

The Official OST

B'nai Mitzvah **HANDBOOK**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
From Rabbi Roz	3
From Cantor Jen	4
What Is The Meaning Of Bar Mitzvah And Bat Mitzvah	5
...And What About Confirmation?	5
Timeline For Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah	6
Mitzvah Goreret Mitzvah:	7
One Mitzvah Leads To Another... It's A Good Habit!	7
Ohel Sholom Temple B'nai Mitzvah Countdown	8
What Does A Bar/Bat Mitzvah Do?	11
An Outline Of The Day Of Your Ceremony	12
Policies	13
Guide For Facility Use	14
Keeping Bar And Bat Mitzvah In Perspective	16
Parents' Role In B'nai Mitzvah	17
Terms And Expressions	18
Blessings	20
Contributions	22
Guest List Suggestions	23
Suggested Ways To Fulfill Mitzvot	24
At Grade-Appropriate Levels	24
Tips And Suggestions	25

INTRODUCTION

How did this kid become old enough for us to be thinking about a Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony?! How is s/he going to learn all of that Hebrew to chant on his/her big day? What's an appropriate and meaningful role for me as a parent/grandparent/student in preparing for this landmark event? Indeed, these are some of the big questions crossing your mind as a son or daughter in your family – maybe it's you – approaching that milestone age of thirteen! This Handbook is here to give you some answers, and some items to think about, for those approaching B'nai Mitzvah at Ohef Sholom Temple.

We should all be reminded that (and this is perhaps the most challenging aspect of all) one does not *get* a Bar or Bat Mitzvah but *becomes* one. A new status as a “Jewish adult-in-training” is given on one's 13th birthday, magically transforming them into a Bat or Bar Mitzvah. It is also a journey that involves us all. It instills a sense of spiritual esteem and connects us with the moral teachings of our people. *A Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah* day is about more than a grand party or an affirmation of rote learning – it is the public declaration that this child is becoming a Jewish adult, ready to take on the responsibilities of caring for the world with her or his unique perspective. It's also about a purposeful endeavor to acknowledge one's spiritual nature, one that may (hopefully!) take a lifetime to explore.

The Ohef Sholom Temple B'nai Mitzvah Handbook outlines Temple policies, suggestions, lists of responsibilities, and schedules to keep you and your family organized and mindful along the way.

Keep in mind, that this booklet is merely a starting place, a logistical how-to guide. It's a compilation of ideas and timelines, thoughtfully put together by members and leaders of your Temple, with you and your fellow congregants in mind. Its primary purpose is to help you understand how we can all work together to make your family's B'nai Mitzvah experience as rewarding as it can and should be. The real gem of this synagogue is not the Handbook or any of the written material – it's the people like you who actively participate in the making of Jewish *mensch*es (good people). The technical outline is in this booklet. The rest is up to you!

FROM RABBI ROZ



One of my favorite parents' speeches at her son's Bar Mitzvah began, "today you are a man, tomorrow a thirteen-year-old boy." This mom got it right. For one, very special day, our child embodies our family's and community's heritage and hopes for a personally fulfilling Jewish life and a strong Jewish future for our people. That day will be the culmination of years of religious education and Hebrew study, months of B'nai Mitzvah classes, hours of learning and practice, and days of rehearsals. Your Bar or Bat Mitzvah will have studied the meaning of the portion they are reading and contemplated its relevance for themselves and our world. They will endure the inevitable jitters associated with publicly proclaiming all that they have accomplished. Standing before their community of family, friends, and congregants, they will affirm their commitment to Judaism and their heritage, and, in so doing, ensure our people's destiny.

Personally, they will be transformed by this experience. They may not become a man or a woman overnight, but they will no longer be a child anymore either. They will understand what it means to be a Jewish adult, to take responsibility for the teachings of our tradition, to do what is right and just in the sight of God and all people, to cherish the values we hold dear, and to look, in addition to their families, to Judaism and Ohef Sholom Temple for strength and guidance throughout their lives.

It is a very big deal! We look forward to nurturing you through it with quality teaching and tutoring and with meaningful and engaging educational experiences. Guaranteed, we always learn more from our students than they do from us; may we all grow in knowledge, in commitment, and in spirit throughout the coming days and months and forevermore. Amen.

FROM CANTOR JEN



Eilu d'varim sh'ein lahem shiur ... These are the things that are without limits...

In our morning prayer service, we list the mitzvot we can do for which there is no limit to the good they serve in the world. Honoring our parents, arriving early for study, celebrating with the wedding couple, creating peace amongst peoples...the list is a rich one. There is, however, one mitzvah that sits a little above the rest.

...v'talmud Torah k'neged kulam ... but the study of Torah encompasses them all.

You are about to embark on a journey that is unique in the life of a family. Your child will become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The pride that I know you will feel watching your child reach this momentous achievement will only be rivaled by their own deep sense of accomplishment. During the course of this process, your family will engage in the deep study of Torah. When this task is undertaken together with dedication, there is, truly, no limit to the good that will come of it. This good will radiate out, from your child, through your family, and into the world. It really is that powerful, and we are here to help you to maximize the impact of this mitzvah.

While your child will be responsible for the bulk of the work, you as their parent have a critical role to play. The more you allow this process to be one of family collaboration, the deeper and more meaningful it will become. Discuss their Torah portion with them. Take joy in the new insights they discover. Practice the Torah blessings together - if you don't know the Hebrew, have them teach you. Listen to them chant, and celebrate each new aliyah that they master. Help them to get excited about their mitzvah project, and get the whole family involved. Celebrate Shabbat with us! What better way could there be to teach your children the value of engaging in Jewish life than to enthusiastically engage in it with them?

