



Breman
EDUCATION CENTER
at  **THE TEMPLE**

Sparking Positive Jewish Identities

5781/2021
B'nei Mitzvah Handbook

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WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Let us welcome you to the bar/bat mitzvah process at The Temple.

B'NEI MITZVAH 101

Everything you need to know about what to do leading up to the bar/bar mitzvah, prerequisites, the ceremony itself, family participation, and more.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This will lay out a complete timeline and all of our policies and procedures vis-a-vis the bar/bat mitzvah.

THE 13 BY 13 PROGRAM

These are the mitzvot that your child will complete along the way.

ADDITIONAL MITZVOT

More resources for mitzvot.

KEEP TRACK

FORMS

WELCOME

Dear Temple Family,

Mazal tov! The celebration of a child's becoming a bar or bat mitzvah is one of the greatest events in the life cycle of a Jewish family. This handbook has been prepared to help make the period of study and preparation for the ceremony less stressful and, hopefully, more meaningful. Please read all of this information carefully.

The Temple has established certain expectations and responsibilities to help you and your child feel a part of the ongoing tradition *dor l'dor*, from generation to generation. All of these study and mitzvah opportunities will help you maintain the highest standards during this important life cycle event.

Bar/bat mitzvah is about ritual maturity. It is about growing up as a Jew. It is about becoming a fuller member of the Jewish community. It is about moral responsibility, and about connecting to Torah, to community, and to God. As you begin the process, it is appropriate for you and your child to turn inward and ask yourselves, "Why are we doing this?" and "What does it all mean?"

It is our greatest hope and expectation that the upcoming preparation and celebration you and your family are undertaking will have enduring and lasting significance. The seriousness and commitment required will help to shape the meaning of the celebration.

We look forward to working with your entire family during this meaningful time. Please know that we will make ourselves completely available to you during this process and always feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns during the journey ahead.

It is our fervent prayer that this experience will be one of many meaningful and fulfilling opportunities for your family at The Temple.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Peter S. Berg

Rabbi Loren Filson Lapidus

Rabbi Samuel Kaye

Cantor Deborah L. Hartman

Rabbi Steven H. Rau, RJE

Rabbi Lydia Medwin

Elizabeth C. Foster

Rebecca L. Good

Nalo Grant

The Temple B'nei Mitzvah Committee

The Temple Tutoring Staff

BAR/BAT MITZVAH: OUR MISSION

The mission of The Temple's bar/bat mitzvah program is very simple — We want to foster mature, loving and committed Jews. In order to make this happen, we envision the following goals:

1. To help each student reach his or her full potential through the partnership, encouragement, guidance and support of the clergy and teachers.
2. To give students the skills to lead the congregation in prayer and chant the ancient melodies from the Torah and the Haftarah.
3. To instill a thirst for Jewish knowledge through the study of Torah.
4. To encourage the practice of the mitzvot of Torah, Avodah (worship) and G'milut Chasadim (acts of loving-kindness).
5. To support our families throughout this meaningful life cycle.

HISTORY OF B'NEI MITZVAH

Although the origins of the term bar mitzvah go back approximately two thousand years, the ceremony itself appeared around the Middle Ages. A boy aged thirteen was considered a full member of the religious community and was given an aliyah (to go up) to the bimah (pulpit) and share in the Torah service. It symbolized the teen's entry into responsible Jewish living in the community.

Though the Talmud teaches that girls had a legal responsibility to observe mitzvot beginning at the age of twelve, it was not until the twentieth century that some families started celebrating the girl's new status with festivity. The first bat mitzvah ceremony in North America was that of Judith Kaplan Eisenstein's, the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism.

Bar/bat mitzvah is not only a ceremony – it is also a decisive milestone: a period when the child reaches adolescence, spiritually as well as emotionally. While the usual age is thirteen, there is no maximum age limit. In our society, when one reaches the age of eighteen, he/she receives many privileges and responsibilities such as the right to vote. So, too, in Jewish society, when one reaches the age of bar/bat mitzvah, one receives certain privileges and accepts certain responsibilities, most especially the full range of personal and spiritual accountability.

PREREQUISITES OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH

The bar/bat mitzvah celebration is an ancient tradition that represents a significant milestone in the life of a young Jewish adult. In order to ensure that the bar/bat mitzvah process continues to anchor the path of lifelong Jewish learning, the following requirements have been put into place at The Temple.

