



The Complete B'nei Mitzvah Companion

2022-2023
EDITION

Name: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Overview

At Temple Beth Sholom, we consider it a great privilege to accompany your family through the B'nei Mitzvah journey, which is one of the most celebrated Jewish milestones along the path of one's Jewish life. Learners on the journey are immersed in a sense of moral obligation toward all people, of being an integral member of the Jewish people, of being loved and cherished by one's clergy and educator, of answering the call to participate with "Hineini – Here I Am," and of having a place of leadership within the Jewish community, well beyond a Bar/Bat Mitzvah event.



The celebration of Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the beginning of a young man or woman's transition from childhood to adulthood in the Jewish tradition. It is a wonderful milestone and memorable moment for family, friends, and community to share. Bar/Bat Mitzvah requires a child to demonstrate their readiness to begin to take on adult responsibility, and that they have learned how the wisdom of our Jewish heritage is a tool to building a Jewish life. It is an occasion for celebration!

Temple Beth Sholom (TBS) values the individual lives and souls of each of our students, our learners. We honor and care about the dreams and aspirations that each student and his or her family bring to the process. We value the Jewish tradition of immersion in the core mitzvot that signify a Jew's coming of age, including lifelong learning, engagement in the wider community and being a partner in making Temple Beth Sholom a "Kehilah Kedosha," a holy community. It is our expectation that our students continue with their Jewish education by attending our middle and high school Judaic programs and Confirmation.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Bar or Bat Mitzvah literally means "Son/Daughter of the Commandment." In Jewish tradition, celebrating a Bar or Bat Mitzvah marks the beginning of a young man or woman's transition from childhood to adulthood. Bar or Bat Mitzvah is the age when a Jew becomes responsible for performing the mitzvot. These rituals mark the occasion in the young person's attainment of this status. As a Reform congregation, the educational requirements and ceremony of both Bar and Bat Mitzvah are identical at Temple Beth Sholom. Both boys and girls are called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the age of thirteen.

The tradition of chanting aloud the Books of the Bible is an ancient one. According to tradition, Ezra, on the Jews' return to Israel from Babylonia in 457 B.C.E., established the public reading of the Torah with a special melody system. There is also a chanting system for Haftarah, the prophetic readings.

During the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ritual, the student leads the service, recites a blessing at the reading of the Torah (Aliyah), chants from the Torah and from the prophets (Haftarah), and delivers a D'var Torah (teaching about the portion). These rights are earned through meaningful preparation. What must be kept in mind is that one does not prepare just for the one day, but for full participation in the responsibilities and privileges of a Jewish lifetime. While we have a general set of expectations for our students, we recognize that each child is unique and will lead the service and chant according to his/her own capabilities.

Each child's journey to B'nei Mitzvah is unique and great sensitivity and care is given to each individual. Although there are expectations with regards to service leading and chanting Torah and Haftarah, our goal is to tend carefully to each child's individual needs and capabilities. We do all in our power to help your child flourish and be proud of their accomplishments, reaching the goals that he or she is capable of reaching. As we strive to highlight the talents of your child, parent or sibling, please discuss any possibilities of enhancing the service with additional singing, chanting or playing a musical instrument with the Cantor.

The Cantor will assign certain prayers to siblings as they are encouraged to participate. We also encourage post B'nei Mitzvah siblings, parents and other relatives to chant Torah at your service. The aliyot recordings specifically for this purpose.

We offer three meaningful ways to mark this coming of age:

B'nei Mitzvah in Israel

Join your TBS clergy on a meaningful family trip to Israel which includes a group B'nei Mitzvah service.

Shabbat Morning Service

This is a service which will incorporate your child's participation as well as the community's. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will lead prayers in the service, give a "D'var Torah" and chant of Torah and Haftarah. The honors are inclusive of the entire community and not limited to the B'nei Mitzvah family. A program is provided with honors selected by the family.

Shabbat Afternoon Service

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will lead the service including prayers, blessings, Torah, Haftarah, and a "D'var Torah". A program is provided with honors selected by the family.



