



B'nai Mitzvah Program Handbook



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Dear Parents,

We welcome you to what promises to be a very exciting year for you and your entire family. While it is true that the greater part of the burden of getting ready will fall upon your child, you, and your family, and the congregation will have their own crucial role to play as well.

A Note on Terms: You will see the phrase ‘B’nai Mitzvah many times in this book. Functionally speaking, ‘Bnai’ is the plural of ‘Bar’ but many also indicate both ‘Bar’ and ‘Bat’ as a plurality. You may also see the word ‘Simcha’ - this means happy occasion.

Many people think that Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the culmination of a child’s Jewish Education. This could not be further from the truth! The focus and goal of the educational program at Temple Sinai is not to prepare your son or daughter to have the ability to ‘perform’ on one day, but to be literate, educated Jewish adults. This journey begins with Consecration, continues through Bar/Bat Mitzvah to Confirmation, and beyond. This progression is our obligation, as the Jewish community is commanded to engage in a lifetime of learning. This process should be meaningful and personal. WE want your child to highlight his/her talents and passions. WE want him/her to be able to express him/herself and connect the way they learn best with how they engage in his/her torah portion.

Note: Though your child might celebrate their Bar/Bat Mitzvah early in the 7th grade year, they are required to finish the year, and the community truly hopes and expects that they will continue to Confirmation.

WE have put together this handbook to define and explain your congregation’s B’nai Mitzvah Program. Our solemn oath is that each of us, and the staff of Temple Sinai, will work with you and your family to ensure that every child lives up to his or her full potential. What we expect in return is that you will be our partners in this task. If each of us does our part together, we will succeed.

Please take the time to familiarize yourselves with all the materials contained herein. Do not hesitate to ask questions. Mazel Tov!

Rabbi Samantha Kahn



Chazzan Cliff Abramson



Bethany Leinweber



THE MEANING OF BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an important step in the spiritual growth of a young Jewish person. The words, “Bar” or “Bat” Mitzvah mean - son or daughter of the Commandment. Our hope is that in learning Jewish prayers, customs, history and teachings, our children will come to affirm Jewish values as a source of guidance and ennoblement in their lives.

THE HISTORY OF BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

Though the origins of the term Bar Mitzvah (Son of the Commandment) go back thousands of years, the Bar Mitzvah ceremony as we experience it today began to appear about the 14th century. It evolved into a joyous celebration during the 16th century. A boy was considered a full member of the religious community, and was given an Aliyah, the honor of an invitation to ascend the bema to share in the Torah service. It symbolizes the young person’s change to a more elevated and responsible status in the community.

A similar rite of passage for girls, Bat Mitzvah (Daughter of the Commandment), began in the mid-Twentieth century. In our Reform Movement, girls have all the same honors and expectations as boys for this simcha. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah receives certain privileges and assumes certain responsibilities. Depending on the academic accomplishments of the individual, the Bat or Bar Mitzvah candidate’s participation in the service may vary from reciting a few blessings to conducting the entire Shabbat service. The central achievement is reading or chanting from the Torah and reciting the day’s Haftarah. It was the custom among the Sephardic Jews (i.e., those Jews living in the Mediterranean countries during the Middle Ages) for the service to be followed by a party at which the Bar Mitzvah would deliver a scholarly dissertation for which he would be rewarded with gifts. The tradition of the party and the gifts has survived, but the dissertation has been replaced by a moral lesson usually derived by the student from the Torah or Haftarah readings and delivered as part of the worship service.



BAR/BAT MITZVAH IN REFORM JUDAISM AS PRACTICED AT TEMPLE SINAI

At Temple Sinai becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is one exciting moment on the continuum of Jewish learning. The purposes of this life cycle event are to enhance the child's self-esteem and to help nurture an identification with his or her Jewish community. Family participation is vital to the success of these endeavors.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is celebrated by participating in the Friday evening service and helping to lead either the Shabbat morning service or Saturday evening service. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony demonstrates that the student has:

1. Proudly identifies as Jewish
2. Reached a significant level of Jewish learning
3. Made a commitment to continue his/her religious education at our congregation through at least ninth grade and hopefully through the end of High School.

In Jewish tradition, a person is obligated to continue to study his/her Jewish heritage well beyond age thirteen. At the age of thirteen, the student is barely able to begin to grasp the true importance and significance of Jewish teaching. Therefore, as a prerequisite for the celebration of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, an agreement by child and parent to continue formal Jewish studies through the ninth grade is made.

Please note: Even though this agreement focuses on continuing their Religious education through the significant ceremony of Confirmation, Jewish learning is a lifelong process and our hopes is they will continue their religious education and involvement in Jewish community not only through confirmation, but throughout High School, college and beyond.

PREPARATION AND OBLIGATIONS

Working with Rabbi Kahn

Approximately 12 months prior to your child's simcha, parents join the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student to meet with Rabbi Kahn and go over details, questions, and expectations. Before this meeting, please fill out and bring with you the "**BAR/BAT MITZVAH INFORMATION SHEET**" which can be found at the end of this packet. That will enable Rabbi Kahn to assign your Torah reading. After that, you will not formally have meetings with Rabbi Kahn scheduled for a few months, but you are always invited to come by and say hello or to schedule additional personal meetings.

Approximately twenty weeks prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, you should reach out to Rabbi Kahn and arrange a series of meetings for her to work one on one with your child. The primary purpose of these meetings is to help your child prepare his/her D'var Torah, a commentary and teaching on their Torah portion. An added benefit is the opportunity to establish a more personal relationship between the student and the Rabbi.

Approximately 8 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you will meet with Rabbi Kahn and Chazan Abramson to show them what you've learned. After this, based on the students shown skill at this meeting, the Rabbi will design the service experience. The Rabbi is responsible for the content and conduct of each service. She is determined to find the ways by which the entire B'nai Mitzvah

experience may become as holy and worthy as possible. The Rabbi welcomes creative approaches to B'nai Mitzvah, please discuss any ideas with her directly so she can try and make them possible. She is always available to meet privately with each Bar and Bat Mitzvah family added times to make sure that all questions are answered and everyone is prepared for the service. You can find a link to schedule an appointment with her on the Temple website.

Working with Chazzan Abramson

Approximately 12 months prior, after meeting with Rabbi Kahn, your child will meet with Chazzan Abramson for an initial Hebrew assessment. Based on that assessment, Chazzan will provide materials for at home practice. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students will then have approximately three months to practice and polish what they already know, before meeting with Chazzan again 9 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, for a formal Hebrew evaluation. The student must be able to fluently read Hebrew at this point. If not, the date of the event will be rescheduled.

If moving forward with the current date, students will receive their Torah portion resources. They will be expected to come once a week on their scheduled day and time for a 30-minute appointment. Your student will be provided with approximately 20 mentoring lessons with Chazzan, and you should bring all your materials to each lesson.

After the meeting with Chazzan and Rabbi Kahn approximately 8 weeks before the simcha, no new material will be introduced, however Chazzan will continue meeting with you weekly to help polish all your prayers and blessings. Chazzan will help you to feel extremely confident in leading services by having you practice chanting from the Torah as well as reading and chanting from the Siddur in the Sanctuary. One or two weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Chazzan will conduct a full rehearsal with your family to review ceremony participation and honors.

Student Requirements

It is important that the student utilizes his/her time wisely before meeting with Chazzan and starts preparing for his/her special day by studying/reading Hebrew for 15 minutes a day. Students **must** be enrolled in Temple Sinai Religious School at least 3 years prior to the B'nai mitzvah. During the year leading up to the bar/bat mitzvah, students **must** maintain regular attendance (at least twice a month) and participation in religious school classes. This is true even if a child has entered 8th grade at the time of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In addition, we also require their continued attendance AFTER their ceremony through the completion of the year. **There is an expectation that every one of our B'nai Mitzvah students will continue their religious education to Confirmation class in 9th or 10th grade.**

Family Requirements

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family will participate as Shabbat greeters twice during the year prior to their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The family will be thanked from the Bimah and mentioned in the weekly program. This will familiarize the family with the service and the congregation.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family will attend at least 3 Friday night and 3 Saturday morning services, as well as Adult High Holiday services the year prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date.

Even though we all have our own roles, we are working together as a team to make this a wonderful experience for you and your child.

GENERAL TEMPLE POLICY STATEMENTS AND HELPFUL INFORMATION

1. **Temple Facility Reservations** -- Application for use of the Temple facilities for your luncheon or dinner *must be made* through the Temple office or on shulcloud. We recommend reserving the date at least one year prior to the event. Attached you will find all guidelines and requirements, as well as rental fees for the social hall, catering, and use of other Temple Sinai resources.
2. **Kiddush** -- Families are required to provide a Kiddush following services for the entire congregation on Shabbat morning. This Kiddush can be as simple as Challah and wine, or it can be a more elaborate celebration.
3. **Oneg (Welcome Reception) Options** -- The family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah traditionally hosts the entire Oneg Shabbat, or shares the hosting with another family who is also celebrating a simcha (baby naming, anniversary, adoption of Judaism, etc..). There are some options available for participation in the Friday evening Oneg Shabbat. Please refer to the page containing the Kiddush contract. It is customary for Jews to share their Simchas with the Congregation. You should coordinate your desires regarding this Oneg and the Saturday morning Kiddush with the Temple office. If providing a Kiddush or Oneg will cause a financial hardship, arrangements can be made with the Temple office.
4. **Flowers** -- Bima flowers enhance the beauty of our synagogue for Sabbath worship. You must order the Bima flowers through the Temple office due to Chazzan's severe allergy issues. Notification of your choice must be made at least one month prior to your date. *In lieu of flowers, you may beautify the Bima with a basket containing items that can be donated to charitable organizations.*
5. **Times** -- Invitations should invite people to the service at 10:30 a.m. or 5:00p.m. and should read "Bar or Bat Mitzvah Service."
6. **Honors** -- There are a variety of honors that a family may bestow upon their loved ones during the B'nai mitzvah ceremony. This may include but are not limited to: Aliyot, opening/closing the Ark, and reading selected prayers. The Chazzan will be able to provide more guidance and advice on what honors are available and how they might be distributed. See attached form that must be turned in a week prior.
7. **Tallit & kippah** -- We invite the wearing of tallit (prayer shawl) and kippah (skull cap or yarmulke) by both boys and girls during worship on Saturday, and just a kippah on Friday evening. We can provide suggestions as to where these can be purchased or we can provide 'loaners' if necessary.
- 8.. **Photographers** - Photos may be taken before and after the service on the bimah and with lighting. During the service, no flash photography is allowed and photographers must remain in the back of the sanctuary, behind the pews.

9. **Live streaming** – If requested, the temple is happy to offer live streaming of the service. This way, if you have friends or relatives who can't make it in person, they can view the services from their ipad or computer by going to our website, www.templestinai-sarasota.org.
10. **Rental contract** -- and **caterer rules** are enclosed in this booklet
11. **Ushers** -- Parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates should ask members of their families (or friends) to serve as ushers during the service. A copy of the guidelines for ushering is available in our Temple office. Ushers must be provided with a copy of the instructions.
12. **Temple Gifts** – A member of the Board of Trustees will present your child with the Temple gift(s). If there is a particular board member that is close with your family you may request their presences.
13. **Financial obligations** -- You may only secure your bar/bat mitzvah date if you are in good standing with your congregation. A reminder that **All** dues, religious school fees and financial obligations due to the Temple, must be paid no fewer than thirty (30) days before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
14. **Rabbi** -- The Rabbi of our Temple, or her designate, must officiate at all religious ceremonies.
15. **“Differences” and Inclusion** -- If parents are divorced or the child's name is different from the parents, please clarify how he/she is to be addressed. If there are other special dynamics, please inform the clergy. All parents and family members are embraced exactly as you are and invited to participate fully in this ceremony, as much or as little as you are comfortable. Everyone is included and welcome. We invite all parents and all members of a family to join in a child's B'nai Mitzvah celebration, regardless of their faith, gender, race, sexual orientation, family of origin, marital status or any other possible difference we may have forgotten. Seriously - Temple Sinai truly welcomes you, and everyone may be included in this special day!
16. **Thank You Notes** -- When you are ordering your invitations, make sure to order “Thank You” notes. Have your child list the gifts as soon as they are received. Then he/she can check off the donor's name when a note has been written. “Thank you” notes may be written one week after the gift is received. Parents should oversee notes and encourage the child to keep up with acknowledgments. Thank you notes should be written to Temple auxiliaries who give gifts.
17. **Etiquette** -- We strongly recommend that you and your child invite **ALL** students of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. No child should be left out. We also suggest that you become Balaboostehs and bake for your children's classmates Onegs. This supplements the Onegs in a lovely way.
18. **Dress Code** – It is expected that your child and his/her guest be dressed appropriately and respectfully for both the service and the reception. The following expectations are to be adhered to: Dress pants, suits, nice skirts or dresses only. No t-shirts, shorts or flip flops. Shoulders must be covered.

19. **Behavior/Sanctuary** -- We expect our students and their guests to behave appropriately and respectfully during the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony. A child will be removed immediately from the sanctuary if they do not demonstrate proper behavior. Electronic devices must be turned off before services begin or they will be taken away and returned after services. The students are expected to worship with the congregation and give the candidate his/her full attention and participation. It is expected that our bar/bat mitzvah students set an example for invited guests. Parents are to discuss appropriate sanctuary behavior during a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and worship service with guests, especially if a child is present without an accompanying adult. Respect for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate as well as for the endeavor of worship must be maintained.