It is one of the biggest joys of my life to walk this path with you. I am here to help your family to find the abundant meaning and joy that this process can yield. I can't wait to share in your learning and your pride, and to celebrate your child's arrival at this milestone with our community.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAR MITZVAH AND BAT MITZVAH

...AND WHAT ABOUT CONFIRMATION?

A mitzvah is a commandment. It is something that Jews who have reached the age of responsibility are expected to do. Sometimes, mitzvot are ethical acts that help to make the world a better place. Other times, mitzvot are ritual acts that perpetuate Jewish tradition through the generations. When the rabbis in ancient times wrote that performing these commandments leads to the performance of others, they were wise to understand the power of a legacy.

It is this legacy of Jewish tradition, both ethical and ritual, that is passed on during a Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony. The words Bat Mitzvah and Bar Mitzvah (literally, “child of a commandment”) are terms indicating that a person has reached the status of an adult member of the Jewish community. The Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah ceremony marks this important life transition, with all the privileges and responsibilities of that new status. The ceremony enables family and friends, and the religious community as a whole, to celebrate the continuity of tradition and faith.

Although a child has a Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony to mark this new stage in his/her Jewish life, the terms Bat Mitzvah and Bar Mitzvah are nouns that reflect this newfound status. A young person doesn't have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah – he or she becomes one. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah or Bar Mitzvah – a responsible Jewish adult – denotes a new status for our youth. The Hebrew word mitzvah refers to the commandments found in the Torah - traditionally reckoned at 613. A Bat Mitzvah, then, is a female who is “subject to the commandments,” or, even better, “a woman of responsibility.” Similarly, Bar Mitzvah is “a man of responsibility.” The terms may be applied to every Jewish person from the age of thirteen, whether or not a ceremony takes place. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah service is designed simply to celebrate a teen's change in status within the Jewish community.

To mark the growth in spiritual maturity, and to help the Bat or Bar Mitzvah candidate publicly demonstrate their acceptance of Jewish adults' responsibilities, we ask all students to work hard to master the material for the ceremony. Each student is unique, and based on his or her individual abilities, the amount of material differs. Students learn prayers, Torah text, Haftarah text, and readings in English; they complete Mitzvah projects; they write and give a talk on their Torah Portion and its meaning in their lives. In the Reform Movement, Religious School continues through 10th grade- Confirmation. Students are expected to remain enrolled and participate in classes through tenth grade and celebrate the culmination of their “formal” Jewish education with Confirmation in 10th Grade. We also encourage them to participate in our Temple Junior Youth Group, JOSTY, and then get active with our Senior Youth Group, OSTY, which presents opportunities to create lifelong friends, Jewish memories, and positive experiences rooted in Judaism. It is our sincerest hope that the journey to your child's B'nai Mitzvah gives you a deeper connection to your Jewish heritage and our temple family so that your family continues lifelong Jewish learning and engagement in the life of the community.

A side note: It's never too late to celebrate one's status as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah! Many proud grown-ups are alumni of our OST Adult B'nai Mitzvah classes. Consider joining the next class... even if you turned 13 a while ago. You and your children might inspire each other!

TIMELINE FOR BECOMING BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Students must be enrolled in Religious School to participate in B’Nai Mitzvah

End of Second Grade

→ Families receive an informational packet, outlining the Hebrew program

Third Grade

- Parents attend Hebrew School Orientation in the first month of Religious School
- Enroll in and regularly attend Hebrew School
- Continue regular attendance in Religious School
- Fulfill the Third Grade Mitzvot

Fourth Grade

- Continue regular attendance in Hebrew School
- Continue regular attendance in Religious School
- Work weekly with prayer text (Bet Class)

Fifth Grade

- Continue regular attendance in Hebrew School
- Continue regular attendance in Religious School
- Work weekly with prayer text (Gimmel Class)
- Receive information on choosing B’Nai Mitzvah ceremony date
- Attend B’Nai Mitzvah Orientation, receive ceremony date and B’Nai Mitzvah Packet
- Receive and begin Mitzvah Goreret Mitzvah (MGM) Program

Sixth Grade

- Continue regular attendance in Hebrew School
- Continue regular attendance in Religious School
- Fulfill the Sixth Grade Mitzvot and continue working on MGM Program
- Work weekly with prayer text (Dalet Material)

Seventh Grade

- Continue regular attendance in Religious School
- Continue working on MGM Program
- Personalized preparation with Cantor Jen and Rabbi Roz to be arranged

MITZVAH GORERET MITZVAH:

ONE MITZVAH LEADS TO ANOTHER... IT'S A GOOD HABIT!

Becoming a person of maturity (Bat or Bar Mitzvah) means taking on new responsibilities, like taking care of this world. Each student, according to his or her grade level, is expected to fulfill certain Mitzvot (commandments) – a minimum of three in third grade, four in fourth grade, and so on. A list of major categories of Mitzvot with a brief word of explanation is listed below. (More discussion will follow at the grade-level family workshops.)

Gemilut Chasadim: Acts of Loving-Kindness (non-financial giving)

Tzedakah: Sacred Giving (donations); Righteous living, doing the right thing

Talmud Torah: The Study of Torah (experiential learning and teaching)

Hiddur P'nei Zakein: Honoring the Elderly (linking generations)

Zicharon: Memory (remembering where we came from/where we still are)

Shabbat: Honoring the Sabbath (making Friday night to Saturday night special)

Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh ba-Zeh: All Jews are Responsible for One Another (support for the State of Israel and Jews around the world)

Kedushat Ha-Lashon: The Holiness of Speech (watching your mouth!)