1. A student must have a minimum of three years of intensive Hebrew or its equivalent in The Temple's Sunday and Midweek Hebrew program for bar/bat mitzvah. The decision to enter the Midweek Hebrew Program and study for bar/bat mitzvah must be made as the student enters the fourth grade.
2. Transfer students will be accepted if they have successfully completed a minimum of three years of Hebrew or its equivalent in an intensive Hebrew program for bar/bat mitzvah at another synagogue. The student must provide records showing satisfactory completion of studies in the former school and the family must make a commitment that the student will continue religious studies through confirmation at The Temple. The student and family must also fulfill the other requirements for bar/bat mitzvah. All transfer students must be enrolled and actively attend Sunday Program at The Temple for one year to be eligible for bar/bat mitzvah.
3. We want the bar/bat mitzvah experience to develop Jews who value Jewish learning. Therefore, a student must meet the requirements of the Judaic studies component of the Breman Education Center in order to begin preparing for bar/bat mitzvah.
4. Approximately nine months prior to the service, the family attends a meeting with the cantor, at which time the Torah and Haftarah portions are discussed in greater detail regarding the preparation for the bar/bat mitzvah service. At this time, students may choose to chant or read their Torah portion.
5. After the meeting with the cantor, students begin attending intensive bar/bat mitzvah tutoring one day during the week at a Midweek Hebrew location. A bar/bat mitzvah tutor is assigned according to student's Midweek Hebrew location choice. For program specifics, please refer to B'nei Mitzvah Tutoring on page 8 of this handbook.
6. We want our young people and their families to feel connected to Jewish worship and The Temple community. Therefore, the bar/bat mitzvah student is required to attend a minimum of eight Shabbat services at The Temple-- at least six of which should be on Shabbat morning. Because we believe that the practice of Judaism should be a family experience, we ask that parents attend services with their child. In this way, everyone in the family will feel comfortable and connected to our worship service. More than this, we want to create a worshipping community, in which we know our families. We want to feel connected to you.
7. The Temple, in concert with our Jewish heritage, considers becoming a bar/bat mitzvah to be an important landmark in a child's journey toward becoming an educated adult - not the final destination. Therefore, any child who becomes bar/bat mitzvah is making a commitment to continue Jewish education through confirmation and this is reflected in his/her d'var Torah. We are proud of our large confirmation classes, and we are grateful to our parents for upholding the values of Jewish education for our children.
8. Practice is the key to bar/bat mitzvah preparation. Our experience has shown that the most successful students are those who practice every day rather than "cramming" immediately before their lessons.
9. The clergy has the authority to implement the above requirements with flexibility, designing a program to meet the individual student's needs.
10. All b'nei mitzvah families are expected to usher at least twice at a Shabbat morning b'nei mitzvah service during their seventh grade year.

11. Parents are encouraged to light the Sabbath candles, to say Kiddush, and recite the Motsi in their homes on Friday night. The purpose of doing this is to create a positive example of the Sabbath for the bar/bat mitzvah child within the home. At a family's request, the clergy will provide a sample home ceremony for the observance of Shabbat for your usage. The family is asked to recite these blessings in Hebrew and English on the Friday night of the bar/bat mitzvah.
12. If Temple standards are not met satisfactorily, the bar/bat mitzvah can be postponed or canceled by the Temple clergy. Final approval of the date of the bar/bat mitzvah should be obtained through the clergy three months before the scheduled date.
13. All seventh grade students are required to participate in our Thirteen by Thirteen Mitzvah Program. For program specifics, please refer to pages 13-16 of this handbook.

THE CEREMONY

At The Temple, becoming bar/bat mitzvah symbolizes, in Jewish terms, the passing of the child's intellectual, emotional and moral childhood to adolescence. This is celebrated by participation in the Sabbath evening and Sabbath morning services.

The recognition that each student is an individual of varying abilities and talents is taken into consideration in planning and designing the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony. The bar/bat mitzvah student's participation may vary from reciting a few blessings to conducting virtually the entire Shabbat morning service. The clergy will determine the level of participation during the private tutorials. The number of verses chanted in both Torah and Haftarah is also considered during this time. Each ceremony is special, as each student offers his or her own unique gifts.

Friday Evening Service

The parents of the bar/bat mitzvah lead the congregation in the lighting of the Shabbat candles and the bar/bat mitzvah leads the congregation in the Kiddush and recites a personal prayer. Please be aware that during the Friday evening worship service there are often other simchas being celebrated, special events and at times creative worship experiences. When there are two children becoming b'nei mitzvah, we split the honors between the families in an equitable way.

Shabbat Morning Service

The bar/bat mitzvah is invited to lead the congregation in the morning Sanctuary service. Students typically lead the liturgy and read or chant the Torah and Haftarah selections. The student also composes and delivers a d'var Torah on the meaning of his/her Torah portion. When two students share the ceremony, each student will read from a portion of the Torah and Haftarah and deliver his/her own d'var Torah.

Shabbat Afternoon (Mincha) Service

The bar/bat mitzvah is invited to lead the congregation in the afternoon Sanctuary service. Students typically lead the liturgy and read or chant the Torah selection. The student also composes and delivers a d'var Torah on the meaning of his/her Torah portion. When two students share the ceremony, each student will read from a portion of the Torah and deliver his/her own d'var Torah.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

It is our utmost goal to create an environment where all family members become invested in the sanctity of the bar/bat mitzvah celebration. Our service is designed to be fully inclusive of both Jewish and non-Jewish family members and guests and our clergy is careful to show respect to both parents. Therefore, when there are specific religious acts permissible only for Jews (such as reciting the Torah blessings), the choreography is designed so that the congregation will not notice one parent's participation over another.

- Candles: On the Friday night prior to the bar/bat mitzvah, the parents of the bar/bat mitzvah are invited to lead the congregation in the Shabbat candle lighting.
- Generational passing of the Torah Scroll: Parents and grandparents (both Jewish and non-Jewish) are invited to participate in the passing of the Torah from generation to generation. Family members rehearse this on the Friday morning prior to the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.
- Hakafah (Torah Procession): After the generational passing of the scroll, family members and friends are invited to participate in the hakafah around the sanctuary. This is the perfect opportunity for cousins to be honored as participants in the service. Please feel free to invite family members to participate in this joyous act of reverence.
- Aliyah: Each bar/bat mitzvah is given the opportunity to honor Jewish family members* with an aliyah (the recitation of the blessings before and after a Torah reading). Honors are given for the bar/bat mitzvah's first two aliyot (and the third aliyah is reserved for the bar/bat mitzvah). Honors are typically reserved for immediate and close family members. These blessings are recited or chanted in Hebrew and those being honored can review the correct pronunciation of the Hebrew by contacting one of our Temple clergy or on-line on The Temple's website (www.the-temple.org, click prayers and worship then prayers). Please be sure to provide us with the Hebrew names of those who are to be honored with aliyot at least ten weeks in advance by returning the honors form to the officiating rabbi. The honors form can be found in the back of this handbook (page 25).
- Parents' Blessing: The parents' blessing for the bar/bat mitzvah follows the rabbi's blessing toward the end of the service. We ask that one parent deliver the blessing (limited to 200 words) to the child on behalf of both parents. It should be written in the form of a personal blessing and not a family story. Examples will be distributed by the officiating rabbi at least 14 weeks in advance. The final text must be reviewed by the officiating rabbi no later than two weeks prior to the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.

