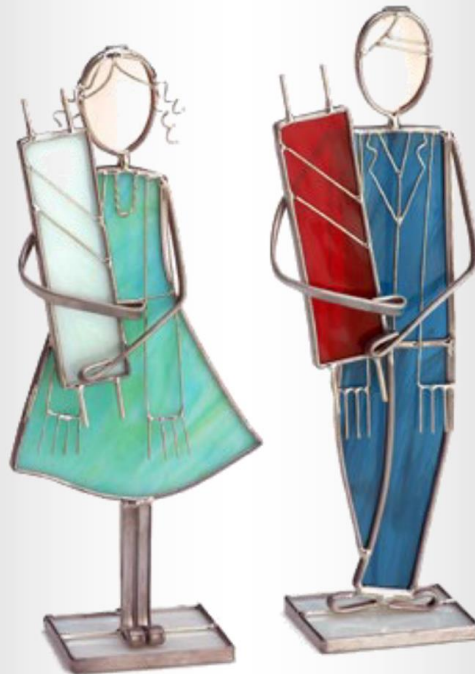


 Temple Shaari Emeth

# B'nai Mitzvah Handbook



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Dear B'nai Mitzvah Parents,

What is Bar/Bat Mitzvah (plural: B'nai Mitzvah)? For starters, it is *not* something you “get,” or something that’s “done” to you (as in “I was Bar Mitzvahed”); nor is it simply a celebration, a milestone event, or a religious service. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is really none of these things.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is something you *become*. Strictly speaking, it happens automatically when you come of age (in traditional Jewish terms, that’s 13 years old, with some sources saying 12 for girls). At Temple Shaari Emeth, a child marks this coming-of-age through a process of study, social action, self-reflection, and religious service. And we, the congregation and professional staff, together with the child’s family, rejoice in his/her entry into Jewish adulthood.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is only a beginning. It represents a commitment to Jewish learning and living, and of dedication to the welfare of the Jewish community. Most of all, it represents a commitment to continued study and exploration. In the truest sense of the word, Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a “commencement” of an emerging Jewish adult’s religious studies.

It is easy to lose sight of Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s true meaning. Our colleague Rabbi Steven Kushner puts it well: “There can be little doubt that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration has come to embody both the bright and dark sides of Judaism American-Style. We know the excesses. They’ve been elevated to legendary lore. But we also know the power, the beauty, the wonder of it all. Indeed, were Bar/Bat Mitzvah not so filled with the potential for meaning, you would not be holding this book right now. Welcome (back) to the journey of discovery.”

Because Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a long process, with lots of details to manage, we have put together this Handbook to help you manage the details and not get lost in the process. We want to make the process as smooth as possible, and, ultimately, one in which the lives of your child and family are together enriched and blessed.

May this step along your way carry you from strength to strength.

Yours with *shalom*,



Rabbi Melinda F. Panken

Cantor Wally Shachet-Briskin



Stuart Brown  
Executive Director



Melissa Pescatore  
Director of Religious Education

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH: MEANINGS AND MYTHS

- **Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an ancient Jewish practice.**

But it's not mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The practice seems to date back at least as far as the Second Century, where the Talmud notes that "at age thirteen a boy becomes subject to the commandments." Further, traditional Judaism regarded the age of thirteen as the point at which a father is released from responsibility for his son's conduct. Though the practice of Bar Mitzvah has evolved throughout the ages, many believe that by the Middle Ages in Europe, a boy of thirteen would demonstrate his new status in the community by reading from the Torah scroll, leading the community in worship, and offering an original interpretation of the weekly Torah portion. These essential practices have been retained to the present day. In this century, the demand for equality gave rise in 1922 to the practice of Bat Mitzvah for girls, which in Reform (and most Conservative) communities has become universal.

- **Bar/Bat Mitzvah is ultimately about responsibility.**

While the process of Bar/Bat Mitzvah necessitates the acquisition of skills such as chanting Torah and reading Haftarah, studying Torah, and speaking in public, these do not comprise the essence of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The key is the word *mitzvah*: a sacred obligation. By becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a child learns his/her responsibilities to the community and acquires the motivation and experience to respond to a noble challenge. In so doing, s/he emerges as a "Jewish adult": one who has responded to the Jewish understanding of maturity.

- **The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is not a performance.**

It's a celebration and a commemoration of a child's effort and personal growth. The service is a **religious ceremony**, not a show. More to the point, the only *mistake* one can make at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to lose sight of this fact.

- **The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony emphasizes the centrality of Torah in Jewish life.**

And so a child's primary honor at the service is to chant from the Torah scroll. Torah tells the story of our people as they emerged from tribes of nomads and slaves. It commemorates our people's early experience of God. It has served as the source of Jewish wisdom for millennia. And it unites the Jewish people, even today, as a common source of inspiration and hope.

- **The reception which follows is a continuation of the celebration.**

Please try not to think of it as a separate party or event. Traditionally called a *Se'udat Mitzvah*, or meal in honor of the performance of a *mitzvah*, it is a special and sacred occasion. Setting aside a portion of one's abundance to help the poor and needy can demonstrate that your celebration represents an ongoing commitment to others. MAZON, a Jewish Response to Hunger, urges that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah contribute a portion of gift money and 3% of the expense of the catering to this worthy charity. Read more on [www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org). We recommend, in the spirit of your child reaching a state of maturity and responsibility, that s/he be encouraged to make a personal contribution to a charity of his/her choice from the gift money s/he receives as well.

- **Bar/Bat Mitzvah's meaning will endure only if it leads to further Jewish growth and study.**

Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a process that can remain with us throughout our lives. We state firmly that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is validated by a commitment to continue religious education at least to Confirmation (10<sup>th</sup> grade) and ideally in Post-Confirmation to High School Graduation (12<sup>th</sup> grade). Our program for 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade is vibrant and popular, with a winning mix of learning and social connection that helps our students thrive and mature academically and Jewishly. Without this commitment to continue Jewish learning and exploration, what will the ceremony really mean?

## PREPARING FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH: A FAMILY JOURNEY

### SCHEDULING THE CEREMONY

The process of Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Shaari Emeth formally begins in the spring of the child's 4<sup>th</sup> Grade year with the scheduling of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Our Religious School Director will test your child's Hebrew reading skills in 4<sup>th</sup> Grade and assess his/her reading abilities in concert with our Hebrew teachers in order to arrange the schedule for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. Our aim is to assign a date that is closest to your child's birth date, ideally, within a month of his/her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday (though, especially with children with summer birthdays, this is not always possible) and, depending on the number of students in a given year, to place students who will become Bar/Bat Mitzvah in a double or triple with other students of similar Hebrew skills.

In the late spring of 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, before the end of the school year, parents will receive a letter offering two dates for the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Date Assignment and Values Orientation Workshop. Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates will only be given to those families who attend the workshop and whose Temple accounts are in good standing. Some services are shared by two or three children because of the large number of students each year. No dates are scheduled in July or in most of August. Our earliest date is usually the last Saturday in August. Therefore, children born in the summer months will probably be scheduled in August, September, or October.

If there are any circumstances or information that you would like to be considered when assigning your child's date, a request should be made, in writing, to the Religious School Director in the winter/early spring of your child's 4<sup>th</sup> Grade year. We will do our best to accommodate any request, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to honor your preferences. Date changes can only be requested after the second 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Date Assignment Workshop of a given year. Changes will normally not be accommodated in the year prior to the ceremony unless there are mitigating circumstances. We cannot guarantee that your child's date will remain a single, double, or triple. When families sharing your date make changes, we will notify you as soon as possible.

Students are scheduled to celebrate becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah during Saturday Shabbat Services. Those with relatives who cannot travel on Shabbat can request a Rosh Chodesh service on a Sunday morning. There is usually at least one Rosh Chodesh that coincides with Sunday during the school year and it can be filled by up to three students on a first come, first served basis as long as clergy approve the date.

### SHARED (DOUBLE AND TRIPLE) B'NAI MITZVAH SERVICES

The number of students celebrating B'nai Mitzvah at TSE during any given year has often come close to one hundred. We are blessed to have so many celebrations in our midst! However, the large number has necessitated that many of our students share their service with another. We work hard to match students appropriately—and take into consideration not only a student's potential for mastery of Hebrew and Torah readings, but also study skills and any other information about friends or family you share with us. We strive to create the best possible match between students. Our paramount aim is to create a service that is shared

equitably, with all students feeling joy and satisfaction in their accomplishments. Because of the many sensitivities that must be recognized in pairing students, TSE entrusts this task exclusively to our Religious School Director.

Occasionally we reach the conclusion, in consultation with our educational staff, clergy, and parents, that a student's special needs will be met best by a "single" service which is **not** shared with another family. We do not regard the assignment of such a service as any kind of preferential treatment; we offer such an option only in special circumstances.

Know that we will work hard to create with you a moment of lasting significance, holiness, and beauty, for each family, individually and together.

## REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

### ELIGIBILITY

The celebration of Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Shaari Emeth is a privilege afforded only to members in good standing. A member's account must be current, with payment received for all membership dues, tuition fees, and the appropriate B'nai Mitzvah fees for the year. Our Board of Trustees requires that payment be made before the first lesson with the Cantor and we will send out a reminder prior to that appointment.

Only students enrolled in the Religious School by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, continuing through the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year, and having successfully met all academic and attendance requirements are eligible. For students with other academic backgrounds or circumstances, eligibility for Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be determined in consultation with the Clergy and Religious School Director. Only students deemed age-appropriate will be considered for Bar/Bat Mitzvah (starting at age 13, or older—it's never too late!). Students must be enrolled in Religious School for the year that their Bar/Bat Mitzvah will take place.