Kedushat Haz'man: Festival Observance (experiencing the cycle of the year)

Tzar Baalei Chayim: Non-Cruelty to Animals (treating other creatures with dignity)

Tikkun Atzmi: Repairing the Self (recognizing maturity)

Lo Tashchit: Recycling, composting (Do not waste our natural resources, good stewardship of our earth)

OHEF SHOLOM TEMPLE B'NAI MITZVAH COUNTDOWN

10-12 Months Prior

Rabbi's and Cantor's Assistant will contact the family to arrange appointments with Cantor for Hebrew evaluation and Rabbi for Torah portion assignment and D'var Torah assistance. Cantor will determine if additional tutoring is needed. *This is a good time to start fulfilling the MGM cards if you haven't already.*

Season before Ceremony

Students begin Saturday morning B'nai Mitzvah Classes with Cantor. Parents will meet with the Director of Religious School concurrently. Families are encouraged to attend Saturday Shabbat service following each class.

Hebrew Names

The office will need your child's Hebrew name for their certificate and Order of Service. If your child has no Hebrew name, please inform the Rabbi or Cantor to discuss an appropriate name.

Planning Suggestions

These suggestions are not required, nor expected. Every family is different. Diversity is essential to a strong community. Parents should contact the Administrative Assistant regarding contractual questions with planning a reception at the Temple including: invitations, caterers, bima flowers, Oneg Shabbat, etc.

This is a good time to:

- *Check with the Administrative Assistant for availability and book dates for the Reception. (At OST or Offsite)*
- *Begin to look for vendors, including a caterer, DJ, florist, and photographer.*
- *Make a tentative invitation list. In the spirit of community, please include all of your child's Sunday morning peers on your invitation list to avoid any hurt feelings. A roster will be provided. To help accomplish this, we are happy to send out an email invitation via Paperless Post.*
- *If you plan to have many friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah who are attending without parents, you might want to consider providing transportation from the Temple to the reception if the reception is not located at the Temple.*

6 - 8 Months Prior

Rabbi Roz will help the family determine which family members will be involved in the service and what roles they will play. Rabbi Roz will study the Torah portion with the student and family in preparation for the writing of the D'var Torah (speech). Follow-up meetings will be scheduled to work on the D'var Torah speech.

Cantor Jen will begin meeting weekly with the student; he/she will receive a study chart which may be used each week with an overview of all that is required to help the student prepare for their service. The student should be working on keeping a regular study routine (i.e. minimum of 15 minutes per night.)

The amount of practice time will increase as the student begins his/her Torah and Haftarah portions, to accommodate prayers and speech preparation.

4 Months Prior

Planning Suggestions

This is a good time to finalize your invitation list, including all peers from his or her Sunday Learning class: Rabbi Roz and Cantor Jen, the Director of Religious School; order invitations, order yarmulkes if desired, order tallit for your child, and plan or order decorations and/or favors.

2-3 Months Prior

Oneg Shabbat

It is customary for all families to sponsor the Friday night Oneg Shabbat in honor of their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please contact the main office for the current Sisterhood contact information for assistance with this.

Planning Suggestion

This is a good time to address invitations.

Flowers for Bima

We encourage you to provide flowers in honor of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Sisterhood has a regular contract with a florist at a discounted rate and we suggest you consider using this florist, instead of your own. Please contact the main office for the current Sisterhood contact information regarding your flower arrangements including color selections and cost.

Temple Bulletin

Families submit a photo (digital image preferred) of their child to the Temple office for use in the Temple bulletin.

Attire

On both the Friday evening prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and at the Shabbat Morning Service, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and his/her family should wear clothing appropriate for the bima. For male family members, a jacket and tie are suggested and for female family members, a dress, tailored slacks, or a suit is appropriate. Kippa (traditional Jewish head covering) and Tallit (prayer shawl) are optional and are not provided by the Temple, but available for purchase in our gift shop.

Shabbat Candles

Families will have the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles on the eve of their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Contact the Temple Office for more information.

6 - 8 Weeks Prior

The student begins practicing in the sanctuary or chapel.

Planning Suggestions

Invitations should be mailed. This is the time to inform anyone who will have an honor at the ceremony and provide a copy of the blessings if needed.

4 Weeks Prior

Planning Suggestions

Have your final fitting for clothing. Begin table seating charts if needed, make sure the hotel has all the out-of-town reservations- call right before the cutoff date to make sure everyone will have accommodations. Start packing guest hospitality bags and/or party favors if needed.

2 - 4 Weeks Prior

Order of Service

The Order of Service will be prepared by the office in our (Printed Program) standard format. The Rabbi's and Cantor's Assistant will begin working with the family regarding the Order of Service. Parents will be asked to proofread the Order of Service. The basic Order of Services is included in the \$400.00 B'nai Mitzvah fee. There are additional fees for the Order of Service for using specialty paper and color printing.

- Color cover: \$.75 a booklet
- BW Cardstock cover: \$.14 a booklet
- Color Cardstock cover: \$.90 a booklet
- BW booklet: included

Week of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Tuesday Afternoon

Family Rehearsal with the Rabbi and Cantor is scheduled for Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. *Please have your child wear the shoes s/he will be wearing for the actual service.*

Photo Session

This may take place before Bar/Bat Mitzvah service on Saturday between 9:15 and 10:05 a.m. Rabbi and Cantor will be available at 10:00 a.m.

