

Teacher of Torah, Leader of Prayer

***The Temple Shalom Bar/Bat Mitzvah
Planning Guide***

*The world is sustained by three things:
by Torah, by worship, by loving deeds.*

Mishnah Avot

Introduction

“We come together this Shabbat to celebrate a special moment in the life of our community. We come here from different places, yet we share a common goal to witness and to welcome the assumption of the covenant by one of our young people... You are today teacher of Torah and leader of prayer.”

These words are from the “Call to Responsibility,” spoken by the Rabbi during a service at which a Jewish young person will be called to the Torah as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Temple Shalom.

This emotional moment, filled with a sense of accomplishment and hope, takes place during a public worship service. It is preceded by months of intensive preparation, and years of study. The key to alleviating any last minute tensions, to preserving and enhancing the inherent integrity of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah for our young people, is preparation and planning.

This handbook is for you. We have prepared it to answer as many of your questions as possible. It was written originally by Sid Levine, a member of Temple Shalom, and has been revised by the Rabbi, Cantor, Director of Education and Executive Director to reflect the growth and development of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program in our congregation. It contains the history and background of Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the procedures that are customary in our congregation. Our hope is to make each Bar/Bat Mitzvah a meaningful, comfortable and joyous family experience.

Within these pages you will find a step-by-step plan that includes a review of the religious requirements and spiritual expectations of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program at Temple Shalom, as well as suggestions based on experience in areas as diverse as booking a band to printing invitations.

These are, of course, **two very different kinds of information:**

- **Religious and spiritual aspects** described in this book are an outline of our community’s expectations and requirements. In this regard, this booklet describes the services and functions that Temple Shalom provides for each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family, as well as the obligations and commitments that are expected of each Bar and Bat Mitzvah.
- **Information about the celebration**, on the other hand, is included because many people have questions about this aspect of the experience, and providing such information has proven to be helpful to many families.

In reaction to the question: “Do I have to have a party like this?” (whatever the “this” may be) the answer is, of course, *no, not at all*. Aspects of some information surrounding the celebration described in these pages may not apply to everyone.

One copy of this guide is provided free to each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family. (Additional or replacement copies are available for a nominal fee.) This guide is also available on our website at http://www.templeshalom.net/index.php/home/life_cycle/. *Please keep this booklet in a safe and readily accessible place, to refer to as needed.*

History and Origin of Bar and Bat Mitzvah

A Tradition Develops Over Time

The term Bar Mitzvah literally means “son of the commandment.” The term indicates the coming of the age of accountability for a Jewish young person, a time of transition from a childhood in which religious decisions were made for us, to a maturity in which we are bound by the laws and traditions of our people.

Centuries ago, the age of thirteen was determined to be the age of accountability for Jewish boys. Prior to this age, they were not obligated to observe all the traditions as an adult; after age thirteen they were bound by the full extent of Jewish privileges and responsibilities and counted in the quorum of adults required for public prayer. The Talmud tells us that “until the thirteenth year, it is the father’s responsibility to raise his son.” After that, however, the father must say: “Blessed is God, who releases me from punishment for this one!” (The father is no longer culpable for mistakes and misdeeds the son may make.)

The ceremony marking this coming of age, however, originated fairly late in Jewish history. There is no mention of such a ceremony in either the *Tanakh* (the Hebrew Bible) or the Talmud. The first record we have of a ceremony celebrating boys becoming bound by the commandments is from the 10th century C.E., and refers to boys being brought forward for a blessing or communal prayer.

The Bar Mitzvah ceremony developed during the Middle Ages, but still consisted only of the 13-year old boy being called to the Torah, and required to read a small portion of the weekly Torah reading. A modest celebration occasionally followed the service.

Finally, by the middle of the 15th century the Bar Mitzvah ceremony really came into its own. For the first time we read in contemporary sources about the connection of Bar Mitzvah with ritual acts, a change in legal status and a festive celebration. In the 16th century many of the practices associated with the ceremony today are present: the Bar Mitzvah was to give a lecture about a portion of Talmud; he was counted as a member of the *minyan*; one first put on *tefillin* upon becoming Bar Mitzvah; presents are given the Bar Mitzvah boy; a new suit of clothes is purchased for the youngster; the Bar Mitzvah feast is large and given a lot of attention (so much so that some sources even contain warnings or complaints that the celebrations were getting out of hand.)

Equal Opportunities for Girls: The Origin of the Bat Mitzvah

In Jewish tradition, the age of responsibility for the performance of the commandments was said to have been age twelve for girls rather than age thirteen, as it was for boys. (The age of accountability probably corresponded with the average age for the onset of puberty.)

Girls, however, were at that time obligated to far fewer commandments than boys. Jewish society at that time saw women only as wives and mothers, and thus exempted women from any commandments that had to be performed at a certain time - in order

that they would be able to tend to their primary responsibilities in the home. Today, of course, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Jews view women as having equal responsibilities - and equal rights - in Jewish religious life.

It was quite some time before the appearance of a Bat Mitzvah ceremony equal in every way to that of a Bar Mitzvah. In the late 19th century, Reform Judaism dispensed with the Bar Mitzvah ceremony altogether. The age of 13, once seen as the beginning of moral and ritual responsibility, now seemed too young an age for a real understanding of the tradition. "Adolescence" emerged - a new phenomenon, unheard of at a time when young people were expected to earn a living by thirteen, perhaps marry by fifteen, and begin their families by age seventeen at the latest. In response to this new reality, Reform Judaism replaced the Bar Mitzvah with a more mature - and more egalitarian - ceremony of Confirmation for both girls and boys.

The first known Bat Mitzvah occurred in 1922. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (who would later found the Reconstructionist movement of Judaism) scheduled such a ceremony for his daughter Judith. According to the story told about this event, she was called to the *bimah*, read the blessing before the reading of the Torah, read part of the Torah portion in Hebrew - although not from the Torah itself, and read the blessing after the reading of the Torah. The Bat Mitzvah ceremony was born. Reform Judaism, which by this time was reintroducing the Bar Mitzvah ceremony, quickly asked its young girls to go through a rite equal to that which it asked of its boys. Conservative Judaism also adopted the Bat Mitzvah, although in many cases that which girls and boys were allowed or expected to do was not identical.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Today at Temple Shalom

Today, the responsibilities of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the requirements leading up to the event, and the extent of their participation in the service vary widely from congregation to congregation. In some places, the primary emphasis is placed on the reading of the Torah, in other places the primary emphasis is on the Haftarah reading (the selection from the Prophets). Expectations of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah vary even between congregations in the same movement of Judaism.

At Temple Shalom we have created our own Bar/Bat Mitzvah customs. As in all Reform congregations, Bar and Bat Mitzvah are treated equally. Our B'nai Mitzvah read from the appropriate Torah and Haftarah portions and participate significantly in the service. They are called upon to prepare lessons on those portions and teach them to the congregation. They are required to continue with formal Jewish education through the completion of tenth grade.

At Temple Shalom, we do not see Bar or Bat Mitzvah as a conclusion to Jewish studies. Rather, we affirm that this "coming of age" ceremony symbolizes the *beginning* of one's passage toward higher levels of Jewish knowledge, understanding and participation and, as Reform Jews, the obligation to study in order to shape a meaningful expression of Judaism.

Never did becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah mean a child was to be considered an adult, and it does not mean that here. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a serious and a wonderful event. It provides great personal satisfaction. It represents a significant accomplishment. It

celebrates moving from childhood toward adulthood: physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, ethically, spiritually and ritually. It is worthy of celebration and very careful consideration. But it is also a step on a larger journey, a part of an ongoing process, a means towards an even greater end, a ceremony whose meaning unfolds essentially in the context of a larger commitment, a down payment on the promise of tomorrow.

It is the journey and the commitment on which the future of our people depends, as much as on this special day itself.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Pledge

Much has been said about the importance of viewing the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as part of a process. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah teaches Jewish (and general) life-skills; its impact is meant for a lifetime.

The commitment to this ideal is a core value of this congregation. In word and in deed, time and again, we emphasize the requirement to continue Jewish education beyond Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This is a commitment which each family should encounter at least four times prior to the ceremony of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah: on entering the school and/or joining the congregation, upon first receiving the date for the ceremony, upon the commencement of individual preparation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the *Madrich/Madricha* and tutor, and on the morning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah itself, on the occasion of signing the Bar/Bat Mitzvah certificate. We consider this commitment binding even if you only recall some, and not all, of the above occasions.

Our expectation is that our young people continue through the end of tenth grade, or its equivalent. The phrase “equivalent level of learning” is an acknowledgement that some students have real conflicts or learning issues which make the development of an Individualized Educational Program (independent study) necessary; this misses the social component of the program (a key element, especially in the Tenth Grade year), but allows the learning to continue. We also recognize that people move, or even occasionally change congregations. While the vast majority of our students remain with us, and remain in class, we consider the pledge fulfilled with the completion of three years of supervised Jewish study – even if that takes place in another setting, or by individual arrangement.

It is of critical importance to the success of our B’nai Mitzvah program and to the survival of the Jewish faith and people for our children to obtain more than a Bar/Bat Mitzvah level Jewish education. As much as they learn prior to reaching this milestone, they simply are not equipped with enough Jewish knowledge, Jewish experiences, Jewish understanding to face their futures competently as Jews.

That is why Temple Shalom’s policy is that all B’nai Mitzvah are to promise to continue with their formal Jewish studies at least until they graduate from our school at the end of Tenth Grade.

What follows on the next page is the exact wording and phrasing of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah pledge:

My Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a bridge
Between yesterday and tomorrow,
Between commitments kept and promises made,
Faith preserved, and the future survival of the Jewish people.

I understand that a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony
is the beginning of a Jewish life and not its culmination.
It is a step on a journey, a gateway to new levels of learning and observance.

In accepting the date of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Shalom,
and in celebrating this sacred occasion in our synagogue,
I understand and accept the commitment to continue formal Jewish studies
at least until graduation from our Religious School at the end of Tenth Grade,
or an equivalent program of study and Jewish learning.

I understand that Jewish life is built around the recognition of blessings.
At this time I recite ancient words
Which echo the importance and spiritual essence
Of study, education and learning:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצוותיו, וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה.
ברוך אתה יי, המלמד תורה לעמו ישראל.

Barukh atta Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh HaOlam
asher kiddeshanu b'mitzvotov, v'tzivanu l'asok b'divrei Torah.
Barukh atta Adonai, HaMelameid Torah L'amo Yisrael.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of Existence, who makes us holy with
Your mitzvot, and commands us to immerse ourselves in words of Torah.
And may the words of Your Torah, Eternal our God, be sweet in our mouths,
and in the mouths of Your people, the house of Israel,
so that we, and our children, and the children of the house of Israel
will, all of us, come to know Your name, and study Your Torah for its own sake.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who teaches Torah to Your people Israel.

As I stand here on this day, I give my word, I pledge my sacred honor
To do my best to live up to the ideals and commitments
Of our history, of our heritage and of my heart.

Signature of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature(s): _____

A Modern Challenge in the Meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: Finding the Right Balance

As the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony has grown in importance, something has happened in many synagogues which was *not* a part of the original intent of this celebration. The original place, power, and purpose of the Bar Mitzvah was in this form: it was a celebration of a young person finding his voice, and taking his place, *as part of* a praying community. The Bar Mitzvah *participated in* a living, vibrant Shabbat morning. The young person's role was not the only thing happening in the service, nor was it even the sole focus of the service.