It is our policy to have both girls and boys celebrate Bat/Bar Mitzvah at the age of 13. Though some congregations celebrate Bat Mitzvah at age 12 for girls, at TSE we celebrate at age 13 for several reasons. First, if we held the ceremony for girls at 12 they would miss an entire year of Hebrew instruction, which would put them at a disadvantage. Their skills are much stronger at the end of four years of Hebrew learning. Additionally, we are egalitarian. In our congregation, girls read directly from the Torah and fully participate in all aspects of the service and so holding the service at 13 helps to create that sense of equality.

Parents and students must fulfill the following educational, spiritual, financial, and communal obligations:

### EDUCATIONAL OBLIGATIONS:

#### **5<sup>th</sup> GRADE FAMILY SHABBAT EXPERIENCE PROGRAM**

During the child's 5<sup>th</sup> Grade year, all TSE 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents attend this program with the Rabbi, Cantor, and Religious School Director on a Saturday morning. This workshop is offered twice during 5<sup>th</sup> Grade and you will be notified about the dates at the beginning of the school year. This workshop, which starts at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m., includes a learner's service in which we review the service structure and an exploration of prayer tools including the fundamentals behind the purpose and meaning of tallit. Students are required to attend with a parent (or preferably both) in order to be eligible for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> GRADE B'NAI MITZVAH FAMILY PROGRAM**

During the child's 6<sup>th</sup> Grade year, all TSE 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents spend a day of study, community building, and spiritual preparation to begin the process of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The program begins at 11:15 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. We spend the day in each other's company, learning, engaging in discussion, and preparing for a milestone year to come. Together we explore the rituals and symbols of our Sanctuary, the meaning and structure of the

service, and how to make the celebration of Bar/Bat Mitzvah centered on deeds of loving kindness. We offer two possible Sunday options and ask you to commit to either date at the beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. Students are required to attend with a parent (or preferably both) in order to be eligible for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

### **BAR/BAT MITZVAH BUSINESS MEETING**

Beginning at around eight months to a year and a half from your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, parents (without children) will meet in a large group with the Rabbi, Cantor, Executive Director, and Religious School Director to discuss the particulars of planning and preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At this meeting we will review all of these guidelines. We will hold these group meetings twice throughout the year. At least one parent must attend.

### **RELIGIOUS AND HEBREW EDUCATION**

Students are required to matriculate in Religious School by the start of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade. They must fulfill attendance, worship, and grade requirements up until the formal Bar/Bat Mitzvah training begins.

Students begin studying the prayers recited as part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade and continue in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. Recordings of all of the prayers for Bar/Bat Mitzvah are available at [www.shaariemeth.org/prayers](http://www.shaariemeth.org/prayers). At the end of the year, each 6<sup>th</sup> grader will receive his/her own copy of Mishkan Tefilah (our prayerbook) during the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Siddur Ceremony to use in the lessons with the Cantor, the rehearsals, and at the actual ceremony.

The structure of 7<sup>th</sup> Grade is a 25-week program focusing on topics relevant to the prospective Bar/Bat Mitzvah student, including an in-depth study of the Holocaust. Review of prayer Hebrew, good attendance, thorough home preparation and attentiveness during class sessions are essential. Students will receive their Torah portion and booklet either at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade or during 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, depending on their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

### **MITZVAH ED**

In order to emphasize the "mitzvah" aspect of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process, our Religious School and Temple Boards have approved a Mitzvah Education Program that is required of every B'nai Mitzvah candidate. All candidates will complete 13 mitzvot. Seven are required and six are chosen by the student from the list provided to them by the Mitzvah Ed Coordinator.

Students will attend two meetings with the Mitzvah Ed Coordinator and one meeting with the Rabbi (three in total). At least one parent must attend the first class with their child. These lessons are in small groups and begin about a year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Rescheduling is very difficult, so please make every effort to attend classes as scheduled. A missed session cannot be made up in private except in extenuating circumstances. You will receive the schedule of class dates a few months before your group's first class.

At the first class, students will receive a packet that has a sign-off sheet in the back. Please complete this sheet and return it to the Religious School Office with the folder and supporting documents by the date listed on the front of the folder. The Mitzvah Ed folder must be completed and handed in two months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

## MITZVAH ED D'VAR TORAH WORKSHOP

A *D'var Torah* (literally, a “word” of Torah) is not a sermon or a term paper. It is, simply, the identification of a question about or feature of the Torah portion followed by a straightforward and thoughtful response. It is a single idea, based on the text of the Torah, and applied to the congregation and the speaker’s personal experience.

As part of Mitzvah Ed, every student must attend a D’var Torah Workshop, taught by the Rabbi explaining how to write a D’var Torah. **Attendance at the D’var Torah Workshop is very important.**

In class, the Rabbi will explain the format for the D’var Torah. It usually includes three paragraphs:

- I. An introduction and explanation of the Torah portion. In this first section students will also identify a main idea.
- II. A connection to our lives today with examples from the student’s life.
- III. A summary explaining what you want everyone to learn from this teaching.

In this workshop we will practice outlining a D’var Torah using a piece of Torah that we will study together. Once students receive their Torah portion assignments from the Cantor, they are free to begin writing their D’var Torah.

## ASSESSMENT MEETING AND CHOOSING YOUR TORAH PORTION

About eight to ten months before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, the Cantor will set up a short appointment with your family to assess your child’s progress in Hebrew and discuss what section of the Torah portion your child connects with and would like to read for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. You will receive a copy of the summary of the entire Torah portion for the Shabbat of your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah before this meeting so that you can review it and your child should come prepared to read the basic Hebrew prayers expected of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate (see “What Does the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Do?” below).

## WRITING YOUR D'VAR TORAH

The Cantor will give each student his/her Torah Portion Booklet around six months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the assigned Torah portion in Hebrew and English highlighted in yellow. Once your child receives his/her Torah portion from the Cantor, the Rabbi’s Assistant will contact you and let you know when the D’var Torah is due. Usually we try to have students finish their D’var Torah at least four months before the ceremony. A D’var Torah should be double-spaced, in 14 point font and about 2-3 pages long. Please put the student’s name, parshah name, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah date on the top of the page and number the pages in the upper right hand corner.

Some students like to write on their own D’var Torah and some like help. If your child needs assistance, please call the Rabbi’s Office to schedule a time to meet with the Rabbi. Students must come to this meeting with the Rabbi with at least one parent and they must bring their Torah Portion Booklet with them.



Once the Rabbi receives the D'var Torah draft, she will read it, correct it, and return it to you. Once you receive the corrected copy, please make all corrections, and print out two final copies. One will go in the student's prayerbook and the other should be turned in to the Rabbi's Assistant to be kept as a backup at the Temple in case something happens to the student's book.

## LESSONS WITH THE CANTOR

Your child, and those sharing the date, will begin meeting with the Cantor approximately six months before the big day. Nine or more 45-minute lessons are scheduled in the Cantor's Office, plus the last appointment, which is held in the Sanctuary and lasts about 90 minutes. Your child must know all the prayers and blessings required for the service before the first meeting with the Cantor. The Cantor will make available to you a recording of your child's Torah portion and all prayers can be listened to or downloaded from [www.shaariemeth.org/prayers](http://www.shaariemeth.org/prayers). Large print copies of the prayers for students to study from are also available on the website. The Cantor can provide a CD of your child's parts if you request one as well.

You will receive a schedule of your appointments about eight months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Most of the Cantor's lessons take place on Sunday mornings and Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoons and evenings. Before the schedule is finalized, the Cantor's Assistant will send you a letter asking when your child gets home from school and if you have any conflicts (including vacation plans, sleep-away camp, etc. during the months of July or August). If any conflicts arise once you receive this schedule, please notify the Temple Office immediately.

Please be aware that we are scheduling and coordinating appointments for multiple students, therefore it is difficult to reschedule appointments due to the Cantor's limited schedule and those who share the day with you. Please be absolutely certain your child is on time and brings his/her prayerbook and Torah Portion Booklet.

If the Cantor determines that extra tutoring is needed, it will be at your family's expense. By following your child's progress and making sure he/she is practicing and learning the prayers as assigned in Religious School and by the Cantor, you can avoid the need for extra tutoring. The Cantor or Religious School Director can provide you with a list of approved tutors if the need arises.

## WHAT DOES THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH DO?

There are four components for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah's participation at the service:

- To be a *Shaliach Tzibur*/Leader of Worship.
- To chant from the Torah.
- To read the English and/or Hebrew of the Haftarah.
- To deliver a *D'var Torah*, a teaching on the week's Torah portion.

## *SHALIACH TZIBUR*: A LEADER OF WORSHIP

At TSE, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student joins with the clergy in leading the congregation in worship. Most of the Hebrew prayers for this responsibility have been learned in Religious School prior to preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah; others will be studied with the Cantor. The basic Hebrew prayers expected of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate are:

- *Tallit Blessing*
- *Barchu*
- *Yotzer Or*
- *Shema*
- *V'ahavta*
- *Avot v'Imahot*
- *Gevurot*
- *Hoda'ah*
- *Sim Shalom*
- Torah and Haftarah Blessings (both before and after)

Students who are motivated to lead additional parts of the service may choose to chant a section from the Haftarah in Hebrew, in consultation with the clergy, and/or lead additional prayers.

Besides their Hebrew parts, students will read the English translations of their Torah and Haftarah portions and English portions of the service. These passages are often complicated, and we urge practicing the English alongside the Hebrew!

Specific prayers and English readings will be coordinated with the clergy on an individual basis. Please be mindful that we seek to distribute prayers and readings equitably between students when they share a service.