Friday Night Shabbat Service before the scheduled ceremony

The Family will have the honor of lighting candles.

WHAT DOES A BAR/BAT MITZVAH DO?

There are basically four areas of participation for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at a Shabbat morning service: to be a *sh'liach tzibur*, “leader of worship;” to chant from the Torah and the Haftarah, and to offer a Dvar Torah or teaching on the week’s Torah portion.

Sh’liach Tzibur

One of the oldest and most prestigious roles in the synagogue is to be the *sh'liach tzibur*. Literally, the “representative of the community,” the *sh'liach tzibur* leads the congregation in prayer. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student has the opportunity to be the service leader in this sacred role for part of our worship service on the day of his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah and is privileged to be *sh'liach tzibur* in the future in our congregation and whenever Jews gather for worship. Certain prayers may only be led by one who has reached the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

K’riat HaTorah

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah assumes the role of the Baal *k’riah*, “Torah reader,” for the day. This entails the learning of selection(s) from the week’s Torah portion. The weekly portion, chanted directly from the Torah, contains neither vowels nor trope (markings that designate the melody). Although the minimum requirement is chanting blessings before and after the Torah reading, our students generally chant from the Torah scroll.

The Haftarah

Following the reading of Torah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will chant the Haftarah or reading from the books of the Prophets. Like the Torah reading, the Haftarah is chanted according to a specific melody (trope) that is delivered in Sunday Learning and from the tutor. The number of verses to be read will be determined by the Cantor.

The D’var Torah

One of the privileges of becoming a B’nai Mitzvah is to have the opportunity to teach the congregation. A Dvar Torah (literally, a “word of Torah”) identifies concepts from the Torah portion of the week that provide meaning and guidance to us. The Rabbi meets with the student individually and assists with this process.

AN OUTLINE OF THE DAY OF YOUR CEREMONY

DAY OF THE SERVICE

- Please bring with you all study materials, a copy of your D'var Torah, ritual objects (Tallit, special yad (pointer), and Kiddush cup if you wish...) to be used in the ceremony, and any changes in the names of people to be called up for Bima Honors.
- Arrive at the Temple by 9:30 a.m. for the 10:30 a.m. worship service – perhaps earlier if you have arranged to have photographs taken that morning (photographs must be completed by 10:05 a.m.; the Rabbi and Cantor will be available to join you at 10:00 a.m. if you so desire.)
- Guests will receive a prayer book and an Order of Service as they enter. These will be presented by a greeter.
- At 10:20 a.m. the student and parents will meet in Rabbi's study.

SERVICE

- At 10:30 a.m., the student and clergy will step onto the bima. Parents will be directed to be seated in the front row of pews.
- If a tallit is to be presented to the student, the Rabbi will give instructions.
- The student will lead the remainder of the service up to the silent prayer. At this time, the student will be seated. Anyone chosen for Bima Honors will be called to the Bima at the appropriate times.
- At the beginning of the Torah Service, family members will be called to the bima as the Torah is passed from generation to generation, ending with the student.
- After the singing of the Sh'ma, the student will carry the Torah around the congregation.
- The parents will share some moments of blessing with their child.
- The Torah reading will be divided into a maximum of three sections, or aliyot, per student. For each Aaliyah, the Rabbi will call forward each of the people being honored. They will approach the podium and chant the opening blessing. The student will chant the Torah verses. The people being honored will chant the closing blessing and congratulate the student. (In order to help family members prepare to chant the Torah blessings, tutorials are available from our website or our office.)
- The Torah honorees, except for the student, return to their seats.
- The student will chant the Haftarah blessings and the Haftarah portion.
- The student will deliver his/her D'var Torah.
- The student helps return the Torah to the ark. The Rabbi and Cantor then lead the conclusion of the service.
- A representative from Ohel Sholom Temple's Board of Trustees or Congregation will present him/her with gifts, and a teen representative from our Youth group will also present a gift.
- Appropriate parties will be called to the Bima to participate in the closing song, the Kiddush (blessing over the wine) and Motzi (blessing over the bread).

POLICIES

Security

A security guard will be provided by the Temple for evening services and during the Shabbat morning services. For everyone's safety, we require each family to also engage the security guard for the reception. The Temple will make the arrangements but the payment is the family's responsibility.

Photography & Videography Policies

- **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY** may be used during the Sabbath Service. No photography equipment will be permitted on the bima during the Sabbath Service.
- Photographs may be taken on Saturday morning beginning at 9:00 a.m. and are to be concluded by 10:05 a.m., with all equipment cleared away. Be sure to notify all people you wish to include in these photos. The Rabbi and Cantor will be available at 10:00 a.m. If other arrangements need to be made, please call the Temple office.
- Video cameras on tripods are allowed and the videographer may set up the equipment on either side at the back of the Sanctuary. **THE AISLES CAN NOT BE BLOCKED!**

Inclusion of Ohef Sholom Temple members: The most important thing to remember is that each Bar/Bat mitzvah ceremony takes place within the context of a public, regularly scheduled Shabbat worship service.

It is our custom to welcome all Shabbat worshippers to any Kiddush luncheon celebrations held at the Temple. The welcoming of all worshippers to these luncheons is, in fact, a sacred obligation—it is the essence of what we mean when we call ourselves a congregation. As a practical matter, our Saturday morning “regulars” are few, and they often include upcoming Bar/Bat mitzvah students and their parents.

