

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM - B'NAI MITZVAH GUIDE

Mazel Tov! You are beginning a journey that culminates in an important Jewish life cycle event for your family. Let us begin with an awareness of where this fits into your son or daughter's growth and development as a knowledgeable Jewish adult.

One goal for our children and young adults is that they acquire the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about living as Jewish adults and raising their own Jewish children. One step in this process is that our b'nai mitzvah students be able to participate in services at Temple Beth Shalom, at other synagogues (such as when traveling with USY), and that they feel comfortable and have a desire to participate in organizations for Jewish college students (such as Hillel).

The moment when your son or daughter is first called to the Torah, his or her bar or bat mitzvah, is not an end; it is a milestone along a path towards Jewish adulthood. It signifies acceptance of the bar or bat mitzvah into a new status in our community; that is, being considered a ritually Jewish adult among the Jewish people. This includes being counted in a minyan.

We understand that there is a big focus on the service itself. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that this is just one step in your child's growth and development as a Jewish person.

The Temple Beth Shalom family is here to assist you in preparing for, planning, and enjoying this *simha*. It is our hope that this B'nai Mitzvah Guide will help you through this process. You are encouraged to discuss your individual needs with the TBS staff.

Eligibility for Bar/Bat Mitzvah

TBS policy states that any child who meets the following criteria is eligible to celebrate his or her bar or bat mitzvah service at the synagogue:

- be halachically Jewish
- be at least 12 years old (girl) or 13 years old (boy)
- successfully completed five years of Hebrew school (or at the Rabbi's discretion)
- successfully completed B'nai Mitzvah Training Program
- attended Shabbat services as required in preparation for becoming a bar/bat mitzvah
- parent(s) are members in good standing at TBS

Scheduling the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

The date for your child's bar/bat mitzvah service will be determined by the Jewish calendar, your child's Hebrew birth date, and his/her mastery of the material. This includes completion of the Hebrew School program. You can expect your child's bar/bat mitzvah to occur during the 7th grade year.

The date is set approximately two years in advance through a collaborative effort of the Rabbi, Education Director, and Administrator, with input from the parents.

When you have been assigned a date for the bar/bat mitzvah service, please check your calendar and talk with key family members to assure they are available. If the date will not work then it is best to discuss alternative dates with the Rabbi and TBS Administrator as soon as possible. Many factors (e.g. length of Haftarah) are considered when assigning a date so please understand if a requested date is not available.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Timeline

Though the date of the bar/bat mitzvah service is set about two years in advance (usually some time during the 5th grade school year) your child's study will increase during the final year of preparation. Parents will also be involved in various Parent Education Programs in anticipation of the bar/bat mitzvah. When the student attends Shabbat services during this final year, he/she is to sit with the Rabbi on the *bima* or in the front of the chapel.

5th grade/Kita Gimmel

- Bar/bat mitzvah service date is scheduled
- Attend Shabbat services as required, at least two Friday evenings and one Saturday morning per month

6th grade/Kita Dalet

- Attend Shabbat Services as required, at least two Friday evenings and two Saturday mornings per month
- Initiate b'nai mitzvah volunteer opportunities
- Begin weekly tutorial with assigned peer tutor under the direction and supervision of the lead tutor and Rabbi. Tutorials are 30-minute sessions. The date and time of the tutorials should remain constant throughout the year until the bar/bat mitzvah service. Please remember that the peer tutors have their own schedules and do not often have the option of accommodating time changes.

7th grade/Kita Hey

- Attend Shabbat services as required, at least two Friday evening and two Saturday morning per month, until three (3) months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Continue b'nai mitzvah volunteer opportunities
- Master the content and become confident in leading the congregation in worship service
- Continue weekly tutorial sessions

With the peer tutor's assistance, the student is expected to master the following:

- Kabbalat Shabbat, Maariv, p'zuki d'zimra, Shaharit, Torah, and Musaf Services, as able
- Blessings before and after the Torah and Haftarah readings
- His/her Maftir reading
- His/her Haftarah, as able, depending on student's progress

One year in advance

- Attend b'nai Mitzvah Family workshops with the Rabbi throughout the year

Three months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Attend Shabbat services as required, every Shabbat evening and every Shabbat morning service
- Lead parts of the Shabbat worship services
- While your student is preparing to become a bar/bat mitzvah, you and the Rabbi will also work together.
- Schedule three individual meetings with the Rabbi to prepare d'var Torah.
- Schedule two final practices with the Rabbi, one a month prior to the bar/bat mitzvah, and the second the week of the bar/bat mitzvah
- Meet with the Rabbi to discuss the bar/bat mitzvah service.
 - Among the topics to discuss at this meeting are how to honor various family members and friends with participation roles in the Shabbat services. Assigning honors is a way to recognize important family and friends at this special time for your family. Please see the Honors Sheet in the Appendix for a list of ways in which they can be involved in the services. While this is a list of all the honors usually available, please understand that you are not obligated to fill all of them. If you do not assign all of the honors then TBS will follow our usual customs for assigning Shabbat honors.

Information for Interfaith Families

At TBS there are many opportunities for non-Jewish parents, relatives and friends to participate. Here are some particulars about participation of non-Jewish family and friends. Please feel free to discuss any of these customs with the Rabbi.

- **When the parent(s) are called for an Aliyah:** The Jewish parent is typically called for an aliyah. The non-Jewish parent can accompany the other to the bima for the aliyah but does not say the blessing.
- **When the parent(s) say a blessing over their child.** After the child has read the Torah and Haftarah readings, the parents will recite the Shehecheyanu blessing, which thanks God for the opportunity to celebrate the occasion. Non-Jewish and Jewish parents are included in this blessing.
- **The parent(s) hand the Torah to the child:** This relatively new ritual is meant to symbolize how the

Torah, the holiest book of the Jewish religion, is passed from generation to generation, and has been passed from generation to generation for thousands of years. The non-Jewish parent may participate in the ritual, but the Jewish parent is the one who touches/passes the Torah.

- **When relatives open/close the ark: Non-Jewish relatives may stand with another relative at the ark, but** the opening or closing the ark is generally reserved for the Jewish relative.
- **When a relative carries the Torah around the congregation: Non-Jews, like Jews, can "kiss"** the Torah indirectly, either by touching their prayer shawl to the Torah and then kissing the prayer shawl or by touching their prayer book to the Torah and then kissing the prayer book when the Torah is carried around the Torah is carried around the congregation. At TBS, only Jews actually carry the Torah.
- **When the parent(s) give a talk to the child after he/she reads the Torah and Haftarah.** This is an opportunity for the parent to publicly express their love and pride for their child. Non-Jewish parents can fully participate.
- **When the parent(s) present the child with a tallit:** Non-Jewish parents can fully participate.
- **When relatives read prayers or recitations:** Non-Jewish relatives can participate in English readings. The Hebrew readings are reserved for Jews.
- A Hebrew name is required for anyone receiving an aliyah, including Hagba and G'lila. TBS maintains a file of Hebrew names for our members; you will need to provide the Hebrew name for those who are not TBS members.
- Greeters for Shabbat services are often assigned by the bar/bat mitzvah family.
 - Shabbat evening service—typically two adult members of TBS
 - Shabbat morning service—typically two to four of your student's peers from his or her TBS class (two each for the first two hours of the morning services)
- Torah reading is done under the direction and supervision of the Rabbi, who can provide resources to assist (e.g. written copy and audio recording of the aliyot).
- Please discuss with the Rabbi if you would like:
 - Friends or family members to chant a Torah portion
 - A Kohen to give the priestly blessing
 - If you would like assistance with assigning honors.
- Decide on which type of program you would like to have at the service. There are two options. Examples of each are available for review in the TBS office.
 - Option 1: TBS will provide a simple program listing those being honored with a Aliyah or Torah reading
 - Option 2: You can design your own program that describes the meaning of the bar/bat mitzvah; the various services included in our Shabbat observance; the names of those being honored with aliyot, Torah readings, etc. If you decide to design your own program, you are required to print it. This will not be done by TBS. It will also need to be approved by the Rabbi.

One month in advance

- Submit menus for all meals to be served at TBS for review and approval by the Rabbi
- Confirm family/friends' availability for fulfilling assigned Honors
- Confirm Hebrew names for family and friends who are not TBS members
- Discuss photography/video options and guidelines for Rabbi's approval

Two weeks in advance

- Submit completed Honors worksheet to the Rabbi
- Submit personally designed program (Option 2) for the Rabbi's approval

One week in advance

- Attend rehearsal
- Print personally designed programs (Option 2) and bring them to TBS

Temple Beth Shalom B'nai Mitzvah Check List

While your student is preparing for his/her bar/bat mitzvah service you will be involved in planning the logistics with the TBS Administrator. You can detach this page and use it as a checklist.

One year in advance

- Meet with the TBS Administrator to begin planning and estimate costs of the bar/bat mitzvah services and celebration.
- If you are planning to have a Saturday evening party at TBS, you must reserve the facility and pay a deposit to the TBS Administrator. Please note that all events at TBS must adhere to TBS kashrut policies. An event cannot begin until after Shabbat ends.

Three months in advance

The TBS Administrator will discuss with you TBS policies and practices such as:

- One page article about your child for **publication in the TBS Voice**. A picture can be included on the page, if you wish. Send an electronic copy to TBS Administrator by the 15th of the month prior to the Voice publication.
- Photography and videography
- Child care (Friday night and Saturday morning).
- Security (Friday night and Saturday morning security is included in the fee paid to TBS)

Additional security is mandatory for Saturday night events at TBS.

- Oneg Shabbat (desserts are provided by TBS members and brought in the week of the b'nai mitzvah)
- Approved caterers
- Menu planning and number of guests anticipated
- Kiddush luncheon (buffet style, family style, etc.)
- Delivery of supplies and set-up of equipment
- Kashrut in the kitchen, including what may be done on Shabbat
- Kosher grape juice for use on Shabbat evening

The TBS Administrator can discuss options with you such as:

- Invitation options – (Voice, weekly bulletin, private invitations, etc.)
- Kippot – how many to order
- Tallit, tallit clips, yad, etc.
- Auf ruf candy. The family is in charge of supplying– softer candies are preferred
- Linens and/or paper products (linen color and count, what TBS paper goods are included in fee)
- Decor for the Diskin Social Hall (including any floral arrangements and supplies you can use from TBS)
- Disposition of leftover food (take food home, have delivered to homeless shelter, etc.)
- Havdalah logistics (e.g. who will provide Havdalah set?--TBS has one you can borrow)
- Gifting ideas to TBS -Tree of Life (leaf or stone), donation options to various funds

One week in advance

- Pay balance of all anticipated costs
- Attend rehearsal (usually on Wednesday or Thursday evening)

Friday of the bar/bat mitzvah service

- Set up Oneg Shabbat at 9:30 am with assistance of various TBS members.
- All items needed for the bar/bat mitzvah must be delivered to TBS by noon on Friday (the office closes early on Friday)
- You will want to plan an early Shabbat dinner so that you arrive at the synagogue no later than 7:00.
ENJOY Shabbat!

Saturday of the bar/bat mitzvah service

- Arrive at the synagogue no later than 8:45 am
- Enjoy the *nachas* of watching your child become a bar/bat mitzvah!