A Handbook and Practical Guide to

B’NAI MITZVAH AT

TEMPLE BETH EL

2023-2024 B’nai Mitzvah Cohort

Revised November 2022
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A NOTE FROM YOUR B’NAI MITZVAH TEAM

Dear Families,

Mazel Tov and congratulations in anticipation of a b’nai mitzvah! Temple Beth El—its leaders, members, and staff—are all very proud to share this experience with you, and over the coming months, to assist you in making your family’s simcha (joyous occasion) both meaningful to you and to our Temple community.

The material here for students and their families. Please share it among appropriate members so that everyone may benefit from it.

We are hopeful that this handbook, and all other accompanying materials, will provide you tools with which to make you comfortable with learning the liturgy, Torah and Haftarah, and d’var torah—everything needed for your child’s special day. We are also confident that this handbook will help with some of the logistics of a Temple Beth El family simcha. Please read them carefully and be certain to contact any one of us along the way if you have questions or concerns.

At times the preparation for this special day might seem overwhelming. We look forward to working with you to make this milestone a special one for you and your whole family. As we begin this journey together, may God continue to grace us with good health and good fortune, and may God allow us to celebrate many more simchas together!

L’shalom – for peace!

Jonathan Biatch, Rabbi
Jacob Niemi, Cantor
Nicole A. Jahr, RJE, Director of Lifelong Learning
Stefanie Kushner, Executive Director

We’re Here to Help!

Jonathan Biatch, Rabbi
rabb@tbemadison.org

Jacob Niemi, Cantor
cantor@tbemadison.org

Nicole A. Jahr, RJE, Director of Lifelong Learning
learn@tbemadison.org

Stefanie Kushner, Executive Director
exec@tbemadison.org

Kendra Sager, Associate Executive Director
associate@tbemadison.org

Melissa Osborne, Office & Financial Coordinator
office@tbemadison.org

Kathleen O’Connell, Lifelong Learning Coordinator
Kathleen@tbemadison.org

Steven Gregorius, Facilities/Technology Coordinator
facilities@tbemadison.org
BECOMING B’NAI MITZVAH

BACKGROUND

Bar (male) or Bat (female) Mitzvah – singular

B’nai Mitzvah – plural for males and mixed gender groups, commonly coming into use for non binary individuals

B’not Mitzvah – plural for females

The words “bar/bat/b’nai mitzvah,” meaning “a young person who is subject to the commandments,” refer to the person who becomes a bar/bat/b’nai mitzvah. Our b’nai mitzvah celebrate the moment when they come to the bimah for their first communal aliyah to the Torah. Further, they are now considered as part of the adult worship community, and as such are invited to participate fully in the many sacred obligations of our faith. In short, it is a status that indicates Jewish communal maturity.

While the concept of bar mitzvah is found in the Mishnah (see sidebar), a ceremony for marking this event dates from the Middle Ages. And the first known bat mitzvah ceremony took place in 1922, honoring the daughter of Mordechai Kaplan (the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism).

Traditionally, boys become bar mitzvah at age 13, and girls become bat mitzvah when they turn 12 years of age and enter puberty. Liberal streams of Judaism, such as the Reform movement, typically celebrate all b’nai mitzvah at age 13. In either case, Jewish religious and moral obligations rest upon the b’nai mitzvah whether or not a ceremony is held to mark the occasion.

The simcha of b’nai mitzvah gives our children an opportunity to learn more about the meaning of Judaism in their lives, to recall major Jewish experiences, and to project their future Jewish involvement. It is a time to underscore the three responsibilities that each b’nai mitzvah undertakes: (1) the ongoing study of Torah in all its many forms; (2) regular participation in Avodah (worship); and (3) the never-ceasing human response to those in need, or G’milut Chasadim (acts of lovingkindness). We hope to impress upon our young people the traditional understanding that those who become b’nai mitzvah both take responsibility for one’s own actions and assume a wider and joyous opportunity to perform sacred Jewish obligations.

On Becoming B’nai Mitzvah

• • •

An Ancient source: “At age thirteen one is to fulfill [all] the commandments.” (Rabbi Judah ben Teimah, in Mishnah Avot 5:23)

A Modern Source: Those who become b’nai mitzvah accept “the privileges and responsibilities of being a Jew: lifelong Torah study and the keeping of mitzvot; Shabbat, holy-day and life-cycle observances; participation in the life of the synagogue, the Jewish community, and Israel; dedication to tikkun olam, the perfection of our world.” (From the certificate of b’nai mitzvah that the students receive on their special day).
B’nai mitzvah mark their passage to Jewish communal maturity by demonstrating the ability to do what Jews consider to be the pre-eminent religious activities of a Jewish person, namely, to demonstrate a sensitivity to the needs of others, to lead a congregation in worship, to read our sacred books, and to interpret their meaning for the modern mind.

THE TEMPLE BETH EL APPROACH TO BECOMING B’NAI MITZVAH

The world stands on three things: on Torah, on Worship and on Acts of Loving Kindness
-Pirkei Avot

TORAH

B’nai mitzvah students at Temple Beth El will engage with the words of Torah on many levels. They will work with the rabbi to understand the meaning of their parashah and work together to choose the verses which they will chant during their services. Students will write a d’var torah or a personal prayer with the guidance of the rabbi which they will present to the congregation at their service.