#### TORAH AND HAFTARAH CHANTING

- B'nai Mitzvah students will learn to chant a minimum of three verses from the weekly Torah portion (*parshah*) or more if their Hebrew skills are very strong. They will also read (or chant) a selection from the weekly Haftarah, usually in English.
- The Torah is unvocalized (without the diacritical vowels or accents) and can only be mastered through diligent practice at home.
- Students will chant the Torah blessings before and after the reading of the Torah. Only the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called to bless the Torah.
- Following the chanting of Torah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will deliver their D'var Torah, and then the Haftarah is read.

#### PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah requires diligence, patience, organization, and consistency! The following guidelines will greatly assist your preparation and our ability to ensure your success.

1. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate should practice **twenty – thirty (20-30) minutes each day**. A single day off per week is appropriate, but not more. As the date draws near, more or less may be necessary, as determined by the Cantor or Rabbi.

**REGULAR PRACTICE IS CRUCIAL.** Working once or twice a week for several hours will not achieve the same effect as daily practice for shorter periods of time.

2. Assignments **must** be completed each week and be kept up to date.
3. Please bring **ALL materials to every lesson with the Cantor and every meeting with the Rabbi.** Keep materials in a folder, in a safe place. Always have a pencil and paper on hand.
4. Follow TSE's "Ten Steps To Success": How to Practice for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah! The guide is included at the end of in this Handbook (see Appendix II).
5. **PHOTOCOPY any materials and BACK UP any recordings.** This will make it hard for you to lose something important. If you do lose any materials, please contact the Cantor **immediately** to obtain a replacement! There is a replacement cost for some of the materials. The replacement of Mishkan Tefilah is \$36. The replacement of a Torah Portion Booklet is \$18.

#### **FINAL REHEARSALS WITH PARENTS AND RABBI**

After you have completed your lessons with the Cantor, you will be scheduled for two rehearsals in the Sanctuary with the Rabbi. They are *usually* held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at 3:30 p.m. and last about 90 minutes each. Around three to four months in advance, you will receive a packet with the dates for these rehearsals, a questionnaire that you will need to fill out, and the dates for ushering and oneg duty.

The first rehearsal usually takes place 10 days prior to the big day. By this point, your child should be "ready to go". The Rabbi will assign the parents' parts and rehearse with you. Please bring your completed Questionnaire (which includes the Hebrew names of your family members), your child's tallit, and the parents' prayer that you have written to both rehearsals.

Since the Rabbi's schedule, the Sanctuary, and those who share the day with you are involved, it is essential that you are prompt. It is also essential that both parents attend *at least one rehearsal* so as not to cause your child embarrassment by inadequate preparation on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A parent must be present at each rehearsal. In the event of inadequate preparation, the Rabbi is authorized to postpone or cancel a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

We strive to make Bar/Bat Mitzvah an enriching, positive, meaningful, and memorable experience for you and your family. For students with special needs (including, but not limited to, learning challenges and developmental disabilities), we will work with you to tailor specific requirements and expectations for the process of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Temple Shaari Emeth employs or calls upon additional expert tutors who specialize in working with students with learning challenges. On occasion, we may together reach the conclusion that your child's unique needs will best be met by studying with one of these tutors. In such cases, the appropriate compensation of the additional tutor will be discussed in consultation with the tutor and the clergy.

If your family is experiencing any sort of challenging circumstances, please let us know, so that we can assist. Any such information will be treated confidentially and sensitively. We are aware that the experience of Bar/Bat Mitzvah can easily become overwhelming, especially given these concerns; we are available to guide you and your child throughout the journey.

Additionally, know that we will make every effort to include in the service members of your family with physical or other disabilities. Our synagogue is fully accessible to all and we pride ourselves on being inclusive. The bottom line: We stand at the ready to provide assistance; please let us know how we can be responsive to your needs!

### SPIRITUAL OBLIGATIONS:

#### B'RIT TEFILLAH: A COVENANT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR SERVICE ATTENDANCE

Temple Shaari Emeth requires all Religious School students (grades 3-7), **accompanied by at least one parent**, to attend worship services throughout the year. We require this for the following reasons:

- To improve familiarity with the service for both students and parents. The more you are present, the more you will feel comfortable at services.
- Because communal prayer is the primary expression of Judaism. Bar/Bat Mitzvah ought not to take place as an isolated event, but in the context of community worship.
- To improve familiarity with the liturgy, customs, and music of TSE.
- As a “modeling” experience for a child’s own Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- To foster connections with the extended TSE community.

One year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony you should begin attending services more regularly as a family and services can be counted toward the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service requirement.

The specific requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation are as follows:

- 1 Friday Evening Shabbat Service
- + 5 Saturday Morning Shabbat Services
- (6 in total that also count toward your child’s Religious School grade requirement)

Note: The year of your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students will be invited to participate in blessing the Torah at the Simchat Torah Family Service.

Please arrive on time, as we cannot give service credit if your child is more than 5 minutes late for Shabbat services. This requirement must be completed one month before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, prior to the first rehearsal with the Rabbi. As Saturday Morning Services don’t occur every week and students have many obligations as their Bar/Bat Mitzvah approaches, we highly recommend that you plan ahead and don’t wait until the final weeks before the ceremony to complete your service requirement. Please visit the Temple website, [www.shaariemeth.org](http://www.shaariemeth.org), for the complete schedule of Saturday Morning B’nai Mitzvah services.

## **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS:**

In addition to the obligation of membership at TSE, there are various costs incurred by the Temple specifically pertaining to Bar/Bat Mitzvah which require reimbursement.

### **B'NAI MITZVAH FEE**

The Board of Trustees has established a Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee of \$1100 per child.

This fee includes:

- The cost of lessons with the Cantor, audio recordings, books, and study materials.
- Two food baskets that are placed on the bima for Friday and Saturday services, which represent a donation to our community food pantry, Open Door.
- Childcare, which is also provided on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. Please notify guests who may be bringing young children.
- The Oneg Shabbat on the Friday evening prior to your ceremony, which is sponsored by you and the other Bar/Bat Mitzvah families sharing the date. Please note that when we hold a Holiday Family Service (Simchat Torah, Chanukah, etc.), there is no Oneg due to overcrowding and problems of safety. The Oneg for the Tu B'shevat Family Service may be replaced by a Tu B'shevat Seder.

All fees can be paid to Temple Shaari Emeth in one check or over time, but must be paid before the first lesson with the Cantor. The B'nai Mitzvah Fee will be billed to your Temple account one year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. All fees are subject to change by our Board of Trustees and families will be notified as soon as possible if such a change is made.

## **OPTIONAL EXPENSES:**

### **ORGAN OR PIANO MUSIC**

Some families choose to have an accompanist to provide music during the Saturday Morning Service at their own expense. Currently, the cost is \$165 and this is subject to change. The decision to have an organist or pianist on Saturday morning must be unanimous among the families participating. Consult the Cantor for more information.

### **SIMCHA PLAQUES**

If you plan to purchase a plaque for our lobby wall, we recommend that you order it at least three months in advance so it will be here on time. The cost of \$180 must be paid in full before the order is sent to the engraver. Placement of plaques is at the discretion of the Temple but you may reserve an adjacent space for another simcha with a \$75 deposit. If you have reserved a plaque, we require payment in full three months prior to your simcha in order to ensure ample time for engraving and delivery. A Simcha Plaque Form can be found at the end of this Handbook.

### **WALKWAY BRICKS**

You can now immortalize your support for Temple Shaari Emeth by purchasing a lifelong commemorative brick for our new paver walkway. The commemorative brick you create will be a timeless tribute to honor your family, remember this special occasion, and proudly show your support for Temple Shaari Emeth and our community. Please go to [www.shaariemeth.org/walkway](http://www.shaariemeth.org/walkway) for more information and to purchase a brick.

## **SOCIAL HALL RENTAL**

Families can choose to rent our Social Hall to host a Kiddush luncheon or reception following the Saturday Morning Service. The cost is \$500 for a Kiddush up to 2 ½ hours and \$800 for a reception lasting over 3 hours. The room is rented on a first come, first served basis. Families can reserve the Social Hall once all 4<sup>th</sup> Grade students have received their Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates in a given year. You can reserve the Social Hall by filling out an application at [www.shaariemeth.org/roomrental](http://www.shaariemeth.org/roomrental).

Note: Our Board of Trustees requires that the above fees, all dues (including the current month), assessments, Religious School Registration fees, and other financial obligations be paid before the first lesson with the Cantor, which will be about six months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Please do not be offended if you receive a reminder from us before your child begins attending lessons.

## **COMMUNAL OBLIGATIONS**

### **USHERING AT SATURDAY MORNING SERVICE**

Parents serve as ushers at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service prior to their child's big day, usually in the weeks immediately prior to your own child's service. This cooperative system assures that there will be an adequate supply of ushers for everyone. Preserving decorum in our Sanctuary and the prayerful mood of our services is a paramount value of our congregation. Ushers will work as a team, together with a Head Usher provided by the Temple. As ushers, you will ensure that all worshippers, adults as well as children, show respect for the sanctity of the service, the leaders, the celebrants, and the Temple facility. Ushering will also provide you with an opportunity to see a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service in action.

You should be familiar with our decorum and procedures before ushering. A copy of the Usher Guidelines is provided at the end of this Handbook (see Appendix VII). Your family is required to provide two adult ushers and ushers remain briefly after the service to help put away the prayerbooks. Please do not plan to leave early. Your Saturday morning ushering assignment will be sent to you three to four months ahead of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date as part of the packet that contains the rehearsal schedule.

Important: We take ushering responsibilities *very seriously* and ask that you do the same. Please cancel your assigned date only in an emergency. You are responsible for reaching out to other parents to find a substitute in your absence. If you must cancel, please notify the Rabbi's Assistant as soon as possible so that she can give you names of others to contact. Please come prepared to do the job that is required: part greeter, part police, and above all, a symbol of the respect that we wish to give our service and our congregational community.