The Family B'nei Mitzvah Experience in Israel

The Family B'nei Mitzvah Israel experience is an exciting, unforgettable, once in a lifetime alternative to consider. Enjoy a beautiful, informal, personal ceremony carefully crafted by your clergy for your child. The service, inclusive of all B'nei Mitzvah students and their families, is held atop the panoramic hilltops of Jerusalem. Our clergy is ready to take our families every summer to experience Israel and all its beauty with a meaningful B'nei Mitzvah ceremony as a culmination. The option to have the service in Israel can be either in conjunction with a celebration at TBS or stand on its own. This is A truly memorable way to observe the journey to B'nei Mitzvah.

Date Eligibility

Students are eligible to receive a date on or after their tenth birthday. Special consideration will be made for summer birthdays.

- Families must be in good standing.
- Students must be enrolled and attending the School of Living Judaism (SLJ) "jLAB program." Included in jLAB enrollment is the "Let's Learn Hebrew Side- By-Side" curriculum.
- Our expectation is that we are educating students for Jewish living and not Simply for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

Families seeking a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date whose child is already close to age 13 will be asked to complete a minimum of one year of jLAB religious school education prior to the date assigned. Students will be expected to have a Hebrew proficiency level that is conducive to B'nei Mitzvah preparation. There may be a delay in scheduling the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date for sufficient time needed to bring him/her up to the entry level for B'nei Mitzvah tutoring. If additional remedial tutoring is required, it will be at the family's expense.

Financial Obligations

The celebration of Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Beth Sholom is a privilege afforded only to members in good standing. A member's account must be current, including annual support, Religious School, B'nei Mitzvah fees, and all other miscellaneous charges. No member will be denied any aspect of this important life cycle event due to financial difficulties. Please keep us informed of all relevant circumstances.

Temple Policy on Financial Obligations

It is important that you are current with all of your Temple financial obligations including: Annual Commitment, SLJ, Afterschool and additional commitments. It is the policy of Temple Beth Sholom that every member be current in their financial obligations to the congregation, and remain so throughout the entire process, from the scheduling of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, through Religious School, private instruction and culminating in the simcha of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Should your family discontinue membership prior to the B'nei Mitzvah, the date will be subject to release and be open for other families. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Temple's Executive Director.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee covers the cost of the materials and preparation for your child. If the fee is not paid, the Executive Director and Cantor may remove your child's date from the Temple calendar.

Mitzvah Brick

The name of each Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be inscribed on a brick in the courtyard and added at the end of each fiscal year, memorializing this sacred day.

Friday Night Oneg Shabbat Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sponsors the Friday night Oneg Shabbat. If you wish to have a more elaborate Oneg or Kiddush, please contact our Director of Building and Facilities.

jLAB – The School for Living Judaism (SLJ)

jLAB is the religious education program at Temple Beth Shalom. We are committed to lifelong Jewish learning. As our tradition teaches us, B'nei Mitzvah is but one of many exciting Jewish experiences along the Jewish journey. Included in the curriculum is Hebrew Studies and a prayer preparation class taught by the Cantor. jLAB also includes an exploration into Jewish adulthood. A separate jLAB registration is required. All B'nei Mitzvah students must be enrolled in our jLAB program. For registration materials, contact jLAB, or another Jewish education program (i.e., Lehrman Community Day School). Individual, private Hebrew tutoring does not constitute an alternative Jewish education program. Visit our website at tbsmb.org/jLAB.

B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Process

B'nei Mitzvah preparation begins in jLAB. All jLAB students will be assessed to ensure their Hebrew knowledge meets the B'nei Mitzvah program criteria. Please note that additional private tutoring by an approved TBS tutor may be required, at your expense, to prepare your child for the B'nei Mitzvah preparation process if their assessment score is low.

Private Tutorials – Students will be assigned a tutor five to six months before their date. These tutorials consist of 20 one-hour lessons scheduled at a time mutually convenient for the student and the tutor. Please plan to make B'nei Mitzvah preparation a priority in your child's schedule during these six months. Please allow some flexibility with scheduling tutoring sessions.

