—  
Though we never met, I deeply honor you.

**Great-Grandmas Pauline, Sylvia**, and **Bubbie** so wise—  
Your spirit shines, in how we live our lives.

**Great-Aunt Marge**, and **Great Uncles Elliot, Fred**, and **Rick**—  
I hear stories of your light, and know your love still sticks.

**Great-Great Uncle Walter**, with crystals and light,  
Your calm little treasures made everything right.

**Grandmère**, your soul shines strong and bright—  
I carry your name and your fierce sense of right.  
Next year, we'll visit the family in France who chose to be bold,  
Who sheltered and saved you in times dark and cold.  
Because they saved you, I get to be me—  
A proud Jewish girl, and part of your tree.

There's someone special I'd like to include,  
To help light this candle and honor the mood.  
**Micki**, we share a bond that's loving and true—  
Please join me in honoring those we once knew.

### **Song: Somewhere Over the Rainbow by Kamakawiwo'ole (start at beginning)**

### **Candle 2: Meme & Papa**

From the heart of wine country, calm and sweet,  
Come two loving hearts that make me complete.  
Meme and Papa, you've been by my side,  
With hearts full of love and arms open wide.

When I was a baby, we had one day each week,  
Just Meme and me—it was cozy and sweet.  
You've both cheered me on in big and small ways,  
And your love has been there through all of my days.

From texts and phone calls to FaceTime delight,  
You always make sure that we stay feeling tight.

So please come light this candle with me,  
For the bond we share and the joy you bring endlessly.

**Song: Because you loved me, Celine Dion (start at beginning)**

### **Candle 3: Grammy & Papa**

Grammy and Papa, you're both such a gift,  
Seeing you always gives my heart a lift.  
Grammy, each birthday, you take me to shop,  
For treats and adventures that never do stop.

Papa, you're calm, you're steady and sweet,  
The kind of grandpa who makes life feel complete.  
Always so pleasant, just my kind of pace,  
With a warm gentle smile always on your face.

We gather for holidays, good food and delight,  
I love having you close—it just feels right.

So light up this candle, it's bright and it's true,  
A symbol of how much I love both of you.

**Song: Lean on Me, By Bill Withers (start at 25 seconds)**

### **Candle 4: Aunts & Uncles**

Every great story has characters who care,  
Who show up with love and are just always there.

**Uncle Tony and Thea Kelly**—I'm so happy you're here,  
Bringing warm family vibes and so much cheer.  
Tony, you're hilarious, my mom's little bro,  
With stories and laughter wherever you go.

**Auntie Steph and Uncle David**—games, dogs, and fun,  
And summers on the boat, out under the sun.  
You welcome us in with laughter and snacks,  
And somehow you always know just how to relax.

**Auntie Lisa and Uncle Paul**—go, go, go!  
With travel and plans and a constant flow.  
You host like pros and you're always in motion,  
Bringing your energy, heart, and family devotion.

Please come light this candle—each of you plays  
A part in my story in so many ways.

**Song: We are Family, by Sister Sledge (please start at 31 seconds)**

#### **Candle 5: Cousins**

Cousins are like built-in best friends for life,  
Sometimes chaotic, but rarely with strife.

**Alex, Jake, and Dylan**—the older boy crew,  
You're silly and sweet and fun to talk to.  
From dancing to baking and playing a game,  
With Kombio cousins, it never feels lame.

**Sabrina and Tess**—we're so glad you're here,  
You're becoming Schwartzes, and we'll all cheer!  
You bring so much joy and fun energy too,  
And I'm really excited to grow close to you.

**Sydney and Olivia**—you're thoughtful and fun,  
With books, hand-me-downs, and support by the ton.  
At recitals and plays, you're always right there—  
With smiles and love and the best kind of care.

**Benny, Daniel, Emilia**—though you live far away,  
You're family forever, in every way.  
Our connection stays strong, no matter the miles,  
You're part of my story, my memories, my smiles.

Come light this next candle—my favorite crew,  
No one makes me laugh quite like all of you.

**Song: Best Day of My Life, by American Authors (start at beginning)**

#### **Candle 6: Mentors/Adults**

One of the best parts of growing up around you  
Is how much I've learned from the things that you do.  
From favorite books to creative art,  
To deep conversations that opened my heart—

Some grown-ups have truly shown up for me,  
With steady support and generosity.  
You're more than my parents' friends—you're mine too,  
And I hope you know how much I love you.

There are so many grown-ups I admire and adore,  
But this candle is for the ones who've meant even more.

Please come light this candle and stand here with pride—  
For all the ways you've stayed by my side.

**That includes:**

Miss Rhonda, Tommy & Sara Yaari, Karen Liska, Bekah Mitton, Beth Yates, Dana Aronson, Stacey Walker, Julie Dorfman,  
Natalie Baum, Binay Manchell, Stephanie Lorber, and Murielle Vich.