### **ONEG SHABBAT ASSISTANCE**

Parents are also expected to set up, serve, and clean up at an Oneg Shabbat prior to their child's date as part of our communal system. Your family is required to provide two adults to assist with Oneg and Oneg helpers remain after the conclusion of the Oneg to assist with cleaning up. Please do not plan to leave early. Your Friday night Oneg date will also be included as part of the packet you receive three to four months ahead of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

When you joined the Temple, you signed an agreement as part of your membership committing your child to participate in Confirmation in 10<sup>th</sup> Grade. We ask you to make this commitment at the start of your child's education because studies have shown that Jewish identity grows stronger with each year of continued study beyond Bar and Bat Mitzvah. Jewish education is a life-long process and students are urged to continue in our Religious School through 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Mini-Courses and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation. Many of our students also choose to continue in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade in our Post-Confirmation course of monthly study with the Rabbi, which culminates in a High School Graduation. Our students who *do* continue after Bar and Bat Mitzvah report later in life how valuable these years of study and social interaction proved to be in the shaping of their Jewish identities.

We also have an outstanding youth program with a variety of activities both in and out of the Temple, organized by professional advisors. Our YOSHE (Youth of Shaari Emeth) youth groups offer wonderful opportunities for students to meet and make new friends and connect with Jewish life while having fun. YOSHE Juniors or YOCO, our 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade group, offers community service activities as well as exciting trips outside of the Temple. YOSHE Seniors, for 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders, actively plans and runs their own events, including Midnight Run, creative services, overnights, and other special programs.

Temple Shaari Emeth is affiliated with NFTY, the North American Federation of Temple Youth, which is the Reform Movement's youth program. Students in grades 6-12 can take advantage of regional, national, and international experiences. NFTY events inspire teens to be their best selves and connect them with the wider Jewish community. For more information, visit [www.nfty.org](http://www.nfty.org).

## TRAVEL TO ISRAEL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

**NFTY In Israel:** There is no better way to reinforce your child's commitment to the Jewish people than through a trip to Israel, sponsored by NFTY, our North American Reform Youth organization. Your child will receive a \$250 scholarship from NFTY at their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. The approximate cost for a six-week, fully chaperoned, guided tour of Israel is similar to summer camp. The summer at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> Grade is the ideal time for your child to experience this trip. For more information, visit [www.nftyisrael.org](http://www.nftyisrael.org).

**URJ Heller High:** Teens can immerse themselves in the richness of the land, culture, people, and history of Israel, all while earning high school credit, during this semester in Israel program. For more information, visit [www.hellerhigh.org](http://www.hellerhigh.org).

We also encourage you to consider one of the great summer programs available through the Reform Movement:

**Camp Harlam:** Located on more than 300 acres in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, campers entering grades 3-12 enjoy the finest in Jewish camping with swimming, sports, arts, adventure elements, and so much more. For more information, visit [www.campharlam.org](http://www.campharlam.org).

**6 Points Sci-Tech Academy:** Located on the campus of the Governor's Academy outside Boston, MA, campers entering grades 5-10 explore robotics, video game design, environmental science, digital media, and a host of other fun activities in a friendly setting with those who

share similar interests. Teens in grades 10-12 can invent and discover in Israel or as a CIT. For more information, visit [www.6pointsscitech.org](http://www.6pointsscitech.org).

**6 Points Sports Academy:** Located at the American Hebrew Academy in Greensboro, NC, Jewish athletes entering grades 4-11 participate in top-level sports training alongside the beloved traditions of Reform Jewish camping. For more information, visit [www.6pointssports.org](http://www.6pointssports.org).

**6 Points Creative Arts Academy:** Located at the Westtown School in West Chester, PA, young artists entering grades 3-10 are drawn together in a dynamic community to experience camp, explore their passions, and improve their skills in culinary arts, dance, instrumental or vocal music, theater, and visual arts while being trained by expert mentors. For more information, visit [www.6pointscreativearts.org](http://www.6pointscreativearts.org).

**Kutz Camp:** Located in picturesque Warwick, NY, Kutz Camp brings together hundreds of the most talented and committed Reform Jewish teen leaders for a summer of fun, learning, and leadership training. For more information, visit [www.kutzcamp.org](http://www.kutzcamp.org).

**Urban Mitzvah Corps New Jersey:** Located on the campus of Rutgers University in New Brunswick, teens come together to explore their Jewish identities through the lens of social justice and engagement with new communities. Participants engage in intense hands-on learning and select a volunteer experience that best suits their interests in areas like food and economic justice and learning to work with the underprivileged, elderly, and mentally and physically disabled. For more information, visit [www.mitzvahcorps.org](http://www.mitzvahcorps.org) (click on Programs and New Jersey).

**Mitzvah Corps:** Choose from domestic or international hands-on social justice experiences in locations like the American South, Pacific Northwest, Costa Rica, Ecuador, or Israel. Teens travel the world, build meaningful relationships, and create lasting change. For more information, visit [www.mitzvahcorps.org](http://www.mitzvahcorps.org).

Scholarships for all of these programs are available through our Youth Scholarship Fund, the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey, and many camps offer their own scholarships. One Happy Camper offers grants to all eligible children attending Jewish summer camp for the first time. For more information and to search their scholarship database, visit [www.jewishcamp.org](http://www.jewishcamp.org). You can also consult the Rabbi for more information about scholarships.



## THE SERVICE: A FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF SHABBAT

### GETTING READY FOR THE BIG DAY

The final two weeks leading up to the celebration of Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be a thrilling time for your family. This section includes a timeline and logistical information for the Friday Night and Saturday Morning Services to help make the inevitable hectic pace more manageable.

### FINAL REHEARSALS

The Rabbi's Assistant will schedule two final rehearsals with the Rabbi. The first rehearsal will usually be 10 days before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, on a Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. The final rehearsal usually takes place on the Thursday before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah weekend at 3:30 p.m.

At the first rehearsal, the Rabbi will make sure that all details between the families (at shared services) are fully coordinated. You will see how we alternate roles between the families throughout the service and review the parents' parts during the Friday night service.

If you are concerned about these details, please take reassurance in the knowledge that we have officiated at hundreds of services—sometimes three families a week—and that the choreography is easily learned. Additionally, the Rabbi and Cantor will be present on the bima to guide you at all times!

### DRESS

Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the entry of a child as a full-fledged member of the Jewish community. It is not by coincidence that we choose to hold this ceremony in our Sanctuary. The awarding of an aliyah (being called to the Torah) is among our tradition's highest honors. For this reason, families of B'nai Mitzvah, as well as participants on our bima, should dress with respect for the sanctity of our congregational Shabbat worship service.

**Proper dress for men:** pants, jacket, shirt, and tie.

**Proper dress for women:** knee-length (or longer) dress or suit, with covered shoulders and back.

Inappropriate dress includes strapless, back-less, and sleeveless clothing; plunging necklines; bare midriff; extremely short dresses; and party formals for women and tuxedos for men.

Shoulders, midriffs, and backs should be covered in our Sanctuary. Please advise all of your guests.

If you are concerned about the appropriateness of your clothing, please consult the Rabbi. She will happily look at pictures to make sure your dress is appropriate for the bima.

If your plans call for formalwear or "Black Tie" at your party, please allow time for those participating on the bima to change clothing after the service concludes. Private space is available at the Temple for changing.

It is the responsibility of the B'nai Mitzvah families to educate and inform guests and family members that attire sets the tone for the holiness of this special day. Your cooperation will help to create a meaningful, joyous, and sacred experience for our community.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Families are permitted to take pictures on Saturday morning before the service begins, starting as early as 9:00 a.m and ending by 10:00 a.m. You can call the Rabbi's Assistant to set up a time to take pictures. Each family will have 15 minutes on the bima for their family to take pictures and the Rabbi and Cantor will join you for pictures at 9:45 a.m. You are welcome to take pictures in the lobby or outside the Temple as well. Photography is not permitted during the service. Please be sure your guests are aware of this policy as well.

Note: For B'nai Mitzvah through June 2018, families who aren't able to change their photography to Saturday morning may still take pictures before the final rehearsal on Thursday. The Rabbi will be available for pictures on Thursdays. The Cantor's availability is not guaranteed. When Thursday pictures are completed, families can take a few minutes to change out of their formal clothing and then return to the Sanctuary for the final rehearsal.

Families can also choose to have the Saturday Morning Service videotaped. For a shared service, families must unanimously agree on **one** video person to record the service. The videographer needs to fill out the Videographer Requirements Form, which can be found at the end of this Handbook, and provide a copy of their certificate of insurance with Temple Shaari Emeth named as "Additional Insured". These documents must be submitted to the Executive Director one month before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. (See Appendix V for Guidelines for Photography and Videography.)

## MEANINGFUL GIFTS

We offer the following suggestions as meaningful gifts for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

- a. A *tallit* (prayer shawl) and/or *kippah* (yarmulke)
- b. A *yad* (Torah pointer), or other Judaica
- c. A Jewish Book or CD (Contact the Temple for suggestions.)
- d. Plant trees in Israel in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah (Visit the JNF Tree Center at [usa.jnf.org](http://usa.jnf.org) for more information.)
- e. An Israel Bond (Visit [www.israelbonds.com](http://www.israelbonds.com) for more information about Mazal Tov and eMitzvah bonds.)
- f. A simcha or chair plaque (See form at end of this Handbook.)
- g. *Tzedakah*, by making a special donation to the Temple or another charitable organization

Our Sisterhood Gift Shoppe has an unparalleled selection of Judaica and will work with you to order exactly what you are seeking for your special day. They can assist you with purchasing kippot for your guests and a tallit for your child. Contact Anita Miller at 732-740-0189 or [asmiller@optonline.net](mailto:asmiller@optonline.net) for any questions and to make an appointment.

## FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES

The immediate family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah participates in the Friday night service, preceding the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

## TIME

Friday night services begin **promptly** in our Temple Sanctuary—at 6:30 p.m. on holidays and the first Friday of every month and at 7:30 p.m. every other Friday of the month. Please arrive no later than 6:15 p.m. for the 6:30 PM service and no later than 7:15 p.m. for the 7:30 p.m. service.

## CANDLE LIGHTING

The Rabbi will call forward the B'nai Mitzvah families for the honors of lighting the candles and leading the Kiddush. Please come to the bima when your family is invited up. Parents go to the Rabbi and Cantor's podium and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah students go to the Menorah on the other side of the bima. A parent (usually the mother) of each child will read the English readings, light a Shabbat candle, and then join in reciting the blessing. You can find a recording of the candle lighting blessing at [www.shaariemeth.org/prayers](http://www.shaariemeth.org/prayers) and a copy of the words can be found at the end of this Handbook.

While the parents are lighting the candles, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates will also light the Menorah. If one child is lighting, he/she will light all seven candles. If two or three children are lighting, the lighting of the candles will be divided among the children. After lighting the menorah, students will join their parents at the Rabbi and Cantor's podium.

## KIDDUSH

The Rabbi will pass out cups of grape juice to the parents and students. A parent (usually the father) of each child will then participate in the Kiddush. The parents will read the English introduction and then say the blessing over wine. You can find a recording of the blessing at [www.shaariemeth.org/prayers](http://www.shaariemeth.org/prayers) and a copy of the words can be found at the end of this Handbook. The Cantor will lead us in the chanting of the entire prayer after which the Rabbi will collect the wine cups and wish you "Mazal Tov" and "Shabbat Shalom". You can then return to your seats.

## ALIYOT ON FRIDAY NIGHTS

Sometimes there are opportunities for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah families to provide family members with honors during the Friday night service. The following may sometimes be open for participation:

- 1) Carrying the Torah
- 2) Undressing/Dressing the Torah (*glilah*)
- 3) Saying the Blessing over the Torah (more than one person may participate)
- 4) Opening/Closing the Ark

If there is more than one family, we divide these honors evenly between the families. Assignment of honors is made at the first rehearsal with the Rabbi.

## ONEG SHABBAT

Following the Friday Night Service, the families co-sponsor a regular Oneg Shabbat. A portion of the cost of challah and pastries is included in the B'nai Mitzvah Fee. If you would like to supplement or embellish the Oneg or if you have any special requests, please speak to the Executive Director. Otherwise, your participation is automatically included.

## SATURDAY MORNING SERVICES

The main event!

### TIME

Saturday morning services begin **promptly** in our Temple Sanctuary at 10:30 a.m. Families are advised to indicate 10:15 a.m. on your invitations to ensure the prompt arrival of guests.

## **WHO ATTENDS?**

While no service at TSE is by invitation only, the great majority of attendees at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service will be people you have personally invited. Also present will be congregants, ushers (parents, volunteers, and members of our Board of Trustees), and a Board member who will make presentations from the bima during the service.

All worshippers are welcome at all Shabbat services at TSE. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is considered a significant part of our Shabbat worship experience. It is not a private ceremony reserved for guests of the celebrants. It is, however, a time for your family to rejoice together.

## **SEATING**

Parents will begin the service sitting in the front row of the Sanctuary during the Saturday Morning Service. We do not separate families on different sides of the congregation—worshippers are free to sit wherever they like. Many will choose, of course, to sit near family members, so frequently the congregation “self-segregates” in this fashion. Please work with the other families that share your day to determine where grandparents, siblings, and close relatives will sit.

## **PARTICIPATION OF NON-JEWS**

Temple Shaari Emeth warmly welcomes the participation of non-Jewish family and friends. We very much want you and all of your guests to feel welcome. Non-Jewish family members may participate fully in the candle lighting, Kiddush, and Torah passing. The Rabbi also goes out of her way to explain elements of the service to make those unfamiliar with services feel comfortable. Additionally, we offer a pamphlet in the lobby that describes what guests may see at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

## **KIPPAH (YARMULKE) AND TALLIT**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah may choose to wear a kippah and/or tallit. Kippot are provided by the Temple and families may wish to provide supplementary kippot for their guests. You are welcome to drop off your kippot at the Temple when you come to the final rehearsal with the Rabbi.

It is an ancient custom for service leaders to wear a tallit, symbolic of the mitzvot in which the Jewish people “wrap ourselves”. Tallit and kippah also make meaningful gifts from family members to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Many choose to wear a family heirloom tallit. No person, including the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, is required to wear a tallit or kippah at TSE.

## **PARTICIPATION OF LOVED ONES IN THE SERVICE**

### **Presntation of the Tallit**

You may choose a person or several people to present the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with a tallit at the beginning of the service.

### **Hakafah**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah, along with his/her parents and siblings, will participate in the parade with the Torah when it is taken from the ark.

### **Passing the Torah from Generation to Generation**

Before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called for the aliyah (blessing of the Torah), the Torah is passed down through the generations: from grandparents to parents to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We are also gratified and happy to include any great-grandparents in this ceremony.

At this moment in the service, we will call your family forward (grandparents, parents, and siblings) to stand in a row before the Ark, from eldest to youngest. We invite both Jewish and non-Jewish parents (or grandparents) to participate in this ritual. It is a powerful visual emblem of the meaning of the occasion, and we ask that you understand the sanctity of the moment as you prepare to pass the Torah to your child. Which takes us to...

### **The Parents' Blessing**

Before the Torah is passed, parents have the opportunity to share brief personal remarks reflecting on the significance of the occasion.

One or both parents may speak, and we ask that **remarks are kept to one page.**

We urge that remarks reflect one or more of the following themes: the significance of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah; of taking on the responsibilities of Jewish adulthood; of recognizing your child's spiritual/family heritage and legacy; of thanksgiving for having reached this special occasion; of acknowledging the sanctity of this moment, when a young person embraces Torah. The Rabbi will request to review a draft of your remarks at the first rehearsal with her.

At the end of the Parents' Blessing, both parents will recite the Shehecheyanu together. This blessing thanks God for allowing us to reach this season and this special moment in life. A copy of the words can be found at the end of this Handbook and a recording of the blessing can be found at [www.shaariemeth.org/prayers](http://www.shaariemeth.org/prayers).

After the Parents' Blessing and Shehecheyanu have been read, the Torah will be passed through the generations. The Rabbi will show you how this is done at each rehearsal. Then the family will gather around the student at the podium for the reading of the Torah. After the Bar/Bat Mitzvah has read from the Torah, grandparents and siblings return to their seats in the congregation and parents will sit on the bima while the student delivers his/her D'var Torah.

### **TEMPLE OFFICER AND GIFTS**

A member of our Temple's leadership, typically a member of the Board of Trustees, will join the clergy and B'nai Mitzvah students on the bima and will extend congratulatory wishes and gifts to the students at the end of the service. His/her participation is coordinated by the Temple. S/he will present the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with a Kiddush cup, candlesticks, and a copy of the Tanakh (the Jewish Bible).

The Rabbi will present students with a certificate for \$250 provided by NFTY (the North American Federation of Temple Youth) to be redeemed toward a NFTY trip to Israel during a student's High School years as well as a personalized Bar/Bat Mitzvah Certificate. The Cantor will also present the students with a wonderful collection of Jewish music.

### **MOTZI**

A Shabbat morning celebration ends with the prayers over the wine and challah.

## A FINAL WORD . . . FOR NOW

We know that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process can provoke anxiety. There are so many details to manage. Through it all, please accept our reassurance that we will be with you every step of the way to guide your family through the process.

We make it our business to make sure that every student succeeds. We take pride in every one, and look forward to celebrating with you and your dear ones.

Please use this Handbook as an ongoing resource. It contains very important information that you will find invaluable as the day of your celebration draws near.

**We urge you to consult this Handbook before panicking; we've prepared it so that you'll have the information you need at your fingertips.**

Know, however, that we are always ready to listen to your questions and concerns, and to work together toward a meaningful celebration.

Above all, we are grateful for your children and the trust you have given us, as together we prepare for a transformational and joyous moment in their lives and in the life of your family.

*Wait! There's more!*

*The remaining pages of this Handbook include helpful information that will assist you in getting ready for your celebration. Please read on!*

**APPENDIX I**  
**BAR/BAT MITZVAH COUNTDOWN CALENDAR**  
**(PUT ME ON YOUR REFRIGERATOR!)**

This timetable/checklist will help you ensure that the necessary preparation for becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is completed smoothly. It also helps us track each student's progress at each stage of his/her preparation. Please note that these are general guidelines. If your family has special needs or extenuating circumstances which would affect this process, please speak with Rabbi Panken, Cantor Wally, or our Religious School Director, Melissa Pescatore.

PLEASE NOTE: All dates are approximate.