Cancellation by a parent within 24 hours will count as one of the 20 lessons provided. Parents of students requiring more than 20 lessons will be financially responsible for these additional sessions. The Cantor takes summer schedules into consideration for fall B'nei Mitzvah. At the start of the private tutorials, all parents will be asked to sign a "Covenant of Understanding", reminding them of these policies.

Students will have two bimah rehearsals led by one of our Clergy the week of their service. The rehearsal schedule will be mailed to homes a few months in advance. As we have many students to schedule, please do your best to adhere to the rehearsal schedule provided. One of the rehearsals will be identified as the "Family Rehearsal". Please plan for the immediate family, parents and siblings, to attend this important rehearsal.

Mentor and Mitzvah Project

The clergy office will schedule a family meeting approximately 6 months prior to your ceremony date. At this meeting, your child will be assigned a “mentor.” The mentor will guide your child in the following areas:

Understanding and integrating the spiritual meaning of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Studying and discussing the Torah portion in English

Preparing a meaningful and personal D’var Torah for your child to teach the meaning and message of the Torah portion.

Practicing the 13 mitzvot in preparation for doing a lifetime of mitzvot as a Jewish adult.

Understanding the concept of tzedakah (righteous and just giving) and helping the child to incorporate the giving of tzedakah as part of the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah experience.

Facility Availability, Catering, Rental and Usage

Facility Rental Being able to celebrate in these sacred halls immediately following the ceremony adds to the special impact of the day. To that end, we encourage you to hold your celebration at Temple Beth Sholom.

The Social Hall is available on a first-come, first-served basis. We encourage you to book this date with our Director of Building and Facilities as soon as possible in order to avoid disappointment. You must first clear the date with this individual, who will explain the costs and requirements for renting the room. A deposit and a signed agreement will reserve the room.



Catering

It is suggested that you arrange the date with a caterer as soon as possible, and have that caterer contact our Director of Operations or requirements for the day of the event. All caterers must have a Certificate of Insurance naming Temple Beth Sholom as an additional insured and have a non-refundable fee paid to our office for the use of the kitchen. Party planners must have the room plans and menu approved by the Director of Building and Facilities at least two weeks prior to the event, before any arrangements are made.

Our Kashrut policy is that no shellfish, pork or pork products are permitted on Temple premises at any time. Dairy and meat products may not be served on the same plate during the same course in a meal. All dairy, egg, pasta and vegetable products are acceptable. During Passover, only unleavened foods are permitted.

Although TBS is not a kosher facility, a kosher caterer may convert the kitchen for use. TBS retains the right to disallow any part of a menu that does not comply with the Temple's Kashrut Policy.

Shabbat Dinner

If you would like to host a private Shabbat Dinner, reservations can be made with our Director of Building and Facilities. There is a rental fee for using the facility. If Temple Beth Sholom happens to be hosting a Shabbat Dinner the week of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you are welcome to make reservations and bring your guests to the congregational dinner at the price of the dinner for that date.

Saturday Kiddush

The family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah being held in the morning may wish to sponsor an extended Saturday Kiddush utilizing a caterer. If you do not, the Temple will sponsor a basic Kiddush following the service which may include punch, wine, fruit, cookies, and challah. We encourage you to be inclusive of our regular service attendees in your kiddush planning.



Family Celebration of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Prior to your simcha, you will receive your bima rehearsal schedule and the prayers that the parents will be reciting on either Friday evening or Saturday. These prayers are also available for review on our website at www.tbsmb.org.