Now, in many non-Orthodox congregations, and especially in Reform synagogues where the main experience of communal worship has shifted to Erev Shabbat (Friday night), the celebration of Bar or Bat Mitzvah has become the single and primary centerpiece of Saturday morning worship. With carefully tailored guest-lists, it is even the case that many times, the *only people in attendance at the service* are those who have been invited by the family.

The situation poses a practical and philosophical dilemma: we come together to celebrate the accomplishment of an individual. But the context in which this celebration takes place has been, and is supposed to be, one of communal worship. The act of joining a community takes on the appearance of a private affair.

There is no simple solution. Even as we prod our young people to play a *more* prominent roles as “teachers of Torah and leaders of prayer,” we feel the need to restore the sense, and the reality, of Shabbat morning as a worship experience for the entire community. How we balance the beauty of an individual experience with the intent of communal prayer will evolve in the years to come. We may add adult-level Torah study and discussion to the service. We will seek to welcome other congregants celebrating special events (baby namings, upcoming weddings, significant anniversaries or occasions) to share in the service. All our efforts will be informed by the primary goal of restoring the original genius of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah: an *extraordinary* day to remember in the life of your family, and an ordinary — by which we mean regular — event in the ongoing worship experience of a vibrant congregation.



Temple Resources

We believe in the power, potential and importance of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremony in the lives of our young people, and the lives of their families. Temple Shalom has a proud tradition of depth and breadth of resources available to enhance the experience of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at our congregation. We encourage you to use our resources to help make your B'nai Mitzvah experience both meaningful and enjoyable.

Our Rabbi, Cantor, Director of Education, Executive Director, *Madrichim*, Hebrew tutors, and B'nai Mitzvah coordinators are ready to assist you regarding all phases of your B'nai Mitzvah service preparations.

The Rabbi, Michael Feshbach

The Rabbi is responsible for the content and conduct of each service. He continually works to strike the right balance between the experience of an individual child or family, and the communal nature of the worship service itself. The goal remains to bring a sense of spiritual richness and depth – indeed, of holiness, a sense of the sacred – to the entire process. The Rabbi meets individually with families before their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. He also edits and provides feedback on their speeches and, along with the Cantor, leads a final service rehearsal. The Rabbi is also involved with the family education. Together with the Director of Education, Cantor, the Executive Director, the B'nai Mitzvah coordinators, the *Madrichim*, the Hebrew tutors, and others, he provides guidelines to everyone involved in the B'nai Mitzvah program at Temple Shalom.

The Cantor, Lisa Levine

The Cantor is the coordinator of the B'nai Mitzvah process at Temple Shalom and oversees all the many aspects of the program. This includes preparing all materials, teaching *tfillah* (worship) to all grades in the religious school, teaching 6th Grade *Trope* (cantillation) and coaching students on the *bimah* in preparation for the final Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

The Cantor also assigns the dates, tutors, and *madrichim* for all B'nai Mitzvah students. The Cantor works closely with the tutors and the *madrichim* in support of their efforts. If there are any special needs to be considered in making these assignments, please be sure to inform her as soon as possible. The entire process begins when the Cantor meets one-on-one with your family ten months before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to get to know your family story and give you all the materials your student will require to complete his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

The Executive Director, Susan Zemsky

The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing all logistical support within the Temple. All ushering, oneg, and *bimah* flower commitments are coordinated through her office. Reserving Temple Shalom's social hall and other spaces for your reception is

also done through the Executive Director. If you have made arrangements with a private videographer and/or photographer, the Executive Director will need names and phone numbers of these contractors ten days before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If you are having your reception at Temple Shalom, the Executive Director will need information about your caterer, musicians, and florist. The Executive Director will then work with these people to familiarize them with our expectations, to assist them in their roles, and to guide them through the appropriate use of our building. She will insure the smooth running of your function.

The Director of Education, Lisa Pressman

Our Director of Education oversees all family education retreats, special needs, and educational integration of the B'nai Mitzvah program into the religious school. She is available to speak to you about any educational concerns you may have.

Madrachim

Temple Shalom has a unique program to enhance the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience – a program which has received widespread recognition in Reform movement circles well beyond the bounds of our own synagogue. "*Madrachim*" or "Guides" have been carefully selected and trained to assist the family and the student to reach a fuller understanding of the assigned Torah and Haftarah portions of the week. The Cantor will match a *Madrich* (*male guide*) or *Madricha* (*female guide*) with Bar/Bat Mitzvah students. You will receive this information when you meet with the Cantor ten months before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

During the six-month period prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you will meet (usually as a family) with your "guide" a number of times – it varies from *Madrich* to *Madrich*. This is a large investment of time, and is a big commitment. It is an experience that has been received in an overwhelmingly positive way and very favorably endorsed by nearly everyone who has gone through the process.

During these meetings, the *Madrich/Madricha* will:

- Help the family understand the assigned Torah and Haftarah portions and verses.
- Help the student prepare the two "speeches," the *D'var Torah* (introduction and commentary to the Torah portion) and *D'var Haftarah* (introduction and commentary to the prophetic selection).
- Help the Bar/Bat Mitzvah learn to deliver the speeches for the day of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The *madrachim* are all volunteers. There is no charge for their services. They benefit in other ways from this process – as teachers, as guides, even as adult role models in a special Jewish context. (This is so much the case that many parents, having witnessed this process with their own children going through Bar or Bat Mitzvah, volunteer to become *madrachim* themselves soon thereafter.)

Hebrew Tutors

The Cantor will assign you a tutor at roughly the same time your *Madrich/Madricha* is assigned. Our tutors help each child learn the necessary Hebrew portions of the Torah, Haftarah and liturgy. The tutors also coordinate with the Cantor in the young person's overall participation in the service and prepare his or her *siddur* (prayerbook) for proper cues and ease of use during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service itself.

(Remember: a *siddur* is a sacred book. All markings in it should be done with Post-Its; when it is *absolutely necessary* to make a mark on a page itself, only light pencil should be used. The exclusive use of Post-Its is far preferable.) A copy is provided with your student's materials.

Our tutors are not volunteers. They are paid by the Temple. Your B'nai Mitzvah Program fee pays for all of these 45 minute private sessions. **If additional sessions are needed they can be arranged with your tutor.** If your child has any special learning needs, *please contact the Cantor as soon as you receive your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.* The Temple will work with you to make your child's experience as pleasant and fulfilling as possible.

B'nai Mitzvah Coordinators

The volunteer B'nai Mitzvah Committee Coordinators are assigned to your family to help ensure that everything runs smoothly before and during the service. You will receive the name of your coordinator in a mailing or emailing from the Temple. Your coordinator can provide a number of helpful functions, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The coordinator will be happy to answer any last minute questions and the coordinator and Executive Director can help you with any special requirements at the Temple.
- Since still photography is not permitted during the service, the coordinator will meet you at the Temple at 8:30 a.m. (8:15 a.m. for a double Bar/Bat Mitzvah) to supervise picture taking at that time.
- Your coordinator will guide the ushers in enhancing the mood and behavior that should prevail during the service. Any special seating arrangements to accommodate the aged or handicapped will be taken care of by your coordinator.
- Equipment for the hearing impaired and large print prayer books for the visually impaired are available at the prayer book case. Please let your coordinator know if these items are needed.
- One of the school classrooms can be made available for babysitting for very young children and babies. You will need to provide your own babysitter. The coordinator will be happy to direct your guests to the babysitting room.

If you have not heard from your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator four weeks prior to the service, please contact the B'nai Mitzvah Committee Chairperson to find out the name of your coordinator, so you can initiate the contact yourself. At that time, they will go over the information on the Coordinator's Information Sheet.

Who May Become Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Shalom?

At Temple Shalom, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads the congregation in prayer and study, and reads from the Torah and Haftarah. Each young person is unique; no two Bar or Bat Mitzvah experiences are the same.

The Temple Shalom Family welcomes the participation of our students in the Bar and Bat Mitzvah experience and *we encourage our Temple families to take advantage of our support and experience*. Parents are urged to consult with our Rabbi, our Cantor, our Director of Education, and their *Madrichim* and tutors throughout the entire process so that we can work together to bring out of this sacred process the maximal potential for each of our young people.

All candidates for Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Shalom must be children of Temple members **in good standing**. The Temple will be happy to work with families in every way possible to ensure that the family meets this requirement. Based on our experience and standards, Temple Shalom has established the following guidelines for participation in the Bar and Bat Mitzvah program:

- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will have been a **student in our Religious School, or an equivalent program, for a minimum of three years prior to the year of Bar/Bat Mitzvah**. Please discuss any special circumstances or alternative arrangements with the Senior Rabbi and the Director of Education.
- **All B'nai Mitzvah students must continue formal Jewish studies at least through the end of the tenth grade**. (See the "The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Pledge" on page 6.) In seventh or eighth grade, our students are prepared only to begin the studies that will have the greatest impact on their perceptions of Judaism and who they are as Jews in their adult lives. The continued study through tenth grade, at a minimum, will prepare them to take their place as educated Jewish adults.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah requires a certain level of **proficiency in the Hebrew language**. Students who enter the religious school after Fourth Grade might need additional instruction in order to bring them up to the proper level of Hebrew language proficiency.
- Candidates must **regularly attend religious school** and attendance, behavior and performance at Religious School must meet the guidelines set by the school. Our Director of Education will contact the family if there are any problems in this regard.
- **Participation in regular Shabbat worship** enables our students to develop a feeling for, and an understanding of the service and the obligation of Jewish worship. Our B'nai Mitzvah students must attend a minimum of five (5) Friday evening and five (5) Saturday morning Bar or Bat Mitzvah services during the ten months before their own service. *We encourage entire families to worship together and participate as much as possible*.
- A major component of the Temple Shalom Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience is the Mitzvah Program. You will receive a copy of the Mitzvah Program materials when you meet with the Cantor ten months before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

The Celebration

To plan a Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be a complicated and involved task. Each family faces many important decisions about a Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration, separate and apart from the content of the service. The information that follows should help make this task more manageable.

Placing the Celebration in Perspective

Celebrations for Bar and Bat Mitzvah vary widely at Temple Shalom, from small loving family gatherings in homes to larger parties held in social venues. *Each family should celebrate in a way that is personally meaningful and matches its own needs and circumstances.*

In planning for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we often focus on details of the celebration: luncheons, dinners, guest lists, invitations, bands and parties. The practice of welcoming guests, of hospitality (*hachnasat orchim*) goes back in Jewish tradition all the way to the first Jew, to Abraham, who ran to prepare a meal for unexpected out-of-town visitors. Serious celebrations are a part of our roots. But we should remember – just as the service takes place in the context of commitment, the celebration takes place in the context of – and is inevitably a reflection of – our core values, our real beliefs.

At times, our young people may see a Bar or Bat Mitzvah mainly as a party or as an opportunity to get gifts and make money. But our tradition intends for this to be primarily a profoundly religious event and a deeply spiritual experience. As we begin our planning, it is important to monitor our own attitudes, to keep track of what we as a family, especially as parents, are doing to contribute to the impressions of our children.