Torah and Haftarah Portions

B’nai mitzvah students chant Torah and/or Haftarah texts during the service. There are several systems or melodies used in the chanting of biblical text – the Torah chant is different from that of the Haftarah – and, so, as not to be confusing, your child will initially be taught how to chant Torah. If a student picks up the Torah chant readily, there will be an option to learn the Haftarah in its special musical form.

Your child will offer multiple verses of Torah during their b’nai mitzvah service, and this selection will be divided into three sections or honors (more on family honors later). The rabbi, or under some circumstances, your child’s tutor will assist your child in identifying the specific verses that the student will present.

A D’var Torah or Personal Prayer from the Student

Following the student’s presentation of the Torah and/or Haftarah selections, the student will then offer either a d’var torah or a personal prayer. The rabbi will discuss the specific aspects of the d’var torah or personal prayer with your child, but here are a few beginning hints and guidelines:

D’var Torah
As an discussion of the parashat hashavuah (Torah portion for the week), the d’var torah is intended to relate to the congregation the substance of the weekly parashah, to demonstrate the student’s mastery and understanding of one of the issues raised by the portion, and to connect the parashah to some aspect of life today.
Personal Prayer
As a prayer or benediction, it should include expressions of gratitude, results of learning that the student has accomplished as of this moment in their life, an aspect of the contemporary meaning of the student’s Torah portion that has impressed your child, questions and concerns, and special hopes for the future. The rabbi will discuss further details of the personal prayer during the initial meeting.

AVODAH | ענודת

During our Shabbat worship, students in our congregation who have attended our Hebrew and Religious school programs will lead worship using Hebrew and English.

Students are expected to worship regularly with our congregation in preparation for leading worship. Students are required to attend six Shabbat morning services as well as three Friday evening services in the year leading up to their b’nai mitzvah dates. These services can include:

- Saturday morning worship at another congregation. Please bring something back from the service. This can include a program from the service, snap a selfie-with the b’nai mitzvah student, or a kippah. Either share the picture or keepsake with Kathleen O’Connell digitally through email or share in person.
- Temple Beth El’s T’filat Shabbat (Saturday morning worship on the 3rd Saturday of each month (maximum attendance at 2 of these worship services).

We encourage families to also attend these services as well, as it will help you throughout this process of preparation. Attending these services together will allow families to:

- promote a sense of community during Shabbat worship and throughout the process of preparation.
- observe and learn about the practical aspects of the service;
- learn the choreography associated with the service;
- become familiar with the order of worship and the music of the service, to feel comfortable in participating, and to eventually make decisions on the service options available;
• understand what it means to be counted as a member of the worship community, one of the sacred obligations of any Jew who turns 13;

Experience has shown that those students who attend Shabbat services regularly to observe and participate in their peers’ b’nai mitzvah observances have a much higher level of comfort when they themselves ascend the bimah for their special day.

Please sign the book located outside the sanctuary to let us know you attended the Friday night or Saturday service. If you attend a service at another congregation please email Kathleen (kathleen@tbemadison.org) and let her know.

G’MILUT CHASADIM  |  גמילות חסדים

Mitzvah Project

B’nai Mitzvah students observe the mitzvah of tzedakah by engaging in a mitzvah project. Each student works with their family to identify a particular passion that can help explore what it means to them, personally, to be Jewish. Students create their own project for this exploration and could partner with a mentor in the congregation to guide their work. For example, if a student is particularly interested in gender and LGBTQ issues, they might keep a blog to explore how Judaism addresses these topics, while working with a mentor who is interested in political activism. Students can direct their questions about the b’nai mitzvah project to the director of lifelong learning.

Tzedakah

Tzedakah, though sometimes translated as “charity” has its root in the word “justice” or “righteousness.” Our tradition teaches that giving tzedakah is a religious obligation, and we honor special occasions such as the memory of loved ones.

Temple Beth El Simcha Plaques

You can commemorate b’nai mitzvah forever by inscribing them on the TBE Simcha Wall. It’s a special place where families will be reminded of their celebrated moment for generations to come. It’s also an opportunity to participate in the time-honored tradition of recognizing meaningful milestones in one’s life by making a charitable contribution.

