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Kehilat Nitzan B'nei Mitzvah Program

Thank you for your enquiry about the bar or bat mitzvah for your child.

Becoming a bar or bat mitzvah is a very special occasion for the child and family. Kehilat Nitzan is pleased to be able to provide a rich and meaningful way to celebrate this occasion.

We are a warm and welcoming community, and as part of the B'nei Mitzvah parent group, we encourage you to become actively involved with our community and your child's preparation. You can do this by volunteering with the B'nei program activities, attending services for Shabbat and festivals, or volunteering to be rostered to help set up kiddush on Shabbat and/or other community activities .

We are pleased to provide you with the requirements and procedures for becoming a bar or bat mitzvah at Kehilat Nitzan.

Membership

The family (including both parents) of the bar/bat mitzvah child must be financial members of Kehilat Nitzan for at least a full year prior to the date the simcha falls. Any financial difficulties may be discussed with our treasurer or rabbi in strict confidence.

The bar/bat mitzvah child must be Jewish according to halachic guidelines, meaning his/her mother must be Jewish by birth or by approved conversion (before having the child). Otherwise, the child must be converted or go through conversion prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The Date

In accordance with Halachah, the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony must take place after a boy's 13th birthday and after a girl's 12th birthday according to the Hebrew date. At the family's discretion, girls have the equally acceptable option of having their bat mitzvah on or after their 13th birthday. Please note that due to Jewish festivals or other events the date may not be immediately after your child's 13th or 12th birthday and having a later date is perfectly acceptable in Jewish tradition .

Please contact the office to find out the intended date and the name of the parasha. You will need to meet with the rabbi before a date can be locked in for your simcha.

The B'nei Mitzvah Program

Kehilat Nitzan has a weekly program (during school terms) for its students. The bar/bat mitzvah child must attend the weekly Kehilat Nitzan B'nei mitzvah program for *at least* one whole year before the confirmed date of the bar/bat mitzvah (see 'The Date' above)

We expect that you and your child will attend two Shabbat services a month. This will provide your child with a confident knowledge of Jewish values, traditions, the meaning of bar/bat mitzvah, and an understanding of Masorti/Conservative Judaism. This will also help you become familiar and comfortable with the proceedings in preparation for your bar/bat mitzvah. In our program this year, we will expand this effort by having B'nei/Kesher (pre-B'nei) youth prayer services (and class) on the last Shabbat of each month. This counts as one of two Shabbat mornings. You can select from at least one of the other weeks in that month to attend one Shabbat morning or one Friday evening service.

Here is what else you can expect this year!

- Weekly Wednesday afternoon sessions
- 4 Sundays reserved for our social action projects
- Shabbat Morning Class last Shabbat of the month where kids lead their own service
- Learn prayer skills for Shabbat home (e.g., Kiddush, Ritual Hand Washing, Hamotzi)
- Discuss Torah topics and learn to lead the service for taking out/returning the Torah
- Understand, chant and lead the Shema prayer, the most central prayer in Judaism
- Learn congregational melodies and other Jewish music
- Learn to put on Tallit and Tefillin
- Learn about and celebrate the annual cycle of Jewish Holidays
- Each Bnei student will receive a copy of the Siddur or sections that we are learning, as well as a recording that will be available on the KN website
- Family Project: Each child will work with family and will work on a presentation about a Jewish lifecycle (e.g. simchat bat, bar or bat mitzvah, wedding etc.) to be presented in the second half of the year.

Work at Home:

- Siddur (will be provided)
- We will send home or email any other prayers to be learned to listen to at home or on the go
- the family life cycle project to work on

What will your child do, and what you will do in the days before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service

Learn to put on Tefillin (boys and girls) and have a ceremony the week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah during our weekday service. The Tefillin ceremony will be on Wednesday morning at 7.30am the week of their Bnei Mitzvah (girls are encouraged to this as well) .

What will your child do, and what you will do in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service

At the Shabbat morning service, your son or daughter will:

Chant the maftir and corresponding blessings for having an aliyah to the Torah.

Chant the haftarah and corresponding blessings.

Lead the Shema.

Lead the Service for taking out and putting away the Torah.

Lead to lead Friday evening and Shabbat morning Kiddush.

Write and present a *drasha*, (a Torah talk).

Further participation on that Shabbat morning is always welcome apart from the maftir and Haftarah. Your child may wish to lead other prayers and/or chanting additional aliyot. The rabbi offers a separate class for learning to lead the more of the prayers which is optional.

Parents and grandparents will participate in the traditional handing down of the Torah at the bimah at the start of the Torah service (this will be explained further and will be part of the rehearsal).

We supply the sweet for throwing.