Even the best of intentions can convey the wrong message. If you complain about the time taken to attend services, but devote large amounts of time to discussing the menu, decor, and lists of guests, the spiritual impact of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony may be diminished. Our youngsters are keen observers of the balance we strike concerning the use of our time, money, and energy. Let us face these issues with care and do everything possible to enhance the importance and integrity of Bar/Bat Mitzvah for our sons and daughters.

The opportunity afforded by this traditional Jewish experience is hard to duplicate in any other setting. So, as we plan for our celebration, let's involve our children in ways that will teach them responsibility and good values. At the same time, parental involvement in what appear to be the more child-centered tasks -- practicing prayers, studying the Torah, and Haftarah portions, struggling to make meaning of the text – can deepen the experience for the entire family as well.

For those families who are planning a larger celebration, a list of caterers, printers, photographers, and videographers used by our members, and the names of the members who used them in the recent past, are available in both the Temple office and the Library.

A Preview of a Typical Shabbat

The following description is a brief overview meant to give you a "taste" of what a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service might be like. Later in this guide, you will see a detailed description.

Erev Shabbat (Friday Night)

- Help with lighting candles towards the beginning of the service.
- Opening and closing the ark doors for the Aleinu.
- Help with the Kiddush (blessing using the wine) and Motzi (blessing using the bread) at the entrance to the Social Hall at the end of the service.

Shacharit (Sabbath Morning)

At Temple Shalom, B'nai Mitzvah are called to the Torah during services on Shabbat morning.

The detailed schedule of events for the morning are:

8:30 AM - 9:15 AM - Pictures with family members

9:15 AM - 9:20 AM - Pictures with the Rabbi and Cantor

9:20 AM - Review of the service with all "participants" (those with parts and honors such as the Torah blessing, Torah holding or dressing or undressing parts, ark door openers, family readers)

9:45 AM – The family moves to the Parent's Lounge; family prayer and signing of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Certificate.

10 AM - The service begins with the processional into the sanctuary and continues with:

- Call to Responsibility and singing of Shehecheyanu
- The presentation of the *tallit* (prayer shawl), if the family chooses
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah leading many of the prayers of the Shabbat morning service
- Family readers leading prayers in English
- The passing of the Torah through the generations
- The processional with the Torah scroll through the congregation

The service continues as the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

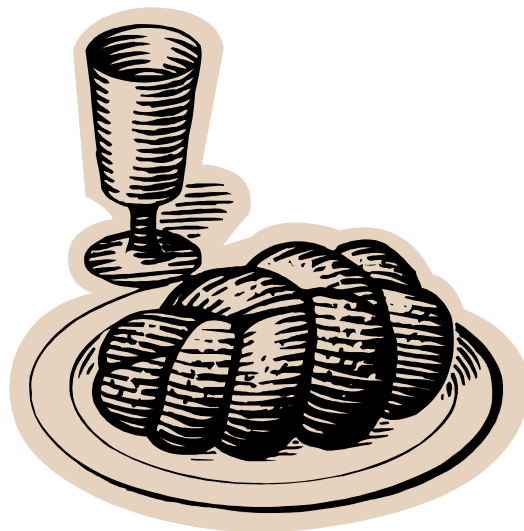
- Delivers the ***D'var Torah*** (an explanation and teaching written by the student about the Torah portion) and chants from the Torah scroll itself

- Delivers the ***D'var Haftarah*** (an explanation and teaching written by the student about the Haftarah portion) and chants the Haftarah.
- Parents' Prayer including the presentation of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah certificate and Clergy Blessing

The family returns the Torah scroll to the ark and the service concludes with closing prayers, the presentation of the certificate and gifts from the congregation, and the Kaddish (Memorial Prayer).

Following the singing of the closing song the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and family lead the congregation in the Saturday morning version of the Kiddush – the blessings over the wine and bread. The service usually concludes around noon for a "Single," and perhaps fifteen minutes later for a "Double." The service may be followed by a Kiddush in the building. The participants can greet one another and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah well.

A family celebration may immediately follow the Kiddush or occur at a later time.



Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planning Checklist

Two years to go:

- Send in Bar/Bat Mitzvah application to the Temple office
- Indicate understanding of the commitment to continue Jewish education through at least tenth grade
- Receive assigned date
- Notify the Cantor immediately about any reading or learning concerns that your child may have.
- Read or re-read “Teacher of Torah, Leader of Prayer”
- Budget contribution to MAZON (see pamphlet)
- Reserve and make deposit on the Social Hall for reception through the Executive Director (if applicable)
- Return Fee and Payment Schedule Sheet

Two years/eighteen months to go:

- Arrange catering if applicable)
- Investigate and/or book photographers, videographers, and entertainment for reception (if applicable)

Eighteen/twelve months to go:

- Let out-of-town guests know the date of your event
- Decide on reception decorations (if applicable)
- Book photographers, videographers, and entertainment for reception (if applicable)
- Begin planning Mitzvah project to be completed following the bar/bat mitzvah

Fall of sixth grade:

- Attend Sixth Grade Family Education
- Write biographical statement and “What Bar/Bat Mitzvah means to me”

Ten months to go:

- Family meeting with Cantor
- Receive booklet of Torah/Haftarah portions and all other materials from Cantor

Nine months to go:

- Begin fulfilling service commitment
- Reserve lodging for out of town guests

Eight months to go:

- Select or create invitations
- Arrange for Twinning participation (if desired)

Six months to go:

- Begin studying with Hebrew tutor
- With *Madrich/Madricha*, begin studying for Torah and Haftarah readings
- Receive assigned ushering date:<enter date here>_____

Five months to go:

- Begin writing speeches

Four months to go:

- Decide who will be honored with *aliyot* or other forms of service participation. Call honorees to ask them to participate.
- Order or print invitations

Three months to go:

- Mail the child's picture and biography to the *Shofar* editor.
- Make donation to Jewish National Fund

Eight weeks to go:

- Make arrangements for flowers or food baskets with Executive Director
- Make arrangements for the Oneg Shabbat with the Executive Director
- Mail invitations

Four/six weeks to go:

- Begin weekly meetings with Cantor
- Provide your *Madrich/Madricha* with a final copy of your speeches
- Your B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator will call you to obtain the information for the "Coordinators Information Sheet."

- For reception in Social Hall, send information to Executive Director
- Receive rehearsal meeting/ date:<enter date here>_____
- Arrange preliminary seating for reception (if applicable)
- Create or arrange program with Clergy Assistant; see samples in the back of this book

Two weeks to go:

- Submit floor plan for social hall set-up, if the reception is at Temple Shalom. If not, submit a seating plan to your reception site (if applicable).
- Return the “Family Service Participation Sheet” to office of the Rabbi
- Meet with the Rabbi to discuss service
- Send Final Speeches to Rabbi for editing and approval

Five days to go:

- Have Tuesday afternoon final rehearsal and meeting with Rabbi and Cantor. Provide written copies of all parts to be read by family and friends and give specific details of other types of participation to Rabbi.

Three days to go:

- Make MAZON contribution

After the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

- Send thank you notes.
- Make contributions to the synagogue and other funds.
- Continue your Jewish education through Confirmation.



Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planning Detailed Timetable

Two Years to Go

Send in Bar/Bat Mitzvah Application to the Temple office

Receive the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Assigned Date, Sign and Return

It is the practice in Temple Shalom to try to make the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service come as close to the 13th birthday as possible. In order to be flexible and to meet the special needs of each family, we try to schedule the date early enough to enable adjustments. Therefore, the date assignment process starts in the fifth grade, fully two years before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. *The date of this mailing may vary.*

The Cantor will make the final assignment and will send each family a letter with the date that has been assigned. You are asked to indicate your acceptance of that date and return the form to the Director. If the assigned date is not acceptable, you are asked to describe the conflict on the form you are returning. The Cantor will contact you to discuss the possibility of an alternative date.

Along with the form indicating your acceptance of the date will be the written agreement indicating your family's *commitment to see that your student continues his/her Jewish education beyond Bar/Bat Mitzvah, through the end of Tenth Grade in our Religious School.* This includes the commitment to complete the requirements for Tenth Grade Graduation. *This written agreement must be returned, along with the acceptance of the date, for any Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates to be considered firm and "final" on our calendar.*

Sharing a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Shalom, known as a “double,” is a normal occurrence. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah originally scheduled as a “single” may be changed to a “double” up to six months before the assigned date, as dictated by the scheduling needs of the congregation and our families. The families involved will be notified as soon as any change is made.

Notify Cantor About Any Reading/Learning Issues

If your child has any reading or learning issues, or other educational challenges or special needs, please bring these issues to the attention of the Cantor as soon as you receive your assigned date so we can discuss the support that you and your child may need.

Budgeting for Contributions to the Temple: B'nai Mitzvah Program

Please see the attached sheet which explains all the services provided. This one time fee covers all educational and arrangement costs for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah event. This charge will be added to your Temple account and may be paid out over time. **The fee must be paid before you meet with the Cantor 10 months before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.** If your family needs assistance with the costs of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

program, please contact our Executive Director, Susan Zemsky and she will assist you.

Mazon

It is a growing custom in Reform Jewish America for Bar/Bat Mitzvah families to participate in the MAZON program. MAZON is “the Jewish response to hunger”, a charitable Jewish organization with almost no overhead expenses whose grants go toward fighting hunger, both in this country and abroad, and for all who are in need. Families celebrating a simcha voluntarily contribute 3% of the total cost of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Temple Shalom is a member congregation of Mazon and we contribute 3% of all "official" Temple meals to this worthy organization. MAZON then grants funds to worthy, credible organizations in the forefront of feeding the hungry in America.

Any of our staff can provide you with more ideas or opportunities to celebrate with class and style – by sharing the sweetness with others. You may also contact MAZON directly, for further information, or with any questions you might have. The address is: **MAZON – 1990 South Bundy Drive, #260, Los Angeles, CA 90025-5232; 310/442-0020; www.mazon.org.**

Reserving the Social Hall

Shortly after you receive your date, the office will send you information about renting the social hall for your reception, if you wish. The Social Hall can accommodate 150 seated guests and still allow room for music and dancing.

A simple *kiddush* (the term narrowly refers to the blessing recited over wine, but is here used in the more general sense of “nourishment following a service”) of wine and challah is provided in the alcove immediately after the service for all worshippers. The social hall may be available for either a luncheon or an evening party.

In the event of a double Bar/ Bat Mitzvah, it is especially important for you to let the Executive Director know your plans as quickly as possible so that any conflicts can be resolved and everyone's needs can be met.

Our experience with working out these arrangements has been generally pleasant and positive. Priority consideration is given to what is considered the *primary* gathering, or celebration, of the family. What this means in practical terms is that if you and your "doubling" family are *each* having your main reception out of the building in the evening, you are *both* entitled to the use of the Social Hall for a kiddush lunch and may share this part of the day. If either you or your "doubling" family desire the social hall for your *main reception* following the wine and challah kiddush, then one family should plan on using the Social Hall exclusively for their luncheon, and the second family the Social Hall exclusively for their evening event. The Executive Director will be happy to answer any questions that you may have concerning Social Hall rentals.

Eighteen Months to go

Investigate and Arrange for Catering (if applicable)

When Jews have come together, it is almost always the case that we celebrate – indeed, we mourn, as well – through food. In custom and practice, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a "*simcha*," a joyous occasion. As such, it is appropriate that it be shared with family and friends. In Jewish tradition, this *simcha* is observed by a *seudat Mitzvah*, a "meal of the commandment," a feast that celebrates the religious nature of this event.