The cost for each plaque $180. Proceeds benefit the TBE building fund which provides for improvements and maintenance of our beautiful building. To place your order, complete the online order form at tbemadison.org/form/simchaplaque.
# TIMELINE FOR B’NAI MITZVAH PLANNING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior to the date of service</th>
<th>Milestone or meeting. Students must be proficient in reading</th>
<th>Action required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 months</td>
<td><strong>Determine Prayer Fluency.</strong> Families are contacted by the director of lifelong learning to determine prayer acquisition and decide if additional prayer tutoring is necessary before Torah and/or Haftarah tutoring begins.</td>
<td>If contacted by the director of lifelong learning, schedule additional sessions for prayer tutoring.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5 months</td>
<td><strong>Receive Tutor Assignment.</strong> Families are introduced to their tutor via email. If you have not already turned in the learning styles questionnaire, please do so.</td>
<td>Contact tutor to schedule weekly, hour-long meetings.</td>
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<td>6 months</td>
<td><strong>Schedule Family Meeting with the Rabbi</strong> In this meeting, Rabbi, parent(s) and student will read the parashah together for the purpose of orienting student to the writing of a d’var Torah or a personal prayer. Usually an hour long, this meeting allows the family to become familiar with the parashah and its themes, and prepare the student for writing what they will present to the congregation.</td>
<td>Schedule with office coordinator to meet with Rabbi Biatch.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td><strong>Worship Planning meeting.</strong> Students meet with the director of lifelong learning to personalize their Shabbat services which celebrates becoming b’nai mitzvah by choosing which prayers they will lead during their service.</td>
<td>Schedule with lifelong learning coordinator to meet with director of lifelong learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td><strong>B’nai Mitzvah fee is assessed.</strong> Monthly payments may be arranged through ShulCloud. Payment in full is due prior to your simcha.</td>
<td>Log in to your account at tbemadison.org to make payments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5 months</td>
<td><strong>Torah portion meetings.</strong> B’nai mitzvah students will have several appointments with the rabbi to study the Torah portion and discuss the d’var torah that the b’nai mitzvah will present. Students will also select the Torah verses that the b’nai mitzvah will chant/present on the day of the b’nai mitzvah service. The first of these meetings include the student and parent/guardian.</td>
<td>Schedule with office coordinator to meet with Rabbi Biatch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td><strong>Reserve space for celebration(s).</strong> Determine your planned facility use in celebration of your event including kiddush luncheons and evening parties.</td>
<td>Contact the executive director to complete facilities agreement and pay $100 deposit, as well as review Oneg Shabbat plans.</td>
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</table>
TBE reserves the right to release the space if no agreement is received at this time. These opportunities are dependent on Temple Beth El’s food policy based on current local guidelines for safe practices concerning COVID-19. TBE reserves the right to release the space if no agreement is received at this time.

| 4 months | **Arrange oneg sponsorship.**  
Families often choose to sponsor an oneg Shabbat in honor of the occasion. | Contact executive director to schedule the date you would like to sponsor the oneg. |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 months | **Tutoring begins.**  
Tutors work with student weekly for approximately 16 weeks. Students should meet with tutors 14 times for one hour at a time. The family and the tutor will agree upon the time and place of tutoring, and every effort should be made to create a calendar that is mutually convenient. The two additional sessions are with the cantor and the director of lifelong learning. | Contact your tutor to schedule. |
|          | **Check ushering schedule.**  
Parents/guardians of b’nai mitzvah should choose at least one date to serve as ushers for another family. | Sign up for ushering at [https://www.tbemadison.org/bmstudents](https://www.tbemadison.org/bmstudents) |
| 4 months | **Order your simcha plaque (optional).**  
Simcha plaques are a great way to mark happy occasions. Plaques are part of a permanent display on the wall outside the sanctuary. | Complete the online order form at [tbemadison.org/form/simchaplaque](http://tbemadison.org/form/simchaplaque) |
| 2 ½ months | **B’nai mitzvah half-way check-in.**  
Students meet with the cantor halfway through the tutoring process to check in on their preparation progress. Parents are welcome, but not required to attend this meeting. Students should bring their siddur and folder with all of their materials. | Schedule with Melissa Osborne, office and financial coordinator, to meet with Cantor Niemi. |
| 6 weeks | **Finalize honors/Forms are due to the office.**  
The final decisions should be made about the honors for the service. The B’nai Mitzvah Honors Form and the B’nai Mitzvah Certificate Information form are due to the office coordinator. If creating a program, a draft is also due at this time so the rabbi may review it. If additional klei kodesh (Torah readers) will be a part of the service, the rabbi will need to speak with them before this date. | Turn in forms to office coordinator if not already done. Turn in program draft to rabbi. Confirm service honors with office coordinator. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Confirmation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Confirm Friday evening service honors. Confirm your family’s participation in the honor of candle blessing and Kiddush at the Friday night Shabbat worship a week before the b’nai mitzvah service.</td>
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<td>3 weeks</td>
<td><strong>Facilities meeting.</strong> Meeting with the executive director and facilities coordinator to review the logistics of your event.</td>
<td>Schedule with executive director.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 days</td>
<td><strong>Final bimah check with cantor.</strong> Families are welcome but are not required to attend this rehearsal on the Tuesday before the week of the service. Students should bring all their materials to this rehearsal.</td>
<td>Schedule with office coordinator to meet with Cantor Niemi.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Week</td>
<td><strong>Erev Shabbat Service.</strong> The student and entire family are invited to worship with the community, as this is our community’s opportunity of honoring you and your family at this moment in your Jewish life. At that service, you will receive the following honors:</td>
<td>Confirm your attendance with office coordinator. Copies of blessings can be provided via email, by request.</td>
<td>Digital version of the program, in page order, must be received by Melissa on the Monday before service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td><strong>Final rehearsal with the director of lifelong learning.</strong> A run-through rehearsal of the entire service is held with the director of lifelong learning. <strong>Parent/guardian attendance is mandatory.</strong> This rehearsal will take place on the Tuesday the week of the simcha from 5:00 – 7:30 pm. Any family members participating in the service are welcome to attend this rehearsal.</td>
<td>Confirm your attendance with the lifelong learning coordinator.</td>
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PREPARING FOR THE CEREMONY