Fees

At the time the student begins the Bar/Bat mitzvah program, his/her family's financial obligations to the congregation (dues, school fees, and other assessments) must be current unless special arrangements are made. In addition to regular school fees, there is a \$400 fee for Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, classes, and supplies. **This fee is due no later than 30 days before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.** For additional, optional use of the Temple facilities for luncheons and dinners, there are additional fees, summarized in the Facilities Rental Contract, in Appendix, pp 27-28.

GUIDE FOR FACILITY USE

Ohel Sholom Temple is eager to have our facilities used for festivities and life cycle events. To assure that our premises are welcoming and inviting for all users, we request that the following guidelines be observed.

Although a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a festive occasion, elaborate social entertainment is not a family obligation. The event is a religious and spiritual one and care should be taken that the social event does not overshadow the religious values.

Food/Alcohol Policies

- Shellfish (shrimp, lobster, crab, oysters, etc.) and pork products are not allowed to be served in the Temple.
- The Temple does not permit the use of alcoholic beverages, other than wine, for events held during the Sabbath. After sundown, alcoholic beverages are permitted.

Set up Policies

- Requests for setting up tables and chairs for a luncheon or dinner must be submitted to the Temple office in writing, one (1) week before the bar/bat mitzvah.
- The Temple's dishes, glassware, silverware, and linens are available for use at your event for a fee (Refer to Appendix for fees).
- If the family chooses to have a private evening affair with a Havdalah service at the Temple, the Rabbi or Cantor doesn't have to be present in as much as a Havdalah service consists of three blessings: Candle, Wine, and Spices. The family may request instructions in advance how to, when and what blessings to recite for their ceremony. A Havdalah ceremony may be done outside, in a hall, hotel, home or anywhere.

Decorator Policies

- Florists/decorators may have access to decorate designated areas within the Temple up to 48 hours before the celebration date, providing there is no conflict with other scheduled events or Temple activities. Please call the Temple office if special arrangements need to be made.
- No nails, tacks, push pins or other fasteners that leave holes and no adhesives may be attached to the Temple's walls or ceilings.
- Florists/decorators are responsible for cleaning up Temple facilities of all floral and decorative items following the end of the scheduled event. Items that are left at the Temple after the event are not the responsibility of the Temple, its agents, officers, employees or assignees.

Liability

- Persons renting are responsible for any damages to Temple facilities and property caused by their vendors (e.g., caterers, florists, etc.) Please make sure the vendors you select have adequate liability insurance coverage.
- Notification of any damages to Temple facilities or property will be made to the renter and/or vendors at fault within 72 hours of the event's conclusion.

APPENDIX

KEEPING BAR AND BAT MITZVAH IN PERSPECTIVE

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is about the acceptance of responsibility.

In the final analysis, this is the bottom line of becoming a Bar and Bat Mitzvah. Learning the skill of k'riah, - "the reading of the Torah" and being the sh'liach tzibur are part of that responsibility. The greatest skill is to respond to the challenge of living a life of mitzvah. This is how Judaism defines maturity.

The Torah is the center of Judaism.

Everything we do as Jews, everything we believe, everything we value revolves around the Torah. The Torah is the testimony of our people's encounter with God. However you interpret those events in the wilderness of Sinai some three millennia ago, what cannot be dismissed is the sacredness with which our ancestors have embraced this legacy. This is why the first mitzvah we expect our children to fulfill is to stand at the Torah.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a community observance.

It is not by coincidence that we choose to hold this initiation ceremony in public. To be a Jew means to live within a covenantal relationship-not only with God but with other Jews as well. Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the entry of the child as a full-fledged member of the community. The awarding of an Aliyah, ("being called to the Torah"), is a gift of the Jewish people. For this reason, the marking of the child's coming of age takes place in the synagogue-the communal home.

Fortunately, you have a built-in community to help you along the way during your B'nai Mitzvah journey - the other parents in your child's class. We encourage all of the parents in each grade to become a cohort class of their own - a "mini-community". We do this by conducting a series of workshops with the parents as their children enter the 6th grade. As a result, classes could decide to go in together on a class gift to the Temple instead of "trading checks" to one another for B'nai Mitzvah gifts. Families could offer to assist one another in setting up the Social Hall during the week of the event, or in greeting guests and handing out prayer books at each ceremony.

Parents' Role in B'Nai Mitzvah

The Ohef Sholom teachers and clergy are committed to spending the time and resources toward the education of young Jewish people. In return, they expect the participation and commitment of the family to Jewish learning. We understand that some children and families have special needs or circumstances that must be considered. We encourage you to express any concerns to our Rabbi or our Cantor or Religious School Director, so that we can help to make your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience a meaningful and rewarding one.

Parents and other guardians can help make the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony a beautiful and memorable one. If the ceremony is to be truly meaningful, parents must become partners in the process by stressing the importance of learning, supporting the commitment to study beyond the celebration, and by reviewing work with the students at home.

The meaning of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is enduring only if it takes place within a context of continued Jewish growth. Being a Bat or Bar Mitzvah is not the experience of a lifetime. It is a lifetime experience—a state of being that remains with us throughout our lives. Parents should convey to their children by their actions and words that the ceremony is not the end of Jewish education but a major step along the path of lifelong Jewish learning and living.

Indeed, the true measure of performance comes not on the day one becomes a Bat or Bar Mitzvah but in the preparation and days that follow. In other words, we hope that our B'nai Mitzvah will observe this new status by continuing in their religious education to Confirmation, participating in OSTY, our Temple Youth Group, Israel travel through birthright funding, community service and the Jewish communal life.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience is not only a special time in the life cycle of a child and his/her family, but also within the congregational family. The presence of the congregation as witness to the child's participation in leading the service and being called to read the Torah and Haftarah completes the ceremony. Since the student's Sunday learning peers are an important part of his or her community, all students in the Sunday peer group should be invited to attend your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Parents should support other families on this journey by accompanying their children to peers' ceremonies.

TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS

Aliyah (plural, aliyot) - literally means “going up”. This is the ascent to the bima to say the blessings over the reading of the Torah. Aliyah is also the word used for the group of Torah verses chanted between these blessings.

Amidah (“Standing Prayer”) - the *Amidah*, a series of prayers, is the major liturgical piece of every synagogue service throughout the year. On a weekday, the Amidah contains prayers for the physical and spiritual well-being of the one praying as well as of the entire community of the people of Israel. On Shabbat, we praise God for the joy of the Shabbat and the rest that we enjoy. Worshippers are also encouraged to pray from their hearts if the printed words do not speak to them.

Bar - is the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word “ben” which means “son”. It also connotes “member.”

Bat - is the Hebrew word for “daughter.” It also connotes “member.” **Bima** - is the word for the raised platform in our synagogue where parts of the service are conducted.

Cantillation / Trope - ancient musical form of chanting the Bible.

Chumash - (from *chameish*, five) the Pentateuch (Five Books of Moses, or a book containing the Pentateuch).

Divrei Torah - is the plural form of the phrase *D’var Torah*, which literally means “a word of Torah’s teachings.” *Divrei Torah* are sermons and lessons which spring from the Jewish texts.

Haftarah - is not, as it sounds, “half-a-torah”. Rather, *Haftarot* (the singular of which is *Haftarah*, which means “conclusion”) is the name given to certain Biblical sections that are read after the Torah portion on Shabbat and Festival mornings. These readings, which almost always come from the book of Prophets (*Nevi’im*), are connected to the Torah portion by either a keyword or a theme.

Kaddish (“Mourner’s Kaddish”) - Although there is no mention of death in this prayer, the *Kaddish* is recited at the end of all worship services by family members who have lost a loved one in the past year or who are observing the anniversary of a loved one’s death that occurred during the week in years past.

Kiddush (“Sanctification of the Wine”) & Motzi (“blessing over the bread”) - At the conclusion of the worship service, everyone is invited for *Kiddush*, the blessing over the wine; and *ha-motzi*, the blessing over the bread.

Kippah - also known in Yiddish as *Yarmulke*, is the traditional head covering worn in order to show respect for God. While Reform Judaism feels that the wearing of *Kippah* either in everyday life or in prayer is not a religious obligation, many Reform Jews choose to do so.

“Mazel Tov!” - Congratulations! (literally: good luck)

Mitzvah - which is often understood as “good deed,” carries with it a stronger sense: a *Mitzvah*, literally, is a commandment from God. Therefore, when Jews perform deeds of love and righteousness, it is not only because they are good, but also because God commands us to do them.

Oneg - reception (literally: to rejoice)

Parasha - the Torah portion of the week. Also sometimes referred to as the *sedra*.

Shema (“Hear oh Israel the Lord is our God, the Lord is One”) - this passage from the Book of Deuteronomy and the passage that follows constitute a central part of each morning and evening Jewish prayer service. Probably the most important single sentence in the liturgy, the *Shema* is an affirmation of the unity of God.

Siddur - prayer book (literally: order)

Tallit - is the ritual prayer shawl, which is adorned at its four corners with *Tzitzit*, fringes. Jews are commanded by God to wear the Tallit in order to remember God’s commandments in the book of Numbers (15:39).

Torah - which means “teaching” is the first five books of the Bible, also known as the “Five Books of Moses” and the “Pentateuch,” which are: Bereshit/Genesis, *Sh’mot/* Exodus, *Vayikra/* Leviticus, *BaMidbar/* Numbers, and *D’varim/* Deuteronomy.

Torah Blessings (“Aliyot to the Torah”) - on Shabbat, the weekly Torah portion is read providing an opportunity to honor family members by calling them up to the *bima* (pulpit) to recite the blessings over the Torah readings. This is known as “receiving an *aliyah*,” that is, “being called up” to the Torah.

Torah Service - following the *Shema* and the *Amidah* is a transition from prayer to study. The primary study text is from The Five Books of Moses. This text has been written on the parchment of the Torah scrolls by a specially trained scribe. The Torah is divided into—and read in—weekly portions, according to a prescribed calendar, so that the entire Torah is read in the span of one year. The cover and accoutrements of the Torah scrolls recall the priestly garb of ancient Temple times, for example breastplate, robe, crowns, and belt. When the Torah scroll is removed from or returned to the ark, the congregation rises. We honor the Torah by carrying it around the Sanctuary in a procession. All guests and participants are encouraged to follow the reading in the Order of Service.

TaNakh - is an acronym for the Hebrew Bible, constructed from the first Hebrew letter of each of 3 sections of the Hebrew Bible T-N-K, *Torah* (Five Books)/*Nevi'im* (Prophets)/*Ketuvim* (Writings, i.e. Psalms, Proverbs, Book of Job, Five Scrolls: Esther, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations)

Tzedakah - is the Hebrew term for “righteousness”, a theme often employed when Jews involve themselves in works of charity and *Tikun Olam*, repairing our world.

Yad - is the pointer used to keep one’s place while reading from the Torah scroll.

“Yashar Ko’ach” - (feminine: *Ko-cheich*) - customary words of congratulations following *Aliyah* or reading from the Torah (literally: more power to you!).