The Executive Director can give you names of caterers who have recent experience at Temple Shalom. Also, you may choose to contract with any of a number of fine caterers in the Washington or Baltimore area for your luncheon or evening affair.

- From past experience, we have found that two years lead time is not excessive for booking an outside caterer/catering establishment/restaurant/hotel.
- Be sure to let the Executive Director know the name and phone number of your caterer.
- Please remind your caterer not to set up during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. Your B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator can help ensure that a caterer is appropriately quiet during your child's service.

A number of families ask about the possibility of serving a "strictly" kosher meal at Temple Shalom. This is possible, and has been done on numerous occasions in the past, but it is not a matter of just using kosher food. It also requires "*kashering*" of the kitchen. For more information about this procedure, call the Executive Director.

Investigate and/or Book Photographers (if applicable)

As a Reform congregation, we do allow photography in *some settings and circumstances* prior to the service. We believe that, with proper procedures, the photographs of this important day can become family treasures.

Temple Shalom's photography guidelines are as follows:

- No photography is permitted *during the service itself*. (Videotaping is permitted if done from the area between the sanctuary and the social hall.) We want our B'nai Mitzvah students, and our service attendants, to be able to concentrate during this important service.
- The photographer must stop taking pictures by 9:15 AM, save for final snapshots with the Rabbi and Cantor. This deadline ensures that your family will not be rushed and that the service can begin as scheduled. *If you wish the Rabbi and Cantor to be present for photos, please invite them to do so.*
- Pictures may be taken at the kiddush table following the service, provided that it is done unobtrusively and without trying to keep the worshippers from approaching the kiddush table. *At no time, and in no way, are photographers to move the furniture, rearrange electronic equipment, or remove the microphones.*

Be sure your photographer knows these rules. Based on unfortunate prior experience, all photography in the sanctuary will be supervised by your B'nai Mitzvah coordinator. Please do not cause any unfortunate embarrassment or discomfort for yourselves or for a photographer who believes the rules are meant for some other event. Believe it or not, photographers have tried to take hidden or even flash pictures during a service when a Rabbi was not looking.

Investigate and/or Book Videographers

While videotaping arrangements are not available directly through the congregation, families may choose to arrange for professional videographers. The Temple Office can provide names of videographers.

While photography is not permitted during the service, a stationary, natural-light video tape is allowed. Please inform your videographer that *no additional lighting is permitted and that filming of the service is to be done from the area between the Sanctuary and the Social Hall, using only one camera on a tripod.*

We *strongly recommend* that the videographer come to the Temple in advance to see the morning light in the Sanctuary, in order to choose the proper equipment and film.

If you are using a professional videographer to videotape the service, please submit the name and phone number to the Executive Director.

One final note: three-hour tapes are now available. Please make every attempt to find one in order to avoid the tape running out. This is particularly important in the case of "Doubles."

Investigate and/or Book Entertainment (if applicable)

If you plan to hire a DJ, band, or an entertainer, it is advisable to start your search 12 to 18 months in advance. We are fortunate to live in an area where we can obtain performers ranging from string quartets to big band sounds. We also have popular entertainers who not only sing and dance, but also can encourage your guests to join in.

- Please let the Executive Director know the name and phone number of your musicians before your celebration so that she can contact them to review our policies and procedures. Also give this information to your B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator.
- Please be sure to inform your musicians that they may not set up during the service. Noise from setting-up and testing their equipment carries into the sanctuary and disturbs the service. Your B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator can help ensure that any musicians' set up is appropriately quiet during your child's service.

Eighteen to Twelve Months To Go

A Different Kind of “Service”: The Mitzvah Project

A major component of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation is the Mitzvah project, to be performed *during the year of your Bar Mitzvah ceremony*. These are thirteen small mitzvot designed to help your Bar/Bat Mitzvah that he/she is fulfilling the responsibilities of becoming a Jewish Adult by repairing the world, tikkun olam. You will receive these materials when you meet with the Cantor.

Tell Out-of-town Guests the Date of Your Event

Out-of-town guests will benefit from as much time as possible to “save the date” for your event. Early notification will also help prevent any conflicts with other events to which your guests may be invited.

Decide on Celebration Decorations (if applicable)

Celebration centerpieces and decorations can range from small pots of seasonal flowers, to simple balloon or flower arrangements to more complex arrangements. Lists of sources for flowers or balloons are available from the Temple office.

Finalize Catering, Photographer, Videographer, and Entertainment (if applicable)

If you have not done so already (see “Eighteen Months to Go” above), now is the time to finalize arrangements with your caterer, photographer, videographer, and DJ/musicians/entertainment.

Fall of Sixth Grade

Sixth Grade B'nai Mitzvah Family Education

The Rabbi, the Cantor, the Director of Education, and the Executive Director will meet with the sixth graders and their parents in a general meeting during the fall of the school year. At that time:

- The Rabbi will further acquaint parents and students with our B'nai Mitzvah ritual practices and answer whatever questions you may have about your Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.
- The Cantor will describe the roles of the Tutor and *Madrichim* in preparing students to be "Teachers of Torah" and "Leaders of Prayer," as well as an overview of the entire B'nai Mitzvah Program.
- The Executive Director will describe ways in which she can assist in making this special day joyous.
- The Director of Education will be available to discuss any educational issues you may have.

- Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student should begin preparing a biographical statement and an essay on “What Bar/Bat Mitzvah means to me.” The student will bring this material to the B'nai Mitzvah Family Education Meeting.

Ten Months To Go

Tutor and Madrachim Assignments

Getting to Know You

You will be contacted via email by the Cantor to set up a family meeting. Both parents and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student are encouraged to attend. Siblings may attend if they wish. It is a time for the Cantor to get to know your family and your family story. The meeting lasts for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. At this meeting, you will receive ALL of your B'nai Mitzvah Materials, including:

- The name, phone number and email address of your Tutor and *Madrach/Madracha*.
- A copy of your Torah and Haftarah portion and URJ Torah Book and Commentary.
- A CD of all Blessings and Prayers from the Shabbat Morning Service.
- A copy of the service to practice from.
- A timeline with the exact schedule of preparation.
- Information about the Mitzvah Project
- Orientation regarding the progress check-off chart on the Cantor’s door.

Begin Fulfilling Service Attendance Commitment

On the Shabbat of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the young person leads the congregation in prayer throughout the service. We therefore expect that, as part of the preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student and his/her family become acquainted with the Shabbat service not just in theory, but in actual practice. Each of our B'nai Mitzvah students must attend five Temple Shalom Shabbat Evening and five Temple Shalom Shabbat Morning services during the seventh grade and before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah takes place so that you and your child will be comfortable and familiar with our customs. There is a chart on the Cantor's door where your student will check off service attendance.

Reserve Lodging for Out-of-Town Guests

Some people are able to accommodate all of their out-of-town visitors in their home. The (vast majority of) the rest of us may wish to make arrangements for a reserved block of rooms for out-of-town guests at nearby hotels and motels. These places offer special weekend discount rates if you can guarantee a certain minimum number of guests. They also will try to accommodate your guests by putting them on one floor in nearby rooms.

If the Bar or Bat Mitzvah occurs during popular wedding months, such as May, June, September, or October, *it is advisable to reserve room blocks at hotels as early as possible.*

If you have invited guests who are *Shomeir Shabbat* (observant of the Sabbath in a traditional way, and therefore will not ride in cars on Shabbat), the Temple office can provide the names of the hotels that are the closest walking distance to the Temple.

Eight Months To Go

Assist with a Friday Night Oneg Shabbat at the Temple

Part of our community building program for the B'nai Mitzvah program includes one Friday Evening Oneg Shabbat volunteer opportunity. You will be contacted by our Oneg Shabbat Coordinator who will ask you to choose a date well before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to do so. This includes arriving 45 minutes prior to services to help arrange cookie trays and put them on the table. It also includes staying after services to act as 'hosts' for the Oneg, pouring coffee and lemonade as well as helping to clean up afterward.

Select or Create Invitations

Be sure to give yourself enough time to make an initial invitation selection (or create your own invitation, if you wish), have it printed and, if need be, reprinted in case a mistake is made.

Invitations should be mailed no later than eight weeks before the service; ten weeks is the preferred time to ensure that out-of-town guests receive their invitations with ample time to respond and make travel arrangements. It is appropriate to provide an R.S.V.P. cut-off date of at least three weeks before the service, although different caterers have different preferences and needs in this regard.

The starting time on the invitation should list the actual time the service begins: 10:00 a.m. Also, it is appropriate to list the Hebrew date as well as the English one.

Seven Months To Go

Arrange for Twinning Participation (if desired)

"Twinning," in the way we use the term, means the opportunity for each of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students to "link" his/her experience with either the memory or the life of another Jewish youngster, in very different circumstances than our young people experience. The Twinning Program is a meaningful supplement to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service at Temple Shalom. There are now three programs from which to choose a name for twinning. They are:

- ***Remember a Child Project***

Through the “Remember a Child Project,” a family is given the name and biography of a child who was killed in the Holocaust before having a chance to celebrate a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Our children use the opportunity to learn something about the Holocaust and think about the meaning of Jewish survival. They also honor the memory of victims. It is almost as if this is a posthumous chance for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah they never had. (Often people will use phrases such as “dedicating this service to...” when referring to a “twin.” We should be somewhat careful in our choice of words: a religious service is dedicated to God. We can, however, link our experience with the memory of one who was not able to know what that experience was like.) If your child decides to “twin”, with a Holocaust victim please telephone: Remember a Child Project, contact Nessie Godin at 301-593-7285 (January - March) and Sam Spiegel at 301-881-2454 (April-December).

- ***Matching with a Student in a Russian Religious School***

A unique program sponsored by the Soviet Jewry Task Forces of the Union for Reform Judaism and the World Union for Progressive Judaism will match your Bar/Bat Mitzvah with a Jewish student in the former Soviet Union or Israeli student.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah participants can choose to correspond with *either* a student from the former Soviet Union *or* Israel for a cost of \$100. If a Bar/Bat mitzvah would like to correspond with a student from *both* Russia and Israel, the cost is \$150.

Your contribution will go directly toward supplying religious schools in Russia with the everyday items they so badly need. In return, your child will receive: (1) the email address of a student from the country (or countries) they chose; and (2) a certificate acknowledging the Bar/Bat mitzvah’s participation in the program. This certificate is suitable for framing and can be presented during the bar/bat mitzvah service. If your child would like to “twin” with a Russian or Israeli student please contact Stephanie Hirschorn at 212-452-6534.

- ***Twinning with an Ethiopian Child***

The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ) Bar and Bat Mitzvah Twinning Program is a way for American Jewish teens to learn about their Ethiopian Israeli peers. By participating in the program, American Jews give important assistance to Ethiopian students in Israel while simultaneously learning about each other's cultures. If your student would like to “twin” with an Ethiopian Israeli Student, you can find more information and an application online at: www.nacoej.org.

Six Months To Go

Begin Working with Your Madrich/Madricha

Your *Madrich/Madricha* will contact you prior to this date. Please look through the material already provided, especially your Torah and Haftarah portions, *prior to* your initial meeting with the *Madrich/Madricha*, so that the initial discussion will be productive. With the help of the *Madrich/Madricha* your student will study the Torah and Haftarah verses and write your speeches for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah as well as rehearse these on the *bimah*.

