



CONGREGATION HAKAFA B'NAI MITZVAH GUIDE

Hakafa B'nai Mitzvah

Becoming a B'nai Mitzvah is a way of bringing our children into the encirclement known as Hakafa. In a larger sense, it is a way of becoming part of this ancient and vital tradition we call Judaism. To be one who embodies the commandments is to reveal not only an ability to read from the Torah, but also a commitment to those values Judaism has always regarded as sacred - worship, study, and good deeds. It also is to taste the joy of being Jewish. And so, we hope that the guidelines that follow will help you not only understand the meaning of the ceremony but enjoy it in the fullest possible way.

At Hakafa, B'nai Mitzvah services are meaningful to children, but they also are important acts for the entire family. We encourage all members of our Hakafa families to join not only in the *mitzvah* itself, but also in the planning that precedes it.

Use the following as a guide. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We want to help in every way we can. Above all, try to make whatever you do a stepping-stone toward a rich and fulfilling Jewish life.

Bruce Elder, Rabbi
Anna Calamaro, Rabbi
Bibi Patt, Director of Education

Mitzvah: The Commitment

The purpose of this handout is to help our children and their families have a more meaningful religious experience. Our guidelines have been thoughtfully discussed with the members of Congregation Hakafa, with our Rabbi, and with our religious education staff.

We want to stress simplicity. The B'nai Mitzvah ceremony is a religious one, and that is where we feel the emphasis should be. This means that wherever possible, both in the ceremony itself and in the celebrations that accompany it, worship, charity, and deeds should be emphasized - and extravagance minimized.

Do not worry: Help is available. Rabbi Elder, Rabbi Calamaro, Bibi Patt, Rona Elder, and your tutor, with the help of other Hakafa members, will be happy to assist you. Please feel free to contact any of us.

Educational Standards

Becoming B'nai Mitzvah is above all a learning experience. Start early. Congregation Hakafa encourages religious education and training and provides a full program beginning with our Sunday morning primary classes. Our children begin formal Hebrew instruction in the third grade. **Because we believe that a well-rounded Jewish and Hebrew education is essential to becoming B'nai Mitzvah, all B'nai Mitzvah Candidates are expected to be enrolled in both Religious School and Hebrew School.**

A B'nai Mitzvah candidate should have enough knowledge to read and understand the basic prayers of the Shabbat service in order to conduct or participate in it. In addition, the candidate should be able to read the weekly Torah portion, to read part of the Haftara (the prophetic reading) if the Haftara is traditionally read during the service, and to give a short reflection on the Torah portion.

It is understood at Hakafa that all of our young people who celebrate becoming B'nai Mitzvah will remain in our Hebrew Program through Hebrew School Graduation (7th Grade) and in our Religious School Program through Confirmation (12th Grade). B'nai Mitzvah is not an ending, but a beginning. If we fail to convey this to our children, we have missed the point of the whole ceremony and have done a disservice to them as well as to Judaism. Continuing education is a must at Hakafa, and it is something that makes the whole process more meaningful and enjoyable.

How to Begin

Approximately 12-18 months in advance of your child's 13th birthday, contact Rabbi Elder to arrange a date and discuss the preparation process. You will have an opportunity to work closely with our Rabbis. They look forward to personal contact with each of our families.

1. The Mitzvah of Study

Note: Hakafa members have found that writing one's own service adds immeasurably to the entire experience. The service booklet should incorporate the basic prayers of the Jewish ritual, which the Rabbi and/or B'nai Mitzvah tutor will share with you, but it also leaves room for creativity on your part. It may be tailored to express your own personal search. The rabbis like to meet with each family to discuss the service and to develop a closer relationship. If you are unable to create your own service booklet, you may opt to use Mishkan T'fillah, the Reform Movement's prayerbook, if your service will be taking place at the Winnetka Community House.

Sample services are available. These will help clarify the order of the service and offer ideas for ways to personalize it. The use of artwork may enhance the appearance of the service booklet, and many of our families create their own art. We also have sample services that we can e-mail to you.

After your service has been written, please review it with your tutor and the Rabbi for final suggestions and approval. You may then proceed to have it reproduced for use at the service. Please donate a few copies of the service to the Congregation for others to use as models when they are working to create a service. *Remember, we want to help you along the way.*

- a. B'nai Mitzvah Workshops and Shabbat Services:** A series of workshops and a Saturday Shabbat service will be offered for families to learn about the rubrics of Jewish prayer. The meaning behind the prayers and the structure of the service will be covered in depth. By the end of this series, families should have the tools by which they can more easily compile a service for their own B'nai Mitzvah celebration.

b. Hebrew/Tutorial Assistance: We have a superb Hebrew staff at Congregation Hakafa. Children who enter our Hebrew School in 3rd grade and continue through the 7th grade will receive the background they require, and **we will recommend tutors for the additional, individual instruction needed to read or chant Torah**, etc. *It is strongly recommended that you use a Hakafa tutor for this purpose and not someone else. They know us best.*

We expect participation in our Hebrew School program. If, for some reason, this is not possible, you may speak to Bibi about Hebrew tutors for private instruction.

c. Continuing Education: Remember that study does not end with B'nai Mitzvah. Not only is there Confirmation to which to look forward, but we are also part of S.K.I.P., the Send a Kid to Israel Partnership. With the help of Hakafa and the Jewish Federation, you may look forward to a visit to Israel during High School or after (Students must register while in 3rd - 6th grades.). The rabbis will be happy to discuss the details of this wonderful opportunity with you.

2. The Mitzvah of Social Action

The B'nai Mitzvah year is an important time to learn the meaning of service to others. At Hakafa, we are very conscious of our commitment to work together as Jews to help in *tikkun olam*, repairing our world. As you become B'nai Mitzvah, this obligation (this gift) becomes yours as well. You should develop your own justice project; you may wish to involve your family and/or religious school class as well. We are eager to help you find a service project that is meaningful to you.

There are also a number of ways to bring this *mitzvah* into the service and celebration. Share a part of the gift money or cost of the celebration with Mazon (or other organizations that feed those who are hungry). Donate the centerpieces. Teach about the lessons behind the social action project with which you have been involved, and find a way for your guests to help.

In accordance with Jewish tradition, an important aspect of your *simcha* (celebration) is *tzedakah*. You may choose to make a charitable donation in honor of the occasion. A contribution to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund is always appreciated. Your joy can then benefit those who depend upon help from these funds.

3. The Mitzvah of Worship

B'nai Mitzvah youngsters and their families are expected to attend a minimum of THREE Friday evening or Saturday Morning services at Hakafa during the year prior to their B'nai Mitzvah date. Not only does this help in the learning process, but worship opens our families to the actual values the B'nai Mitzvah is about to affirm.

When a child becomes B'nai Mitzvah, it is a celebration for our whole Hakafa community. Where possible, please invite the members of the congregation to share the worship service with you – you are welcome to extend an open invitation to the congregation in our newsletter. **Minimally, we ask that you invite members of the B'nai Mitzvah's religious school class to the ceremony.** In addition, your service is an excellent opportunity for prospective B'nai Mitzvah students and their families to attend and get a feel for what a Hakafa B'nai Mitzvah service is like.

4. The Service Itself

We have found that most families find it beneficial to sit down and discuss exactly what kind of B'nai Mitzvah service and celebration they wish to have. Your options for the time of the service include Shabbat morning or afternoon, Rosh Chodesh (the new moon), or the traditional days of Monday and Thursday. In addition, a late Saturday afternoon Havdallah service may be very beautiful. Friday night services are not available for b'nai mitzvah ceremonies. **Before setting your service time, please clear it with the rabbi who will be officiating at your service.**

5. The Place

Hakafa holds services at the Winnetka Community House. It has beautiful facilities for a B'nai Mitzvah service and celebration. Since Hakafa does not have a permanent home of its own, the choice of a place is up to you, and there are other suitable locations you may wish to explore. Your own home may also be an appropriate place. Please be sure that your location can provide a sound system (if needed).

6. Hakafa's Ark

Many families choose to borrow Hakafa's second Ark, which is kept in storage at our offices at the North Shore United Methodist Church (213 Hazel Avenue, Glencoe). If you would like to borrow the Ark, you are responsible for picking it up, transporting it to your ceremony location, and returning it. It is fairly large. As such, a large vehicle will be necessary, as will a couple of strong people.

If you do not choose to use Hakafa's Ark, please be sure to have a cloth-covered table and Hakafa's Torah Cover to drape over it.

7. Music

We have found that some kind of musical accompaniment to the services makes for a beautiful ceremony. Your options include guitar, piano, violin, etc. You may also wish to engage a soloist to help lead in the prayers and to sing any personal musical selection. Our own Hakafa musical staff is experienced and eager to help. You may contact Bibi Patt or Tory May. If you wish to do something else, we will be happy to assist.

8. Friday Evening Shabbat Service and Oneg

It is customary for the family of the B'nai Mitzvah to attend Friday evening Shabbat services and host the congregation's Oneg Shabbat on the Friday evening prior to your B'nai Mitzvah celebration or on a different Friday before the B'nai Mitzvah. Some may wish to invite other Hakafa members to help fulfill this *mitzvah*. Please contact Rona Elder, Congregation Administrator, in the Hakafa office for details on hosting a Friday night oneg.

In addition, the rabbis may ask members of your family to light the Shabbat candles, participate in the Torah service, and help lead Kiddush during these Friday evening services.

Finally: Some “Don’ts” and Some “Dos”

Photography and videos: Since the B’nai Mitzvah is a religious ceremony; the congregation has decided that the use of photography is intrusive and should be omitted. However, video cameras are allowed if the camera is stationary and the operator remains unobtrusive.

Candle lighting: Candle lighting in Judaism is reserved for honoring God and remembering the departed. For that reason, it is not appropriate to add a candle lighting ceremony to the post - B’nai Mitzvah celebration. However, we are available to share creative alternatives with you.

Kipot and Tallit: Many b’nai mitzvah candidates wear a tallit at the ceremony. Some receive one as a gift for becoming B’nai mitzvah. Others use one handed down from previous generations. In addition, some families choose to provide kipot for their guests. We are happy to provide suggestions as to where to purchase these ritual items.

Aliyot and family involvement in the service: Often, though not necessarily, friends or relatives are called to the pulpit during the reading of the Torah. There are many other opportunities for involvement by others in the service as well, whether it be through a reading, opening the Ark, or the like.

Dietary Laws: Kosher foods are not required. However, we request that in accordance with Jewish tradition, no pork or shellfish should be included in your celebration.

Liquor: Wine is traditionally served at religious ceremonies. Liquor is not a necessity. In all cases, moderation and simplicity should be stressed.

**Becoming a B’nai Mitzvah is an inspiring and life changing act.
Start early and plan well. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. And, enjoy!**

CHECKLIST

✓ **Set the Date:**

Contact Rabbi Elder (847-266-8854 or rabbi@hakafa.org) to reserve your date on Hakafa's calendar. Generally, families select dates 12-18 months in advance.

✓ **Attend the B'nai Mitzvah Workshops and Workshop Service:**

Put the B'nai Mitzvah Workshop and Workshop Practice Service dates into your calendar and make it a priority to attend all 4 workshops and the service in the year preceding your ceremony.

B'nai Mitzvah Workshop and Workshop Service Dates 2023-24

- PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FIRST AND LAST WORKSHOPS ARE FOR ALL FAMILIES.
- THE 2nd & 3rd WORKSHOPS AND THE PRACTICE SERVICE WILL HAVE TWO SESSIONS – ONE FOR THOSE HAVING MORNING B'NAI MITZVAH AND ONE FOR THOSE HAVING EVENING B'NAI MITZVAH.
- PLEASE BE SURE TO MARK THE CORRECT TIMES IN YOUR CALENDARS.

Workshop 1	Sunday, November 19, 2023 Takiff Center	12:15 p.m. (everyone)
Workshop 2	Sunday, December 17, 2023 Takiff Center	12:15 p.m. (AM Services) 1:30 p.m. (PM Services)
Workshop 3	Sunday, January 21, 2024 Takiff Center	12:15 p.m. (AM Services) 1:30 p.m. (PM Services)
Workshop 4	Sunday, March 3, 2024 Takiff Center	12:15 p.m. (everyone)
Practice Service	Saturday, April 6, 2024 North Shore United Methodist Church (213 Hazel Avenue, Glencoe)	11:00 a.m. (AM Services) 12:00 p.m. (PM Services)

✓ **Reserve a Place:**

Reserve a room to conduct the service. Many Hakafa families choose the Winnetka Community House (847-446-0537). Some of our families have chosen to have the ceremony in Israel. For information on this option, contact Rabbi Elder (847-266-8854 or rabbi@hakafa.org).

✓ **Select a Tutor:**

Below is a list of tutors used by our students. You may choose to call and/or meet with more than one individual and ask about their hourly rates prior to making a final selection. It is recommended that you contact a tutor 12 months in advance in order to determine when the best time to begin private studies would be.

Rebecca Willis
Ros Wolfe

847-559-1217 / beccabecca28@gmail.com
847-564-2578 / ros8080@aol.com

If you have any questions regarding which tutor to select, contact Bibi Patt (education@hakafa.org or 847-650-7720) or Rabbi Elder (847-266-8854 or rabbi@hakafa.org).

✓ **Select a Music Leader:**

Select someone to do the music at the service. Two options are:

Bibi Patt (guitar/vocals).

847-650-7720 / education@hakafa.org

Tory May (guitar/vocals)

504-939-1855 / torymlala@gmail.com

✓ **Sign Up to Host the Friday Night Oneg:**

It is customary for the family of the B'nai Mitzvah to attend Friday evening services and host the congregation's Oneg Shabbat on the Friday evening prior to your B'nai Mitzvah celebration. Some may wish to invite other Hakafa members or friends to help fulfill this mitzvah. Please contact Rona Elder, Congregation Administrator, in the Hakafa office (847-242-0687 or admin@hakafa.org) for details on hosting a Friday night oneg and see the oneg instruction sheet attached to this packet.

✓ **Attend Services:**

You are expected to attend AT LEAST 3 Friday night Shabbat Services or Saturday Morning Minyan Services at Hakafa. It is a good idea to put some dates onto your calendar now. Attending Shabbat Services is one of the most valuable preparation tools for B'nai Mitzvah. The more services you attend, the more familiar your child (and you!) will become with the service, and the easier his/her preparation will become.

CONGREGATION HAKAFA SHABBAT SERVICE ONEG HOSTING INSTRUCTIONS

It is customary for the family of the B'nai Mitzvah to attend Friday evening services and host the congregation's Oneg Shabbat on a Friday evening prior to your B'nai Mitzvah celebration.

If you are hosting on a night when our service is via Zoom only,
please see instructions at the end of this document for how to host a virtual oneg.

HOSTING AN IN-PERSON ONEG

From September through May, our Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services take place indoors at the Winnetka Community House (620 Lincoln Avenue, Winnetka).

All services will take place in-person and via-Zoom EXCEPT the last Friday of each month, which will continue to be via Zoom only (not in-person).

ITEMS THAT HAKAFA SUPPLIES:

The items listed below are supplied by Hakafa and will be brought into the service/oneg room on a cart by the Winnetka Community House custodial staff. If they do not bring the cart in, it can be found in our storage closet located just beyond and to the left of room 102. It is the first door on the left after turning the corner. The closet should be unlocked for us, but if it is not, the custodial staff may be contacted for access. Hakafa does not have a key.

Additional supplies, if needed, are on the shelves in the above mentioned storage closet. If these supplies are running low, please let the oneg coordinators (oneg@hakafa.org) know.

- Kiddush Cup
- Challah Tray and Cover
- Candlesticks/ Candles/Matches/Candle Wax Drip Guards (foil)
- Kippot
- Masks
- Name Tags/Pens/Welcome to Hakafa sign
- Serving Platters
- Cart of prayer books (which the custodial staff will have put into the room)

HOST PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING:

There are usually around 20-30 people in attendance, but please check the Hakafa calendar or check with the coordinators a few days before to see if there's a special guest or other event which might result in a larger than usual crowd. If you're having the special event, please plan for 20-30 people in addition to your own likely guest count.

- Paper Goods (cups, plates, napkins, forks/knives/spoons - as needed)
- Challah (a must)
- Grape Juice for Kiddush (NOT wine) – a must
- Food: Keep it simple! Some suggestions include cake, cookies, fruit, cheese & crackers, snacks (pretzels or popcorn), or anything else you'd like to bring!
- Serving utensils if needed (spatulas, knives, etc.)
- Serving trays as needed.
- Beverages (non-alcoholic): Again, keep it simple! Some suggestions include iced tea, lemonade, soda, water. There is a pitcher on the cart of Hakafa supplies. We have access to an ice machine and water in the kitchen off of Room 101.

PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Please arrive at 6:45 PM for our regular 7:30 PM service, but please check the Hakafa calendar or check with the Oneg Coordinators in case there is an early start time.
- Location: Both the service and oneg take place in Room 101 at the Winnetka Community House (620 Lincoln Avenue, Winnetka).
- Ask the service leader how you can help with general set up.
- Once the service is set-up, then set up for the Oneg.
 - Put the candles in the tall candlesticks and put a 3rd candle in one of the smaller holders. Please use the candle wax drip guards. All 3 candlesticks can be put onto a tray and placed at the end of the Torah table.
 - Set out the basket of kippot, face masks, name tags/pens, and prayer booklets on the card table near the entrance to the room. The "Welcome to Hakafa" sign can be propped up on this card table, as well.
 - Put the Tzedakah Box/Can on the oneg table.
 - Put out the filled kiddush cup and challah/tray/cover on the oneg table.
 - Place the food and drinks, along with paper goods, nicely on the table. We suggest keeping them covered until the end of the service.
- Stay for the Service and Oneg. It is customary and respectful for the oneg host to attend Friday evening services after setting up. Oneg hosts are often given the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles. If you would like this honor (or not), please notify the service leader prior to the service.
- Help with clean-up of both the Service and Oneg. When people start leaving, you can start to clean up. *The service leaders and others will help with clean-up.*
 - Make sure all garbage is thrown away.
 - Please clean and put the items that Hakafa provides back onto the cart. (The custodial staff will return the cart to the storage closet.)
 - Be sure the kiddush cup is washed out with soap and dried off before it is returned to the cart.
 - Please clean the wax off the candlesticks with warm water and dry them with paper towels before they are returned to the cart.
 - If you used any of Hakafa's serving trays, please wash and dry them before they are returned to the cart.
 - Please do not leave any extra paper goods, serving platters, utensils, beverages, or food of any kind, even if they are unopened. We do not have the capacity to store these items.
- Check the tzedakah box: If money has not been removed at the end of the evening, please take it and send a check for the amount found made out to "Congregation Hakafa" to:

Congregation Hakafa
P.O. Box 409
Glencoe, IL 60022

Make sure to include a note explaining that the check is tzedakah from Shabbat Services. Please also include the date of the Service.

Please let our oneg coordinators, Gayle Inbinder (847-951-0380 / oneg@hakafa.org) and Jill Mihailovic-Sternberg (773-710-4436 / oneg@hakafa.org), know if you have any questions or comments.

Once again, thank you. We truly appreciate you - our wonderful volunteers - for helping our congregation reflect the beauty of Shabbat at our service and on our oneg table.

HOSTING A VIRTUAL ONEG

Our service on the last Friday of each month will continue to be held via Zoom only.

- After signing up for one of our virtual oneg dates, make a donation to a charity about which you are passionate.
- Light the Shabbat candles that night at services (Our service officiants will lead us all in the blessing, unless you would prefer to recite it yourself.).
- During announcements, you will be able to tell us about the place to which you donated.
- Hakafa will make a donation to that organization in your honor.
- Even if you cannot be at our Zoom service that evening, we will tell participants about your cause, and Hakafa will make the donation in your honor.