*Family members of other faiths are invited to participate in the service by reading an adapted English translation of the Torah Blessing or by reading the Blessing for Our Country.

PRAYER BOOK

Our bar/bat mitzvah students lead the Shabbat morning service from the Reform Movement's prayerbook, *Mishkan T'filah*. This prayer book is written in gender sensitive language and includes transliterations of all prayers, making it inclusive and accessible to all worshippers.

B'NEI MITZVAH TUTORING *

*We hope to be back in person at midweek locations soon.

In order to be fully prepared for the simcha, b'nei mitzvah students are required to attend weekly tutoring sessions at one of our three midweek Hebrew locations.

During the first few weeks of tutoring, Nalo Grant will schedule a 30 minute time block for your child's tutoring on his/her tutoring day/location. It is important to ensure that your child arrives on time so as not to affect other student appointments.

Regular study is crucial and it is the bar/bar mitzvah student's responsibility to practice a minimum of 20 minutes each night throughout the process. Tutoring sessions are designed to check on student's progress and introduce new material and not to drill them on the work they should be doing at home. If a tutor deems that the student is not practicing or attending regularly, it is the responsibility of the family to pay for additional private tutoring.

Fourteen weeks prior to his/her bar/bat mitzvah, students are expected to attend tutoring sessions at The Temple location only and **stay for the entire hour and a half**. This will ensure that your child will have time to work with their tutors, their officiating rabbi, and cantor.

Students may bring their homework with them to do during breaks during tutoring sessions.



IF YOU'RE A STUDENT WHO IS LEARNING TO READ YOUR PRAYERS OR TORAH PORTION...

	TIME	LOCATION	ADDRESS
MONDAYS	4:30 TO 6:00	OAK GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1857 OAK GROVE ROAD, 30345
TUESDAYS	5:00 TO 6:30	THE TEMPLE	1589 PEACHTREE STREET, 30309
WEDNESDAYS	4:30 TO 6:00	THE GALLOWAY SCHOOL	215 W. WIEUCA ROAD NW, 30342



IF YOU'RE A STUDENT WHO IS LEARNING TO CHANT YOUR PRAYERS OR TORAH PORTION...

	TIME	LOCATION	ADDRESS
MONDAYS	4:30 TO 6:00	THE TEMPLE	1589 PEACHTREE STREET, 30309
TUESDAYS	5:00 TO 6:30	THE TEMPLE	1589 PEACHTREE STREET, 30309
WEDNESDAYS	4:30 TO 6:00	THE GALLOWAY SCHOOL	215 W. WIEUCA ROAD NW, 30342

**PLEASE
NOTE:**

The above schedule applies during weeks when Midweek Hebrew is in session. We always hold sessions at The Temple on Mondays and Tuesdays during spring, winter, and summer breaks. We are off on many holidays such as MLK and Memorial Day. Please refer to The Temple's calendar at www.the-temple.org/calendar to see when tutoring is in session.

B'NEI MITZVAH IN ISRAEL

During the Temple Family Israel Experience, members of The Temple who are 12 or 13 years old may choose to become bar or bat mitzvah in a group setting in Jerusalem. The 5:30 PM (IST-Israel Standard Time) service is live streamed and broadcast at The Temple in place of the regular 10:30 AM Shabbat service. Extended family members and guests are welcome to come to The Temple to see the live broadcast, watch the service online or travel with The Temple to Israel. Becoming bar or bat mitzvah in Israel can be in lieu of or in addition to a service at The Temple. The b'nei mitzvah service in Israel is followed by a dinner honoring the students and additional celebrations throughout the trip. For more information on The Temple's Israel Experience, please contact Rabbi Steven Rau at srau@the-temple.org or 404-873-1734.

B'NEI MITZVAH TIMELINE

By the winter of fifth grade year:

- Students are assigned a bar/bat mitzvah date and parents meet with the professional staff to discuss basic procedures and policies.
- Parents attend a b'nei mitzvah education day with The Temple clergy where they learn about the meaning of b'nei mitzvah, the process and timeline at The Temple, and facilities and resources available to members.

January of sixth grade year

- Students attend a b'nei mitzvah workshop with the clergy to learn about the b'nei mitzvah process and 13x13 mitzvah program at The Temple.

End of sixth grade and throughout the seventh grade year:

- Students begin working on their 13 mitzvot.

Twelve months before the ceremony

- Families attend an intake meeting with one of the rabbis or the cantor who will answer initial questions and explain the bar/bat mitzvah program in detail.

Nine months before the ceremony:

- The cantor will contact families to meet on a Sunday afternoon about the tutoring process.
- Students begin attending weekly bar/bat mitzvah tutoring for 30 minute sessions.
- Families begin attending services regularly.

Six to twelve months before the ceremony:

- One of The Temple rabbis will contact parents and inform them that he or she has been assigned as the officiating rabbi of the service and will be available to the family for questions and support throughout the process.

Fourteen weeks before the ceremony:

- Families meet with the officiating rabbi and share information about the family, discuss tutoring progress, learn guidelines for writing a d'var Torah (Torah message), discuss honors, and answer any questions.
- Families begin working on the Aliyah Honors Form with the officiating rabbi (page 25).
- Students begin attending the full 1 1/2 hour tutoring sessions.