THIRD GRADE:	Hebrew Instruction Begins Service Attendance Requirement Begins (to help build comfort & familiarity with prayer)
FOURTH GRADE:	Hebrew Decoding Instruction Parents attend 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Values and Orientation Program Dates Confirmed & Planning Begins
FIFTH GRADE:	Prayer Study Begins (Tallit Blessing, Barchu, Shema, Yotzer Or, Avot v'Imahot) Parents and Students participate in the 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Family Shabbat Experience Program (2 ½ hours on a Saturday morning)
SIXTH GRADE:	Prayer Study Continues (V'ahavta, Gevurot, Hoda'ah, Sim Shalom, Torah and Haftarah Blessings) Parents and Students participate in the 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Family B'nai Mitzvah Program (4 hours on a Sunday afternoon)
1 YEAR PRIOR:	Mitzvah Education Classes Begin Parents attend Bar/Bat Mitzvah Business Meeting B'nai Mitzvah Services Count toward Requirement B'nai Mitzvah Fee Billed (due before beginning with Cantor)
SEVENTH GRADE:	Prayer Study Continues Service Attendance Continues
8 – 10 MONTHS PRIOR:	Assessment Meeting with Cantor/Select Section of Torah Portion Learn How to Write a D'var Torah with Rabbi Panken
6 – 7 MONTHS PRIOR:	Begin Lessons with Cantor*
3 – 4 MONTHS PRIOR:	D'var Torah Due to Rabbi Panken
2 MONTHS PRIOR:	Mitzvah Education Requirements Completed and Folder Handed In
1 MONTH PRIOR:	Rehearsals with Rabbi Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service Requirements Completed Ushering & Oneg Duties Parents Write Their Prayer for Their Child

*\*Please note that this number represents "working months". For example, if your family is planning to go on vacation for a month, or your child will attend summer camp, do not include these months in your calculation of the total.*

## CHECKLIST FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH

### TORAH PORTION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Verses \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Attend 5 Saturday morning services  
at Temple Shaari Emeth

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Attend Friday night service  
at Temple Shaari Emeth

\_\_\_ Practice Hebrew for service

\_\_\_ Practice English for service

\_\_\_ Chant Torah portion

\_\_\_ Practice Haftarah portion

\_\_\_ Remind guests of expectations regarding dress and decorum

\_\_\_ Remind your child of the moral pledge you made regarding Confirmation

### HAFTARAH PORTION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Verses \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Photographer/Videographer Forms  
(1 month advance notice)

\_\_\_ Complete Questionnaire

\_\_\_ Temple dues current

\_\_\_ \$1100 B'nai Mitzvah Fee paid

\_\_\_ Review B'nai Mitzvah Handbook

\_\_\_ Parents practice Shabbat blessings  
and Shehecheyanu

\_\_\_ Parents practice Parents' Blessing

### DATES TO RECORD AND REMEMBER

Lessons with Cantor:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 \_\_\_\_\_

9 \_\_\_\_\_

10 \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsals with Rabbi:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

Date to serve Oneg Shabbat: \_\_\_\_\_

Date to usher on Saturday: \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX II  
TSE's "TEN STEPS TO SUCCESS":  
HOW TO PRACTICE FOR YOUR BAR/BAT MITZVAH

1. **BREAK IT DOWN.** Break up your parshah into parts – we like to separate each Torah/Haftarah section into phrases. Study the first 2-4-word phrase. Repeat it about 10-20 times. Make sure each time that the repetition is pronounced correctly. If you have a problem with one word, simply repeat that word over until you have it. Once one phrase is done, study the next phrase. When that phrase is done, go back to the beginning! Put the two phrases together. Then add the next phrase. Never go on to another phrase until everything previously studied is well known.
2. **DO IT AGAIN.** Repetition! The more often you practice your chanting and your Hebrew reading, the more accustomed you will become to the sounds of the text.
3. **CORRECT YOUR MISTAKES.** Always correct your mistakes thoroughly when you identify them. Chant or read the phrase the correct way three times and then go on.
4. **POINT TO THE WORDS.** Always study with the text in front of you, not just listening to the audio recording, and use your finger or a pencil to follow along! This will not only help you not lose your place on a page, but will also prepare you for Torah reading/chanting which is done with a pointer (yad).
5. **MIX IT UP.** Add some variety. You should not always study from the beginning. You should sometimes start from the end of your parshah, with the last phrase. Then study the second-to-last phrase and put them together. Or start in the middle. If you keep going back to the beginning, you'll start strong, but the other parts will be weaker.
6. **SPEAK UP.** *You must practice out loud!* Do not be embarrassed to practice LOUDLY! You need to hear yourself chanting or reciting the words in order to learn. And it will be a much more successful study session if you practice with conviction. Try standing at a high table or an ironing board to get the experience of reading/chanting at the podium.
7. **SLOW IT DOWN.** Practice *sslllooowwwlllyyy* . . . If you practice too quickly, you are likely to make mistakes which will need to be corrected later on. It's not a race.
8. **GET A PARTNER/LISTENER.** Study with someone else. Mom/Dad are perfect. Friends or stuffed animals also work, and there's always a mirror!
9. **DON'T FORGET THE ENGLISH.** There are some tricky/unfamiliar words throughout the service. Remember to *regularly* practice the English translations of your Torah and Haftarah, the prayers, and the service and page announcements.
10. **DON'T GIVE UP.** Have diligence and persistence. Never tell yourself that you can't do it. You can! Just have patience and it will happen.

APPENDIX III  
GUIDELINES FOR THE PARENTAL BLESSING  
AND SAMPLE PRAYERS

Rabbi Eliezer ben Rabbi Shimon said: A man is responsible for his son until the age of thirteen; thereafter he must say, “Blessed is the One who has freed me from the responsibility of this boy.”

- *Midrash Genesis Rabbah 63:10*

In our service, a parent is afforded the opportunity to acknowledge in public, and in a sacred setting, the joy and pride that parents feel at this moment. As importantly, s/he can use this time to share hopes and dreams for their child, particularly in relation to being called to the Torah. In other words, it’s a chance to express the meaning of this moment. Please do not write a roast for your child, nor should you list all of their afterschool activities.

Speak from your heart. This is the moment of passing Jewish tradition to your child. What do you want them to carry on from the Jewish tradition? Be sure to include what it means to you to see your child grow as a Jew and what you hope for their Jewish future. Include Judaism in what you say. Some parents pull from the themes of their child’s Torah portion. Make sure to let them know why you think being Jewish is important.

Either way, we ask that you prepare your remarks in advance and not improvise. The Rabbi will ask to review a copy of your remarks in advance of the service at the first rehearsal and you will have a chance to practice them. We are mindful that shared B’nai Mitzvah services are already long and potentially draining on participants and attendants, so we respectfully request that your remarks not exceed two minutes or 500 words. Crying, of course, is permitted and tissues will be available.

Make sure to include the Shehecheyanu at the end of your blessing and please practice so that you feel comfortable reciting the prayer. The Rabbi and Cantor are wonderful tutors and can assist as you need. The blessing is also available at [www.shaariemeth.org/prayers](http://www.shaariemeth.org/prayers).

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ,  
וְהַגַּעְנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,  
sheh-heh-cheh-ya-nu, v’kee-y’ma-nu, v’hi-gee-a-nu laz’mān ha-zeh.*

*Praised are You, Eternal our God, Source of the Universe,  
for giving us life, for sustaining us, for enabling us to reach this day.*

The Rabbi and Cantor are happy to discuss the Parents’ Blessing with you as you prepare for the occasion. Veteran Bar/Bat Mitzvah parents are also available to offer their insights. Rabbi Panken has some choice parental remarks on file that she’s happy to share with you if you need assistance.

*Mazal Tov!*

## SAMPLE PRAYERS

Into our hands, O God, You have placed Your Torah, to be held high by parents and children, and taught by one generation to the next.

Whatever has befallen us, our people have remained steadfast in loyalty to the Torah. It was carried into exile in the arms of parents that children might not be deprived of their birthright.

And now I pray that you, my child, will always be worthy of this inheritance. Take its teaching into your heart, and in turn pass it on to your children and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew, searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace. Thus will you be among those who labor to bring nearer the day when God will be One and God's name will be One.

Gates of Prayer

May your eyes sparkle with the light of Torah,  
And your ears hear the music of its words.

May the space between each letter of the scrolls  
Bring warmth and comfort to your soul.

May the syllables draw holiness from your heart,  
And may this holiness be gentle and soothing  
To you and all God's creatures.

May your study be passionate,  
And meanings bear more meanings  
Until life arrays itself to you  
As a dazzling wedding feast.

And may your conversation,  
even of the commonplace,  
Be a blessing to all who listen to your words  
And see the Torah glowing on your face.

Danny Siegel

## Traditional Parents' Prayer

Praised is God who has granted new responsibility to \_\_\_\_\_ and to us. As \_\_\_\_\_ begins to enjoy his/her new status among the Jewish people, a status which redefines our own role in his/her life, may God grant us the wisdom to continue as guides and counselors, allowing \_\_\_\_\_ to live in accordance with the teachings of our Torah as a responsible Jewish adult.

For a male: *Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-p'tarani mei-onsho she-la-zeh.*

For a female: *Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-p'tarani mei-onshah she-la-zeh.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has freed us of some responsibilities and conferred new ones upon \_\_\_\_\_.

The Rabbinical Assembly

## Praise in Time of Celebration

May the God of our people, the God of the universe, bless you. May the One who has always been our guide inspire you to bring honor to our family and to our people Israel.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man ha-zeh.*

We give thanks to You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this day of joy. *Amen.*

## Parents' Prayer (for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah)

On this Shabbat when our son/daughter becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we have come with him/her and our loved ones to join in worship and to offer our prayer of thanksgiving

We are grateful, O God, for the privilege of passing along the gift of life, which You gave us, thus sharing with You in the miracle of creation. We are grateful for the thirteen years of nurturing this life, for the unnumbered joys and challenges which these years have brought us. Praise to You, Adonai, for keeping us alive, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this day.

Bless our son/daughter, O God; watch over him/her, protect him/her, guide him/her. Help him/her to grow in body and mind, in soul and character. Keep him/her loyal to our people and to the teachings of our Torah. May his/her life be rich and rewarding. May all his/her deeds bring pride to us, honor to the house of Israel, and glory to Your name.

