

HEA Approved B'nai Mitzvah Tutors

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We value all our tutors, and we recommend you reach out to at least three tutors before making your choice.

Rabbi/Cantor Birdie Becker

EMAIL	rabbibirdie@gmail.com
PREFERRED PHONE	720/ 849-5270
SECONDARY PHONE	
WEBSITE	www.rabbibirdiebecker.com
LESSON LENGTH	usually 30 minutes, can vary to 45 minutes and infrequently to 1 hour
TIMES	M-Th after school and early evenings. Daytime available during vacations and summer.
WHERE	my home/near I-25 and Orchard
LESSONS BEGIN	Depends on student's needs
PAY STRUCTURE	\$80/hr usually monthly but weekly or lump sums are fine. (I do bookkeeping.) \$40/half hr lesson
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Traditional Mincha - Shabbat Afternoon, Weekday Shacharit, Shir Hadash
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	My approach is eclectic, depending on the student's needs. I work with students and families to develop skills that allow the student to participate maximally in their ceremony and continue to lead and participate in services. Recognizing learning differences, I teach to the student's learning style and skills to make this memorable experience enriching. A cantor, musician and author, with forty-five years in theatre, I also assist with proper singing and public speaking techniques and enrich the liturgy through exploring its meaning.
BIOGRAPHY	Rabbi Birdie Becker has been a Jewish educator and performer for over 40 years. Rabbi of Temple Emanuel, Pueblo, she works with numerous congregations throughout Colorado and served as president of the Rocky Mountain Cantors Association for 12 years. Innovator of teaching techniques, she is the author of Conversations at the Well: Where Modern Life and Ancient Stories Meet. As a medical social worker, she is experienced in hospice and psychiatric social work. Becker also served as Ohio State Consultant for Volunteer Services. Certified in Genetics and Infertility, she spent over eleven years in reproductive health, and served as director of an outpatient medical-surgical clinic. She currently serves on the executive board of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and the Rabbinical Council VAAD. Storahteller, choreographer, and cellist for the violin-cello duo "Apples and Honey" since 1989, she is a composer and performer of folk and liturgical music. Becker is committed to the Jewish community and was honored by Denver B'nai Brith for 12 years of administrative service. She currently serves as Administrator of B'nai B'rith Colorado. A dance teacher for 18 years, she danced with the Shelhevet Performance Troupe of Cleveland, the Denver Shibolet Israeli Folk Dance Ensemble, and has choreographed for and performed with musical theater throughout the Midwest and Rocky Mountain Regions. Ordained at the Academy for Jewish Religion-CA, she

	holds Master degrees in Rabbinic Studies, Education and Social Work and a Doctorate in Education.
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Mallory Bustow

EMAIL	mallory.bustow@gmail.com
PREFERRED PHONE	303/ 478-5788
SECONDARY PHONE	
WEBSITE	
LESSON LENGTH	Up to 1 hour (some sessions run shorter)
TIMES	Sundays and Monday through Thursday evenings
WHERE	Typically the family's home, sometimes the HEA if the family home is beyond a 30-minute driving radius of my home/work/HEA
LESSONS BEGIN	I like to begin 10-12 months out to allow for sick and vacation breaks (on both sides) but am flexible
PAY STRUCTURE	1/2022 My new standard rate will be \$60/hour for lessons that take place within 6 miles of either HEA or my home just south of downtown Denver, with modestly higher hourly rates for other locations (\$10-20/hour more depending on location)
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Shir Hadash Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Traditional Mincha - Shabbat Afternoon
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	My approach is student- and family-focused, which is why I tutor students in their homes with parents within earshot whenever possible. I typically spend one hour with each family per week, usually comprised of a ~45 minute lesson with ~15 minutes to share progress and next steps with a parent. I meet students where they are in their Jewish education as well as their physical location — for example, if a student struggles with reading Hebrew, I will provide support with transliteration. For Torah and Haftarah reading, I teach common trope notes and phrases before we begin working on readings from the student's parsha. I provide audio recordings and weekly homework assignments via text (usually both student and parent are on text string), the latter of which include guidance on effective study habits (frequency, how to use repetition to strengthen memorization, etc.).
BIOGRAPHY	Mallory is a big believer in the power of education, especially Jewish education. In addition to teaching B'nai Mitzvah and Hebrew reading students, she is a professional fundraiser dedicated to inspiring philanthropy for education-based impact organizations. Mallory attended what is now Denver Jewish Day School, then HEA Religious School and Hebrew High, before completing a Judaic Studies minor (with a Finance major) at the University of Denver. She deepened her love for Jewish community, tefilah, and ruach through United Synagogue Youth (USY) group and at Shwayder Camp. You will often find her laying (reading from the) Torah on Shabbat mornings at Shir Hadash. A lifelong member of the Hebrew Educational Alliance, Mallory learned Torah and Haftarah trope from Cantor Marty Goldstein.