LEARNING AND STUDY

Tutoring for Proficiency in Torah and Haftarah

In addition to regular meetings with our clergy, each student will be designated a qualified tutor to work with weekly for approximately 16 weeks. The family and the tutor will agree upon the time and place of tutoring, and every effort should be made to create a calendar that is mutually convenient. Please strive to keep all appointments. If a student or a tutor needs to cancel a session due to illness or vacation, etc., it must be made up or you must start that many sessions earlier to ensure that you will meet at least 14 times. For example, if you know your child will be at camp for a month this summer, you should start a month earlier, etc. Families wishing to find alternative tutoring arrangements must obtain permission from the director of lifelong learning. It is important for us to maintain the quality of our b’nai mitzvah preparation, so not every outside tutor will qualify for teaching a Temple Beth El student.

Guide for a Student’s Effective Studying

We know that the student’s and family’s level of satisfaction and reward will be commensurate with the amount of time and enthusiasm they invest. The positive enthusiasm of the family, the team effort among synagogue staff, and everyone’s ability to respond to the needs of each student’s unique situation will help to ensure a good experience.

Hebrew prayers are taught in Hebrew school in addition to being recited in t’filah during Religious School. The b’nai mitzvah tutor will teach the Torah and/or Haftarah portions and review prayers as necessary. If your child needs assistance with prayers, a prayer tutor may be hired BEFORE b’nai mitzvah tutoring begins, approximately 6 months before the b’nai mitzvah service, additional charges may be assessed. Please contact the director of lifelong learning if your child has this need or have any questions.

Please establish a specific time for study each day, and make sure it is calendared just like any other activity in which your child participates. Take all study cues from your child’s tutor. Set a specific time every day to practice, e.g., Mondays at 4:00 pm, Tuesdays at 7:00 pm, etc. Before their Torah and/or Haftarah tutoring begins, students should practice prayers for no fewer than 15 minutes a day. (A list of prayers is provided through the TBE website www.tbemadison.org/bmstudents). When tutoring begins for Torah and/or Haftarah, they should increase practice to 30 minutes per day, to accommodate new and/or more challenging material.

Please use Post-It notes or other flags if you need to place notes in the prayer book.
The student can break their practicing up into two sessions, if that works better for them, as long as they practice every day for the amount of time determined by their tutor. The student should review all the Hebrew prayers once each day.

Students should put in extra time on prayers or parts of prayers that are more difficult. They should read and re-read Haftarah and Torah lines as they are assigned. They should use the sound files that your tutor records for you to learn new material and review the verses you have already learned.

Torah, Haftarah, prayers, etc., should be practiced out loud whenever possible. Newer and/or more difficult material should be broken down into more manageable phrases. Students can then work on these phrases individually before putting them back together in full sentences/verses, paragraphs/aliyot, etc. Tutors can help students to determine the best way to break their material up into manageable pieces.

Parent/guardian need to actively monitor and listen to the reading of the English parts of the service aloud. The English can be practiced every few days during the second to the last month. Then the entire service, beginning to end, English and Hebrew, should be practiced every day, including the personal prayer, during the last month. Follow the page numbers listed in the copy of the service outline as you go page by page through the prayer book. Some parts may be modified to meet individual needs and skills. If you have questions, please ask!

Remember to practice every day! That is the only way the material will stay fresh. As a suggestion, you can take one prayer a week to learn and practice it with the recording. Once it is learned, all you will need to do is review it each day. Remember that the sooner you learn the prayers before your b’nai mitzvah service, the less you will have to worry about when you begin b’nai mitzvah tutoring. Ideally, you should not be learning new prayers when tutoring begins, just reviewing them.

**Learning Styles**

Children may participate in b’nai mitzvah rituals regardless of physical, emotional, learning, speech, language, hearing, developmental, or cognitive challenges. We make personalized adjustments for all b’nai mitzvah students so that they can participate in a service based on their unique abilities and talents. Completing a learning styles questionnaire will assist.

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**Best Practices for B’nai Mitzvah Practice**

Adapted from the Cantors Assembly

**Practice DAILY, 15-30 minutes each session**

**PRACTICE MAKES PREPARED!**

1. **Listen** to the track in its entirety while following along with your finger.

2. **Listen** until you get to a comma, phrase section, or a vertical line, pause the recording, then...

3. **REPEAT OUT LOUD!**

4. **REPEAT Step 2** until you can chant on YOUR OWN without the recording. (This step may take you a few days of consistent practice!)
THE SHABBAT SERVICE WHICH CELEBRATES BECOMING B’NAI MITZVAH

What the service is: The Shabbat service is open to the entire community, and we encourage members of Temple Beth El to attend and celebrate with us as we bring your child to the bimah on that day. Since this is a communal day of worship and joy, it is possible that Temple Beth El clergy will observe a simchah with and for other Temple Beth El families, such as naming a baby, wishing a safe journey for those traveling to Israel, or mourning with a Temple Beth El member who has lost a loved one. You will be notified in advance if and when we know there will be another family observance of this kind on the day of your child’s b’nai mitzvah celebration.

What the service is not: The Shabbat service is not a private ceremony. It is a regular Shabbat service for our community. There are a fixed number of honors for b’nai mitzvah family members; most are available for non-Jewish relatives and friends.