*Amen.*

## A Vision from Talmud

May you live to see your world fulfilled,  
May your destiny be for worlds still to come,  
And may you trust in generations past and yet to be.

May your heart be filled with intuition  
And your words be filled with insight.  
May songs of praise ever be upon your tongue  
And your vision be on a straight path before you.  
May your eyes shine with the light of holy words  
And your face reflect the brightness of the heavens.  
May your lips ever speak wisdom  
And your fulfillment be in righteousness  
Even as you ever yearn to hear the words  
Of the Holy Ancient One of Old.

- Babylonian Talmud, *Berachot* 17

## Tendering the Seed of Promise

O God, we have tendered  
With hope this seed  
Of our youth.  
We have watched  
From springtime  
The ripening and growth.  
Now come the harvest days  
And our child stands before You.  
Bless this life with wisdom  
To serve You with love.

## A Blessed Moment in Time

A Jewish home opens its heart,  
A child is born and its link  
To the generations is proclaimed.  
  
Today, that child, nearly grown,  
Is called to read from the Torah  
And is welcomed into the congregation.  
  
May this moment in time be blessed.

*Other sample prayers and ideas are available.  
Please contact the Rabbi with questions.*

APPENDIX IV  
PARENTS' BLESSINGS FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH

FRIDAY NIGHT PARENT BLESSINGS

Candle Blessing

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELOHEINU MELECH HA-OLAM,  
ASHER KEE-DE-SHA-NU B'MITZ-VO-TAV  
V'TZEE-VA-NU L'HAD-LEEK NEHR SHEL SHABBAT.

Kiddush (Wine)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELOHEINU  
MELECH HA-OLAM BO-RAY P'REE HA-GAFEN.

SATURDAY MORNING PARENT BLESSING

Prayer for Torah Passing: *Shehecheyanu*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ,  
וְהִגַּעְנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELOHEINU MELECH HA-OLAM,  
SHEH-HEH-CHEH-YA-NU, V'KEE-Y'MA-NU, V'HI-GEE-A-NU LAZ'MAN HA-ZEH.

## APPENDIX V GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah service is an occasion best captured with the lens of the heart. Photography—flash or other—is not permitted in the Sanctuary during worship. In addition, photography is not permitted during rehearsals. Many families choose to have a professional photographer take pictures the week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Whatever your arrangements, please follow the following guidelines. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

- Please call the Rabbi's Assistant to schedule a time for pictures on Saturday morning.
- A Torah scroll will be put out for you to take pictures with on the bima.
- Please advise your photographer not to adjust our Temple's bima fixtures—especially microphones, lights, and the like.
- Your photographer must provide the Temple with a certificate of insurance which specifically names Temple Shaari Emeth as "Additional Insured".
- No photographs may be taken during services, either on Friday or Saturday. This policy should be communicated by your family to the photographer and your guests in advance.

### VIDEOGRAPHY

- Videotaping is allowed on Saturday mornings.
- Only **one** videographer is allowed in the service so families must agree and make arrangements together for a shared service. The videographer will be stationed on the stage in the back of the Social Hall, which enables him/her to plug directly into the Sanctuary sound system.
- All videographers must provide the Temple with a certificate of insurance which specifically names Temple Shaari Emeth as "Additional Insured".

**Temple Shaari Emeth  
Videographer Requirements**

If you agree to accept the responsibilities listed below we welcome you, as videographer, to our Shabbat morning service.

- Sign the bottom portion of this form (keep a copy for yourself) and return a signed copy to the family that contracted you – at least one month before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.
- Be available to video our service on Saturday morning from 10:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (service starts promptly at 10:30 a.m. and ends by 12:30 p.m.), or as scheduled.
- Your video camera must be placed on a fixed tripod on the stage in our Social Hall (a large room situated to the rear of our Sanctuary) and must stay in place throughout the service. A back-up camera should be available in case of technical problems. You'll need a standard microphone cord to plug into our sound system. Only the available lighting in the Temple will be used. No auxiliary lighting may be brought in.
- Video may **not** be taken anywhere in or around the Temple, before or after the service (this does not refer to a Kiddush or Luncheon held at the Temple).
- Please be aware that by the direction of the Temple's insurance company, any vendor working in our building must provide Temple Shaari Emeth with a certificate of insurance which specifically names Temple Shaari Emeth as "Additional Insured". If the vendor cannot provide this specific type of certificate of insurance, we cannot permit them to work in the building. This provision is required of all photographers, caterers, disc jockeys, entertainers, and party planners.
- If you have any questions or comments relative to logistics or facilities at the Temple, please call the Temple Executive Director, Stuart Brown, at 732-462-7744.

-----  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Videographer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date

I agree to comply with the above regulations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## APPENDIX VI TEMPLE FACILITIES AND THEIR USE

### BIMA FLOWERS

Our Sanctuary has a permanent flower arrangement. Supplemental flowers are **not** permitted.

### FACILITY RENTAL AND OTHER INFORMATION

Our Social Hall is available to be rented for an additional fee of \$500 to \$800. If you wish to reserve the Social Hall for a Kiddush luncheon or reception following your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, you will be able to do so after the second of our 4<sup>th</sup> Grade date allocation meetings in a given year. The Social Hall is rented on a first come, first served basis, and a \$100 deposit is required when you rent the room. Visit [www.shaariemeth.org/roomrental](http://www.shaariemeth.org/roomrental) for more information and to submit a Room Rental Agreement. If you have any questions, please contact our Executive Director, Stuart Brown, at 732-462-7744 ext. 115 or [sbrown@shaariemeth.org](mailto:sbrown@shaariemeth.org).

Please be aware that by the direction of the Temple's insurance company, any vendor working in our building must provide Temple Shaari Emeth with a certificate of insurance which specifically names Temple Shaari Emeth as "Additional Insured". If the vendor cannot provide this specific type of certificate of insurance, we cannot permit them to work in the building. This provision is required of all photographers, caterers, disc jockeys, entertainers, party planners, etc.

For all other information regarding the use of our facilities for your celebration or for the service, kindly contact our Executive Director. Stuart Brown will be happy to discuss all of your arrangements with you.

### SIMCHA PLAQUES

If you plan to purchase a plaque for our lobby wall, we recommend that you order it at least three months in advance so it will be here on time. The cost of \$180 must be paid in full before the order is sent to the engraver. Placement of plaques is at the discretion of the Temple but you may reserve an adjacent space for another simcha with a \$75 deposit. If you have reserved a plaque, we require payment in full three months prior to your simcha in order to ensure ample time for engraving and delivery.

### WALKWAY BRICKS

You can now immortalize your support for Temple Shaari Emeth by purchasing a lifelong commemorative brick for our new paver walkway. The commemorative brick you create will be a timeless tribute to honor your family, remember this special occasion, and proudly show your support for Temple Shaari Emeth and our community. Please go to [www.shaariemeth.org/walkway](http://www.shaariemeth.org/walkway) for more information and to purchase a brick.

**SIMCHA PLAQUE ORDER FORM**

I WISH TO PURCHASE A SIMCHA PLAQUE ON THE LOBBY WALL IN HONOR OF THE FOLLOWING JOYOUS OCCASION, TO BE ENGRAVED AS INDICATED BELOW.

CURRENT PRICE - \$180 (Subject to Change)

THE FOLLOWING IS TO APPEAR ON THE PLAQUE:  
(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

22 spaces \_\_\_\_\_

19 spaces \_\_\_\_\_

22 spaces \_\_\_\_\_

19 spaces \_\_\_\_\_

(Number on left indicates maximum number of characters and spaces per line. The 4<sup>th</sup> line is optional)

YOU MAY RESERVE A PLAQUE LOCATION FOR A FUTURE SIMCHA WITH A DEPOSIT OF ½ OF THE CURRENT PLAQUE PRICE. THIS IS A RESERVATION FOR LOCATION ONLY.

THE BALANCE WILL BE DUE AT THE TIME OF THE ACTUAL ORDER, AND IS SUBJECT TO ANY PRICE INCREASE BEING CHARGED AT THAT TIME.

FULL PAYMENT FOR FUTURE ORDERS IS REQUIRED THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR SIMCHA IN ORDER TO INSURE AMPLE TIME FOR ENGRAVING AND DELIVERY.

DONOR'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

AMOUNT PAID \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX VII DECORUM: OUR EXPECTATIONS

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an occasion to bring together family and friends, so don't let family politics get in the way. You have the power to choose how your child will remember his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah day by how you act toward relatives. Don't pull your child apart emotionally; prove to your child that you love him/her more than you are at odds with a family member.

We rejoice to see so many young people fill our Sanctuary week after week to support their friends. However, large congregations—especially of adolescents—can become difficult to manage when guests lose sight of the sanctity of the occasion. Our ushers—of whom you are an integral part—will help all of us ensure the dignity of your family's milestone celebration.

All who worship at TSE are expected to adhere to the following four guidelines. Failure to do so will result, at an usher's discretion, in removal from our service and, at the usher's discretion, disciplinary measures that might include contacting a child's parents or clergy (if not from TSE), which could result in our Temple not welcoming back individuals who have previously disrupted our services.

Please familiarize yourself with the following guidelines:

- 1) When attending services, we will work together to create an atmosphere of respect, attentiveness, and appropriate joy.
- 2) Parents of upcoming Bar and Bat Mitzvah students will assist by ushering, by modeling attentive behavior, and by training other parents as ushers.
- 3) Students will behave at services in the way that they would like their friends to behave at their own Bar/Bat Mitzvah services.
- 4) All those attending services will treat our facilities, clergy, maintenance staff, and congregational members with the utmost respect.

We urge parental ushers and parents worshipping in the congregation at B'nai Mitzvah services to help us preserve these guidelines with vigilant attention to the behavior of young people in our Sanctuary, and by considering it a shared responsibility of all adults in our congregation to speak appropriately to students who are disrupting a service.

## USHER GUIDELINES

Thank you for ushering at services.  
The following is a list of guidelines explaining the role of the Ushers.

**Please arrive no later than 10:00 a.m.**  
**Check in with the Head Usher for any special directions or information.**

- A. Ushers should welcome guests in a warm manner and wish them “Shabbat Shalom”.
- B. The role of an usher is to help maintain decorum. In the spirit of creating sacred space, please be aware of the behavior around you. If people are using their phones, please ask them to step into the lobby so as not to disturb others. If congregants are talking, please ask them to be quiet. If small children are becoming disruptive, please offer the children a board book, invite their parents to utilize childcare in Room 1, or simply ask them to step out into the lobby for a break. Please make all these requests kindly and helpfully.
- C. Ushers should follow along during the service and be able to show guests where we are in the service. Please make sure that guests have a prayerbook and guide them to a seat, especially if they arrive after services have begun.
- D. If teens are acting up, ushers should stand near them to try to quiet them down. If they do not quiet down, ushers should split up those who are being disruptive. Ushers have the right to ask someone who is causing a disturbance to leave the Sanctuary.
- E. Ushers should hold guests at the door while the congregation is standing during prayer. People may return to their seats only after the congregation has been seated.
- F. Ushers should remind late guests to turn off their cell phones as they enter the Sanctuary.
- G. Ushers should know where tallit, kippot, siddurim, bathrooms, and childcare are located.
- H. During the Torah service, guests will be invited to raise their hand to ask for a Torah Commentary. Ushers should hand out the books, located under the memorial plaques on the side wall of the Sanctuary, to the guests that want them.
- I. Ushers should help straighten out tallit and kippot and put siddurim and Torah Commentary books away once services have ended.
- J. The Head Usher will assign the ushers as he/she sees fits in locations around the Sanctuary as needed.

APPENDIX VIII:  
COMMUNICATING TSE'S EXPECTATIONS TO YOUR GUESTS

We encourage you to share our community's expectations about dress and decorum with your invited guests. If you would like to send these expectations to your guests in advance, we suggest the following:

*An Important Note from Our Family*

*To Our Family and Dear Friends:*

*Our hope is to make \_\_\_\_\_'s Bar/Bat Mitzvah a joyful and memorable celebration. We wish for that joy to characterize not only the party, but also the service. However, we will be able to celebrate wholeheartedly only if all of us, especially our young guests, are mindful of certain expectations that we share with Temple Shaari Emeth.*

*Adults and children are asked to remain in our Sanctuary for the duration of the service, which will be approximately two hours, and to participate while refraining from extraneous talking. Younger guests may need to sit with parents or other adults to ensure appropriate decorum. We ask all adults in attendance to help us fulfill this important responsibility. We ask that you refrain from using cell phones in the Sanctuary. If you need to use them, please step into the hallway so as not to distract those around you.*

*We also ask that your attire reflect the sanctity of our Shabbat worship service. As such, we list below guidelines that have been provided by our Temple:*

- *Proper dress for men: pants, jacket, shirt and tie.*
- *Proper dress for women: knee-length or longer dress or suit.*

*Inappropriate dress includes strapless or back-less dresses, plunging necklines, bare midriff, extremely short dresses, party formals, and tuxedos for men.*

- *Shawls will be provided if necessary.*
- *Kippot (Yarmulkes) and Tallitot are available at the Temple for our guests who would like to wear them at the service.*

*If you are concerned that your child cannot meet these expectations, our family is comfortable with \_\_\_\_\_'s friends attending only the reception.*

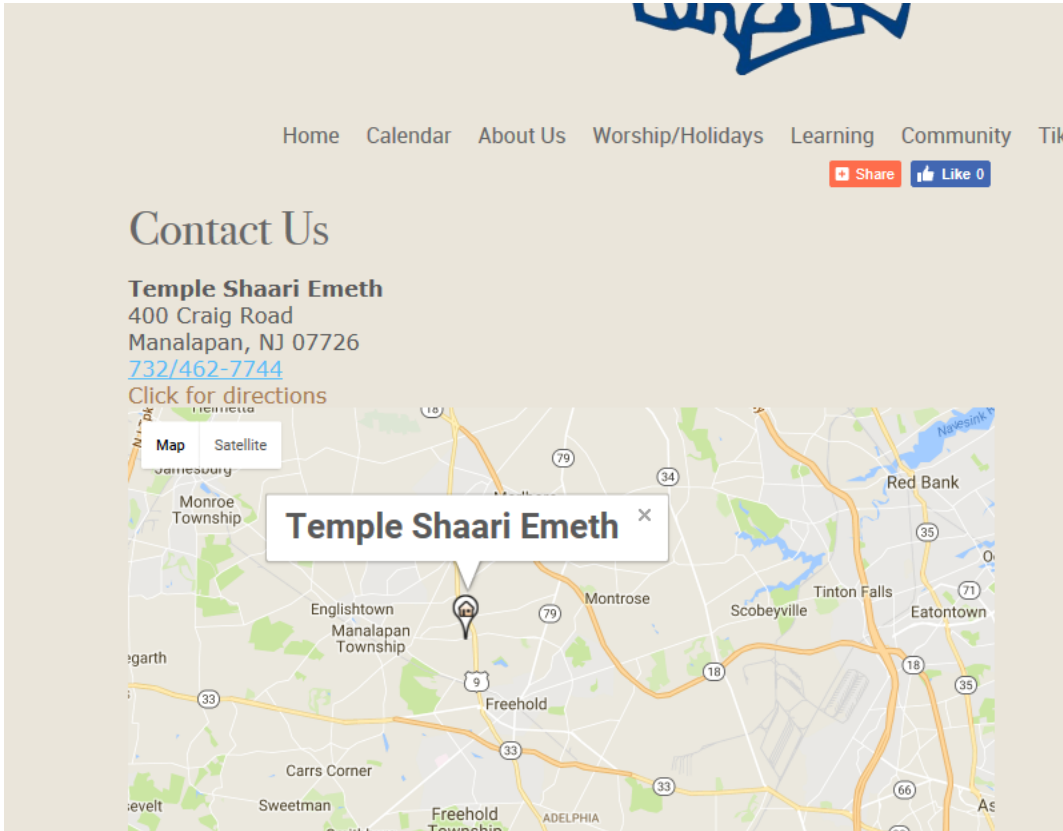
*Thank you in advance for helping to make our celebration all the more meaningful.*

*We look forward to sharing in this special day!*

*(Signatures)*

**APPENDIX IX:  
DIRECTIONS TO TEMPLE SHAARI EMETH**

Temple Shaari Emeth is located at 400 Craig Road, Manalapan, New Jersey 07726.  
Our telephone number is 732-462-7744.



The “Find Us” link under the “About Us” tab on our website, [www.shaariemeth.org](http://www.shaariemeth.org), includes a direct link to provide directions to the Temple.

Please remind your guests to look for our sign out front. They should enter the Temple through the Main Entrance, which is at the rear of the parking area. Please observe all traffic and safety signs, as our driveway is one-way.

WE'RE HERE FOR ANYTHING YOU NEED!

FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING:

ACCOUNT STATUS  
BOOKLETS AND MATERIALS  
DATE SCHEDULING  
DATE SWITCHING  
DRESS CODE/DECORUM  
D'VAR TORAH  
D'VAR TORAH MEETINGS WITH RABBI PANKEN  
FINAL REHEARSALS  
GIFTS/JUDAICA STORE AT THE TEMPLE  
HANDBOOK QUESTIONS  
LESSONS/APPOINTMENTS WITH CANTOR WALLY  
MAINTENANCE STAFF REQUESTS  
MEETINGS WITH RABBI PANKEN  
MITZVAH ED  
MUSIC AT SERVICES  
ONEG SHABBAT ON FRIDAY NIGHT  
PARENTS' BLESSING  
PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY  
RECEPTION PLANNING  
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
RESERVING TEMPLE FACILITIES  
SERVICE HONORS FOR LOVED ONES  
SPECIAL NEEDS  
TORAH READING AND TUTORING  
USHERING/ONEG DUTIES  
WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE

PLEASE CONTACT:

Michele Kornbluh  
Melissa Pescatore  
Melissa Pescatore  
Melissa Pescatore  
Rabbi Melinda Panken  
Rabbi Melinda Panken  
Audrey Medvin  
Audrey Medvin  
Anita Miller (732-740-0189 or [asmiller@optonline.net](mailto:asmiller@optonline.net))  
Melissa Pescatore  
Liz Schachter  
Stuart Brown  
Audrey Medvin  
Melissa Pescatore  
Cantor Wally Schachet-Briskin  
Stuart Brown  
Rabbi Melinda Panken  
Stuart Brown  
Stuart Brown  
Melissa Pescatore  
Stuart Brown  
Rabbi Melinda Panken  
Melissa Pescatore  
Cantor Wally Schachet-Briskin  
Audrey Medvin  
Stacey Pearl

Rabbi Melinda Panken 732-462-7744 ext. 116  
Cantor Wally Schachet-Briskin 732-462-7744 ext. 128  
Stuart Brown 732-462-7744 ext. 115  
Melissa Pescatore 732-462-7744 ext. 130  
Michele Kornbluh 732-462-7744 ext. 126  
Audrey Medvin 732-462-7744 ext. 123  
Stacey Pearl 732-462-7744 ext. 119  
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