Ten weeks before the ceremony:

- Families submit the Honors and Information Form electronically along with a digital picture. Example of the online form can be found on pages 24 & 25.

Eight to two weeks before the ceremony:

- Students meet weekly (on Monday or Tuesday at The Temple) with the officiating rabbi to write a d'var Torah and practice reading from the Torah scroll.

One and a half weeks before the ceremony:

- Students meet with the officiating rabbi on Wednesday afternoon at 4pm at The Temple for a first rehearsal.

Friday Morning of bar/bat mitzvah weekend:

- Final sanctuary rehearsal with the rabbis and the cantor.

Thirteenth birthday (or by the end of the seventh grade year):

- All mitzvot requirements completed.

TEMPLE POLICIES

The Temple staff is delighted to help you plan your upcoming life cycle event.

Understanding the policies in advance and adhering to them will make everything run smoothly. Close communication with the Executive Director is essential.

1. To confirm a bar/bat mitzvah date, the family must be members in good standing, and the student must be enrolled in Breman Education Center or its equivalent. All dues, fees, and assessments are due prior to the ceremony. A bar/bat mitzvah tutoring fee will be billed one year prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date.
2. ABSOLUTELY NO PHOTOS may be taken at anytime during the services. Families may schedule photos before the services on Friday or Saturday. It is the responsibility of the PARENTS of the bar/bat mitzvah student to inform family members and the photographer of The Temple policy. All photo sessions must be scheduled through The Temple office and placed on The Temple calendar.
3. All b'nei mitzvah services are professionally broadcast over the internet. A link to the broadcast will be provided for your family. The Temple's technology team will also work with you to include any family members who cannot be with you in person to participate in service honors from their remote location via Zoom and they will be broadcast in the Sanctuary live.
4. The bar/bat mitzvah ceremony is, first and foremost, a Shabbat worship service and modest and appropriate dress provides sanctity to our Shabbat experience. For ladies, shoulders and arms must be covered on the bimah. Ritual garb, such as kippot (head covering) and tallitot (prayer shawl), are at the option of each worshipper. Please notify your guests (especially teenagers) of our modesty policy in order to bring proper sanctity to the day.
5. If parents are divorced or the child's name is different from the parents, please clarify how he/she is to be addressed, as well as the parents. Sensitivity for the welfare of the child is vital. Parents should remember that this is their child's day and that personal differences should not interfere with the beauty of the ceremony, regardless of other family complications. If students live in two households, duplicate materials will be provided for both houses.
6. We are a large and diverse congregation in a major metropolitan area and we are fortunate to have many students in each grade. While the secular lives of our children are often separated by geographic and other factors, we seek to promote and foster friendship and inclusion in our religious community, within our Temple family and among b'nei mitzvah families and students. As part of the b'nei mitzvah process, The Temple has established the following policy regarding the inclusion and invitation of classmates by each b'nei mitzvah candidate enrolled in the Temple Breman Education Center:

All of your child's homeroom classmates will be encouraged to attend your child's service and any Kiddush luncheon if held at The Temple immediately following the service. A list of your child's homeroom b'nei mitzvah schedule will be provided during the spring of the sixth grade year and the fall of the seventh grade year. Each b'nei mitzvah student is required to attend at least six Shabbat morning services prior to his or her bar or bat mitzvah, and to serve as an usher at two services. The services at which your child ushers will count towards your six required Shabbat morning services. We highly encourage your child to attend these services and to usher when his or her classmates will be called to the Torah.

7. The wearing of kippot and tallitot by b'nei mitzvah and their family members is optional. We begin b'nei mitzvah services with the blessing for the wearing of the tallit. If your child chooses not to wear one, please let your officiating rabbi know so he/she can make necessary adjustments to the service.
8. We recommend that parents encourage their child to write thank you notes for all gifts received.

DATE SELECTION LOTTERY POLICIES

A lottery process is used to assign Temple b'nei mitzvah dates to students actively attending the Midweek Hebrew program or its equivalent during their fourth or fifth grade year based on their birth year. The lottery is supervised by The Temple's B'nei Mitzvah Committee, the Breman Education Committee Chair and Temple Staff using the following guidelines:

- The lottery is held privately in early January and includes all families who have returned forms by the deadline for date selection.
- Families are given the option to prioritize available b'nei mitzvah dates for the lottery process. Every effort is made to accommodate requests.
- Diagnosed learning needs and disabilities that may affect service participation are given first priority for mincha services.
- Families (including siblings) who mutually select one another to partner on identical dates are given priority over individual students after dates have been assigned for students with needs or disabilities.
- Temple clergy and educators ensure that student pairings are compatible.
- Dates are distributed in late January or early February at the B'nei Mitzvah Parent Education program.
- If a valid conflict arises with the assigned date after dates have been distributed, the family should notify the cantor/b'nei mitzvah coordinator to discuss potential options.
- Pairings may change. Up until six months prior to the service, The Temple may add or remove a partner.
- If a partner is added between 6 and 12 month prior to a service, the family who originally had the date has first right of refusal for sharing Schwartz-Goldstein Hall for a Kiddush luncheon. For more information on hall rental and policies, please refer to The Temple's house rules found on The Temple's website.

PICTURE IN BULLETIN

The congregation is honored to feature our bar/bat mitzvah students in The Temple Bulletin. In order to meet publishing deadlines, please provide the Temple office with a digital picture at least ten weeks before the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony. Please email the photo to Joya Schmidt at jschmidt@the-temple.org. Because The Temple Bulletin is accessible online, please be aware that his/her picture will be on the Internet.

USHERS

Part of the bar/bat mitzvah experience is to foster a sense of community between families.