Begin Working with the Hebrew Tutor

Work with the Hebrew tutor also begins approximately six months prior to the date of the service. The tutors work with the student on their Torah and Haftarah portions and the liturgy that he/she will recite for the service. The tutor also prepares the student's prayer book, so that he/she is equipped to be "leader of prayer."

There are 20 private tutoring sessions included in our B'nai Mitzvah Program. If your student's needs more than 20 sessions, they can be arranged privately with your tutor. These lessons can be done in your home, in your tutor's home, or at the Temple. Each lesson is approximately 45 minutes in length.

Receive the Date for Ushering on a Shabbat Morning

Part of the commitment of parents and students is to serve as an Ushering Team for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service before yours. Through the participation of all of our families, you can yourselves be assured of competent and courteous ushers in attendance for your important day.

Approximately four to six months prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah day, you will be assigned an ushering date by the coordinators. The arrival of this mailing may vary depending upon the number of Bar/Bat Mitzvah services scheduled during the upcoming year.

We will provide a set of helpful instructions, and your B'nai Mitzvah coordinator can provide additional information. *If you cannot serve on the assigned date, it is up to you to make your own arrangements for a substitute from the list of Bar/Bat Mitzvah families.* Trades are often easily arranged – but any changes should be reported to the B'nai Mitzvah Committee Chairperson, and the Temple office.

Five Months To Go

Begin Writing Speeches

Research and discussion, as well as the actual writing of the *D'var Torah* and *D'var Haftarah* speeches should be underway.

Four Months To Go

Options for Participating in Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service

There are many opportunities to honor family and friends by asking them to participate in the service, in a variety of capacities. Honoring family and friends is an important part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. Most families have questions about what can and cannot be done. These questions can be discussed with the Rabbi and Cantor at any time. To prepare for that discussion, begin by filling out the Service Participation Sheet you received with the letter about the Final Rehearsal. Then you can clarify any questions you may have with the clergy before submitting this information to the Clergy Assistant two weeks prior to the service. A final program will be generated by this sheet. Please make sure that you coordinate your program with the Clergy Assistant and have the Rabbi proof it before printing.

Honors for Jewish Service Participants

Jewish service participants may:

- Go to the Ark and open the Ark Doors
- Hold the Torah Scroll
- Pass the Scroll from generation to generation
- Prepare the Scroll to be read
- Dress the scroll after the reading
- Have an *Aliyah* (saying the blessings - in Hebrew or English - before and after the Torah readings)
- Sit on the *Bimah* (When there is a double B'nai Mitzvah, three seats are available for each family.)

Honors for Non-Jewish Service Participants

One question about participation comes up so often, and is so important, that it deserves attention in some detail at this point. This is the question of the role in our service for non-Jewish family members and friends. In this regard, Temple Shalom stands clear and firm: **we believe in the maximum degree of appropriate inclusion. Temple Shalom members seek to create an atmosphere of loving warmth and peace.** As we read in Isaiah: "Your house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples."

In practical terms, then, our custom has been that non-Jews are welcome (and, in the case of a parent: *explicitly encouraged – even expected*) to sit on our *bimah*. They may also:

- Go to the Ark, to open and close the Ark doors
- Stand in line as the Torah is passed from Generation to Generation
- Recite an alternative, universalized version of the *Aliyah* in English

- Participate in the *hakkafah* (Torah procession) around the sanctuary
- Give words of blessing and present the Bar/Bat Mitzvah certificate
- Lead readings of liturgy which are universal in content.

We welcome the inclusion of meaningful readings. The only requirement here is that *the content of each one of these selections make sense for a non-Jew to read*. The Rabbi and the Cantor have the list of specific readings available to you, and we are *always* happy to discuss any input or ideas that families may have as well.

Order or Print Invitations

Since we recommend mailing invitations ten weeks in advance for out-of-town guests, invitations should be ordered at this time. This allows time for delivery of the invitations, correcting any (rare) mistakes, and addressing invitations prior to mailing.

It is also important to know well in advance which of the guests you would like to honor with parts in the service and to tell these guests in advance that you would like to honor them. If potential participants know well in advance, they can also inform you if they will be unable to attend and you will have ample time to select other participants.

We have three suggestions concerning determining the appropriate number of invitations to order for your child's *simcha*:

- The *first* suggestion relates to a recent trend we would like to encourage. In one of the classes in our Religious School with particularly good "chemistry", every child in the class invited every other child in the class to his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The result was a kind of closeness and cohesion that had an effect well beyond the party; it also lent a depth and level of participation to these services. For that reason, as well as issues of kindness and inclusiveness, we urge our families to consider inviting their child's entire Religious School class if they are able to do so.
- The *second* idea is an extension of the first. In some (usually smaller) congregations, Bar/Bat Mitzvah invitations actually appear in the Temple bulletin. They might even include words such as: "this is the only invitation being sent to members of the congregation." The kiddush to follow would then be open to all who came to the service. (Of course, invitations to an evening celebration would be sent only to invited guests.) Such an act would be a huge step toward the communal and, indeed, congregational nature of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Another idea is to use a computer *evite* and eliminate paper invitations completely. This is a growing trend and is a great way to 'go green'.

Please be sure to send invitations to your student's *Madrich(a)* and tutor, as well as to the Rabbi and to the Cantor.

Three Months To Go

Jewish National Fund (JNF)

The Jewish National Fund (the “tree” people, and also the agency which collectively, on behalf of the Jewish people, owns most of the land in Israel) has a nice tradition of inscribing names in its Bar/Bat Mitzvah scroll at its headquarters in Jerusalem. The child receives a certificate and book connecting Bar/Bat Mitzvah with Israel and the work of the JNF. In addition, his/her photograph is printed in a special section of the Washington Jewish Week. The cost is approximately \$54.00. Washington Jewish Week can be contacted by phone at 301-230-2227 or at www.Washingtonjewishweek.com.

To purchase tree certificates, contact the JNF Office in New York at 1-800-542-8733 or at www.jnf.org. (It may sometimes be necessary to stay in close touch with the Jewish National Fund office concerning the progress of your request.)

Send Announcement to the Temple Shalom Shofar

Our Temple Shalom bulletin, the *Shofar*, prints pictures of and information about our upcoming B’nai Mitzvah - assuming we have the pictures and the information in a timely fashion. We will need a recent appropriate photograph (such as those purchased at school) of your son/daughter to print in the *Shofar*. Please mail it, along with a short autobiographical statement to the Temple office, marked "Attention: *Shofar* Editor".

The deadline for all Shofar announcements is six weeks prior to printing. For example, to have your child's picture and write up in the November *Shofar*, the announcement forms and photo must be in the office no later than September 15th.

Send Announcement to the Washington Jewish Week

Send your child’s photo and a brief autobiography either by email to jsteinberg@washingtonjewishweek.com or via post office mail to Washington Jewish Week, 1500 East Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20852, Attn: Jackie Steinberg. There is no cost for the picture insert.

Eight Weeks to Go

Confirm Participation in the Service

Confirm the out-of-town and local attendees who will participate in the service. It is advisable to send copies of *Aliyot* blessings, (the blessings before and after the Torah) or service portions to the participants to give them time to “practice” and feel comfortable with their parts.

Mail Invitations

We recommend mailing invitations eight weeks before the service. Eight weeks is not excessive if there are a number of out-of-town guests. This allows time for slow postal delivery to many out of town guests and also gives everyone enough time (except, perhaps, during other “peak” times, such as graduation season) to make travel and lodging arrangements.

Again:

- We urge our families to consider inviting their child’s entire Religious School class if they are able to do so.
- If you are able, include an invitation in the Temple bulletin. You might even include words such as: “this is the only invitation being sent to members of the congregation.” The *kiddush* to follow would then be open to all who came to the service. (Of course, invitations to an evening celebration would be sent only to invited guests.)
- Make *Bimah* Arrangements: Flowers or baskets, candy for throwing after the Haftarah and discuss any musical requests with the Cantor.

It is customary for each family to provide flowers for the *Bimah* on the weekend of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Temple handles the arrangements. If you would like to request special arrangements for the flowers for "your" weekend, please contact the Executive Director at least two months before your date.

As an alternative arrangement, the Temple has assembled display baskets of grocery items to be placed on the *bimah* in place of flowers. The Temple will then send the payment you normally make for flowers to MAZON. You may consider this part of your 3% contribution to MAZON.

If you use flowers, we ask that you perform a mitzvah by taking the *bimah* flowers to a nursing home or hospital following the Saturday service. For example, the Chevy Chase Nursing Home is a few moments' drive from Temple Shalom, heading east on East-West Highway.

We suggest that the floral arrangements for your luncheon/dinner reception be coordinated with your caterer. You may use any florist of your choosing, and caterers will also recommend florists they have worked with.

Candy will be provided by the Temple if you wish to have it ‘thrown’ at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student after the Haftarah is read.

Sponsor the Oneg

The Oneg Shabbat after services on Friday night and the wine and *challah kiddush* on Saturday morning are provided by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah families. Other arrangements are also possible through consultation with the Executive Director. Please make arrangements for the Oneg with the Executive Director.

Donations To Temple Shalom Funds

Sharing can take many forms. In our tradition, *tzedakah* (charitable giving) and the support of Jewish institutions are both obligations – and they are *separate* obligations.

In the discussion of Mazon on page 19, we mentioned a contribution of 3% of the total cost of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to the hungry and homeless. At this time, it would also be appropriate to express appreciation or support through a gift to the Rabbi's and Cantor's Mitzvah Funds or to any of the other Temple Shalom special purpose funds listed below, through a leaf on our "Tree of Life" in the lobby, or through a special additional contribution to our Endowment Campaign. For specific information, a list of funds and the purposes for which the funds are used refer to your *Shofar*, Temple funds booklet or contact the Temple office.

Four to Six Weeks To Go

Begin Your Weekly Meetings With The Cantor

Six weeks before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date you will begin your weekly 45-minute meetings with the Cantor. If you have a "Double," these meetings will occur with your double partner. The purpose of these sessions is to practice the worship service, Torah readings, Haftarah readings and speeches on the *bimah*. The Cantor will be your coach up until your Bar/Bat Mitzvah day. It is also a time to answer any questions and fill out your Family Service Participation sheet. The Cantor will email you when it is time to set up these final rehearsals.

Finalize the Speeches

The Rabbi reviews all of the speeches that are delivered during our B'nai Mitzvah services in advance, edits and occasionally suggests changes or corrections. Through the *Madrich/Madricha*, please submit a copy of these speeches to the Rabbi via email *no later than* one month in advance.

Complete the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator Information Sheet

Approximately a month before the service, you will be called by your B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator for certain information. (If you wish, you can ask to meet in person with the Coordinator instead of discussing the information over the phone.) The Coordinator will discuss this information with you and gather additional information needed to help you as much as possible with your *simcha*. If you are having a celebration at Temple Shalom immediately after the service, be sure to provide your coordinator with the names and phone numbers of your caterer, photographer, videographer, and entertainment (if applicable).

Send Information to the Executive Director

If your reception is being held at Temple Shalom, be sure to give the names and phone numbers of your caterer, musicians, and florist on to the Executive Director. If you have made arrangements with a private videographer, and/or photographer, the Executive Director needs the names and phone numbers of these contractors. It is important for the Executive Director to contact these people to make sure they understand the proper procedures for working at Temple Shalom. The Executive Director will be happy to discuss with you any aspects of your reception.