**Song: Stand By Me, Tracy Chapman - Live at the late show with David Letterman (start at beginning)**

**Candle 7: Friends**

People sometimes wonder if homeschoolers have friends—  
But I definitely do, and the list never ends.  
From Renaissance, to Theater, to Skiing and Dance,  
Each new adventure gave friendship a chance.

**Thea**, my best friend, so loyal and true,  
I can tell you anything—you always come through.  
We keep getting closer with each passing day—  
I love you so much, more than I can say.

**Ryan**, my oldest friend, since we were both small—  
We've shared so many memories, I can't name them all.  
**Hope**, we met at ski club and became fast and true—  
A newer friend, but it feels like I've always known you.

**Mya**, we met at Renaissance and grew side by side—  
We've been through so much, with nothing to hide.  
You're steady and strong, with a heart that's true,  
And no matter what, I can count on you.

**Salomé and Clémentine**, I'll never forget—  
That bee sting moment when we first met.  
You helped me feel better, you stayed by my side,  
And that's when our friendship really hit stride.

In Jewish Mother-Daughter Club, I've made some true friends—  
Ari, Shai, Lucy, and Lilac—where connection never ends.  
And Lucy and Lilac, since toddlerhood days,  
We've circled back in the most beautiful ways.

Pearl, yes you—I'll say more in a sec,  
But you're also my friend, and you keep me in check.  
And Faustine, from France, who crossed land and sea—  
You feel like a sister, especially to me.

So if you've been a friend, in big ways or small,  
Please come light this candle—I'd love to see you all.

**Song: We're Going to be Friends, The White Stripes (start at 4 seconds)**

#### **Candle 8: Pearl**

**Pearl**, you're my sister, my opposite twin—  
You're loud where I'm quiet, and you dive right in.  
We argue, we laugh, we dance and perform,  
And somehow that chaos has become our norm.

We put on big shows, and make messes with flair,  
We laugh 'til we cry—or pee in our pants, to be fair.  
You say what you think, and stand big and bright,  
You help me be bold when I tend to go light.

And then there's **Louie**, our big fluffy thief—  
With a bark like thunder and a sock obsession beyond belief.  
He steals all our shoes and makes the house wild,  
But you chase him down, while I freeze like a child.

So **Pearl**, please come up—this candle's for you,  
For the wild, loud love that only sisters do.

**Song: Weird Sisters, The Story Pirates, Stephanie Hsu**

**Candles 9 & 10: Mom & Dad**

**Mom**, you're my best friend, my guide, my safe place,  
With love and with laughter, you brighten my space.  
Like Lorelai and Rory, just us two,  
No matter what happens, I have you.

When I'm 18 and you're 50, we'll take a spa day,  
Relaxing together, letting stress slip away.  
We'll laugh, we'll unwind, like best friends do,  
Making memories that are peaceful and true.

I love you more than words can say,  
You've given me so much in every way.  
Your kindness, your strength, the love that you show,  
Have shaped me more than you'll ever know.

I love you forever, in all that I do,  
**And now, Dad—this part's for you.**

You're gentle and kind, with a heart that stays true,  
Always showing up in the way that you do.  
You've taught me, supported me, helped me feel strong,  
And made me know that I truly belong.

I know I asked for a dog—and you said yes,  
But you're the one who handles the mess.

I love how you love Mom—with humor and grace,  
With quiet devotion, and warmth in your face.  
You show me what love can truly be—  
**Kind, consistent, and perfect to me.**

So **Mom and Dad**, please come light this flame,  
The one that honors your love and your name.  
Thank you for all that you are and you do—  
This candle burns bright because of you two.

**Song: Where you Lead, I will Follow, Carol King (start at beginning)**

**Candle 11: The Jewish People**

This candle is for my people—my Jewish pride,  
For those who have suffered, resisted, and died.

For those who were taken, for those who still fight,  
For those who keep singing and shining their light.

For every survivor, each brave voice and name,  
Who stood up with courage and carried the flame.  
For ancestors lost and stories held tight,  
Who dreamed of a future where I'd stand in the light.

We are just 0.2 percent, but we're mighty and wise,  
A people who've lived with our hearts open wide.

So I'll light this candle tonight—  
For every Jewish soul, in darkness or light.  
For those who are free, and those held away,  
Because we matter—every single day.

**Song: One Day, Matisyahu (start at 12 seconds)**

#### **Candle 12: Me**

This last candle is one just for me—  
For who I am now, and who I will be.  
For the pride I feel deep in my heart,  
For all of the ways I've done my part.

This moment is big—this moment is mine,  
A piece of my story, a bright little sign  
That I've learned, that I've grown, that I've stepped into light—  
That I'm holding my voice, and I'm shining it bright.

Thank you for being here, for standing with me,  
For witnessing this moment so meaningfully.  
This ritual matters, this day feels true,  
And I'll carry it forward in all that I do.

And let's call it **Candle 13**, too—just for fun,  
For **good luck**, for joy, and for all that's to come.

**Song: Girl on Fire, Alicia Keys (start at beginning)**