BLESSINGS

Aliyah Primer

Below are the basic fundamentals of being called to the Torah for an Aliyah at Ohel Sholom Temple. Meaning to "go up" or "ascend," Afyah also implies a spiritual ascent. An Aliyah is considered to be one of the most sacred privileges in Judaism. Consequently, you must be Jewish and "of age" (i.e., B'nai Mitzvah) to qualify for an Aliyah. Indeed, the ceremony of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a celebration of a child's first Aliyah.

Ascending the Bimah for your Aliyah

When called for the Aliyah, ascend the Bimah (or pulpit) and stand to the right of the reader. He/She will point to the place in the sefer Torah scroll, where he/she is reading. Touch that spot with the tzitzit (fringes) of the taifit (prayer shawl), or the Torah's sash and then kiss the tzitzit. At this point, recite the b'rachah (blessing).

The First Blessing

Below is the blessing that is recited in Hebrew prior to the reading of the Torah. This blessing will be on the Bimah in both Hebrew and Transliteration. The first line is recited by the person doing the Aliyah, the congregation responds with the second line, the second line is repeated by the person doing the Aliyah who then continues with the rest of the first blessing.

ברכו את יי המברך;

Transliteration: *Bar'chu et Adonai hame'vorach.*

Translation: Praise Adonai, the One to be praised.

The congregation responds,

ברוך יי המברך לעולם ועד;

Transliteration: *Baruch Adonai ham'vorach I'olam va-ed.*

Translation: Praise Adonai, the One to be praised, forever.

You then respond:

ברוך יי המברך לעולם ועד;

Transliteration: *Adonai ham'vorach I'olam va-ed.*

Translation: Praise Adonai, the One to be praised, forever.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם,

אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְנָתַן לָנוּ
אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Transliteration: *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam asher bachar banu mikol ha-amim v'natan lanu et Torohto Baruch Atah Adonai Notein ha Torah.*

Translation: Praised are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen us from among the peoples and given us the Torah. Praised are You, Adonai, the Giver of the Torah.

The congregation responds, "Amen."

The Torah Reading

Following the conclusion of the first b'rachah, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah will chant the selection from the Torah. When the reading is finished, the b'rachah after the Torah reading is recited.

The Concluding Blessing

Following the Torah reading, the concluding b'rachah is offered. Again, the person offering the blessing will touch the place in the sefer Torah (scroll) with the tzitzit (fringes) of his or her tallit (prayer shawl) or the Torah's sash.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם
נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Transliteration: *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam Asher natan lanu Torat emet V'chayei olam nata b'to cheinu. Baruch Atah Adonai notein ha Torah.*

Translation: Praised are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who has given us the Torah of truth and implanted within us eternal life. Praised are You, Adonai, the Giver of Torah.

The congregation responds, "Amen."

NOTE: There are many websites where these blessings are chanted, including the Temple website. Torah and Haftarah portions and blessings may be found in the Temple Office.

After the Concluding Blessing

Following the concluding b'rachah, the person(s) who was called to the Torah should move to the reader's left and remain there until the next Aliyah is concluded. They each then return to his or her seat. It is customary to shake hands with those on the Bima.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Tree of Life Sculpture

The Tree of Life Sculpture is a magnificent work of art by renowned artist, Emanuel Millstein, on the wall outside our Sanctuary. The leaves provide a splendid means to honor special life events, including Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. The Cost is \$150 per leaf. Call the Temple Office, 625-4295 to order your child's leaf.

MAZON Donations

The Temple suggests that a donation be made to "MAZON - The Jewish Response to Hunger," by the parents for an amount totaling 3% or more of the total cost of the reception. MAZON collects money to fight hunger here in the United States and around the world.

Tzedakah or Charitable suggestions

The time of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a unique opportunity for your child to learn about Tzedakah, Acts of Righteousness and the responsibility to give Charity. In addition to participation in MAZON, consider having your child take flowers or other decorations from the reception to Beth Shalom Home, King's Daughters Hospital, or any other charitable institution as a meaningful closure to your celebration. Consider using Jewish books as table center-pieces, and then donating them to the Temple Library. Your child should also be encouraged to donate some portion of his or her gift money to a worthy charitable cause in honor of his/her celebration of life.

It is customary to make a contribution to the Rabbi's and Cantor's Discretionary Funds to thank them for their efforts and to share your simcha with those less fortunate.

B'nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy Program

Coordinated by the Tidewater Jewish Foundation, this program teaches teens about long-term financial investments, matching community funds, and pooling community resources.

GUEST LIST SUGGESTIONS

Below are suggestions/reminders to help you make the invitation list. Following the guidelines of a Jewish community event, it is recommended that all Sunday Learning classmates, as well as the people listed below be invited to the service and reception. If a member of the congregation is invited to have an honor during the B’Nai Mitzvah service, typically, that person would be invited to the reception as well.

Mr. Martin & Rabbi Rosalin Mandelberg

530 Raleigh Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23507

Cantor Jennifer Rueben

530 Raleigh Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23507

Mrs. Alyson Morrissey, Director of Lifelong Learning

530 Raleigh Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23507

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Kayer, Executive Director

530 Raleigh Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23507

Charles Woodward, Music Director

530 Raleigh Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23507

Religious and Hebrew Studies Teachers (present year)

(Addresses available upon request)

Classmates (present year)

(Addresses available upon request)

SUGGESTED WAYS TO FULFILL MITZVOT

AT GRADE-APPROPRIATE LEVELS

Third Grade: A Minimum of Three Mitzvot.

Examples:

- Contribute items and funds to your Sunday Tzedakah Project.
- Read a Jewish-themed book.
- Spend time with a grandparent (or someone in their generation) learning a craft, game, or story from them.

Fourth Grade: A Minimum of Four Mitzvot.

Examples:

- Contribute items and funds to your Sunday Tzedakah Project.
- Find out where your family is from, going back as many generations as you can.
- Decide as a family how you'll make Shabbat different from the other days of the week.
- Make something to give to the residents of a retirement home.

Fifth Grade: A Minimum of Five Mitzvot.

Examples:

- Contribute items and funds to your Sunday Tzedakah Project.
- Teach someone a Jewish ritual.
- Invite a friend to enjoy a Shabbat meal you made.
- Buy and use five Israeli-made products.
- Write and deliver three appreciation cards: one for someone in your family, one for someone who works hard to take care of you, and one for a senior citizen.

Sixth Grade: A Minimum of Six Mitzvot.

Examples:

- Contribute items and funds to your Sunday Tzedakah Project.
- Attend a Festival Service at Ohel Sholom or another temple. (Examples: Simchat Torah, Sukkot, Tu B'shvat, Lag Ba'Omer, Shavuot.) 3. Go 24 hours consciously avoiding "petty talk" (e.g. talking back, calling other people names, whining). Write up your experience.
- Visit a cemetery with your family. Place a stone on the grave/headstone of someone you knew or heard stories about.
- Visit an animal shelter and care for (play with) an animal.
- Assemble a collage of pictures of your life from the time you were born until now. Reflect on how much you've grown!

Like it says at the top, Mitzvah Goreret Mitzvah – do one Mitzvah, and then another, and then another, and you'll get into the habit of constantly doing the right thing!

TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is not a graded performance; it is a ritual experience. The synagogue is not a theater of entertainment; it is a theater of life's passages. And the bimah is not a stage separated from an audience; it is a stage set within a sacred community of participants and witnesses. More to the point, the only mistake one can make at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to lose sight of these truths.

Judaism has a formal name for the meal after a Bar/Bat Mitzvah: s'udat mitzvah. This meal is in honor of the performance of a mitzvah. It, too, is a sacred gathering. This is not to say that it must be solemn; it is to say, however, that the spirit of the morning's celebration should be perpetuated through the performance of mitzvot.

Invitation Tip

Before mailing invitations, write a sequential number on the back of each return card, and create a master list for yourself. That way, if a guest forgets to write his/her name on the return, you will be able to determine who it is. Do not expect everyone to return their cards - even close family! You may have to call up to a quarter of your list to determine who will be attending.

Tips from Temple families:

- The Temple office was helpful with whatever we needed, Don't be afraid to ask for help!
- Practice 15-20 minutes per day on prayers/Torah/Haftarah.
- Know all prayers except for Torah/Haftarah portions before meeting with the Cantor, so the preparation is not so overwhelming.
- Do not feel obligated to have an event at the Temple after the service.
- Don't panic, it will all work out and you don't have to do the same as everyone else.
- Just know that even though it seems overwhelming at first, the Temple is there for you through all of the steps. I have not seen any child do poorly. All the children have done a beautiful job.
- Relax and enjoy it.
- Remember this is about the religious significance of the event and not the party or the gifts. This is just one important event in a long list of important events and while it is the first, it is nice to keep it in perspective. Keeping up with the Jones' is not needed.

How to pick a Mitzvah Project

How can we add that special ingredient of tikkun olam, or fixing the world, to your upcoming simcha (joyous event) so that many more people can benefit from our happiness and joy?

It's really easy to find that special idea, the one you will enjoy working on and the one that will give you a special glow when you complete your work. In the process, you will see how many other people's lives have been changed because you cared and you care.

Start by asking yourself a few questions. We all know the traditional four questions recited at the Passover seder--Ma nishtana haleila hazeh But here is a different set of four questions, as well as a Question We Need to Ask Before We Ask the Four Questions.

First, we must ask ourselves: Who or what do I think needs help? What will make the world a better place. What have I seen that bothers me?

Now ask:

- What is it that I do well?
- What do I really like to do?
- What are my hobbies, interests, etc?
- What bothers me so much about what is wrong in the world that I get very angry about and want to do whatever I can to change it?
- Whom do I know that can help me?

And finally: Why not?

#1 may include: giving big hugs, playing soccer, baking chocolate chip cookies, talking on the phone for hours, being a computer whiz, or drawing or painting the most beautiful pictures.

#2 In order to answer what you like to do, you will have to think a little bit more. What activities give you the most pleasure? Can you sit and read for hours? Are you really excited about playing the guitar or keyboard?

#3 “What bothers you?” Are you tired of hearing that there are untold numbers of kids who go to bed hungry every night? Are you enraged when you think about war in the world, and refugees from war-torn regions? Or bullying in your school? Do you see problems with racism, classism, gender roles, and ethnic hatred, and do you want to bring a measure of justice to these matters? Do you feel uncomfortable when you visit a nursing home and see so many people just sitting and staring into space? Now, turn what bothers you into tikkun olam and make a difference.

#4 Know someone who enjoys playing a musical instrument as much as you do and would like to join you in a concert at a local nursing home? Or maybe you have a relative who is a dentist and is willing to give you dental supplies that can be donated to a dental clinic in Jerusalem? Are you and your friends ace soccer players who could teach kids at a homeless shelter how to play?

There is no end to the answers to this question. You just need to think about it ... and do it!

The additional question--“Why Not?” - -is generally the easiest of all. Almost always the answer is, “There’s no real reason why not. So, let’s do it.” Now, list your own answers, pick a piece of tikkun olam, and go do it.



Ohef Sholom

T E M P L E