Service Time Options

Appropriate Dress on the Bimah

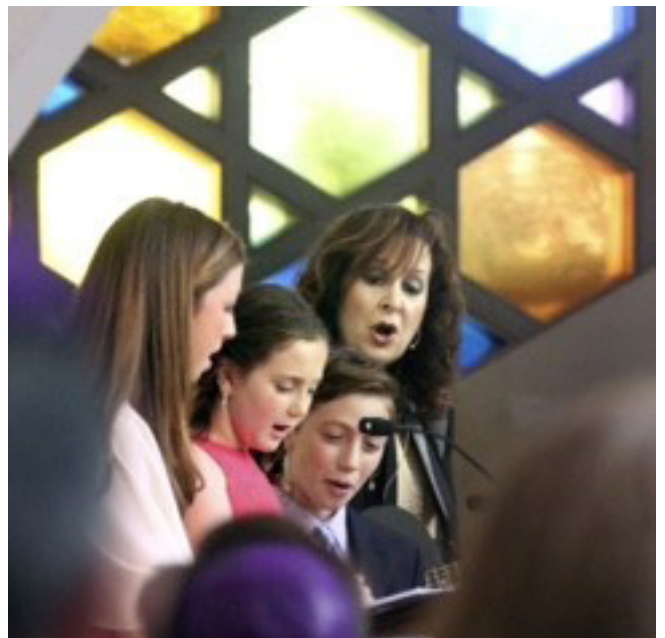
The Bar/Bat Mitzvah and family are expected to dress in a manner which reflects the special religious nature of this ceremony. Women's shoulders should be covered. Formal evening wear is inappropriate at Bar/Bat Mitzvah services.

Our Inclusive Policy

Temple Beth Sholom warmly welcomes the participation of family and friends not of the Jewish faith. We recognize that they have been supportive of your child's Jewish upbringing and play an integral role in your child's life and may participate in honors such as the chain of tradition, first and second ark openings, Torah carriers and undressing the Torah. The aliyot blessings must be chanted by post-B'nei Mitzvah attendees. Relatives and friends not of the Jewish faith and children may ascend the bima and stand with the Jewish attendees assigned to chanting the Torah blessings.

Children

Children should be given age-appropriate honors such as helping to dress the Torah or opening the Ark. Younger siblings will be assigned a few specific prayers and join the family at the end of the service to recite Kiddush and Motzi or Havdalah. Any child having already completed Bar/Bat Mitzvah is eligible for an aliyah to the Torah and is also encouraged to chant an aliyah from the Torah.



Before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Our Cantorial Assistant is available to help with all the information we will need from you for your simcha. Included in this guidebook are a series of forms that will require completion. In the weeks leading up to your simcha, you will be reminded to send us this pertinent information. All forms are available on our website in the B'nei Mitzvah section.

Temple Bulletin and Announcement Board

We want to publicize your simcha. Our entire congregation takes pleasure in sharing your joy. In order for the announcement of your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah to appear in HaKOL, the Temple Beth Sholom bulletin, we will need a picture (300 DPI or greater) and a brief article (150 words or less) about your child no later than two months before the date.

B'nei Mitzvah Service Program

The Temple prepares a printed program for the service, listing the special honors you wish to bestow on friends and family. The forms (Hebrew Names Request and Aliyot Form) must be submitted to the Cantorial Assistant two weeks prior to the service. For the program, we ask that families submit photographs in which the attire worn by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reflects the sanctity of our congregational Shabbat worship service.

Invitations

Invitations should call for 15 minutes before the actual service begins. Morning services begin at 10:30 am - Invitations should read 10:15 am. Minchah/Havdalah services begin at 4:30 pm - Invitations should read 4:15 pm.

Please encourage your guests to be prompt. IMPORTANT NOTE: It is encouraged for you to include the Clergy and tutor on your guest list. Never assume they would automatically be there if they do not receive an invitation.

Tzedakah - Contributions at the Time of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

At joyous occasions, and in the true tradition of our heritage and its custom of giving tzedakah, you are encouraged to make a contribution to the synagogue at the time of this simcha. The Rabbis' fund is the Mitzvah Fund and the Cantor's fund is the Music Fund. You may also wish to show your appreciation directly to your child's tutor. It is also fitting for you to set an example for your child and encourage him or her to begin the obligation of tzedakah by contributing to other worthwhile causes on the occasion of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A recommended list of projects may be found on our website in the Parents' section of our B'nei Mitzvah page.

Families are encouraged to individualize the service through tzedakah and mitzvah projects. Each child is expected to perform some type of gemilut chasadim (acts of righteousness).

