

Shmuel Ushpitsas



This is the bar mitzvah of my son Shmuel Ushpitsas. The picture was taken after the rite in a Kaunas photo salon in 1974. On 15th May 1961 I bore a son, whom we called after my perished brother Shmuel. We had a good life. We were not needy. I made pretty good money. My husband was also well paid despite being a common worker. We were one of the first people in Kaunas who bought a car for the whole family. My children were raised by their grandparents in their house in Sakiai. My husband and I went there every weekend. Only when it was time for them to go to school, I took Hanna and then Shmuel to the city. We went to the seaside in Palanga with our children. We also went to Vilnius. We didn't leave Lithuania. We tried to observe Jewish traditions the best way we could. We went to the synagogue with our children on Sabbath and on holidays.

Both of us were members of the Jewish religious community of Kaunas in the Soviet years, which was quite frowned upon, to put it mildly. The monument to the perished Jews in Sakiai was set up on the donations from the relatives of the perished. We went there every year on the day of execution. When our children grew up, we took them with us. We told them about things that took place during the war. I communicated with Lithuanians and with Jews. Both Lithuanians and Russians treated me very well at work. I felt no anti-Semitism. My children identified themselves as Jews. Yiddish was spoken at home. At the age of 13 we celebrated our son's bar mitzvah. Unfortunately, my mother didn't live to see that, but my father and brother were very happy to see it.