It has become our custom for parents to usher at other bar/bat mitzvah ceremonies. A schedule of dates is sent to families in the summer before the school year in which the bar/bat mitzvah will take place. If you switch your assigned date with another family, please make sure to forward on your reminder e-mail to that family when you receive it.

The following guidelines should be followed when ushering at a bar/bat mitzvah:

- Ushers should arrive by 9:45am to assist with arriving guests. Prayer books are located on book carts near the entrance of the sanctuary. Please hand out a book, a service pamphlet and the bar/bat mitzvah booklet to all worshippers entering the service.
- “Ask me about The Temple” or “Sanctuary Usher” buttons or badges should be worn while ushering. This will help identify you as an usher who can answer questions, etc. The buttons/badges can be found on the tallit racks or in the drawer of the tallit racks. Please remember to return the buttons at the end of the service.
- Ushers should also greet worshippers at entrance of the sanctuary. Many of the guests may be first-time visitors to The Temple. Please assist them with basic questions.
- Once the service begins, one door on each side should be closed, signaling the start of the service. Ushers should remain at the sanctuary doors until after the *Shema* has been recited and the congregation is seated. At that time, the doors should be closed and the ushers may be seated. Please do not allow anyone to enter when the congregation is standing.
- It is suggested that both parents usher when called upon. Past experience has shown that more ushers bring a warmer and more welcoming feeling to guests of The Temple.
- No one should be in the balcony of the sanctuary during a bar/bat mitzvah service. If students do go upstairs unsupervised, please kindly ask them to sit in the first level.
- If there are groups of students seated together, please sit near them and remind them to be respectful of the service. Typically, they sit in the back of the sanctuary.
- Ushers should be sensitive to distractions that may disrupt worship: (a) No flash photography is permitted during the service. (b) Conversations during the service are amplified in our acoustically superior sanctuary. Please give a gentle reminder to those involved. (c) Crying babies should be removed from the sanctuary by a parent. Please guide them toward the front lobby or to the classrooms upstairs.
- The Temple strives to be an inclusive home for all types of worshippers. A cart of items for those with sensory needs or to occupy young children is located in the Chapel and in the Sanctuary. We ask for ushers to assist worshippers in utilizing these when needed.

13 BY 13 MITZVAH PROGRAM

Preparing for bar/bat mitzvah is a process that begins well before the student's special Shabbat Service. An essential element of bar/bat mitzvah preparation at The Temple includes understanding and practicing mitzvot. While mitzvot are often referred to as "good deeds," the literal Hebrew meaning is "commandments" – obligations that define the special covenant between the Jewish People and God. We feel it is important for our students to experience this broader view of mitzvot so that the bar/bat mitzvah celebration has deeper meaning than just practicing the liturgy and planning a party.

Our bar/bat mitzvah program is centered around the three eternal mitzvot: Torah (study), avodah (worship) and g'milut chasadim (acts of loving kindness). A total of 13 mitzvot are required by the end of the student's seventh grade year (or when the student is 13 years old). Some mitzvot are individual and may be completed at home or in the community, while others are completed as part of the seventh grade curriculum. Certain mitzvot are required; others give the student choice. A mitzvah journal for recording the process is given to students with this handbook. We encourage students to complete all mitzvot prior to their bar/bat mitzvah date, with the exception of those projects that are part of the bar/bat mitzvah Shabbat Service, but completion is not required until the end of the seventh grade program year. Additionally, the seventh grade curriculum includes two in-class projects and work time to complete mitzvah journal writings.

THE MITZVAH OF TORAH

DEDICATION TO JEWISH STUDY

Required Mitzvot:

- Minimum of 3 years of Hebrew or its equivalent in The Temple's Sunday and Midweek Hebrew program for bar/bat mitzvah. The decision to enter the Midweek Hebrew Program and study for bar/bat mitzvah must be made as the student enters the fourth grade.
- Study the meaning of your Torah and Haftarah portions with the student's assigned officiating rabbi and attend all b'nei mitzvah tutoring sessions beginning nine months prior to the ceremony.

Elective Mitzvot (Choose 1 Mitzvah below):

- Start a Jewish library-- add a Jewish book to your personal collection, read it and write about it in your journal.
- Watch two programs of Jewish interest and write a brief report about each one in your journal.
- Reserve a half-hour on Saturday to study a Jewish text together as a family.
- Research and write about a Jewish subject that interests you in your journal.
- Interview with a grandparent about Jewish life when he/she was thirteen years old and write about it in your journal.
- Attend concerts of Jewish music or lectures on Jewish subjects and write about them in your journal.
- Read Jewish books together as a family and write about one of them in your journal.

THE MITZVAH OF G'MILUT CHASADIM

MITZVOT THAT CONNECT US TO PEOPLE AND THE WORLD

Required Mitzvah:

- Adopt a name of a child from the Shoah and recreate the story of his or her life. Since 1995, The Temple has participated in a program to honor the memory of children who perished in the Holocaust. A list of names is distributed to all sixth grade students in January.

Elective Mitzvot (Choose a total of 7 mitzvot from the following 11 groups):

Bikkur Holim/Helping the Sick

- Visit someone who is ill and write about it in your journal.
- Help a classmate who is ill (bring homework, library books, messages between home and school, etc.) and write about it in your journal.
- Visit someone who has lost a loved one and write about it in your journal.
- Entertain sick children in a hospital and write about it in your journal.

Tikkun Olam/Repairing the World

- Bring chametz from your home before Pesach to a local food pantry and write about it in your journal.
- Volunteer as a family at a soup kitchen for the homeless and write about it in your journal.
- Ask guests to bring canned food/toiletries to your bar/bat mitzvah party for distribution to the homeless.
- Write to an elected official about an important social or political issue. Use a Jewish idea in the letter and include a copy of the letter in your journal.
- Participate as a family in a clothing drive for the needy and write about it in your journal.
- Participate in a peaceful rally or demonstration that supports a worthy cause. How does it connect to Judaism? Write about it in your journal.

Hachnasat Orchim/Hospitality

- Show hospitality by inviting a new classmate or neighbor over for a meal and write about it in your journal.
- Volunteer at a homeless day care center and write about it in your journal.

Tzedakah/Righteous Financial Giving

- Pledge part of your gift money to the charity of your choice.
- Contribute some tzedakah every Friday night before Shabbat into a family tzedakah box. Decide as a family where the money should go and write about it in your journal.

Hidur P'nei Zakein/Honoring the Elderly

- Call, write, or visit an elderly relative or friend and write about it in your journal.
- Help nursing home residents hold services for Shabbat and Jewish holidays and write about it in your journal.
- Deliver flowers to a nursing home before the start of Shabbat and write about it in your journal.
- "Adopt" a resident of a nearby nursing home and send them cards and/or visit them regularly and write about it in your journal.

Zikaron/Memory

- Learn your Hebrew name and the person/people for whom you are named and about the special qualities of the person/people after which you were named. In addition, learn what your Hebrew name means. Write about this in your journal.
- Learn what your family's name was in "the old country." Write about this in your journal.
- Find out the name of the town, city or village that your family came from in its country of origin. Look up the town in the Encyclopedia Judaica and learn something about the town and what it gave to the Jewish world. Write about this in your journal.

Tzaar Baalei Chayim/Caring for Animals

- Donate a portion of money from your bar/bat mitzvah to the local animal shelter and advertise it to your guests.
- Adopt a dog or cat after educating yourself about this responsibility and write about it in your journal.
- Volunteer at your local animal shelter and write about it in your journal.
- Collect supplies for animals living at animal shelters and encourage others to do the same.

K'dushat HaAretz/Sanctifying our Relationship with the Land of Israel

- Purchase and use Israeli products and record what you have purchased in your journal.
- Plant trees in Israel and place the certificate in your journal.
- Give tzedakah to Israel and write some information about the organization in your journal.
- Travel to Israel as a family and write about it in your journal.
- Write letters of support to elected officials supporting peace in the Middle East for all people who live there. Include one in your journal.
- Establish a pen pal/e-mail relationship with an Israeli child.

Tikkun HaNefesh/Repairing the Self

- Eliminate a bad habit. Describe in your journal the habit you eliminated and why.
- Patch up a bad relationship with another person. Write about the experience in your journal.
- Transform a negative attitude into a positive attitude. Describe this transformation in your journal.

K'dushat HaLashon/Sanctity of Speech

- Be careful about what you say about other people. Describe in your journal how you strive to practice this Mitzvah in your every day life.
- Talk as a family about times when you did not observe this Jewish value of *K'dushat HaLashon* and how you could have done differently. Write about it in your journal.
- Hold a family discussion about acceptable kinds of speech. Discuss the quality, the content (and the volume!) of speech in your home. Consider how speech can be used for healing, not hurting. Write your findings in your journal.

Darchei Shalom/The Paths of Peace

- Do a "shalom inventory" of your own home, and work with your family to revise habits that are not reflective of shalom. Write about this in your journal.
- Try to make your daily life more peaceful. Write in your journal how you strive to practice this mitzvah in your every day life.
- Be aware of the words and tone used in your family. Discuss with your family ways to make words more reflective of peace and to not be offensive to others. Record your findings in your journal.

THE MITZVAH OF AVODAH

WORSHIP

Required Mitzvah:

- Shabbat/Honoring the Sabbath: Attend at least two Friday night services and at least six Saturday morning services in the 9 months prior to your bar/bat mitzvah

Elective Mitzvot (Choose 1 Mitzvah from the following 2 groups):

Likvod HaShabbat/Honoring the Sabbath

- Light Shabbat candles every Friday evening for at least four consecutive weeks.
- Lead your family in Kiddush every Friday evening for at least four consecutive weeks.
- Lead your family in the Motzi before your main meal every day for two weeks.
- As a family, jointly discuss and create mitzvot for Shabbat. (i.e. avoid commercial transactions on Shabbat, such as business and shopping; turn off the TV or computer for Shabbat; make Shabbat into a day for visiting friends or family instead of engaging in entertainment.)

K'dushat HaZ'man/Holiness of Festivals and Sacred Seasons

- Enrich the Passover Seder with your family by writing a special reading or explaining a certain part of the Seder to the family and record it in your journal.
- Write a prayer for your family to use when lighting the Chanukiah and record it in your journal.
- Help build a sukkah in your backyard, at a friend's home or at the synagogue.
- Decorate a sukkah and have dinner in it during Sukkot. Write about the experience in your journal.
- Make and deliver Mishloach Manot to friends and family.
- Plant a tree in Israel each year on Tu B'Shvat.
- Fast all day on Yom Kippur and write in your journal what it meant to you.

ADDITIONAL MITZVAH SUGGESTIONS

The following is a list of organizations that do worthwhile mitzvot. It can be used in a number of ways. Your child may choose to give part of his or her bar/bat mitzvah gift money to a particular organization whose work is meaningful to your family. You may choose to put certain organizations on a list that will accompany the bar/bat mitzvah invitations, suggesting that your guests donate to the groups of their choice in honor of the bar/bat mitzvah. Or, your family may volunteer for the organization and enrich the bar/bat mitzvah experience by making it an experiment in living mitzvot.

Soup kitchens for the homeless:

Soup kitchens feed the poor and the homeless. Sometimes, they feed entire families. Donate leftovers from your bar or bat mitzvah celebration. Consider how much smoked salmon and salad is thrown out on any Saturday afternoon after a bar/bat mitzvah party.

Some local food banks and shelters:

- OUR HOUSE (FORMERLY GENESIS SHELTER)
www.ourhousega.org
A non-profit shelter for homeless newborns and their families.
- MAC (MIDTOWN ASSISTANCE CENTER)
30 Porter Place, Atlanta, GA 30308, www.midtownassistancectr.org
A non-profit, interfaith organization whose mission is to provide emergency assistance to the working poor of Midtown and Downtown Atlanta.
- THE ZABAN PARADIES CENTER FOR HOMELESS COUPLES
1605 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA, 30309, www.zabanparadiescenter.org
This non-profit night shelter for homeless couples, located in The Temple's Selig Building, operates from October through May and is staffed almost exclusively by volunteers.
- NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR JEWISH WOMEN, ATLANTA SECTION
6303 Roswell Road, Atlanta, GA, 30328, www.ncjwatlanta.org. (404) 843-9600
This non-profit has teamed up with the Atlanta Jewish Coalition for Literacy to collect children's books as part of their literacy programs. They also coordinate a tutoring program for younger students.

Other organizations that do worthy things:

- ARMDI: AMERICAN RED MAGEN DAVID FOR ISRAEL
888 Seventh Avenue, Suite 403, New York, NY 10106, (212) 757-1627, www.armdi.org
The sole support arm in the United States for the Magen David, Israel's emergency medical and blood services organization.
- AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE
45 W. 36th Street, New York, NY 10018, (800) 889-7146, www.ajws.org
AJWS has become the Jewish response to suffering caused by famine, epidemic, or natural disaster. The group has managed projects in Africa, South America, Mexico, and the United States.
- FRIENDS OF THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES
350 Fifth Avenue Suite 2011, New York, NY 10118, (212) 244-3118, www.israelsoldiers.org
The FIDF initiates and helps support social, educational, cultural and recreational programs and facilities for the young men and women soldiers of Israel who defend the Jewish homeland. The FIDF also provides support for widows and orphans of fallen soldiers.
- HADASSAH
1050 Crown Pointe Parkway, Suite 500, Atlanta, GA 30338, (678) 2443-2961, www.hadassah.org
Hadassah is a women's Zionist organization founded in 1912. Through education, advocacy, and research, they work to enhance the health and lives of people in Israel and around the world.

ADDITIONAL MITZVAH SUGGESTIONS

- **HILLEL: THE FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CAMPUS LIFE**
Charles & Lynn Schusterman International Center, Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Building, 800 Eighth Street, NW Washington, DC 20001-3742, (202) 449-6500, www.hillel.org
As its web site says, “the largest Jewish campus organization in the world, Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life provides opportunities for Jewish students to explore and celebrate their Jewish identity through its global network of over 500 regional centers, campus Foundations and Hillel student organizations. Hillel is working to provoke a renaissance of Jewish life.”
- **ISRAEL BONDS**
(404) 817-3500, www.israelbonds.com
Israel Bonds and the UJC are the great international pillars of support for Israel. Israel’s capital improvements and infrastructure are largely the result of the strong commitment to Israel Bonds by Jews all over the world. Not just tzedakah--it’s an investment in Israel’s future.
- **THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER ATLANTA**
The Selig Center, 1440 Spring Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30309, www.jewishatlanta.org
Our local Jewish federation supports the JCC, Jewish education, nursing homes, youth activities, etc. It should be an essential part of every Jew’s tzedakah plans.
- **THE JEWISH BRAILLE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA**
110 East 30th Street, New York, NY 10016, (212) 889-2525, www.jewishbraille.org
This organization provides books, tapes, special materials for summer camps, college and career counseling, and free b’nei mitzvah training to blind and partially sighted Jewish adults. Improves the quality of Jewish life for the estimated 20,000 Jewish blind and 50,000 Jews who are severely visually impaired.
- **JEWISH FOUNDATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS**
305 Seventh Avenue, 19th floor, New York, NY 10001-6008, (212) 727-9955, www.jfr.org
Many Christians who saved Jews from the Nazis now live in poverty in the United States, Europe, and Israel. Jews must remember them; our history is incomplete without them. The foundation sustains them financially and emotionally, thus bearing witness to eternal gratitude. The Foundation has an excellent “twinning” program for bar and bat mitzvah.
- **JEWISH NATIONAL FUND**
(404) 236-8990 or (888) JNF-0099 www.jnf.org
JNF improves and develops the land of Israel, most notably through the planting of trees. Virtually all forested land in the Jewish state is the gift of the JNF. Supporting JNF is one of the most important and most worthwhile ways of contributing to the ongoing welfare of Israel.
- **LIFELINE FOR THE OLD — YAD LAKASHISH**
14 Shivtei Israel Street, P.O.Box 28, Jerusalem 91000, Israel, www.lifeline.org.il
Yad LaKashish was formed so Jerusalem’s elderly would create lovely handicrafts, challah covers, talitot, toys, metal mezuzot, ceramic items, clothing, book binding. They also employ young and old handicapped individuals.
- **MAZON**
1990 S. Bundy Dr, Ste 260, L.A. CA 90025-5232, (310) 442-0020, www.mazon.org
MAZON asks Jews to send three percent of the cost of a simcha to MAZON so we can share our blessing with the needy. MAZON then makes allocations to hunger organizations around the country.

● THE NEW ISRAEL FUND

165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022, (212) 750-2333, www.newisraelfund.org

The New Israel Fund supports the following programs in Israel: Jewish/Arab relations; pluralism; civil rights and civil liberties; women's rights, especially rape crisis centers; and community action.

● TOOMER ELEMENTARY

65 Rogers Street, Atlanta, GA 30317

The Temple has partnered with local school Toomer Elementary as a social action project.

(1) Students can organize and help lead Toomer's tour of The Temple, including raising funding for the bus trip to Temple. (2) Host a supply drive and deliver backpacks stuffed with supplies to Toomer kids. (3) Host and lead monthly game nights at Toomer.

● SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER

1399 South Roxbury Drive, Los Angeles, California 90035, (310) 553.9036, www.wiesenthal.com

This organization has taken a leading role in discovering Nazis in hiding as well as exposing modern hate groups. Insures that Americans will remember the Holocaust and its lessons.

● ZIV TZEDAKAH FUND

384 Wyoming Ave, Millburn, NJ 07041, (973) 763-9396, www.ziv.org

Ziv Tzedakah Fund is the independent tzedakah fund of Danny Siegel: poet, writer, and mitzvah impresario. He searches for – and finds – righteous people doing holy work and raises money for them.

MAZON: A JEWISH RESPONSE TO HUNGER

Once you have the invitations, the food, the flowers, and the music... Consider giving 3% of the cost of your celebration to help the hungry.

The day you become bar or bat mitzvah is one of the few that will stay with you all of your life. Our Jewish tradition tells us to mark special occasions by celebrating with family and friends, in part so that these memorable days will remain with us forever.

There is a companion tradition, one that teaches us to deepen our happiness by sharing joyous celebrations with those in need. It is especially appropriate to do so on the day one becomes bar or bat mitzvah, when a child becomes an adult and accepts the responsibilities for fulfilling the mitzvah of tzedakah.

On that special day of your celebration, millions of children in America and around the world will go hungry, as they do every day. That tragedy – and the happiness of a bar or bat mitzvah – represents the joys and sorrows of life. Both need your family's attention.

In the spirit of our Jewish tradition, we ask you to consider giving 3% of the cost of your celebration to MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger. You have the opportunity to make this day even more special by providing food and other help, through MAZON, to poor families everywhere. For example, 3% to the cost of \$1,000 is \$30. 3% to the cost of \$20,000 is \$600. 3% of your celebration adds hope. Your 3% will enrich their lives – and your own.

MITZVAH JOURNAL

THE MITZVAH OF TORAH - ELECTIVE CHOICE:

PERFORMING THIS MITZVAH WAS MEANINGFUL TO ME BECAUSE _____

THE MITZVAH OF AVODAH - ELECTIVE CHOICES:

PERFORMING THIS MITZVAH WAS MEANINGFUL TO ME BECAUSE _____

HONORS AND INFORMATION FORM

DUE 10 WEEKS IN ADVANCE

Information provided here will be used for Temple bulletin, worship pamphlet, and certificate.

Please complete the form below online at www.the-temple.org/bmhonors. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact any of our Temple clergy.

Bar/Mitzvah Date: _____

Child's name (for all publications and documents):

<i>FIRST</i>	<i>MIDDLE</i>	<i>LAST</i>
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Child's Hebrew name: _____

Father's English Name (how you would like to be printed): _____

Father's Hebrew name (if applicable): _____

Mother's English Name (how you would like to be printed): _____

Mother's Hebrew name (if applicable): _____

Each family is given the opportunity to honor Jewish family members with two additional aliyot.* When you assign an aliyah, you are asking the individual(s) to recite the blessings before and after the Torah reading. Honors are typically reserved for immediate and close family members. All individuals receiving the aliyah must be well-versed in the Hebrew recitation of the prayer, and at least bar/bat mitzvah age. Participants can find the blessings recited and chanted at www.the-temple.org/prayers.

1ST ALIYAH* (LIST UP TO 4): English name/Hebrew name/Relationship of person to child (i.e. grandfather)

2ND ALIYAH* (LIST UP TO 4): English name/Hebrew name/Relationship of person to child (i.e. grandfather)

3RD ALIYAH: Your child, the bar/bat mitzvah student!

NATIONAL PRAYERS**

If you would like to assign an additional honor, please list up to 4 names:

*Family members of other faiths are invited to participate by reading an adapted English translation of the Torah Blessing or by reading the Prayer for Our Country.

**The Prayer for the United States or Israel will be provided by your officiating rabbi prior to the service.

WWW.THE-TEMPLE.ORG/BMFORMS

KADDISH LIST: Please list the names of any close family members or friends who have passed away that you would like to remember before the recitation of the Kaddish at your child's service:

Name	Relationship	Name	Relationship
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

MOTZI: At the end of the service, it is our custom to invite younger family members to lead our congregation in hamotzi. Please list the first names of children and relationship to child you would like to invite:

TALLIT (PRAYER SHAWL): Does your child's tallit have special significance, such as given by or belongs to a relative or purchased in Israel? _____

ATTENDANCE:

Does your family plan to attend Friday night Shabbat service prior to bar/bat mitzvah service? Yes No

If yes, please list the number of people expected. _____

How many adults do you plan to attend bar/bat mitzvah service? _____

How many children do you plan to attend bar/bat mitzvah service? _____

PICTURES FOR THE TEMPLE BULLETIN MUST BE E-MAILED TO JOYA (JSCHMIDT@THE-TEMPLE.ORG).

THE PICTURE MUST BE A JPEG HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGE (NOT ALL MOBILE DEVICE PICTURES QUALIFY).

By signing this form and submitting a picture, I/We give The Temple permission to print my/our child's photo in The Temple Bulletin, which can be accessed online through The Temple's website.

Parent(s) Name(s): _____

Parent Signature(s): _____

Date: _____

CLERGY

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www.the-temple.org

www.bremaneducationcenter.com