Livestreaming

We are fortunate to have the capabilities to livestream all of our worship to share with our Temple Beth El community as well as with any of your guests that are unable to come in person. You will receive the livestreaming information and should feel free to share that with any guests that want to be part of this lifecycle event.

Honors during the service

There are several opportunities during the service to honor your family and friends. Some are non-speaking parts while some are speaking parts, some in Hebrew, and some in English. Ask the rabbi if you are uncertain as to which honors are provided for Jewish and non-Jewish individuals.

English Readings
There are several English readings in the beginning section of the service that may be given as honors to family or friends.

Tallit presentation
You may wish to designate a special person or couple in your life to present your child with a tallit for your child’s future spiritual life. Presenters often share the origin of the tallit and the significance of the moment for the family. Please know the presentation of a tallit is optional.

Handing down of the Torah
An honor reserved for grandparents and parents/guardians, those who have contributed to the Jewish upbringing of the child are invited to participate in this ceremony at the beginning of the Torah service where the Torah is passed down through the generations both physically and symbolically. This is a non-speaking part.

G’lilah (Dressing and Undressing the Torah)
Torah undressers and dressers can be anyone in your family, and are often younger family members who have yet to reach b’nai mitzvah age. Participants under age 10 must be
accompanied by an adult. This is a non-speaking part but the honoree should be able to hear and understand the directions offered by TBE staff when the Torah scroll is undressed and dressed.

Ark Opening
Ark openers can be anyone in your family, and are often younger family members who have yet to reach b’nai mitzvah age. This is a non-speaking part.

Aliyot to the Torah
An aliyah is an honor during the course of the Torah service. The word aliyah literally translates as “ascent” and refers to the act of ascending to the pulpit and being honored in the service.

During the Torah service, there are a minimum of three (3) aliyot. The student receives one of these on the occasion of ‘being called to the Torah as b’nai mitzvah.’ As the family celebrating this simcha, you will have the privilege of honoring other family members or friends with up to two more aliyot to the Torah. This is an honor reserved for Jewish individuals. Please be certain that your honorees are familiar with the blessings for the aliyah; the Temple Beth El office can provide you with materials to help family members in this regard. When the parents/guardians of the b’nai mitzvah are not Jewish, there is a special English benediction they are invited to offer.

Torah Chanting/Reading
The student will chant an adequate amount of Torah to cover three aliyot; the student’s total responsibility for Torah that day will consist of anywhere from ten to sixteen verses. If you choose to invite up to two additional aliyot, it is initially up to you to seek out additional Torah readers. Friends and relatives are excellent choices. These honors are also reserved for Jewish individuals. The cantor will be happy to make a recording of their portion for them to practice with.

A Presentation from the Parents/Guardians
After the student’s presentation, one or both parents/guardians may offer a personal statement of their own. This presentation can be up to five minutes in its entirety, even when shared between two parents/guardians. These remarks are intended to be spoken to your child, expressing your hopes and dreams for the future, gratitude to God for the privilege of being able to ascend the bimah with their child on the occasion of becoming b’nai mitzvah, or similar personal sentiments.

Ushering
Parents/guardians of b’nai mitzvah should choose at least one date to serve as ushers for another family in their cohort. This is a great opportunity to observe the b’nai mitzvah service and ensure a positive experience for our guests and congregants on this important day. Ushers may be asked to distribute any programs, kippot, or other handouts for the service.
Additionally, as an usher/greeter, we ask the following of you:

- Please arrive no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of services.
- Help guests find seats toward the front of the sanctuary. Often guests and congregants are shy to sit near the front, however it is less disruptive to the service if there is space left toward the back for late comers.
- If the family has programs, please station one adult just outside the sanctuary doors to distribute.
- If the family has chosen to throw candy after the Torah reading, please pass out this candy at the time designated by the rabbi.

Here are a few answers to frequently asked questions by our guests:

- Kippot and tallitot are a matter of personal choice. Congregants and guests are not required to wear them but are certainly welcome to. Kippot and tallitot for general use are available on the rack just outside the sanctuary.
- During the service the main worship text is Mishkan T’filah. The Plaut Torah Commentary is also used during the Torah service. These are available on the rack outside the Sanctuary.
- There are five available restrooms on the main floor. There are male and female multi-stall restrooms on either ends of the halls (one set by the office, one set by the kitchen) as well as an all gender, single stall restroom which is opposite Room 106.
- The coat room is located just past the gift shop. Strollers and umbrellas may be left in the coat room.

ETIQUETTE AND DECORUM

Invitations
All the members of the student’s Hebrew and Religious School classes are invited to the all worship services in their cohort. Our goal is to imbue our students with the value of supporting their peers, and to have them develop a sense of community. We do not require that all these students be invited to any social gathering that you hold. You will receive an invitation from TBE that lists all the dates of the b’nai mitzvah in your student’s cohort.

Invitations to celebrations following the kiddush do not need to be extended to all classmates. It is important for parents/guardians to help their children be sensitive to the potential for hurt feelings when students discuss celebration plans during class. Please take the time to urge your children to refrain from these discussions during Hebrew and Religious School.