For example, students have collected food for the food bank, clothes and furniture for new Americans. Many families have used the centerpieces at their receptions as an opportunity for those who are less fortunate. They have included nonperishable food that went to the food bank, sports equipment which went to a center for abused children, and toys which went to a child development center for underprivileged children. Other families have planted a tree in honor of each guest and have asked guests to bring non-perishable foods to the service.

The Day of the Service

Arrival at Temple Beth Shalom

You, as parents and hosts, should plan to be in the Temple no later than 10:00 am or 4:00 pm to greet your guests. All worshipers should be seated when services begin.

Photography and Videography

To preserve the sanctity of the occasion, photographs may be taken in the Sanctuary during the service as long as there is no flash, movement or sound. The photographer must stand along the back wall of the room. Photographers and videographers must have a tall tripod and stepladder to ensure a good view of the ceremony. Video equipment must be placed on the back folding door of the Sanctuary or on the South side near the back of the Sanctuary. No additional lighting may be used. Please minimize noise and movement.

Live-stream and TBS YouTube Channel

We are happy to share TBS services with those unable to attend in person through automated recording and live-streaming, available on our website, Facebook Live, and on our YouTube channel. The camera will be focused on the bimah and areas to the side and front of the Ark. Your presence in those areas indicates your consent to your image appearing on the live-stream. Tune in live-and to watch previously streamed services and programs. Following your simcha, you will receive an email from our Cantorial Assistant with a link to view your service on-line from our TBS YouTube channel. You have the option to request a download of the service from our Cantorial Assistant as well.

Decorum: Code of Conduct

We ask your support in creating an atmosphere which is conducive to prayer and celebration. Your participation will help your family, other families, and our congregants to have a meaningful worship experience. The Temple Beth Sholom School Board has passed the following Code of Conduct:

Guests are expected to participate in services, behave with a high degree of ***Derech Eretz***, showing the appropriate level of respect for being in the Sanctuary.

Guests will refrain from continuous talking, laughing, and other inappropriate behaviors while sitting in services.

Guests will not commit any acts of vandalism or damage to any part of the building, either during services or at any party.

Guests will remain in the areas of the Temple where services are taking place or where the party is being held.

Guests and their parents are to fully understand that they will be responsible for any damages that they incur.

Guests will dress in a fitting manner for Temple, including the wearing of slacks, shirt and tie, dresses, outfits, or pantsuits. Shoulders should be covered.

Guests agree to abide by all above rules and any additional ones pertinent to making the simcha meaningful and positive.



Links for Website Blessings/Recordings

Refer to our website at tbsmb.org and click on the Education tab on top. Click "B'nei Mitzvah Program" for all pertinent information you and your child needs. For Parents Blessings, follow the same path and instead of Prayer Recordings, go to Parent's Page to find answers to questions as well as the blessings you will need to know for your child's simcha. We suggest you email the link to the Torah Blessings to your relatives who will be called up to lead the blessings for the aliyot. There is a visual and audio recording for preparation.

B'nei Mitzvah Honors and Participation Friday Shabbat Evening Service

Bar/Bat Mitzvah families participate in the Shabbat Evening Service on the Friday evening prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. You are encouraged to invite family and friends to join you for this beautiful service. Services begin at 6:00 pm. Please arrive no later than 5:45 pm and be seated with your immediate family in the front row assigned to you at your bima rehearsal. Your participation will take place shortly after the service begins.

One or more B'nei Mitzvah and their families will lead the following prayers:

Candle Blessing

The Rabbi will announce the lighting of the Shabbat candles. Your immediate family should go to the table with the candles and Kiddush. The Cantor will provide the parents with their readings. One parent will light the candles. After the Cantor leads the blessing, this parent will recite an English reading.

Kiddush

One parent will introduce the reading before the chanting of the Kiddush. If there are two families, one parent from each family will read it together.

Shema/V'ahavta

The B'nei Mitzvah will lead the congregation in this liturgy.

Open Ark Doors for Aleinu

The immediate family will be called up to open and close the ark doors for the Aleinu prayer.

Saturday Morning or Afternoon B'nei Mitzvah Ceremony Tallit Presentation

All of our B'nei Mitzvah are presented with a tallit at their ceremony, either purchased for them for their simcha, or using a family heirloom tallit. Tallitot are available from our Temple gift shop, Holy Grounds. We suggest that you arrange tallit shopping by appointment through our Cantorial Assistant. Parents will be able to present their child with his or her Tallit and offer him or her words of blessing. We ask that you follow the guidelines below.

Both parents should share a message to their child. Try to plan your message to your child in a concise amount of time. Parents may divide these precious moments any way they like but remember that anything beyond five minutes will challenge the attention span of the congregation and lengthen an already full service.

As you prepare your words, try to keep in mind that humor is great, but some things may be misinterpreted. Additionally, the place to highlight all the attributes and talents of your child is not during the service, but at the reception. Please keep your thoughts and message centered on the meaning of this day. This is a wonderful time to speak of how proud you are of your son/daughter with a focus on his/her Jewish heritage.

Just as we recommend to B'nei Mitzvah students, type your words legibly and bring the papers with you. We suggest 14-point type, double spaced, 360 to 500 words.

A parent may wish to include the significance of the Tallit you are presenting.

Instructions for Guests with Honors

Chain of Tradition

The Rabbi will call to the bima the parents and grandparents for the traditional passing of the Torah from generation to generation. Grandparents not of the Jewish faith who have supported their grandchild's Jewish upbringing are welcome to participate. Parents and grandparents will have the chance to offer a private blessing to their child/grandchild during the Torah passing moment.

First Ark Opening

Following the Rabbi's announcement, ascend to the top level of the bimah and open the ark and stay there until the Torah processional begins. Follow the procession and after you walk around the sanctuary, return to your seats.

Torah Carriers - Beginning of Torah Service

After the Chain of Tradition, ascend the bimah to take your part in walking the Torah around the sanctuary.

Minhag Ha-Makom - TBS Custom

The custom of Temple Beth Sholom is for each Jewish adult who is called for an honor to wear a tallit and kippah. Both are available outside the sanctuary.

Undressing the Torah

As the Torah is walked around the sanctuary, go to seats next to Torah stand on the right side of the bimah. When the Torah is brought back, take off the silver and the cover. The Rabbi will take the Torah from you. Return to your seat.

Aliyot

The word, "Aliyah" means to "go up." It refers specifically to being called to the Torah to recite two blessings, one before and one after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's chanting of the Torah. Only Jewish adults over age 13 may recite these blessings over the Torah. Being called to the Torah for an Aliyah is an honor. It also presupposes an ability to recite or chant credibly. Non-Jewish family or friends, as well as children, can accompany the person reciting this blessing. There are potentially seven aliyot. The family may be assigned up to five aliyot for honors. Often, there will be a community Aliyah offered for healing or gratitude. The exact number will depend on the ability of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and if there are additional Torah chanters. Any Torah chanter is expected to have a mastery of Hebrew and chanting and it must be done from the Torah scroll – no papers. The final Aliyah is known as the "maftir" and it is given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The next to the last Aliyah is given to the parents.

Second Ark Opening

Following the "D'var Torah", the Rabbi will call up the people who are designated to open the ark for the second time. Ascend to the top level of the bimah and open the ark. Remain there until the Torah is returned to the ark, close the doors when the Rabbi tells you to do so and return to your seat.

Throwing Candy

Throwing candy is a custom that in recent years has been "borrowed" from wedding tradition. To avoid any safety hazard, TBS provides soft jelled candy for this purpose. Please do not bring your own candy to use.

Board Presenters

At the conclusion of the service, a member of our Board of Trustees will present certificates and gifts to each child. Should you desire to have a family member or close friend who is on the Board of Trustees make this presentation, please notify our Executive Office Assistant.

Security

Celebration is an important part of the simcha. In order to ensure that participants at parties and celebrations are safe and that our building remains secure, we must have security people for any party that is being held at the Temple. Please contact the Director of Facilities to arrange for security personnel which is part of the fee for facility usage.



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