Receive Date for the Final Rehearsal

You will receive a mailing setting a date for and detailing your rehearsal with the Rabbi and the Cantor. It usually takes place on the Tuesday afternoon four days before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, from 4-5:30 PM. If you have not received this letter *within three weeks of the event*, or if for some reason you need to know more than a month in advance what the exact time of the rehearsal will be, please call the Clergy Assistant at 301-587-2273 x108 to request your rehearsal date and time.

A sample of the letter arranging for the Final Rehearsal is found in this manual. The letter contains more information than just the time and date of the rehearsal, so please review it carefully.

Invite the Videographer to Tour the Temple

Temple Shalom policies and practices regarding videotaping were discussed in the section "Investigate and/or Book Videographers." Please invite the videographer to come to the Sanctuary four to six weeks in advance to check out the setting, any audio needs, and the morning light.

Make Preliminary Reception Seating Arrangements

If your celebration includes formal seating, six weeks in advance is not too early to start planning your seating arrangements. Find out from the Temple office or your reception site/caterer how many tables are available for seating 8 or 12 guests.

If your celebration will take place at the Temple, please make a diagram of the Temple Social Hall with a tentative seating arrangement. It is suggested that you furnish your caterer with a copy of your plans and be sure to send a copy to Temple Shalom *no later than four weeks before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

Two Weeks To Go

Finalize List of Service Participants

Confirm the list of all service participants and their roles in the service and make sure that they have received copies of their blessing or reading. Coordinate with the Clergy

Assistant on your program. This will include the name of all participants. If you wish to have a standard template for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the clergy assistant will edit and create it for you. If you wish to create a special program for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah then you are responsible for making sure the Rabbi edits and approves it at least two weeks in advance. You are also responsible for printing a special program if it is not the standard template.

Four Days To Go

Participate in the Final Rehearsal

The Final Rehearsal takes place with the Rabbi and the Cantor in the Sanctuary, usually on the Tuesday afternoon before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Parents, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student, and siblings are expected to attend. Any additional service participants who are already in town and available are welcome as well. By prior arrangement, pictures can also be taken at that time.

The Final Rehearsal takes approximately an hour and a half. *Please dress appropriately for entering the Sanctuary.*

One Day To Go

Years of anticipation, months of intensive preparation, pride, joy, anxiety... and the time has come. The weekend has arrived. All the work that could have been done is now behind you; as is the case with the concept of Shabbat in general – we have “done.” Now is the time to “be.”

Etiquette and Dress

If you plan to have your guests worship with you at Friday night services, please be sure to advise them of the starting time for that service. Our starting times vary, so please be sure that *you* have the correct starting time for the service that night.

If you think that some of your guests might bring a camera to the Temple Friday night or Saturday, please advise them that we do not permit pictures to be taken during services.

Please (tactfully) remind your guests to dress appropriately for a Temple service. While Temple Shalom always encourages a warm, informal environment, we do encourage attendees to dress respectfully.

Tallitot (prayer shawls) and *kippot* (head coverings, also known by the Yiddish term *yarmulkes*) are always available for those who wish to wear them.

Temple Shalom: A Family-Friendly Congregation

Temple Shalom is a family-friendly congregation. We welcome children of all ages at all of our services. Some amount of movement and noise on the part of young children is expected and even welcome. After all, our children are our future. We want them

here, and we want them to be comfortable in our sanctuary and our synagogue. We want this to be a good experience for them.

The Temple provides a “quiet room” for parents whose children may find it difficult to sit quietly for the one and one-half hour service. The room is at the back of the sanctuary with a clear view of the bimah, enabling parents and children to see and hear the entire service. We encourage families to take advantage of this special space in our Temple as appropriate.

Small children may choose to carry a small Torah during the Torah Service. Please let the Rabbi and Cantor know at your final rehearsal if you would like to have them participate in this way.

Some families may conclude that it is appropriate to arrange for child-care for children who are guests. This can be done in one (or both) of two ways.

- The family can arrange for one or more sitters who remain downstairs with the children during the length of the service.
- We can also set up the "Take A Break" (T.A.B.) room to which parents can bring (but also remain with) young children who need to leave the Sanctuary for only part of the service.

Please let the Executive Director know in advance if you will be having a babysitter or need the T.A.B. room set up.

The Behavior of Teenagers

The behavior of older children – including the teenage friends and guests of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah – is another important issue. It should not be necessary to remind teenagers that they are attending a sacred service, but sometimes it is. They should avoid excessive or loud social chatting and only leave and re-enter the sanctuary when necessary – and certainly not in large groups at one time.

It is often helpful to assign an adult friend of the family, who knows the teenagers, to sit among them. Real problems in this regard are quite rare – for the most part all those in attendance at services are respectful, interested, and often quite curious - but it does happen. *The ushers at Bar and Bat Mitzvah services may speak to teenagers who are distracting others.* Cell phones are not permitted to be used at any point during the service and must be turned off.

The behavior of teenagers during a service is one issue. Behavior at a celebration held in the Temple sanctuary is yet another level of concern. Here the issue is not merely one of respect, but rises to the level of protection of our building, liability, and highly inappropriate conduct. Again, the frequency of misbehavior is not an issue – we are still talking about a tiny minority of cases – but the fact that these problems occur at all means that we need to address them. Parents should be aware of the potential for wild behavior no matter where the celebration is held and plan accordingly for adequate supervision.

Friday Night

That important weekend is finally here. The out-of-town relatives have been arriving. It is now Friday evening!

- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah and family arrive at Temple Shalom fifteen minutes before the service begins. Please check in with the Rabbi or Cantor in order to go over any last minute questions and to say hello.
- It is possible that there might be an opportunity to introduce some out of town relatives – particularly grandparents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah – prior to the start of the service. If this does not happen before the service, it certainly will during the Oneg Shabbat.
- Once in the sanctuary, please sit in the front rows nearest the Torah table.
- The weekly announcement sheet, which the ushers give out with the prayer book, has the names of your family members who will be participating in the service that night.
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah and one of his/her parents are called forward to bless and light the Shabbat candles.
- The B'nai Mitzvah family is invited to open the ark for the Aleinu toward the end of the service.
- After the service, the Rabbi and Cantor will ask the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to join them at the Kiddush table in the Social Hall to recite the blessings over the wine. Siblings often assist with the blessing recited over the *challah*.

During the Oneg Shabbat you will have a chance to relax, mingle with family and friends, and hear wishes of "Shabbat Shalom" and "Mazal Tov" from others who are present at the service.

The Day Has Arrived - Celebration of Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah!!!

Before the Service

If you have made arrangements to take pictures before the service (see “Investigate and/or Book Photographers (if applicable)”), you then will need to plan with your coordinator to arrive at the Temple early enough to do so. The hard part often is getting everyone else you want in the pictures to arrive at the Temple early as well.

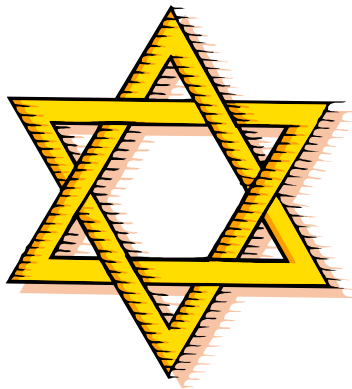
Make sure all participants in the Service are in the Sanctuary by 9:15 to meet with the Rabbi and Cantor, and that pictures are completed by 9:15. The Rabbi and Cantor will take final pictures with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, review some of the “choreography” of the service, go over the service with the participants, review the *aliyot*, practice passing the Torah, and answer the last minute questions which inevitably arise.

This is also an opportunity to block out important parts of the service with grandparents or relatives who might not have been present at the rehearsal, especially including the ritual passing of the Torah from generation to generation. Any other questions about participation or details of the service can be dealt with at this time as well.

At 9:45 the family members who will enter the sanctuary together, gather downstairs in the Parents' Lounge. There, the signing of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah certificate is followed by a Family blessing.

While you are downstairs, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah coordinator and ushers attend to last minute details and the doors to the Sanctuary open to your guests. Those who are here to attend the Shabbat morning service, including your extended family and friends, begin to take their seats in the Sanctuary.

Soon the moment arrives (10:00 AM) for the service to begin. You proceed upstairs!
Mazel Tov!



Acknowledgements

Temple Shalom is indebted to Sidney Levine for the preparation of the first edition of the original Bar/Bat Mitzvah guide "A DAY TO REMEMBER: The Temple Shalom Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planning Guide," as well as to Barbara Jacobowitz for her work on the previous edition.

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Appendix

Glossary

As you read this guide, you may encounter some terms and Hebrew phrases that are new to you. We hope that this glossary will help you to become more familiar with these terms and phrases that are common to B'nai Mitzvah preparation.

Aliyah (plural: Aliyot): Literally: "Ascending; coming up." The (one or more) individuals who are called up to the *bimah* (the raised platform from which services are led) in order to recite the blessings before and after the chanting of verses from the Torah scroll. At Temple Shalom, there are usually:

- For a *single* Bar/Bat Mitzvah: Three *aliyot* - three groups of people called up to the Torah
- For a "*double*": Often, six *aliyot* - three groups for each Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Bimah: The raised platform from which services are led

Bar Mitzvah: "Son of the Commandment" - the term used to indicate that a Jewish boy has reached the age of responsibility, eligible to count in a "minyan" and obligated by certain commandments in Jewish life

Bat Mitzvah: "Daughter of the Commandment" - same term, but for girls

B'nai Mitzvah: The plural of Bar Mitzvah that refers to more than one, *if at least one of the participants is a male*

B'not Mitzvah: The plural term used only *if all participants are female*

B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator: A Temple volunteer assigned to each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family who assists with the details of the service and serves as a general "helper" to the family

Darshan: "Interpreter, commentator"; the Hebrew term for one giving an interpretation (or sermon) about the weekly Torah portion

Double: The term used at Temple Shalom to refer to two of our young people sharing a service and becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah during the same service

D'var Torah: The interpretive speech given before the reading of the Torah that outlines the portion of the week, focuses on one aspect of the portion, connects with the history of Jewish commentary and includes the bar/bar mitzvah student's own interpretation and commentary

D'var Haftarah. The interpretive speech given before the Haftarah (selection from the Prophets) reading that explains the history of Haftarah portions, the background of the prophet whose words are chanted that week, the connection between the particular Haftarah and Torah portions, and any lessons for our lives that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah derives from this reading

Erev Shabbat: The "Eve" of Shabbat, referring to Friday evening

Haftarah: The Scriptural selection from the Prophets, the second of the three sections of the Hebrew Bible, read following the Torah portion and always linked in some way either to that Torah portion or the Jewish calendar

Hakkafah: The procession with the Torah scroll(s), encircling the congregation and embracing the community

Kiddush: The blessing using wine, which celebrates the sanctity of Shabbat

Kippah: Hebrew term for the head covering worn by all men in Conservative and Orthodox congregations and which is optional for men and women in Reform synagogues such as Temple Shalom. The Yiddish equivalent term yarmulka (often pronounced as "yah-mul-ke") is frequently used instead.