Families celebrating a bar/bat mitzvah are expected to sponsor a kosher kiddush for the community, including kiddush wine/grape juice and 2 challas for the conclusion of the Shabbat service on the morning of the bar/bat mitzvah. Please speak to the office in regards to Kiddushim.

Tutors

You will need a tutor to teach your child the maftir, haftarah and corresponding blessings. We can refer you to several experienced tutors. (This expense is the responsibility of each family). These Weekly lessons are essential and should begin **at least** 10 months before the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

If your child attends a Jewish day school, the school will have a tutor on staff, and they generally offer weekly individual sessions during the school day.

The rabbi, your child and final preparations

The bar/bat mitzvah together with his/her parents, is required to meet with the rabbi at least nine months prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date to discuss the ceremony and process.

About two months prior to the day, there will be several meetings with the rabbi to prepare the drasha or d'var Torah. The first of these will be a meeting of the entire family. In the next three meetings the B'nai student will write their drasha and will be guided and helped by the rabbi.

Around one month prior to the date, please inform the office as to the number of guests you expect, and who will be catering for the kiddush.

About 3 weeks before the date of the event, you will receive a list of honors to be filled in and returned to the office no later than one week before the simcha.

The week of the bar or bat mitzvah there will be a dress rehearsal at Kehilat Nitzan. At this rehearsal, the rabbi will run through one last time the overall service; listen to your child; and review with you any other questions you may have.

As photography is not permitted on Shabbat, you may wish to organize a photographer to take pictures after the rehearsal. If you have a photo session following the rehearsal, you are welcome to spend as much time as you like to take pictures in the Synagogue and with the Torah.

Enclosed is an application form together with the student and parent contracts for you to complete and return to the office at your earliest convenience.

There is a B'nei Mitzvah booking fee of \$900 to cover the educational program and administration expenses. Due to the costs involved in processing this booking, the fee is non-refundable. An account will be forwarded upon receipt of the enclosed forms.

If you have any queries regarding the program, please contact Rabbi Yonatan at rabbi@kehilatnitzan.org.au or contact Miri in the office on 9500 0906 or at info@kehilatnitzan.org.au

Class Dates and Times:

March 10, 17, 24

April 21, 24 Junior Congregation, 28

May 5, 12, 16 Shavuot Pizza and Pasta Dinner, 19, 26, 29 Junior Congregation, 30 Social Action

June 2, 9, 16, 23

July 14, 21, 28, 31 Junior Congregation

August 4, 11, 18, 25, 28 Junior Congregation, 29 Social Action

September 1, 26 Family Sukkot Lunch

October 6, 13, 20, 27, 30 Junior Congregation, 31 Social Action

November 3, 10, 17, 24, 27 Junior Congregation

December 1, 5 Social Action and Chanukah family event, 8

Parents acknowledgment

I/We Parent/s)
understand the importance of this Jewish milestone in my/our child's life. In the interest of making it a meaningful experience I/we undertake to bring my/our child to synagogue on a regular basis during the course of his/her preparation; to support my child in learning the relevant parts of the service and for him/her to attend the weekly sessions lead by the B'nei mitzvah coordinator, which will further enhance the experience of preparation for being an informed and proud Masorti/conservative Jewish. I/we agree to all the requirements of this contract.

Signed by:
Parent/s)

Date:

Please sign and return signed copy to:

Kehilat Nitzan
P O Box 2313
Caulfield junction 3161

Kehilat Nitzan B'nei Mitzvah Program

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Student Contract

Bar/Bat Mitzvah of:

I understand that my bar/bat mitzvah is about becoming a responsible, independent and proud Jewish adult.

Therefore, I will regularly go to the weekly B'nei mitzvah program to learn about Jewish values, traditions, the meaning of bar/bat mitzvah, and about Masorti/Conservative Judaism. I will participate fully in my B'nai Mitzvah classes and learning and complete my practice and prayer assignments at home. I will complete my life cycles project with a member of my family.

I know it's important for me to understand the different parts of the service, so I will make every effort to come to Shabbat morning services, at least twice a month on Shabbat including the once a month kids-led service and class.

I want to be confident by the time my bar/bat mitzvah arrives, so I will meet regularly with my tutor to learn how to lead the parts of the service that I am responsible for, which means:

Chant my maftir

Chant my haftarah

Lead the service for taking out and putting away the Torah as well as leading the Shema early in the service.

Chant the blessings for the Torah and haftarah as well as chanting Torah and Haftarah.

Lead prayers (Shema, Torah service and Kiddush). I may learn more prayers and Torah reading according to my choice to do even more!

Since my parasha is important to me, I will work with the rabbi and my parents to write an amazing d'var Torah which shows my understanding of my parashah.

I know that my bar/bat mitzvah is one part of my Jewish education. I will try to continue learning about my Jewish identity and growing as a Jewish adult even after my bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.

Signed by:

B'nei Participant)

Date: