

Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah

B'nai Mitzvah Guide



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Dear B'nai Mitzvah Families,

Mazel Tov on your upcoming celebration! Becoming a B'nai Mitzvah is one of the greatest events in the life cycle of a Jewish family, and we are honored to share this special milestone with you. We are available to be of help in any way we can, and look forward to working with you and your child(ren) over the coming months or years.

The information included in this manual is designed to help make preparing for a B'nai Mitzvah as smooth and meaningful as possible, and we hope you will read it carefully. Please call any time with questions or concerns.

Again, Mazel Tov and all our best wishes at this exciting time.

The BHBE B'nai Mitzvah Team

Introduction and Who's Who in the BHBE B'nai Mitzvah Program.

B'nai Mitzvah planning at BHBE is truly a collaborative effort between our clergy, the synagogue's administrative staff, and our B'nai Mitzvah families working together to ensure preparations are smooth, effective, and tailored to the individual needs of each student. Below are key members of the BMP team:

- **Aaron Frankel, Director of Education and Family Engagement** works to incorporate content and skills that will be used for the B'nai Mitzvah into both Academy and Family programming, and is responsible for working with students on their Mitzvah projects. Our goal is for each child to combine learning with action, giving back to the community in a way that speaks to his or her individual interests and talents. Aaron works closely with the rabbi and cantor to help guide the B'nai Mitzvah experience. He can be reached at aaronfrankel@bhcbce.org or by phone at 847-256-0755.
- **Michael Kahn, Executive Director** manages the financial arrangements and logistics, and is available to discuss any other issues that may arise. Michael can be reached by phone at 847-256-1213 ext. 15 or at executive@bhcbce.org. Please see the documents that accompany this handbook for specifics regarding fees and catering.

Policies and Suggestions for the B'nai Mitzvah Preparation Process

Advance Preparation

A) Setting Date and Time

The date of the B'nai Mitzvah is set by the Cantor in coordination with the synagogue calendar and the B'nai Mitzvah families.

B) Religious/Educational Requirements

Content and skills that will be required for the B'nai Ceremony are incorporated into the Academy program starting in grade three, if not before. If a student joins the Academy less than 5 years before their B'nai Mitzvah date, additional outside tutoring might be required.

C) Tutoring

During the year before the B'nai Mitzvah, your child will meet individually with Cantor Roytman or a designated tutor. The number and timing of lessons will be determined based on the child's individual skills, family goals, and circumstances. The Cantor is looking forward to getting to know your family and working with you to help create a fully meaningful and memorable B'nai Mitzvah experience.

D) Derech Eretz (Considerate Behavior)

Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah nurtures a sense of caring, kindness and sensitivity. We encourage families to invite all students in their child's Academy class to their celebrations. When this is not possible, we strongly urge you to consider the following guidelines: if fifty percent or more of the class is invited to the celebration, the rest of the class is to be invited as well. If you do not plan on inviting the entire Academy class to your Simcha, please send invitations by mail or email rather than handing them out at school.

Aliyot and Other Honors

We look forward to having your family members and friends participate in your celebration. You can expect the Ritual Chair to contact your family about a month in advance of the B'nai Mitzvah to help you assign honors. Please see the Ritual Committee insert for more information about honors during the ceremony, and for contact info and other details. Feel free to reach out earlier if you would like.

Those relatives and guests designated to read Torah or to lead T'filah on the day of Bar/Bat Mitzvah are required to contact Cantor Roytman in advance. He will provide guidance to those in need of help in preparing for the event, and will also make sure the appropriate reading is adequately prepared.

Mitzvah Component

One of the most profound ways of growing is through helping change the lives of others. We believe that by taking the "Mitzvah" part of "B'nai Mitzvah" seriously, we give our participants the chance to better experience what it really means to be a full member of the Jewish community. The Jewish people have a long history of being generous with their time and resources to make the world a better

place and we would like your child to take his or her place in that long-standing noble tradition.

The concept of Mitzvah is embedded in our Academy programming. As students approach their B'nai Mitzvah, we try to personalize that experience to make it individually relevant and reflective of Biblical texts the students will encounter. Giving back to the community is a core value of Judaism, and one that should occupy a solid place in the growth of a young Jewish person and have a role in the process of becoming a Jewish adult.

Therefore, we guide each child to choose a "Mitzvah" that is both personally meaningful and helpful to the community. It is always good to encourage the child to come up with their own ideas for Mitzvot they can perform as part of this experience, but our staff and the child's family have a strong role in guiding and supporting that process.

Aaron Frankel, Director of Education and Family Engagement, will guide you and your child through this aspect of the experience, in consultation with the Cantor and the Rabbi. If you have additional questions about this aspect, please contact Aaron at 847 256-1213, aaronfrankel@bhcbe.org.

We look forward to partnering with you and your child in putting the "Mitzvah" back in B'nai Mitzvah!

Model B'nai Mitzvah Preparation Timeline

3 Years

- Attending the "three -year out" meeting where the initial introductions are made and the B'nai Mitzvah Packet is received
- Setting up/finalizing B'nai Mitzvah Date with Cantor Roytman.

2 Years

- Attending the "two- year out" meeting for additional info and details.

1 Year

- Begin making arrangements for the logistics of the day, by getting in touch with the executive director and catering personnel.
- At this time, Cantor Roytman and Rabbi Crane should be reaching out to you to set up initial appointments. If you do not hear from them, please do not hesitate to initiate the process.

7 Months

- Keep an eye on logistics – invitations, catering, photographer, etc.

3 Months

- Email picture of your child to office@bhcb.org for the Bulletin.
- Consider ordering Kippot, and tallit and tefillin through the BHBE Sisterhood. When ordering, Kippot should be shipped to the synagogue.

1 Month

- Schedule a B'nai Mitzvah rehearsal day with Cantor Roytman.
- Connect with the Ritual Chairperson regarding assigning honors (aliyot, ark openings, etc...).
- Finalize catering and logistics.

The Week Before

- The Saturday one week before the ceremony, each B'nai Mitzvah family is invited to serve as greeters at Shabbat morning services.
- If the child is preparing the first three readings of the Torah they are encouraged to read those during Saturday night (Mincha) and Monday and Thursday morning (Shacharit) services of the week leading up to the B'nai Mitzvah. The family is encouraged to attend as well. It is a good time to take pictures or videos during the actual service.

The Day Of

The day of the B'nai Mitzvah is a very exciting but an understandably stressful one for all those involved. So, here are some guidelines and tips for the celebrant on how to go through it successfully.

- Get a good night's sleep
- Before leaving the house, check and make sure to bring all B'nai Mitzvah materials (D'var Torah, copies of the blessings, etc.) with you
- Be at the synagogue at the beginning of services at 9:30 AM
- Sit on the right (cantor) side of the Bimah
- Participate in the service to the best of your ability
- If unsure, feel free to ask questions. Everyone is there to help you and to cheer you on
- Relax and enjoy!

BHBE Sisterhood wishes you a mazel tov on your child's Simcha.

It is a very special time in the life of your family and we want to make the "other" details easy for you. Sisterhood offers you one stop shopping for your B'nai Mitzvah needs.

You can purchase personalized invitations for 25% off the retail price. The invitation books are in the office and can be taken home to browse. Contact: Marsha Lyons, roarmbl@gmail.com.

The Judaica Shop sells B'nai Mitzvah Tallitot, and they can order one if you find something you like elsewhere. Contact Joan Meyers @ 847-602-2257 or Robin Smulson @ 847-982-1233.

Personalized kippot can also be purchased through Sisterhood.

These are knowledgeable women who can help you navigate through the process.

Please support Sisterhood on your Simcha as Sisterhood always supports Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah!

Mazel Tov

From all of us at BHBE!