Jonathan Defez

EMAIL	jdefez1@gmail.com
PREFERRED PHONE	303/ 917-3045
SECONDARY PHONE	
WEBSITE	
LESSON LENGTH	30-60 minutes
TIMES	Sunday Day or evening, M-Th evening
WHERE	HEA or Student home. I live walking distance from HEA
LESSONS BEGIN	Depends on student's needs and goals
PAY STRUCTURE	\$40/session
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Traditional Mincha - Shabbat Afternoon
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	I believe in "starting with the end in mind". We will first determine the student and family's goals and objectives, strengths and challenges, and what their definition of "success" is. From there we will create a roadmap together that outlines each step to achieve that outcome. My engagement with the student and family will go beyond learning the prayers, torah portion and nusach (melody). Our time together will uncover the "why" of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah journey in addition to the "how".
BIOGRAPHY	I was raised as a Conservative Jew at Rodef Shalom, and joined and moved near the Hebrew Education Alliance in 2002 where I began attending Shabbos and weekday minyan. Fred Karp took me under his wing and taught me weekday and Shabbos nusach, and Torah and Haftorahs trope. I raised three children and worked closely with them through their Bar Mitzvah experiences. Today I am an active lay leader and a regular contributor to the Shabbos and weekday service. While I currently work in the business world, I hold a MSW from the University of Denver and have worked extensively with children and families in crisis.

Rabbi Joshua Ginsberg-Margo *Not Taking New Students

EMAIL	jmmargo@alumni.usc.edu
PREFERRED PHONE	303/ 748-4075
SECONDARY PHONE	720/ 212-7552
WEBSITE	
LESSON LENGTH	30-45 minutes
TIMES	Monday-Thursday, later afternoons
WHERE	Flexible
LESSONS BEGIN	9-12 months, depending upon learning objectives.
PAY STRUCTURE	\$50.00/hour
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Traditional Mincha - Shabbat Afternoon
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	The prayer service is a small part of what it means to be a Jew. However, and unfortunately, we often spend the majority of our tutoring time preparing the child for a "performance." This does not help with the goal of raising a mensch. I would rather the child "do" less but gain clarity on what it means to be a good person and to envision their life as a mensch. A b-mitzvah is still a coming-of-age ceremony and the preparation should be challenging, but not overwhelming.

BIOGRAPHY	By day, Rabbi Ginsberg-Margo (or simply, “Rabbi Josh”) is a senior Human Resources professional, specializing in learning and development technologies and corporate training. Outside of that, Rabbi Josh likes to explore making Judaism meaningful and relevant to everyone via traditional wisdom and modern interpretation. He has taught community-wide Introduction to Judaism courses for over four years and relishes opening up Judaism to both Jews and non-Jews. He is honored to be your spiritual travel guide, and like any travel guide, desires to make the journey joyful, memorable, and fulfilling for all. You may find him teaching across a spectrum of subjects such as: Middot, Prayer, TaNaKh, and Jewish law.
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Rayna Halzel, works w/DJDS students

EMAIL	raynaandra@yahoo.com
PREFERRED PHONE	720/ 810-6924
SECONDARY PHONE	720/ 870-7202
WEBSITE	
LESSON LENGTH	Sixty minutes
TIMES	Very flexible... Work with student to fit lessons in with busy schedules.
WHERE	Sometimes at Denver JDS after school, sometimes at my house.
LESSONS BEGIN	12 months before ceremony
PAY STRUCTURE	\$50 an hour (updated 2024)
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Traditional Mincha - Shabbat Afternoon, Weekday services.
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	I like to make sure students have a solid foundation in reading Hebrew. I work with students to help them achieve this all important piece of the preparation process. I help students acquire a good working knowledge of the Torah tropes. When requested, I teach the Haftarah tropes as well. I make sure students are equipped to lead services in a way that works for each student. I realize that not all students are the same and therefore cater to the needs and expectations of each family/student. I discuss major themes of the parshah and try to propel each student into creating a d'var Torah that feels right and speaks to him/her personally. As needed, I help guide and provide feedback in the writing of the d'var.
BIOGRAPHY	<p>I earned a Master of Arts in Education from the University of Judaism in 1991. Upon graduating, I taught Hebrew and Judaics at a Jewish Day School as well as at a religious school in Youngstown, Ohio. I also worked as a Program Director at a Conservative synagogue where I assisted with b'nai mitzvah training as part of my job. Later, I tutored numerous students for their b'nai mitzvot while living in Memphis, TN. Upon moving to Denver in 2007, I began tutoring various b'nai mitzvah students at different synagogues. I have worked with students from Temple Sinai, Temple Emanuel, HEA, and Rodef Shalom, and I have also customized preparations for bar/bat mitzvahs to be held in Israel.</p> <p>I currently work as a substitute teacher at Denver Jewish Day School and maintain a very busy schedule doing so. I generally only take on b'nai mitzvah students when I already have a good, strong relationship with a student (as a result of getting to know him/her from my work at Denver JDS).</p>

Steve Kapnik

EMAIL	stephenkapniktutoring@gmail.com
PREFERRED PHONE	303/ 489-9740
SECONDARY PHONE	303/ 753-9000
WEBSITE	www.Stephenkapnik.com
LESSON LENGTH	Sixty minutes.
TIMES	Other than Friday and Sunday nights and Shabbat morning I can meet with students any night and during the day.
WHERE	I prefer to meet at my home but am flexible.
LESSONS BEGIN	When parents and child desire (between 24 months and six months or so).
PAY STRUCTURE	I charge \$100 per hour, or a negotiated rate for the entire preparation. I never turn students away for financial reasons. I regularly make special arrangements when a student needs someone to practice with or has special needs.
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Traditional Mincha - Shabbat Afternoon, Weekday services.
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	Teach the child according to his or her path.
BIOGRAPHY	Husband, father, grandfather. Life long student and teacher of Jewish subjects.

Fred Karp

EMAIL	fredkarp@earthlink.net
PREFERRED PHONE	303/ 898-7889
SECONDARY PHONE	303/ 300-4558
WEBSITE	
LESSON LENGTH	45 minutes per session
TIMES	By arrangement.
WHERE	At the Hebrew Educational Alliance, preferably in the sanctuary
LESSONS BEGIN	varies according to student
PAY STRUCTURE	\$1,800.00 per student, flat fee
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Traditional Mincha - Shabbat Afternoon, Shir Hadash - partial
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	The bar/bat mitzvah ceremony is a first bridge between private and public prayer. I encourage students to find their place in the Jewish community, at the sametime guiding them to a technical level that allows them to understand and enjoy their moment and to continue their learning and practice. I place my emphasis at first on technical aspects such as nusach and trop, but every lesson includes Judaic discussion.
BIOGRAPHY	

Aaron Mendelsberg

EMAIL	djamuse@gmail.com
PREFERRED PHONE	303/ 521-1793
SECONDARY PHONE	
WEBSITE	www.mitzvahdj.com
LESSON LENGTH	30 minutes
TIMES	Monday - Friday
WHERE	My home in Greenwood Village or skype
LESSONS BEGIN	12 months before ceremony
PAY STRUCTURE	\$40 per session
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Shir Hadash Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Traditional Mincha - Shabbat Afternoon
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	
BIOGRAPHY	

David Rosenthal

EMAIL	david@dirosenthal.com
PREFERRED PHONE	303/808-2761
SECONDARY PHONE	
WEBSITE	
LESSON LENGTH	30-60 minutes
TIMES	Sundays and Tuesday/Thursday evenings
WHERE	Typically the family home. Open to other locations.
LESSONS BEGIN	10-12 months out
PAY STRUCTURE	\$50 per hour. \$60 per hour for farther travel distance (to be discussed)
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning, Shir Hadash Shacharit - Shabbat Morning
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	The Bar/Bat Mitzvah training experience should be pleasant and enjoyable for all, with the student taking away positive memories. I like to learn about the student and understand his/her interests and concerns. My teaching style will cater to those interests and concerns. I can teach Torah and Haftorah trope and would advise that being part of the learning, as knowing trope is a skill the student can use for a lifetime.
BIOGRAPHY	I am a founding member of the Shir Hadash service. Along with Rabbi Dollin, Tammy Dollin, Rabbi Gruenwald, and others, I helped to create the service and arrange the music for an uplifting and spiritual experience. I have been leyning Torah for over twenty years, and have led weekday Shacharit, Shabbat Shacharit, Shabbat Musaf, and High Holiday services for decades.

Jerry Rotenberg *Not Taking New Students

EMAIL	JRotenberg@denverjds.org
PREFERRED PHONE	303/ 919-0423
SECONDARY PHONE	303/ 329-8892
WEBSITE	
LESSON LENGTH	45 - 50 minutes
TIMES	I prefer after school (3:30--5:00) - Monday-Thursday
WHERE	At DJDS is best
LESSONS BEGIN	9 months before ceremony
PAY STRUCTURE	\$45/lesson
WHICH HEA SERVICES I CAN TUTOR FOR	Traditional Shacharit - Shabbat Morning
EDUCATIONAL APPROACH	Find each student's strengths and build on those - try to always be positive and supportive. I prepare each student for their special day as well as give them a deeper understanding of the Torah and Haftarah portions. It is important for each student to know that their bar/bat mitzvah is only the first step in a life time of Jewish education. Students should feel confident on their special day as well as have an eagerness to continue their learning.
BIOGRAPHY	<p>Actual Denver native--I've been teaching Judaic studies including tutoring B'nai Mitzvah students for 35+ years. I've been teaching at DJDS for 30 years. I'm happily married for 37 years and have two children, both married, and one grandson. I've had many mentors helping me through my years of teaching, including Rabbi Daniel Goldberger, Sam Freedman, Dr. Norman Fischer, Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, Rabbi Dr. Ivan Geller, Ken Hailpern, etc., etc.</p> <p>All these wonderful people taught me the importance of teaching Jewish children and the impact it will have on their lives. My goal has always been to show that to all my students and have them continue leading Jewish lives.</p>