Worship Programs
Programs are often created to help explain the different parts of our sanctuary and worship service to those that aren’t familiar with Temple Beth El. It is also a place where families list the names of those that have honors in the service. The programs are optional. If you choose to create one Rabbi Biatch must receive a draft 6 weeks before the simcha to approve of wording. You can change names of people with honors after that time. It is your responsibility to print the programs.
for the service. A digital version of the program, in page order, is due to Melissa Osborne on the Monday before the service so she can upload it for those watching the livestream.

**Gifts**

We do not want the families of the other class members to feel obligated to purchase gifts for their child’s peers; this, too, is an undue burden. In some previous cohorts at Temple Beth El, the class gets together and makes a group purchase of modest gifts for the students who become b’nai mitzvah, such as trees in Israel or an Israel Bond. We encourage class parent/guardian to get together to coordinate the purchase of these kinds of group gifts for the students rather than students buying presents individually.

**Clothing**

Any family or guest who will be honored by being on our bimah should be dressed accordingly. It is also suggested to advise guests that the sanctuary may be unseasonably cold at any time during the year. Guests may be more comfortable in our sanctuary with a sweater or jacket.

For our b’nai mitzvah, we want them to take the additional consideration that they will be joining the worship leading team on the day of their simcha. As sh’lichei tzibbur, messengers of the community, the rabbi, cantor, and director of lifelong learning have set standards for how they present themselves as prayer leaders on the bimah. Accordingly, this is the standard we have set for our students joining that team: skirts or dresses should extend to knee length or lower; shoulders and upper arms should be covered before donning a tallit. Proper shoes are required, which are appropriate for the occasion, appropriate for the bima and safe. Clothing that reveals cleavage, private areas, bare midriff, or undergarments is not permitted. Any questions on appropriate attire can be addressed with clergy or director of lifelong learning.

**Minimizing Distractions**

In order to best support our b’nai mitzvah students, please take the following precautions to help your guests to minimize distractions during the service. Encourage your guests to focus on the meaning of the event. There will be plenty of time following the service for greeting family and friends or answering questions of those who are new to this service. Ask your guests to refrain from excessive, loud, or distracting talking during the service.

We want our children and their guests to fully participate in the worship services and the Jewish life of our congregation. Occasionally, we have had children, both our members’ children and their guests who are unsupervised, forget that this is a beit t’filah (house of prayer) and use parts of the building as though they were a playground. This is quite unsafe and completely unacceptable. To avoid this issue, please talk to your family members and friends about setting appropriate restrictions for their children. Host families are responsible for the behavior of their guests, and in the event of any damage.

Very young children are always welcome in the sanctuary and on Temple grounds, but they may not always be able to sit through the service. Should they become restless, parents/guardians are requested to bring them to an area away from the sanctuary until they are ready to return. Some
families have hired child care providers for their younger family members, and we can make a space available for this purpose.

The rabbi will request that mobile phones of congregants be turned to the ‘silent’ mode, and guests refrain from taking photographs.

Candy
There is a custom in some synagogues of showering b’nai mitzvah with candy at an appropriate moment to signify a sweet day and wonderful hopes for the future. This custom started in the Sephardic community and is welcomed here. All candies must be soft (gummy nature) no chocolate please, and individually wrapped.

• If the family has chosen to use this ritual, please throw this candy at the time designated by the rabbi.

CELEBRATING AT TEMPLE BETH EL

Sharing food and drink at an oneg and kiddush celebration strengthens relationships among our members and guests and continues the joyous spiritual journey of Shabbat. These opportunities are dependent on Temple Beth El’s food policy based on current local guidelines for safe practices concerning COVID-19. Sponsoring the oneg or a kiddush is a generous gift to help sustain our community’s vitality. Please consult with the executive director to find out the food policy during the time of your simcha.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CELEBRATION

Friday Night

Hosting a Shabbat Dinner
The Frank Adult Lounge is available to b’nai mitzvah families to host a Shabbat dinner prior to Shabbat services. Please see the fee schedule for details.

Oneg Shabbat
In celebration of a happy occasion, many families choose to sponsor an oneg Shabbat (reception associated with Friday evening services). This is not a requirement, but it is a thoughtful way to welcome visiting family and friends from outside of the area, to honor the community, and to support our Sisterhood, who provide all non-sponsored oneg Shabbats for Temple Beth El. If you
would like to host the oneg Shabbat, please contact the executive director. Some Friday evenings have already been designated by the congregation for special communal observances and/or the oneg Shabbat may already be sponsored by another family. In these instances, you may be able to share in this honor.

Shabbat Morning Kiddush

When b’nai mitzvah services occur on Saturday mornings, you are responsible for hosting a community kiddush following services, which is minimally to include challah, and juice. Temple will purchase the supplies for this and set it up. Temple Beth El refers to this as a “convenience kiddush” which includes challah, juice and cups for an additional fee.

The facilities staff will set up tables and chairs & cloths and break down tables and chairs and vacuum following the kiddush luncheon. Any other setup or clean up needs are the responsibility of the host family or their vendors. If you choose to supply your own kiddush, be sure to clearly label your items with your name. Items may be delivered to the kitchen on the Thursday or Friday prior or on the day of your event. The two middle sections of the refrigerator may be used for storage.

The executive director is available to discuss the details of your simcha. Approximately three weeks prior to your date, a meeting will be arranged with the executive director and the facilities coordinator to review the logistics of your special day. Items that will be addressed include tablecloth rentals, skirting, physical layout of your event space, number of guests attending the service, and other related topics.

Evening Celebrations

Celebrations occurring outside our normal operating hours will incur additional facilities and security costs. Space is available on a first-come, first-served basis. See the fee schedule for current rental costs.

Planning Tips

FLOOR PLANS
- You or your caterer must submit the floor plan three (3) weeks before your event.
- If you submit the plan, be sure that your caterer has approved it.

TABLES
- Temple Beth El has 22 five foot round tables that seat 8 people each.
- There are also 30 rectangles that seat 8-10.

TABLE LINENS – Rental
- We work with a rental linen supplier to provide fresh and clean linens. Our current supplier offers white and cream-colored tablecloths as well as cloth napkins in a myriad of colors.
- Be sure to confer with your caterer regarding the number of linens/napkins needed.

CONVENIENCE KIDDUSH
- A convenience kiddush is available for a fee. This includes challah and juice.
WORKING WITH VENDORS

Photography and Videography

You may elect to have a still photographer with a quiet shutter remained stationed at the rear of the sanctuary to take photographs during the service. The photographer is required to have their own liability insurance. They must use only available light. They must also remain out of the walking aisles at all times. The rabbi will request at the beginning of each service that congregants refrain from taking photographs during the service. We ask that you inform your guests of this policy.

Our new equipment and livestreaming capabilities will create a recording of your simcha. You may also ask an outside videographer to record the service. Your videographer may stand in one location. Only one video camera may be employed using only available light. Please be advised that the sound to be recorded will be ambient sound, though the use of unobtrusive wireless microphones may be permitted with the consultation and permission of the rabbi.

Both still and video photographers must remain in one location during the service which will be determined by the clergy; they may not move or rove around the sanctuary. These guidelines assist us in preserving the sanctity of the worship service, and not distracting your child, clergy, or worshipers during the service.

On the day of the service, please plan to complete any formal photography 30 minutes prior to the start time of the service.

Catering

Working with Outside Caterers:

The caterer will need to schedule a walk-thru to learn:

- The layout of the kitchen and where things are stored.
- How to turn on and off the ovens.
- How to use the coffee maker including turning on and off the breaker in the unisex bathroom.
- How to use the dishwasher, booster heater, and clean strainers.
- Proper cleaning and drying instructions for all Temple dishware.

The following policies are included in our facilities agreement in which the family agrees to these stipulations on behalf of the caterer:

- The caterer is beholden to the TBE food policy as stated in this handbook and any policies in regard to safety in terms of COVID-19.
- The caterer is required to reimburse the Temple for the cost of replacing any property damaged during the event;
- The caterer is required to provide, not less than 15 days prior to the event, certificates showing the following minimum insurance to be in effect.
• Comprehensive general liability coverage, providing limits of not less than $1,000,000 for property damage, and including product liability for injury, illness, or damage caused by contaminated food; and
• Worker’s Compensation coverage as required by Wisconsin law.
• Such coverage shall be subject to lapse or cancellation only upon notice of not less than 30 days.
• The facilities staff will set up tables and chairs including placing table cloths and skirting on tables, and break down tables and chairs and vacuum following the Kiddush luncheon. Any other setup or clean up needs are the responsibility of the caterer
• At the end of the event, all linens should be placed in a linen bag in the linen room (just off the social hall).
• Any food items left in the kitchen in advance of the event should be clearly labeled with your name and date of the event. Items may be delivered to the kitchen on the Thursday or Friday prior or on the day of your event. Non-perishable items should be stored in the kitchen ante-room.
• The caterer is free to use Temple dishware but is responsible for cleaning and re-shelving any dishes used.
• All food items must be removed from the kitchen by the end of the event. Please do not leave “leftovers” behind.
• All items related to the event must be cleared from the space by 3:00 pm, including garbage, bagged and placed in the dumpster.

**TBE Self-Catering Policy**

An event is considered self-catered when the food and setup will be coordinated by a member, or a volunteer designated by the member. This coordinator will need to schedule a walk-thru to learn:

• The layout of the kitchen and where things are stored.
• How to turn on and off the ovens.
• How to use the coffee maker including turning on and off the breaker in the unisex bathroom.
• How to use the dishwasher, booster heater, and clean strainers.
• Proper cleaning and drying instructions for all Temple dishware.

The host agrees to the following policies per the previously signed facilities agreement.

• There must be at least 1 volunteer/50 guests. If you cannot provide the adequate number of volunteers, Temple will hire our facilities staff for you at a rate of $50/hour/person. The names of the volunteers responsible for setting and cleaning up the event must be included on your facility agreement.
• The member is responsible and required to reimburse the Temple for the cost of replacing any property damaged during the event.
• The facilities staff will set up tables and chairs including placing table cloths and skirting on tables, and break down tables and chairs and vacuum following the Kiddush luncheon. Any other setup and clean up needs are the responsibility of the member.
• At the end of the event, all linens should be placed in a linen bag in the linen room (just off of the social hall). Clean skirts should be folded accordion style and place on hangers in linen room center white cabinet, dirty skirts should be given to facilities staff. Should facilities staff totally take care of removal? Could be confusing for members. Or just ask facilities staff for guidance. Do not take any extra linens from the linen closet. If you need extra linens, please tell the facilities staff.