Madrich (male)/ madricha (female)/ madrichim (plural): The Temple volunteer who helps the Bar or Bat Mitzvah students with text study and to prepare their D'Var Torah and D'Var Haftarah

Mazon: Charitable Jewish organization with almost no overhead expenses whose grants go toward fighting hunger, both in this country and abroad, and for all who are in need. Mazon encourages Jewish families to contribute 3% of the cost of their "simchas" (their happy occasions) - often celebrated with festive meals - towards fighting hunger. Temple Shalom is a member congregation of Mazon and we contribute 3% of all "official" Temple meals to this worthy organization.

Motzi: The blessing recited over bread

Oneg/Oneg Shabbat: The Hebrew word "Oneg" means "joy" or "celebration;" the reference is to the bread we break and the dessert and closeness we share following a Friday evening Sabbath service.

Shacharit: The Hebrew word for "morning", in this case referring to a Jewish morning prayer service. (The French equivalent for a Catholic service is heard in the song "Frere Jacques" in which the phrase "Sonnez les matines" refers not just to random "morning bells," but to calling the monk to the morning service.)

Shofar: The Hebrew term refers to the ram's horn used on Rosh Hashanah to "wake up" the congregation; here it refers to the name of the Temple Shalom monthly bulletin.

Shulchan: The Hebrew term means "table" and refers to the table from which we lead services and on which the Torah is placed when it is read.

Siddur: The Hebrew term for prayerbook. The word literally means "order" and is related to the term Passover "Seder" - the connection being that in both the *siddur* and the Seder things take place in a set arranged order.

Tallit: The prayer shawl worn for the first time on becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Torah: The scroll containing the Five Books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), read in weekly portions in order from the beginning to the end throughout the Jewish year

Twinning: Linking the Bar or Bat Mitzvah with another child somewhere else- either a child in Israel or the Former Soviet Union - or with the memory of a child who perished in the Holocaust and was not able to reach the age of Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Temple Shalom Special Purpose Funds

- Rabbi Michael Feshbach Mitzvah Fund
- Cantor Lisa Levine Mitzvah Fund
- Rabbi Bruce E. Kahn Mitzvah Fund
- Adele D. Lewis Fund - Provides training and professional development for teachers in our religious school.
- Beautification Fund – Provides funds for the maintenance and enhancement of the Temple grounds
- Burton Hoffman Memorial Fund - Supports the B'nai Mitzvah and Madrichim programs
- Church Association for Community Service (CACS)
- David Mark Gildenhorn Fund - Sends worthy high school students to attend programs in Israel
- David Rivkind Memorial Flower Fund - Provides flowers on the bimah each week.
- Eli Newberger Speakers Fund - Provides speakers for Temple functions
- Herman Rosenfeld Memorial Fund - Provides tuition assistance to send children to religious school and supports Jewish immigrants to the Washington area.
- Levinsohn-Feinberg Youth Educational Program - Provides scholarships for attendance at summer camps.
- Library Fund
- Mitzvah Corps Fund
- Music Fund
- Oscar Felker Memorial Fund - Contributes to the educational enrichment of the Temple and its members
- Sanctuary Fund
- Sigmund Mayer, Jr. Prayer book Fund
- Sisterhood Remembrance Fund
- Stanley Nehmer Fund for Special Events - Provides financial support and growth for Temple Shalom by a commitment to Judaic knowledge, social interaction, continuing education, and pleasurable enrichment through the arts.
- Torah Shalom Fund

B'nai Mitzvah Blank Family Letter

DATE

FAMILY INVOLVED
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear FAMILY,

Shalom, and *mazel tov* (congratulations) on the coming *simcha* (celebration) in your life and in the life of your family. We look forward to sharing this special time with you, and hope it will truly be "a day to remember."

Your final rehearsal is scheduled for **Tuesday, DATE, at 4:00 PM** with Cantor Levine and Rabbi Feshbach. Please plan to be here between one and a half to two hours, as we have the opportunity to review the service, practice reading from the Torah, and go over any individual questions you might have.

It is our custom that, to read from the scroll, our Bar/Bat Mitzvah student must be properly dressed. A child need not wear his or her best clothes, but jeans and sneakers are inappropriate.

Enclosed is the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Information Sheet*. **Please complete and return this form to the Temple Office, attention: Lauren Harrison, at least one week prior to final rehearsal.** During your final meeting, a **draft copy** of the service sheet will be given to you to make any final changes. *If you are making your own booklet for the service (which may include more text than the Temple Sheet), the text should be proofread by the Rabbi before the service. The Rabbi must see it before its final printing. Please bring a copy of the booklet to the rehearsal.* Finally, bring a list of any questions which *you may want to ask* about the service.

One of the true strengths of this congregation has been its efforts to promote a high-quality and personally meaningful Jewish education. One of the primary ways we have worked towards this goal has been our consistent perspective on the Bar or Bat Mitzvah in the context of a larger process of personal growth, spiritual development and Jewish commitment. As you have heard many times before, it is the policy of Temple Shalom that youngsters who accept the privilege of becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah are thereby committing themselves to attend religious school through the tenth grade, and to fulfill the requirements for graduation from the basic program of the religious school. At the rehearsal, we will discuss this commitment with you once again.

I look forward to being together with you on **DATE, at 4:00 PM**, as well as to sharing this very important occasion with you.

With my best wishes,

L'shalom,

Rabbi Michael Feshbach

Cantor Lisa Levine

THE MITZVAH PROJECT

The Mitzvah Project is a learning-through-doing program. According to Jewish tradition there are 613 mitzvot in the Torah. The Rabbi's taught that all mitzvot fall into one of three areas:

- Study
- Worship
- Deeds of Lovingkindness

The Mitzvah Project offers you a choice of 25 different mitzvot to perform. As part of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirement **you will be asked to fulfill 13** of these during your course of study.

You may choose to expand on one of these ideas for your 7th/8th Grade LARGE Mitzvah Project .

The Mitzvah Project will help prepare you for the increasing responsibilities you will assume as you enter Jewish adulthood. The program is self-administered with your parents help. Your clergy and your Madrichim, will help you navigate the program, answer any questions you might have and support you in your completion of these basic and simple mitzvot.

As each mitzvah project is completed, check it off and have your parents, clergy OR your tutor or Madrich/Madricha sign as well.

Share your ideas for mitzvah projects with your family, friends, classmates and teachers. Create a box for collecting items. Send out email and flyers to promote your cause.

Mitzvah go-re-ret Mitzvah
One mitzvah leads to another!

Mazel tov on your road to becoming a Jewish Adult!

MITZVAH PROJECT	DATE COMPLETED	PARENT SIGNATURE	TEACHER SIGNATURE
------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------

TORAH

- 1) Add one Jewish book to your personal library. Write a short one paragraph report.
- 2) Watch one Jewish educational program on T.V. or the Internet. Write a short one paragraph report.
- 3) Read a Jewish magazine or newspaper. Write a short report on an article of interest to you.
- 4) Complete your D'var Torah. Do additional research on your Parshah on the Internet.
- 5) Interview the Rabbi, Cantor or Director of Education regarding their service to the Jewish community.
- 6) Create a family tree of genealogy
- 7) Attend Saturday Morning Torah Study

WORSHIP

- 8) Attend FIVE Shabbat Evening and FIVE Shabbat Morning Services. Hand in your Service Attendance Card to the clergy (worth 5!.)
- 9) Choose one of the Shabbat Friday Evening prayers to recite at your Shabbat table.
- 10) Recite the Shema prayer before bedtime . for one week. Keep a journal of your thoughts while doing this mitzvah.
- 11) Attend one special holiday service with your family between now and your Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

MITZVAH PROJECT**DATE
COMPLETED****PARENT
SIGNATURE****TEACHER
SIGNATURE**

- 12) Make a Jewish ritual object: mezuzah, havdalah set, challah cover, tallit.
- 13) Lead your family in the Hamotzi before dinner each night for one week.

DEEDS OF LOVING KINDNESS

- 14) Donate three hours of your time volunteering.
- 15) Contribute one coin per week to a family Tzedakah box. Make one if you don't have one!
- 16) Make a contribution to one of the Temple funds in honor or memory of a loved one.
- 17) Pledge part of your gift money to the charity of your choice.
- 18) Clean out your drawers and closets and give your old clothes, books and games to charity.
- 19) Recycle all paper, cans, glass and plastic in your household foras long as possible.
- 20) Visit a local nursing home and volunteer
- 21) Write, call and visit your Grandparents.
- 22) Clean out your pantry and donate the food
- 23) Help out an older adult in your neighborhood
- 24) Help a classmate who is ill. Bring their homework, Write them a card or call them at home.
- 25) Adopt a pet, walk a dog, or volunteer at the ASPCA or animal shelter

YOUR OWN IDEAS:

TEMPLE SHALOM B'nai Mitzvah Program

B'nai Mitzvah Education and Preparation:

- Weekly private tutoring (20 sessions)*
- Meetings with Cantor, including family meeting and final ceremony preparation
- Meetings with Rabbi including final rehearsal
- Weekly meetings with Madrichim on speech preparation
- B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator assistance
- 6th Grade B'nai Mitzvah Family Education Program
- Books, CD's and materials

Arrangements:

- Friday Night Oneg, including desserts, fruit, cheese, challah and wine
- Saturday Kiddush including challah and wine
- Bimah flowers or food basket symbolizing a monetary donation to Mazon, a Jewish hunger organization (www.mazon.org)
- Candy for the service upon request
- Piano accompanist for the service upon request. Note: if you do not want piano, guitar accompaniment will be provided by Cantor Levine

**The total for all of the services provided above
will be billed to your Temple account:**

\$1,750.00

* Additional tutoring, if needed, can be @ \$60.00 per 45 minute session.

Temple Shalom Social Hall Reservation Information

Notes:

1. **No Kitchen - Stand-Up Kiddush.** – The Stand-Up Kiddush will be set up in the same fashion a Temple Shalom’s Friday Night Oneg. Congregants wishing to use this service must provide their own paper goods and service help for set-ups and clean-up. (There is no fee for the traditional challah and wine Kiddush following a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.) This arrangement is for those who wish something between a Kiddush and a luncheon.
2. **Partial Kitchen** – Includes limited use of kitchen facilities, such as refrigerator storage, coffee pots, and counters for set up. The renter is fully responsible for clean-up, including sinks and floors.
3. **Full Kitchen** – Includes use of the stove, ovens, etc. by the renter or a caterer to provide a meal. In addition, the dishes, glasses, and flatware are available. All clean-up is the responsibility of the renter.
4. **Use of the kitchen at a separate time or on a different day to prepare** - Such use MUST be scheduled through the Temple office. (This does not apply to the Temple Shalom Sisterhood or Brotherhood.)
5. All functions are based on no more than **6 hours total use**, which includes 1 ½ hours of set-up time, 3 ½ hours of function, and 1 hour of clean-up.
6. **Security Deposit for all functions:** A security deposit of \$200 for Temple members is required. The security deposit will be returned in 10 business days following the function if there is no damage or disappearance of Temple property, or if no overtime costs are incurred. *All security deposits are due at the same time as the contract down payment.*

DATE OF APPLICATION:

DATE OF EVENT:

TIME OF FUNCTION:

NUMBER OF PEOPLE:

CONTACT PERSONS:

CATERER: _____

PHOTOGRAPHER: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: _____

AMOUNT OF DEPOSIT: \$

DATE RECEIVED:

Check #:

TOTAL BALANCE DUE: \$

BALANCE DUE 30 DAYS PRIOR TO EVENT

Responsible person’s signature: _____

Please print your name: _____

Street Address: _____

City _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Email address: _____@_____

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Information For "Singles"

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____

Name of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____

Hebrew: _____ ben/bat (son/daughter of) _____ (Parents' Hebrew names where applicable)

Parent's English Names: _____

Erev Shabbat - Friday Evening: Information and Participants

Candles will be lit this night by: _____ on page _____
(usually this is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and one parent)

Kiddush will be led by: _____
(usually this is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and one parent)

Motzi will be led by: _____, _____ (usually siblings)

The pulpit flowers/food baskets are the gift of _____ in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

The Oneg Shabbat is sponsored by _____ in honor of _____

Pulpit Flowers _____ Food Baskets _____ Enhanced Oneg _____

Shabbat Morning Service: Information and Participants

Presentation of the Tallit _____

Are you planning to print your own service booklet? _____yes _____no

If the family is printing a booklet or any additional handouts please show this material to the Rabbi or the Cantor at least three weeks prior to schedule service date. Our policy is that we will prepare and print a service sheet including both the Call to Responsibility and an outline of the service and the names of all the participants (gathering the information for that handout is the purpose of the papers you are now reading); any background information about the service or any additional programs the families want to provide should be cleared with us and then printed by the families. Sometimes – and this is helpful, and also less wasteful – the families will agree to incorporate what our office would print into their program; in that case our office will coordinate arranging that information with you.

How many guests are you expecting? _____

Are you planning to have candy _____yes _____no

Cost is \$10.00. (Temple will provide the candy for those families who incorporate candy tossing as part of their service Please do not bring your own.)

Family Readings (Optional):

Participants in parts in the service usually leading prayers in English prior to the Torah service. Some of the parts in this section of the service may be led by a person of any faith and are therefore appropriate ways of honoring and including non-Jewish friends or family members; some parts are appropriately led by Jewish friends and family members. As with the Aliyot, any of these parts may be shared by more than one person.

Family I

- 1. _____ **Prayer:** _____ **Page:** _____
- 2. _____ **Prayer:** _____ **Page:** _____
- 3. _____ **Prayer:** _____ **Page:** _____
- 4. _____ **Prayer:** _____ **Page:** _____

Torah Portion: _____ (name of portion)
_____ (name of book), Chapter _____ Verses _____ to Chapter _____ Verses _____

JPS Tanakh page(s): _____ (please provide the exact verses that the bar/bat mitzvah will read during service)

Ark Opener(s): _____

Torah Carrier(s): _____

Torah Handlers (to prepare the scroll for reading): _____

Aliyot (Torah Blessings):

Please provide the full Hebrew names of participants, which includes a person’s Hebrew name and his/her parent’s names. * More than one person may share a single Aliyah. As guidance, grandparents, aunts and uncles and older siblings often receive the first Aliyah as a group, parents the second one, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the final Aliyah.

* For Jews by-choice, the person is considered _____ (his/her chosen Hebrew name) ben/bat (son/daughter) Avraham
v’Sara

1. _____ **Hebrew:** _____ **ben/bat** _____ **v’**

_____ **Hebrew:** _____ **ben/bat** _____ **v’**

_____ **Hebrew:** _____ **ben/bat** _____ **v’**

2. _____ **Hebrew:** _____ **ben/bat** _____ **v’**

_____ **Hebrew:** _____ **ben/bat** _____ **v’**

_____ **Hebrew:** _____ **ben/bat** _____ **v’**

3. _____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

(usually this Aliyah is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah who reads Torah second)

[Note one custom of Temple Shalom: we often invite the friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to stand behind our young people during this final Aliyah, and ask any questions they may have about the Torah, the reading, or the service. Where this is to take place at a double, we call the friends of both B'nai/B'not Mitzvah forward during the final Aliyah for the second Torah reading].

Torah Holder(s): _____

Torah Dresser(s): _____

Haftarah Reading (Reading from the Prophets):

_____ (name of book), Chapter _____ Verses _____ to Chapter _____ Verses _____

JPS Tanakh page(s): _____ (please provide the exact verses that the bar/bat mitzvah will read during service)

Ark Opener(s) [optional]: _____, _____

Presentations:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Certificate: _____ (usually the parents)

Gifts from the Congregation and Brotherhood: _____ (usually the tutor and madrich/a)

ARZA/NFTY Certificates and Gift of Israel Program: _____ (often presented by Rabbi Feshbach)

Twinning Certificate (optional):

_____ Name of "twin": _____ from _____

Just for the Rabbi and Cantor's information, please list the names of all grandparents and siblings who will be present at the ceremony:

Grandparents:

Siblings:

Special Family Remembrances to be read during Kaddish:

Special Announcements to be made at the close of service:

Other special notes or information of which the Rabbi and/or Cantor should be aware:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Information Sheet (For “Doubles”)

Name of Bar/Bat Mitzvah I: _____

Hebrew: _____ ben/bat (son/daughter of) _____ (Parents' Hebrew names where applicable)

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____

Parent's names (English): _____

Name of Bar/Bat Mitzvah II: _____

Hebrew: _____ ben/bat (son/daughter of) _____ (Parents' Hebrew names where applicable)

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____

Parent's names (English): _____

Erev Shabbat - Friday Evening: Information and Participants

Candles will be lit this night by: _____ (Family I) and _____ (Family II) on page _____.
(Candles are usually lit by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and one parent. We can call both parents forward as well).

Kiddush will be led by: _____ (Family I)
_____ (Family II)
(Kiddush is usually led the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and one parent. As with candles, we can call both parents forward as well).

Motzi will be led by: _____, _____ (usually siblings)

The pulpit flowers/food baskets are the gift of _____ in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

The Oneg Shabbat is sponsored by _____ in honor of _____

Pulpit Flowers _____ Food Baskets _____ Enhanced Oneg _____

Shabbat Morning Service: Information and Participants

Are you planning to print your own service booklet? _____yes _____no

If the family is printing a booklet or any additional handouts please show this material to the Rabbi or the Cantor at least three weeks prior to schedule service date. Our policy is that we will

prepare and print a service sheet including both the Call to Responsibility and an outline of the service and the names of all the participants (gathering the information for that handout is the purpose of the papers you are now reading); any background information about the service or any additional programs the families want to provide should be cleared with us and then printed by the families. Sometimes – and this is helpful, and also less wasteful – the families will agree to incorporate what our office would print into their program; in that case our office will coordinate arranging that information with you.

Are you planning to have candy ____yes ____no

(The cost for candy is 10\$ per family. The Temple will purchase candy for those families which incorporate candy tossing as part of their service. For doubles, both families must agree on the use of candy during the service.)

How many guests are you expecting? Family I _____ Family II _____

Tallit Information (Family I): Tallit from: _____ Presented by: _____

Tallit Information (Family II): Tallit from: _____ Presented by: _____

Family Readings (Optional):

Participants in parts in the service usually leading prayers in English prior to the Torah service. Some of the parts in this section of the service may be led by a person of any faith and are therefore appropriate ways of honoring and including non-Jewish friends or family members; some parts are appropriately led by Jewish friends and family members. As with the Aliyot, any of these parts may be shared by more than one person. For doubles, Family I should list names for the first two readings, and Family II for the second two. We will assign the particular parts at the rehearsal if we have not done so before then; please indicate non-Jewish participants with an * so we can make reading selections and include everyone in the appropriate way.

Family I

1. _____ Prayer: _____ Page: _____

2. _____ Prayer: _____ Page: _____

Family II

3. _____ Prayer: _____ Page: _____

4. _____ Prayer: _____ Page: _____

First Torah Reader: _____

Torah Portion: _____ (name of portion)
_____(name of book), Chapter _____ Verses _____ to Chapter _____ Verses _____

JPS Tanakh page(s): _____ (please provide the exact verses that the bar/bat mitzvah will read during service)

Second Torah Reader: _____

Torah Portion: _____ (name of portion)
_____(name of book), Chapter _____ Verses _____ to Chapter _____ Verses _____

JPS Tanakh page(s): _____ (please provide the exact verses that the bar/bat mitzvah will read during service)

Ark Opener, p. 362: _____, _____ (from Family I or split; do not need to be Jewish)

Torah Carrier(s): _____ (usually B'nai/B'not Mitzvah)

Torah Handlers (to prepare the scroll for reading): _____ (from Family I)

Aliyot (Torah Blessings):

Please provide the full Hebrew names of participants, which includes a person's Hebrew name and his/her parents' names*. More than one person may share a single Aliyah. As guidance, grandparents, aunts and uncles and older siblings often receive the first Aliyah as a group, parents the second one, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the final Aliyah.

* For Jews by-choice, the person is considered _____ (his/her chosen Hebrew name) ben/bat (son/daughter) Avraham v'Sara

From the family of the first Torah Reader:

1. _____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

_____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

_____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

2. _____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

_____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

_____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

3. _____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

(usually this Aliyah is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah who reads Torah first)

From the family of the Second Torah Reader:

4. _____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

_____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

_____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

5. _____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

_____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

_____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

6. _____ Hebrew: _____ ben/bat _____ v'

(usually this Aliyah is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah who reads Torah second)

[Note one custom of Temple Shalom: we often invite the friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to stand behind our young people during this final Aliyah, and ask any questions they may have about the Torah, the reading, or the service. Where this is to take place at a double, we call the friends of both B'nai/B'not Mitzvah forward during the final Aliyah for the second Torah reading].

Torah Holder(s): _____ (Family II)

Torah Dresser(s): _____ (Family II)

Haftarah (Reading from the Prophets)

First Haftarah Reader: _____

Haftarah Portion: _____ (name of book), Chapter _____ Verses _____ to Chapter _____ Verses _____

JPS Tanakh page(s): _____ (please provide the exact verses that the bar/bat mitzvah will read during service)

Second Haftarah Reader: _____

Haftarah Portion: _____ (name of book), Chapter _____ Verses _____ to Chapter _____ Verses _____

JPS Tanakh page(s): _____ (please provide the exact verses that the bar/bat mitzvah will read during service)

Ark Opener(s), page 374: _____, _____ (Family II; do not need to be Jewish)

[Instead of a second Ark opening here, families may also choose to split Ark Opening I, on page 362]

Presentations:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Certificate: _____ (Family I)

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Certificate: _____ (Family II)

Gifts from the Congregation and Brotherhood: _____, _____ (Family I)

_____, _____ (Family II) / (usually presented by the Madrich/a and Tutor; usually presented simultaneously to both B'nai/B'not Mitzvah)

ARZA/NFTY Certificates: _____ (often presented by the Rabbi)

Gift of Israel Program: _____ (often presented by the Rabbi)

Twinning Certificate: (Family I)

Presenter: _____ Name of "twin": _____ from _____

Twinning Certificate: (Family II)

Presenter _____ Name of "twin": _____ from _____

Special Family Remembrances to be read during Kaddish:

Family I:

Family II:

Special Announcements to be made at the close of service:

Sponsoring Shabbat Kiddush: _____

Just for the rabbi's information, please list the names of all grandparents and siblings who will be present at the ceremony:

Family I:

Grandparents:

Siblings:

Family II:

Grandparents:

Siblings:

Any other special notes or information of which the Rabbi and Cantor should be aware: