

# **A Guide for Becoming B'nai Mitzvah at Congregation Habonim**



**Congregation  
Habonim**

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## 1. WELCOME LETTER

Dear Friends,

Mazal Tov on reaching this significant time in the life of your upcoming B'nai Mitzvah student(s) and your family. We are honored to share in this journey towards adulthood in the Jewish community. B'nai Mitzvah invites a wellspring of emotions. In his book, "Putting God on the Guest List," Rabbi Jeff Salkin speaks of the 'River of Tears' that flow at B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies. In speaking of the passage of time evoked by these ceremonies he writes, "The Talmud teaches that to hear your child's child reading Torah is like hearing the words from Sinai itself. Grandparents, even those that call themselves 'unreligious,' cry when their grandchildren read Torah (p.20)." This could not be more true. I've seen it time and time again, with Jewish family members and those of other faith traditions. B'nai Mitzvah bring us together in a Sinai-like moment to reveal sacred lessons of connection and community, leadership, and love. We come to see ourselves as links in a timeless chain of practice and sometimes unexpected meaning, worthy of a box of tissues and a celebratory hora.

We encourage you to embark upon this path with the end in mind, a celebration of leadership and community AND a commitment to lifelong learning and experience as part of a village that spans generations. May you be blessed with light and love as you journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Gelber".

Rabbi Lisa Gelber

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This handbook serves as a guide to your child's journey to becoming Bar/Bat/B'nai Mitzvah at Congregation Habonim. Our students invest in study, action, and preparation with purpose. The title Bar/Bat/B'nai Mitzvah refers to someone counted in a minyan in Jewish community. Once you take on this title, it is yours forever as someone called to fulfill certain responsibilities (*mitzvot* / commandments) in Jewish community.

The Rabbi and Office Manager will contact your cohort approximately two years in advance of B'nai Mitzvah to collect information that aids in the allocation of appropriate dates for celebration. We will do our best to assign your child's celebration date for W83 by the time your child turns 11 years old.

The pages that follow address important values in Judaism as well as logistics to guide parents in supporting their children's learning and preparation. Of course, we offer guidance for families in preparation for the celebratory day. Rabbi Lisa Gelber, Cantorial Soloist Jessica (Futran) Scheinman, Religious School Directors Karen Sacks and Barry Waldman, Office Manager Michelle Szpilzinger, and our B'nai Mitzvah Liaison Beth Bornstein, are all available to support you on this special journey.

***Mazal Tov*** to you and your family. May the road ahead enrich your hearts, minds, and souls.

Blessings,



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Rabbi Lisa Gelber



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Cantorial Soloist Jessica (Futran) Scheinman



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President of Congregation Habonim



### **3. EXPECTATIONS OF B'NAI MITZVAH AT CONGREGATION HABONIM**

- B'nai Mitzvah families are encouraged and expected to attend all B'nai Mitzvah services for their age cohort and several in their 6<sup>th</sup> grade year. This will help you become better familiar with the elements and flow of the service, provide an opportunity to create and strengthen bonds with members of our Shabbat morning prayer community, and offer support to your cohort and share in their growth and celebration.
  - Religious School requires each student to attend Shabbat morning services at least two-times-per-month in the nine months leading up to the celebration.
- We require all B'nai Mitzvah students to invite all members of their B'nai Mitzvah cohort to the celebratory service. This is an opportunity to show support, build camaraderie and be as inclusive as possible, one of our core values at Habonim. The Office Manager can provide family names and contact information.
  - Invitations to any party or celebration are at the discretion of the family and are not required.
- The family of the B'nai Mitzvah is expected to sponsor a kiddush lunch for all guests and the congregation immediately following the service. If you do not wish to host a kiddush and are planning something offsite for your guests immediately after the service, we require a \$1000 donation to our Kiddush Fund so we can provide a light lunch (an Oneg) for our congregants after the service. Please let the office know as early as possible whether you will be hosting the kiddush. If this is a financial hardship for you, please reach out to the Rabbi.

#### 4. LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES OF B'NAI MITZVAH AT CONGREGATION HABONIM

- At Congregation Habonim, we work intentionally to prepare each B'nai Mitzvah student for prayer leadership on the day of their celebration and beyond. Becoming B'nai Mitzvah is a personal experience, so we prepare each person according to their individual abilities. We envision becoming B'nai Mitzvah as a step on a journey of lifelong learning and experience.
- The B'nai Mitzvah student will lead Shabbat services to the extent that the student is able. This typically includes:
  - Joining us for Friday night services prior to their Shabbat celebration to lead Kiddush and Aleinu. Currently, our Friday night service takes place on Zoom. Families may request the service take place in our building sanctuary or join us on Zoom. Speak with the Rabbi at least two months prior regarding your preference.
  - Most of our students celebrate their B'nai Mitzvah during the Shabbat morning service. Some students decide to celebrate at a Saturday afternoon service, called a Minhah Service. This service is briefer and does not include the chanting of the Haftarah.
  - We require all B'nai Mitzvah to wear a tallit/prayer shawl and have an aliyah to the Torah, which includes reciting the blessings before and after the Torah reading.
  - Most students chant from the Torah. Of the seven aliyot (segments) of the weekly Torah reading, the B'nai Mitzvah student will consult with the Cantorial Soloist to choose the most appropriate portion. Generally, this portion is the seventh aliyah, called the Maftir. Students are also encouraged to read additional aliyot as well.
  - Many students chant Haftarah, readings from the prophets.
  - Our students prepare and deliver a *D'var Torah*, a "Teaching from the weekly Parsha," that explores something from the reading and illuminates meaning for us today. Each B'nai Mitzvah student will develop and share their insights on the Parsha. The Rabbi will guide you during this process.
  - Celebrants also lead or co-lead parts of the Torah Service and the Musaf Amidah, as well as closing prayers, such as *Ein Keloheinu*, *Aleinu*, *Kiddush*, and *HaMotzi*.
  - The Cantorial Soloist works carefully with each student, in collaboration with the Rabbi, to identify and support what each student will lead from the *bimah*/stage.
- We encourage parents and other family members to participate as well. Contact the Cantorial Soloist to discuss ways to involve your whole family.
- Many B'nai Mitzvah students will create and execute a Mitzvah Project (please see below for more information).

## 5. PREPARING FOR YOUR B'NAI MITZVAH SERVICE

### Meetings with the Rabbi

The Rabbi meets with each of our B'nai Mitzvah students. Appointments are scheduled directly with the Rabbi at a mutually convenient time.

- *Pre B'nai Mitzvah Ritual – B'nai Mitzvah student, parents or other guardians, along with their Cohort*
  - In the Fall preceding their B'nai Mitzvah, there will be a B'nai Mitzvah program on a Saturday afternoon where each student receives a special gift to mark this special journey. This program will conclude with Havdalah.
- *Informational Meeting with the Rabbi - B'nai Mitzvah student and their family*
  - Getting to know each other is the first priority of this meeting.
  - This meeting reviews the meaning and purpose of the B'nai Mitzvah and what happens at the service, including the discussion of honors given, and an introduction to the D'var Torah.
  - Discussion and early planning of the B'nai Mitzvah student's Mitzvah Project.
- *Subsequent meetings with the Rabbi - student only*
  - Discussion, refinement of ideas, and writing of the D'var Torah. The Rabbi will guide you in verbalizing what you want to say accurately and proficiently.
  - Further planning of the B'nai Mitzvah student's Mitzvah Project.

### Meetings with the Cantorial Soloist

The Cantorial Soloist meets with each B'nai Mitzvah student on a weekly basis. This is initiated by the Cantorial Soloist and set at a mutually convenient time.

- Each B'nai Mitzvah student will work with the Cantorial Soloist to help them learn the Torah reading/s, Haftarah, the blessings before and after each reading, and prayers to be led during the Friday Night service and Musaf service. The Cantorial Soloist will also meet with the B'nai Mitzvah student to help them get more comfortable with the service, what to do, where to stand, etc.
  - Among other appropriate materials, as needed, copies of the Torah portion/s and of the Haftarah will be given to the B'nai Mitzvah student at the first meeting.
  - Sessions generally start 9-12 months in advance and are held on a weekly basis. Please note, 24 hours' notice is required for any change or cancellation.
  - The B'nai Mitzvah fee includes the cost of these meetings.
- The Cantorial Soloist, the parents, and the B'nai Mitzvah student, will decide how much of the Torah Reading will be read by the B'nai Mitzvah student, as well as how much of the service will be led and chanted by them.



## B'nai Mitzvah Fees

- In order to proceed with your child's preparation, Habonim charges a fee which includes:
  - Tutoring and preparation lessons with the Rabbi and Cantorial Soloist.
  - Materials and support, including printed workbooks, audio/visual support, and Zoom/livestreaming.
  - Administrative costs.
- While we await the construction of our new home, Habonim covers the cost to rent the sanctuary and loft at Redeemer for B'nai Mitzvah celebrations.
- In addition to the fees above, all Membership Dues and Religious School tuition (where applicable) for the relevant year must be paid in full no later than sixty (60) days prior to the date of your celebration.

## D'var Torah: Teaching of Torah

- The D'var Torah is the B'nai Mitzvah student's opportunity to teach and share messages and/or insights they have learned from their Parsha.
- B'nai Mitzvah students will receive a copy of the weekly Parsha in both Hebrew and English in advance of their first meeting with the Rabbi. This serves as a starting point for learning about what will be read in synagogue on the day of their celebration and exploring what the student believes might be of interest as a teaching topic, theme, or idea of interest they may want to explore and share more deeply.

## Mitzvah Project

- In addition to preparing and leading the service, B'nai Mitzvah students at Congregation Habonim are involved in a Mitzvah Project, consisting of volunteering with an agency, organization, or creating a project of their own devise. Many students begin this project prior to their B'nai Mitzvah, and some may even continue afterwards. Some students decide they will invest in a project following their B'nai Mitzvah and use the celebration to announce or kick-off their project.
  - You will discuss your Mitzvah Project in one of your meetings with the Rabbi.
- B'nai Mitzvah student is encouraged to select a project that solves a problem, provides opportunity to the less fortunate, enriches the quality of life of the needy and is of personal interest to the B'nai Mitzvah student. For example, if the B'nai Mitzvah student is interested in addressing the needs of the homeless, then volunteering at a food bank or shelter could be an ideal project.
- ***Inviting family, friends and guests to participate in and support the B'nai Mitzvah student's initiative, where appropriate, is encouraged. Contact the Office Manager for support with collections at the Habonim building.***
- We encourage the B'nai Mitzvah student to embark on a project that has meaning to them. Please feel free to review the appendix below on Mitzvah Project Opportunities for idea inspirations. This is not an exhaustive list but includes projects that have been taken on in the past and that may be of interest.
- Please note: this can also serve as your Community Service requirement for your school. With documentation of progression of achieving goals, time spent volunteering on the project, etc., we will sign off on this for you.

## **Run Through**

- This is the opportunity to practice all leadership roles for the B’nai Mitzvah celebration in order with the Cantorial Soloist and the Rabbi. The B’nai Mitzvah student and their parents should attend this Run Through.
- Generally, this will take place on Thursday at 4pm two weeks (16 days) before the Shabbat celebration. This provides ample time to identify and address areas that need attention and respond to parent questions. This will be discussed with the Rabbi at the first meeting. Please note, families may choose an alternate date for the Run Through in consultation with the Rabbi.
- Run Through takes place at Congregation Habonim 103 West End Avenue.
  - At this time, rehearsal at W83 (formerly known as Redeemer) is not possible.
- Photographers may join the family following the Run Through (at 5pm) or on another day/time. Photography must be coordinated with the Office Manager in advance.

## **Friday Night**

- The B’nai Mitzvah student will lead parts of the Friday Night Service prior to their Shabbat celebration.
- Currently, our Friday Night Service takes place on Zoom. Families may request the service take place in our building sanctuary or join us on Zoom. Speak with the Rabbi at least two months prior regarding your preference.
- Some families choose to host a dinner at Habonim after the service for family and friends. If you would like to host a dinner at Habonim on Friday night, please discuss with our Office Manager. For more information, see Habonim Room Rental section below.

## 6. TIMELINE

The timeline below will help you in planning the overall event and gives you an overview of the key milestones and activities on this journey.

Details of these activities, as well as what the family is responsible for, can be found in subsequent sections.

What	Contact	Details
<b>9 - 12 Months Prior</b>		
<b>Begin working with the Cantorial Soloist</b>	Cantorial Soloist	The Cantorial Soloist will contact you to better understand the B'nai Mitzvah student's learning preferences, personality and schedule. The B'nai Mitzvah student meets with the Cantorial Soloist about once a week.  The Cantorial Soloist will also provide materials related to the Torah portion and Haftarah.
<b>6 Months Prior</b>		
<b>Pay B'nai Mitzvah Fee</b>	Office Manager	The fee includes tutoring sessions with the Cantorial Soloist.
<b>Informational Meeting with the Rabbi and Family</b>	Rabbi	B'nai Mitzvah student and parents meet with the Rabbi for an initial meeting.
<b>3 Months Prior</b>		
<b>Prepare D'var Torah</b>	Rabbi	The B'nai Mitzvah student will meet with the Rabbi several more times to work on the D'var Torah.
<b>Discuss and Plan the Mitzvah Project</b>	Rabbi	The B'nai Mitzvah student will meet with the Rabbi to discuss and plan their Mitzvah Project.
<b>Review/Practice Service</b>	Cantorial Soloist	The B'nai Mitzvah student meets with the Cantorial Soloist to review the prayers in the service and ensure the B'nai Mitzvah student is comfortable with what they will be doing during the service. As it gets closer, the Cantorial Soloist will also bring out the Torah as part of the review.
<b>Arrange Kiddush Luncheon</b>	Office Manager	The family contacts one of the approved caterers to plan the kiddush menu, servers, etc.
<b>Order Kippot (optional)</b>	B'nai Mitzvah Liaison	Family orders kippot for the service, if desired. Please see requirements below.
<b>Honors Form</b>	Rabbi	Two months prior to your simhah, the Rabbi will share a form to complete for honors assignments.

<b>1 Month Prior</b>		
<b>Arrange Friday Night Dinner (optional)</b>	Office Manager	B'nai Mitzvah student leads the Friday night kiddush. If you wish to have dinner at Habonim for your family and friends, please arrange for dinner with one of the approved caterers.
<b>Finalize Financials</b>	Bookkeeper	Resolve any outstanding financial issues.
<b>Arrange for Wine at Kiddush Luncheon (optional)</b>	Office Manager	If you wish to serve wine at kiddush you must contact the Office Manager at least 30 days in advance of the celebration. This provides ample time to arrange for required COI.
<b>Order Food / Flowers / Decorations</b>	Office Manager	Notify the Office Manager of hired caterer and decorations for kiddush and/or flowers for bimah. Flowers for bimah are optional.
<b>Finalize Program (optional)</b>	Rabbi	Programs are optional. If you do want to provide programs during the service, please share it with the Rabbi at least 3 weeks prior to the service. Please see requirements below.
<b>Honors Form</b>	Rabbi / Office Manager	Honors Form is submitted to the Rabbi no later than one week prior to the Run Through.
<b>2 Weeks Prior</b>		
<b>Review with Torah Readers (if applicable)</b>	Cantorial Soloist	Friends and family members reading Torah must review their portion with the Cantorial Soloist 1-2 weeks prior to the service. Please note, all readings take place out of the Torah scroll itself. Torah readers may not use printed copies of the reading. Families are not required to provide Torah readers.
<b>Delivery of Decorations</b>	Office Manager	Contact the Office Manager at least 2 weeks in advance of your simhah to coordinate decorations delivery (balloons, flowers, etc.)
<b>Confirm # of Guests</b>	Office Manager	Notify the Office Manager of how many guests you are expecting for the service/kiddush. Make sure to include 20-30 Habonim congregants in your count.
<b>Run Through</b>	Rabbi / Cantorial Soloist	Run Through takes place on the Thursday 2 weeks before the service at 4:00PM, unless confirmed otherwise. Run Through is in the sanctuary at Congregation Habonim 103 West End Ave. At this time, we cannot schedule Run Throughs at W83. To arrange alternate day/time for Run Through, please contact the Rabbi.
<b>Pictures</b>	Office Manager	If you want pictures on the same day as the Run Through, please schedule the photographer to join the family after the Run Through (at 5:00pm). Alternatively, pictures with the Torah can be scheduled on another day/time. Photography must be coordinated with the Office Manager. * PLEASE NOTE: no photography or videography is allowed on Shabbat. *

Day Prior		
<b>Deliver Kippot and Programs (if applicable)</b>	Head of Facilities	If providing the kippot, the family should drop them off at Habonim no later than 5pm the Thursday prior to the service. If the family will also be providing a program, they should be dropped off at the same time. Please coordinate delivery with the Office Manager in advance.
Friday Night Service at Congregation Habonim		
<b>Arrival</b>	Rabbi	Family should arrive by 6:20pm for in person services.
<b>Service</b>	Rabbi	Prayer Service begins at 6:30pm and ends at approximately 7:30pm.  If the service will be on Zoom, both the Friday night and Saturday morning Zoom links remain the same throughout the Jewish year – i.e. new links (and passwords) are issued each Rosh Hashanah and continuing until the following Jewish New Year.
<b>Friday Night Dinner (optional)</b>	Office Manager/ Head of Facilities	If desired, the family can host a dinner for family and friends after the Friday Night Service. Contact the Office Manager in advance to arrange.
Day of Service at W83		
<b>Delivery of Food</b>	Office Manager	Food should be delivered to W83 at 150 W. 83rd Street starting at 7:30am. The Office Manager confirms with families 2 weeks prior to the date of the celebration.
<b>Arrival</b>	Rabbi	The family must arrive no later than 9:10am at W83. There will be a brief meeting with the Rabbi at 9:15am.
<b>Service</b>	Rabbi	Prayer Service begins at 9:30am and ends approximately 12pm noon. Saturday morning Zoom links remain the same throughout the Jewish year – i.e. new links (and passwords) are issued each Rosh Hashanah and continuing until the following Jewish New Year.
Post B'nai Mitzvah		
<b>Follow-up Meeting / Debrief with the Rabbi and Family</b>	Rabbi	B'nai Mitzvah student and parents meet with the Rabbi for a follow-up meeting to reflect and discuss the B'nai Mitzvah student's continued engagement with Habonim.

## 7. HABONIM ROOM RENTAL FOR FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER

- Families may wish to invite family and friends for dinner after Friday Night Services. As such, you can rent the Function Room for a fee.
  - B'nai Mitzvah family:
    - Coordinate with the Office Manager to reserve the space.
    - Pay any fees associated with reserving the room.
    - Provide catering - a list of approved Kosher caterers for Habonim is included in the appendix. Please note, the list of approved Kosher caterers for Habonim is more extensive than for W83. For clarity, families may choose to have a dairy or meat meal, and not both.
    - Provide cold drinks, including milk / creamer (pareve for a meat meal).
    - Provide plates, cutlery, cups, and napkins.
    - Provide tablecloths for both the round tables and the buffet tables.
      - The round tables are 60 inches around.
      - The buffet tables are 8 feet long.
      - There is also one buffet table for coffee/tea which is 6 feet long.
  - Habonim provides:
    - Tables, chairs, and staff to set up and clean up the room.
    - Tap water, coffee, and tea.

## 8. W83 (FORMERLY KNOWN AS REDEEMER) DETAILS/LOGISTICS

### Overview of Responsibilities

	Congregation Habonim / W83	Family
<b>Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microphones</li> <li>• Prayer books/<i>siddurim</i></li> <li>• Torah and <i>Yad</i>/pointer</li> <li>• Copies of Torah reading</li> <li>• Copies of Haftarah reading</li> <li>• Tallitot/prayer shawls for congregants and guests</li> <li>• Basket for Kippot</li> <li>• Kippot</li> <li>• Self-check coat room (lobby level)</li> <li>• Signage for sanctuary provided by Congregation Habonim</li> <li>• Easels provided upon request (contact the Office Manager)</li> <li>• Broadcast of service via Zoom (Zoom links remain the same throughout the Jewish year – i.e. new links (and passwords) are issued each Rosh Hashanah and continuing until the following Jewish New Year)</li> <li>• Student Siddur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kippot and clips (optional)</li> <li>• Printed program (optional)</li> <li>• Aliyot within prayer service may be offered to family and friends</li> <li>• Tallit for B'nai Mitzvah student</li> <li>• D'var Torah</li> <li>• Haftarah materials</li> <li>• B'nai Mitzvah student binder</li> <li>• Additional materials as designated by the Rabbi and Cantorial Soloist</li> <li>• Flowers (optional)</li> <li>• Small water bottle for B'nai Mitzvah on the Bema (please remember that there are no food or drinks allowed in the sanctuary)</li> </ul>
<b>Kiddush Luncheon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tables</li> <li>• Chairs</li> <li>• Tea/Coffee Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Drinks (other than tea/coffee)</li> <li>• Table linens</li> <li>• Cutlery</li> <li>• Servers</li> <li>• Decorations (optional, COI required)</li> <li>• Wine (optional, COI required)</li> <li>• Acapella group and other outside vendors (optional, must be in alignment with our shabbat observance. More details below)</li> </ul>
<b>Other Details</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The maximum number of guests at W83 is 250 people.</li> <li>• No food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary. This includes candy.</li> <li>• Covid Protocols: <b><i>all attendees 5 years old and up must be fully vaccinated.</i></b> Masks are currently voluntary.</li> <li>• Access to the building starts no earlier than 7:30am on the day of. The Sanctuary is available from 7:30am-1pm. The Loft, if used for kiddush, is available from 7:30am-3pm. You can inquire to extend the time of the Kiddush reception, including full clean-up, but all extra time is the family's financial responsibility.</li> <li>• The service is broadcast via Zoom at W83. In observance of Shabbat, there is no other photography, recording, or cell phone use during the service or in the loft during kiddush lunch.</li> <li>• The service is automatically recorded via Zoom. If you would like a recording of the Zoom service, please contact the Rabbi the week following the service.</li> </ul>	

## 9. SERVICE INFORMATION AND OTHER DETAILS

- *Service Honors*
  - Families may invite family and friends to read Torah.
    - Assignments for Torah reading must be coordinated with the Cantorial Soloist in advance. The Cantorial Soloist must review their portion with the readers 1-2 weeks prior to the service. Please note, all readings take place out of the Torah scroll itself. Torah readers may not use printed copies of the reading.
    - Families are not required to provide Torah readers.
  - A Service Honors Form will be provided to you and you will work with the Rabbi to finalize honors. Please see Appendix 13 below for further information. Honors include:
    - Blessings before/after the Torah readings, Prayers for Our Country / Israel / Peace, opening/closing the Ark, and joining the Torah procession and recession.
    - For the blessings before/after the Torah (“aliyot”), we have 8 aliyot on Shabbat morning. Families may honor Jewish friends/family with up to 6 of those aliyot (one is reserved for our community members, and one is for the B’nai Mitzvah). Shabbat afternoon, we have 3 aliyot and families may honor Jewish friends/family with up to two of those aliyot (one is reserved for the B’nai Mitzvah).
    - Currently, non-Jewish friends and family may lead Prayers for Our Country, Israel, and Peace.
- *Ritual Attire*
  - In the Auditorium
    - All who identify as male (regardless of religion) must wear a head covering. All who identify as female may wear a head coverings if they wish.
    - For those who identify as male, are Jewish, and are of Bar Mitzvah age (13) and older, our practice is to wear tallit/prayer shawls. We invite those who identify as female, who are Jewish and are aged 13 and older to do so as well (especially those who have celebrated B’nai Mitzvah at Habonim). Habonim provides tallitot for those who do not bring their own.
  - On the Bimah
    - All who identify as male (regardless of religion) must wear a head covering. All who identify as female may wear a head coverings if they wish.
    - Those who identify as male and are Jewish are required to wear tallit on the bimah. It is encouraged, but optional, for everyone to wear a tallit. Habonim provides tallitot for those who do not bring their own.
    - Non-Jewish individuals do not wear tallitot.
- *Tallitot*
  - Families may present a tallit to the B’nai Mitzvah celebrant at the beginning of the service. Contact the Rabbi to discuss.



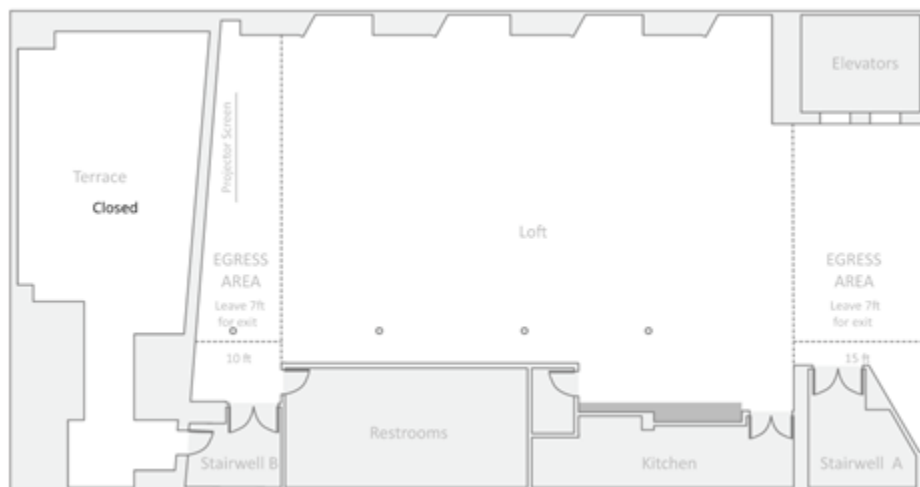
- *Parent Prayer*
  - Parents are invited to offer brief prayerful words as their child steps up to leadership on the Bimah. Some parents offer the traditional blessing for a child reaching B'nai Mitzvah age, some choose from a series of preset prayers, and some craft their own prayerful words. The Rabbi will happily provide examples and guidance in creating the just right blessing. All blessings must be shared with the Rabbi prior to the Run Through.
- *Floral Arrangements*
  - Floral arrangements are at your discretion, they are not required.
  - Standard bimah arrangements are up to 3' tall and 2' wide.
  - You may use any florist you want. Here are a few suggestions:
    - Q Florist (Phone: 212-787-4790, <https://www.qflorist.com/>)
    - Superior Florist (Phone: 212-679-4065; <https://www.superiorflorist.com/>)
    - Posies (Phone: 212.721.2260; <http://www.posiesnyc.com/>; 366 Amsterdam Ave; [info@posiesnyc.com](mailto:info@posiesnyc.com))
    - Plant Shed (<https://www.plantshed.com/>)
  - Flowers should be delivered to W83 at 150 W. 83<sup>rd</sup>. Please contact the Office Manager to arrange delivery.
  - Floral arrangements must be removed in their entirety at the conclusion of the service.
- *Kippot*
  - Congregation Habonim provides kippot for the service. Families who wish to provide branded, or other kippot, in celebration of their child should coordinate with the Office Manager to arrange drop off at Habonim no later than 5pm the Thursday prior to the service. Contact the Office Manager for more information or to inquire.
  - You can order kippot online. Sites include: [www.kippah.com](http://www.kippah.com); [www.skullcap.com](http://www.skullcap.com); [www.yarmulka.com](http://www.yarmulka.com).
  - A basket for the kippot is provided by Habonim.
  - Kippot must be removed in their entirety at the conclusion of the service. If the family has extras, you may wish to pass some of those on to the synagogue following the B'nai Mitzvah celebration for future services.
- *Programs*
  - Programs are not required, but some families choose to include information on the service and names of those participating in the service.
  - We have templates available, upon request, through our B'nai Mitzvah Liaison.
  - Please note, the program needs to be approved by the Rabbi at least 3 weeks prior to the service.

- *Cell Phones and Photography*
  - Remind all guests to respect our tradition of setting aside and silencing cell phones during prayer service and kiddush luncheon on Shabbat. This includes photos, videos and texts.
  - Neither photographs nor videos are permitted at any Congregation Habonim prayer services during Shabbat.
- *Buses*
  - If you are having a bus pick up guests from W83, pick-ups cannot happen in front of the venue, as it's a busy one-way street and double parking is not allowed. It is recommended for the bus to park on the corner of Amsterdam or Columbus and 83rd Street.
- *Accessibility*
  - If you have a guest who will need wheelchair access, please discuss this with the Rabbi and the Office Manager so we can coordinate with W83.
- *Post B'nai Mitzvah Gratitude*
  - Many people wish to express their gratitude to the Rabbi, Cantorial Soloist and Education Director after their child has become a B'nai Mitzvah. One way to do so is to make a contribution to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, Cantor's Discretionary Fund, Religious School, dedicate a Bookplate, dedicate a Leaf on the Tree of Life, or give a general donation to Congregation Habonim.

## 10. KIDDUSH LUNCHEON

- *Room Logistics*
  - Luncheon takes place in the 5th Floor Loft space.
  - The space is available to you until 3pm.
  - Seating options
    - 160 guests with round tables (60" rounds, 8-10 people per table)
    - 180 guests with long tables (72"x30")
    - 200 theater-style
    - 250 for a standing event
- *Catering*
  - In planning the luncheon, you need to consider food, tableware, linens, drinks, servers, and decorations.
  - You may choose from any of the **Approved Caterers** listed in the Appendix.
    - Approved caterer provides table linens and cutlery.
    - Approved caterer provides servers to set up tables/buffet and clear tables following kiddush luncheon.
  - **Tea/Coffee:** Venue provides tea/coffee services, caterer to provide other drinks, cups, etc.
  - **Wine:** If you wish to serve wine at kiddush you must contact the Office Manager at least 30 days in advance of the celebration. This provides ample time to arrange for the required Certificate of Insurance ("COI").
  - Consider tipping the caterer ahead of time as part of the final payment to avoid exchanging money on Shabbat.
- *Decorations*
  - Decorations are at your discretion and are not required.
  - Only painter's tape can be used to tape signs or decorations to the pews and walls. All decorations must be removed at the end of the event.
  - Families have used many different decorations. Here are a few ideas which have been used in the past:
    - Flowers or plants
    - Balloons
    - Candy
    - Fishbowls
    - Pictures
  - Decorations should be delivered to W83 at 150 W. 83rd Street. Please contact the Office Manager to arrange delivery and to arrange the required Certificate of Insurance ("COI").
  - You may use any vendor you want.
    - 'Balloon Kings' are popular and easy to work with.

- *Entertainment*
  - Congregation Habonim currently does not utilize musical instruments during Shabbat services and kiddush lunch, including B’nai Mitzvah Celebrations.
  - Some families chose to hire acapella groups for entertainment during kiddush lunch.
- *COI Information*
  - All vendors (photographers, furniture rental companies, entertainers, musicians, florists (if they are bringing the flowers into the sanctuary or loft)) must provide a “COI” (Certificate of Insurance) that meets W83's requirements.
  - Information regarding COI requirements can be found here:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aibz4R7-KgGrpkVRuvc1ScmDjIf9E7H3/view>
  - If helpful, some vendors prefer to use this Events Helper link for purchasing their COI, which already has our requirements filled in:  
<https://www.theeventhelper.com/#hfwf61>
- *Microphones*
  - Please coordinate with the Office Manager if you will need a microphone, as this needs to be arranged in advance.
- *Floor Plan*
  - Below is a blank floor plan of the Loft. Once in contact with either the family or the event planner, W83 can also share a floor plan on the site they use, “All Seated”, which will give you access to a virtual floor plan you can use to help figure out the set up.



## **11. APPROVED CATERERS FOR W83**

B'nai Mitzvah Families **may only use these approved caterers** for kiddush luncheon at W83. These Caterers are familiar with the space and can also meet our delivery requirements (delivery on Shabbat).

### **Bagel Boss of Murray Hill**

Ph: 646-368-1880  
544 Third Ave  
New York, NY 10016  
Bagelboss.com

### **Classical Caterers**

Ph: 732-297-6444  
1001 Finnegans Lane  
North Brunswick, NJ 08902  
[evan@classicalcaterers.com](mailto:evan@classicalcaterers.com)  
<https://www.classicalcaterers.com/>

### **Pride Caterers**

Robert Fine  
Ph: 201-819-2650  
420 E 79th St  
New York, NY 10075  
[info@pridecaterers.net](mailto:info@pridecaterers.net)  
<https://pridecaterers.net/>

## 12. APPROVED CATERERS FOR CONGREGATION HABONIM

In addition to the caterers above, B'nai Mitzvah Families **may also use these approved caterers** for both kiddush luncheons and other meals that take place within the Habonim building.

### **Suggested Caterers**

#### **Esprit Events**

212-307-3220

<https://www.espritevents.com/>  
[info@espritevents.com](mailto:info@espritevents.com)

#### **Above & Beyond Catering**

201-746-6161

<http://www.aboveandbeyondny.com/>  
[events@aboveandbeyondny.com](mailto:events@aboveandbeyondny.com)

#### **Foremost Caterers**

201-664-2465

[lisal@foremostcaterers.com](mailto:lisal@foremostcaterers.com)  
<http://www.foremostcaterers.com>

#### **Zami Caterers**

718-627-4945

[info@zamicaterers.com](mailto:info@zamicaterers.com)  
<https://www.zamicaterers.com/>

#### **Colbeh Catering**

212-354-8181

[simon@colbeh.com](mailto:simon@colbeh.com)  
<https://www.colbeh.com/catering/>

#### **J2 (J Squared)**

267-521-2550

[info@jsquaredfood.com](mailto:info@jsquaredfood.com)  
<https://www.jsquaredfood.com/>

#### **8th Day**

201-214-0803

[dovid@8thdaycaterers.com](mailto:dovid@8thdaycaterers.com)  
<https://8thdaycaterers.com/>

### **Restaurants and Casual Food**

#### **Hummus Kitchen**

212-333-3009

#### **Fairway**

888-521-1824

#### **Bagels and Co**

212-496-9400

#### **Village Crown**

212-207-3888

#### **Modern Bread and Bagel (Gluten Free)**

646-775-2985

### 13. SHABBAT MORNING AND SHABBAT AFTERNOON SERVICE HONORS

Please find below a list of the different honors that you are able to assign to your friends and family. This list will also be provided to you by the Rabbi, who will set a due date for assigning these honors prior to the Run Through.

#### **Saturday Morning B'nai Mitzvah Honors:**

- *Ark Opening* – at the Opening of Torah Service
- *Ark Opening* – at the Close of Torah Service
- *6 Aliyot* – blessings before and after each Torah reading. Blessings found on page 172 of the Siddur Lev Shalem (there are 8 in total, one is reserved for the B'nai Mitzvah and one for our community members)
- *Hagbah* – Lifting of the Torah Scroll
- *G'lilah* – Rolling and dressing of the Torah Scroll
- *Prayer for the Country* – page 177 of the Siddur Lev Shalem
- *Prayer for Israel* – page 178 of the Siddur Lev Shalem
- *Prayer for Peace* – page 178 of the Siddur Lev Shalem

Please note: Aliyot, Ark Opening, Hagbah and G'lilah may be offered to those of Jewish faith who are of Bar/Bat Mitzvah age (13 on the Hebrew Calendar) and older. Younger people and other family members may join them. The last three Honors can be offered to those of any religion. Contact the Rabbi directly if there are others you'd like to honor in some way not included in the service order.

#### **Saturday Afternoon B'nai Mitzvah Honors:**

- *Ark Opening* – at the Opening of Torah Service
- *Ark Opening* – at the Close of Torah Service
- *2 Aliyot* – blessings before and after each Torah reading. Blessings found on page 172 of the Siddur Lev Shalem (there are 3 in total, one is reserved for the B'nai Mitzvah)
- *Hagbah* – Lifting of the Torah Scroll
- *G'lilah* – Rolling and dressing of the Torah Scroll
- *Prayer for the Country* – page 177 of the Siddur Lev Shalem
- *Prayer for Israel* – page 178 of the Siddur Lev Shalem
- *Prayer for Peace* – page 178 of the Siddur Lev Shalem

Please note: Aliyot, Ark Opening, Hagbah and G'lilah may be offered to those of Jewish faith who are of Bar/Bat Mitzvah age (13 on the Hebrew Calendar) and older. Younger people and other family members may join them. The last three Honors can be offered to those of any religion. Contact the Rabbi directly if there are others you'd like to honor in some way not included in the service order.

## 14. MITZVAH PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES AND INSPIRATIONS

Below you will find organizations and projects which have been used in the past, and which you can use as ideas to focus your Mitzvah Project around. Please remember that this is by no means an exhaustive list of the opportunities available, so feel free to look further, use other ideas, or make up a project all on your own! As you look through, talk to the Rabbi if you need help understanding anything, making decisions, or taking next steps. This project should be personal to the B'nai Mitzvah.

### **Ansche Chesed Men's Homeless Shelter**

- Run solely by volunteers, the Ansche Chesed Homeless Shelter provides a safe haven for homeless men to wash, eat, relax, and sleep. They need volunteers to unlock supply cabinets, greet guests, and provide assistance as necessary.

### **Volunteer with Habonim**

- There is a wide variety of opportunities to participate at Habonim, including but not limited to: assisting with setup of projects for Religious School, assisting with Shabbat programs and services for our families with younger children, ushering at Friday night and Shabbat morning services, and much, much more.

### **Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty**

- The Met provides numerous human service programs to help people living in poverty. Programs include safety repairs for elderly people, feeding people who are hungry, home services for homebound individuals, and much more. The Met Council is in constant need of volunteers for various projects, always including a need for knitted mittens or hats and assistance in feeding seniors.

### **Project Linus**

- Project Linus provides blankets for children that are ill, injured, traumatized or otherwise in need. You can help here by creating or collecting blankets—out of anything! All blankets must be homemade, washable, and pin-free.

### **BARC New York**

- Located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Brooklyn Animal Resource Coalition (BARC) provides safe, permanent homes for animals in need. They host animals in their shelter while they work to provide each cat and dog their own home. BARC invites anyone to volunteer as dog walkers or volunteers in the cat loft. Please note, for many volunteer activities, minors must be accompanied by an adult. BARC also accepts donations of pet food or money to support the shelter.

### **The ASPCA**

- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) helps keeps animals safe and healthy all over the country. In NYC, they are the largest humane society, providing an animal shelter, pet hospital, and advocacy center. While many hands-on volunteer opportunities with animals at the ASPCA require you to be 18, there are a lot of other ways to get involved and advocate for animals without working directly with them. Some opportunities include holding a pet food drive, advertising adoption dates, and raising money to buy items on the ASPCA Wish List.



### **The Lone Soldier Center**

- The Lone Soldier Center was founded in memory of Michael Levine, a “lone soldier” killed in combat in 2009. Lone soldiers are individuals who join the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to become Israeli citizens. The Lone Soldier Center now operates three offices in Israel, providing guidance, support and community through holiday meals, counseling centers, and more. The Lone Soldier Center appreciates care packages that can be sent to soldiers, especially around Jewish holidays like the Holy Days, Chanukah and Pesach.

### **Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel**

- Hand in Hand is a network of bilingual, multicultural Israeli public schools for Jewish and Arab citizens. They accept donations to help develop curriculum, buy school supplies, and train and pay teachers.

### **Project Harmony Israel**

- Project Harmony is a 4-week long English-language immersion camp based in Jerusalem for Arab and Jewish children together. Project Harmony seeks to pass along the message of “peace, one summer at a time.”

### **Riverside Park Fund**

- Riverside Park Fund supports Riverside Park by keeping playgrounds, ball fields, dog parks, gardens, etc. clean & safe. There are three ways to volunteer with Riverside Park: as a Park Tender, Park Rover or Place Partner. Visit the website for details on each. If you’re interested, Riverside Park often has opportunities for small groups to volunteer together.

### **Hazon**

- Hazon is the country’s largest Jewish environmental group. Through local farm shares, bike rides for advocacy, and other events, they are working to make Judaism and food combine in healthy ways. You can get involved by making phone calls, doing food drives, riding bikes, or many other ways. Check the website for more information and specific opportunities.

### **Jewish Home and Hospital**

- Help welcome the Shabbat on Friday afternoons at this local elder-care facility by singing, sharing challah and visiting with the elderly.

### **Dorot**

- DOROT volunteers enhance the lives of the elderly through a variety of programs, including friendly visiting and holiday package delivery. On the Sunday prior to Rosh Hashanah, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and Passover, volunteers visit the elderly and deliver meals or packages filled with traditional foods. The elders appreciate the company as much as the holiday treats.

### **Citymeals on Wheels**

- Citymeals on Wheels raises money to make sure that homebound elderly New Yorkers never go without food or human company. They deliver food to the elderly, make cards, phone calls, and home visits to thousands of New Yorkers every day. Without a chaperone, you may volunteer to make weekly ½- hour phone calls to seniors in need of companionship or respond to thank you letters that Citymeals receives. You may participate in Meal Delivery or Friendly Visiting with a chaperone. Note: you'll need to commit to approximately 6 months.

### **Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)**

- HIAS is the international agency that supports Jewish people being persecuted all over the world. In the U.S., HIAS helps resettle immigrants and refugees, connecting people to legal support, educational opportunities, and advocacy forums. You can get involved with HIAS by helping to preserve stories of Jewish Soviet immigrants. There are other ways to get involved with HIAS as well, by helping at local soup kitchens and other community centers.

### **American Jewish World Service (AJWS)**

- Inspired by Judaism's commitment to justice, American Jewish World Service works to realize human rights and end poverty in the developing world. AJWS is the only Jewish organization committed to alleviating poverty, disease, hunger and oppression in the developing world. They provide money to other local organizations, send US volunteers around the world to be of assistance, and do education campaigns (some of which Habonim participates in!) around the US. You can get involved here by becoming an advocate—hosting an event to writing letters to congress, or by raising money to be used elsewhere in the world.

### **Jewish Prisoners**

- Jewish Prisoners is an organization run by the Chabad movement in Brooklyn, NY. They believe that religious freedom is a right for all people, even while they are in prison. Believing such, this organization provides ritual objects: prayer books, tallitot, tefillin, kippot to inmates in need. They also provide support to family members of people in prison. They are in constant need of financial support and accept donations through their website.

### **Teens Against Bullying**

- Teens against Bullying is a website and action center that collects stories and takes action by speaking out organizing events, and posting information on-line. You can get involved in any of those ways and more.

### **The Ali Forney Center**

- The Ali Forney Center rescues LGBTQ youth living on the streets by placing them into safe, homelike environments and providing numerous resources to them. You can get involved by donating items listed on their website or preparing meals at their centers.

### **New York Public Library**

- One of the most well-known systems in the world, the New York Public Library is home to some incredible research facilities and more books than any of us can imagine. The New York Public Library has a changing, but constant, list of volunteer opportunities always available on their website. They are often looking for assistance in organizing shelves, teaching customers to use computers and self-check machines properly, reading to young children and managing book sales.

### **Room to Grow**

- Room to Grow helps babies born into poverty by providing baby clothes, toys, and other necessities, social work appointments, developmental support, and support for a healthy start to school. They work with families from when a mother is pregnant through their child's third birthday. Room to Grow consistently needs help sorting clothes, toys, books and equipment, but note that this is an on-going volunteer opportunity requiring a 2-hour/week commitment. Room to Grow also welcomes donation drives for many items. Contact them for more information.

### **Special Olympics**

- Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. You can get involved by volunteering at a Special Olympics event, raising money, or other ways.

### **Kibera Girls Soccer Academy**

- The Kibera Girls Soccer Academy (KGSA) is located in Kibera, in Nairobi, the capitol of Kenya. KGSA supports the development and growth of a school in Kibera that caters specifically to developing girls' health, confidence, and academic success. You can get involved by donating money, supplies, or hosting an event to raise awareness about the organization.

## 15. CONTACT INFORMATION AND GETTING YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Who?	Position	For what?	Email	Phone
Rabbi Lisa Gelber	Rabbi	<input type="checkbox"/> Preparing D'var Torah <input type="checkbox"/> Questions about the Service <input type="checkbox"/> Questions about Rituals <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Given to Family Members <input type="checkbox"/> Run Through <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling Appointments with the Rabbi <input type="checkbox"/> Counsel regarding B'nai Mitzvah process and family dynamics	<a href="mailto:rabbigelber@habonim.net">rabbigelber@habonim.net</a>	212-787-5347 x.109
Cantorial Soloist Jessica (Futran) Scheinman	Cantorial Soloist	<input type="checkbox"/> Preparation for Leading Services <input type="checkbox"/> Family members Torah readings <input type="checkbox"/> B'nai Mitzvah Coaches & Sessions	<a href="mailto:cantorjessica@habonim.net">cantorjessica@habonim.net</a>	Cell: 301-651-1249
Karen Sacks and Barry Waldman	Religious School Directors	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Support <input type="checkbox"/> Mitzvah Project ideas and support <input type="checkbox"/> Religious School Liaison	<a href="mailto:religiousschool@habonim.net">religiousschool@habonim.net</a>	212-787-5347 x.105
Michelle Szpilzinger	Office Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Building Use <input type="checkbox"/> General Administrative Questions <input type="checkbox"/> Liaison to Venue <input type="checkbox"/> Kiddush & Catering <input type="checkbox"/> Arranging optional Friday night dinner <input type="checkbox"/> Kippot & Programs	<a href="mailto:office@habonim.net">office@habonim.net</a>	212-787-5347 x.103
Grace Rosas	Bookkeeper	<input type="checkbox"/> Billing Questions	<a href="mailto:grosas@habonim.net">grosas@habonim.net</a>	212-787-5347 x.102
Beth Bornstein	B'nai Mitzvah Liaison	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Support	<a href="mailto:bethjbornstein@gmail.com">bethjbornstein@gmail.com</a>	646-770-7208