• Any food items dropped off to the kitchen in advance of the event should be coordinated with facilities staff and clearly labeled with your name and date of the event. Items may be delivered to the kitchen on the Thursday or Friday prior or on the day of your event. Non-perishable items should be stored in the kitchen ante-room.

• The member is free to use Temple dishware but is responsible for properly cleaning, drying and re-shelving any dishes used.

Please note the following closing procedures:
• Properly clean and turn off dish washer if used – follow instructions – remember to turn off the booster heater, and clean strainers.
• Properly clean and turn off coffee maker breakers in unisex bathroom, if used.
• Shutdown ovens according to directions, if used.
• Clean and sanitize all counters and carts used. You can use dish soap and water to do this. Steramine sterilizing tablets available. Cleaning supplies by 3 basin sink.
• Please take out kitchen garbage to dumpster and replace bags. The bags are under the sink.
• Sweep if needed, broom is in the closet next to the phone.
• All food items must be removed from the kitchen by the end of the event. Please do not leave “leftovers” behind.
• All items related to the event must be cleared from the space by 3:00 pm on Saturdays, including trash, bagged and placed in dumpster.

**FOOD POLICY**

• Food must be served following any TBE policy in regards to food and the safety during COVID-19.
• When meat is served at synagogue functions or prepared for outside groups, animals that would be restricted would be those prohibited by Leviticus Chapter 11.¹
• During Passover, Temple Beth El will observe food guidelines found in the Ashkenazic community.
• When Temple Beth El members prepare meals for outside groups, there will be no restrictions except for those stated in items A and B above.
• Caterers for private functions can serve meals without additional restrictions provided they adhere to the restrictions stated in A and B.
• When Temple Beth El members or caterers prepare meals for formal synagogue functions, there is to be a visible separation between meat and dairy products. However, both kinds

¹ Prohibited animals include camel, rock badger, rabbit, pig, creatures living in water without fins and scales, eagle, vulture, kite, raven, owl, gull, hawk, cormorant, osprey, stork, heron, hoopoe, bat, all winged creatures with four legs, animals that walk on their paws, weasel, rat, lizard, gecko, skink, chameleon, other animals that move about on the ground, any animal that dies of natural causes or whose carcass one comes across accidentally. (from Leviticus 11)
of foods may be served at the same meal. The organizers of the event should strive to present options to allow diners to select a completely dairy or vegan choice.

- During potluck meal events, Temple Beth El program participants are to be asked to refrain from mixing meat and dairy foods in their food preparation. However, invitations for potluck contributions should state clearly that we rely upon members’ voluntary compliance with these guidelines. If both dairy and meat dishes are to be accepted at the meal, event organizers should create signs to identify the various kinds of dishes presented (meat, dairy, vegan, mixed meat, and dairy), and should ask those who bring dishes to place their offering in the correct place.
- Temple Beth El directs that its professional, administrative, and building maintenance staffs to adhere to these guidelines in the performance of their duties.

Please note that we do not have a Kosher kitchen, though arrangements for Kosher food have been made by local caterers.

**FEE SCHEDULE**

**B’nai Mitzvah Fees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023 Cohort Tutoring (to be paid six months prior)</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please see Facility Agreement for Fees associated with celebrating at TBE.*
COMMON VOCABULARY

- **aliyah** (plural **aliyot**) – the word literally translates as “ascent” and refers to the act of ascending to the pulpit and being honored in the service by reciting blessings at the Torah
- **amud** – lectum
- **avodah** – worship, or literally, “service”; or “work” (modern Hebrew)
- **b’nai mitzvah** – plural for males and mixed gender groups of age 13 and over, commonly coming into use for non-binary individuals
- **bar** (male) or **bat** (female) **mitzvah** – a boy or girl who is “subject to the commandments,” refer to the person who becomes a b’nai mitzvah
- **bimah** – the raised front portion of the sanctuary
- **cantillation marks** – trope symbols and musical notes found in certain books that instruct us how to chant the Torah or haftarah
- **d’var torah** – a teaching on the Torah portion
- **g’lilah** – literally “to roll up”, the act of rolling up” or dressing the Torah
- **g’milut chasadim** – acts of lovingkindness
- **haftarah** – a reading from the books of the Prophets that accompanies each weekly Torah portion
- **k’lei kodesh** – clergy and other Jewish professionals who contribute to leading the congregation in worship
- **kiddush** – the blessing over the “fruit of the vine” can be for either grape juice or wine
- **kippah** (plural kippot) – skullcaps, head coverings worn as a sign of respect in the sanctuary, and during other Jewish rituals
- **mourner’s kaddish** – A prayer for those mourning or remembering a loved one
- **oneg Shabbat** – a celebratory nosh to say the Kiddush over and continue the joy of being together for Shabbat
- **parashah** – a portion of the Torah. The Torah is divided up into 54 specific portions for each week of the Jewish year
- **simcha** (plural in yiddish “simchas”) – Joyous occasion
- **tallit** – prayer shawl with fringes
- **Torah** – the five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; a general definition of Jewish learning
- **tzitzit** – the fringes on the tallit