20. **Behavior/ Reception** -- If your reception is held at the Temple, you are responsible for the supervision of the young adults and children. You will be required to reimburse the Temple for the cost of a security guard to be present during the time of your reception. Furthermore, it is your responsibility to inform your children and their guests that they are not allowed in rooms other than the social hall and the bathrooms during the time of the reception. The sanctuary, classrooms and offices are off-limits. Families will be held accountable if any damage is done to our building during your event. *If adults are drinking, it is imperative that you as the host/hostess are sure there is a designated driver (or uber/lyft) to ensure the safety of them and their children.*

BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE OUTLINE

Friday Night Shabbat Services

- Parents join in lighting candles
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah participates by leading two prayers

Shabbat Morning and Evening Services

- Family meets in the Family Room ten minutes before the service begins. (At this point, Tallit blessing may be said privately)
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah walks in with Rabbi, Chazzan, parents, and siblings.
- Parents are seated in the congregation in the first row with siblings.
- The clergy begin the service with a welcome and opening song.
- (Optional) Parents may be invited to give charge to Bar/Bat Mitzvah while giving of Tallit with blessings recited by the student.
- Formal prayer begins.
- **Note: Evening services begin with Havdalah*
- Rabbi will invite Bar/Bat Mitzvah to help lead parts of the service, according to their ability.
- Torah is removed from the Ark and symbolically passed through the generations, followed by the Torah processional (hakafah)
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants Torah (at least one portion/aliyah, as many as 3 aliyot).
- **Note: If a family chooses to have other family members or friends read Torah as well, that is permitted.*
- Torah is lifted (hagbah) and dressed (galilah) and put on stand.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants Haftarah blessings, chants or reads Haftarah portions and chants closing blessings.
- Torah is returned to the Ark
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah gives D'var Torah
- Rabbi blesses Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- (Optional) Parents speak, offering a blessing if they already gave a charge.
- Board of Directors representative presents gifts
- Rabbi leads closing prayers (Aleinu and Mourner's Kaddish)
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads kiddush and Motzi
- (can have sibling/parents/friends join)



PRAYER CHECKLIST:

The document attached provides an outline regarding which prayers students will be responsible for during the service. It will be useful to refer to this while you are preparing for your ceremony. Remember however this is not mandatory or all inclusive. Each student will be encouraged to live up to his/her full potential. Our new website will have all these prayers with links to hear Chazzan chanting/singing them so your child can practice online.

B'NAI MITZVAH TIMELINE:

AT LEAST 3 YEARS PRIOR

Child will enroll in and attend Temple Sinai Religious School

You may secure a date if your family is in good standing with the congregation.

1-2 YEARS PRIOR

Family will attend a B'nai Mitzvah Retreat where they will meet Clergy and the Director of Education.

12 MONTHS PRIOR

Family will meet with Rabbi Kahn to go over details, questions, expectations, and requirements.

Students will meet with Chazzan and/or Bethany for Hebrew evaluation. Students will receive Torah portion resources if they are reading Hebrew fluently.

9 MONTHS PRIOR

Geveret Bethany, Chazzan, and Rabbi will decide if we are postponing b'nai mitzvah OR MOVING FORWARD. If moving forward, student's will begin weekly meetings with Chazzan. Parents are required to be in the room with Chazzan at every meeting for the first month and possibly more - will be determined by Chazzan.

20 WEEKS PRIOR

Students will begin working with Rabbi Kahn on D'var Torah

2 MONTHS PRIOR

Tablet article form/photo are emailed to Mickie Kaye

D'var Torah is written

Prayers, blessings, Torah, and Haftarah have been learned

Student's participation in service is determined

Weekly meetings with Chazzan continue to practice all you have learned.

1 MONTH PRIOR

Student begins practicing in the Sanctuary

WEEK OF THE SERVICE

Parents attend a rehearsal.

Honors form is completed and turned in

DAY OF B'NAI MITZVAH

Arrive early in service attire and meet Rabbi Kahn in the Family Room.



Bar/Bat Mitzvah	“Son/Daughter of the Commandment”
Bimah	Pulpit
Aliyah	“Going Up” to read from the Torah
Haftarah	A selected reading from the Prophets/read after the Torah
Berachot	Blessings
Shabbat	Sabbath
Erev Shabbat	Sabbath Eve
Tallit	Prayer Shawl
Simcha	A joyous occasion
Sefer Torah	Scroll of the Torah
Aron Hakodesh	The Holy Ark
Ketuvim	Writings
Kiddush	Blessing over wine
Mazel Tov	Congratulations and Good Luck
Ner Tamid	Eternal Light
Yad	Pointer
Torah	The Five Books of Moses
Oneg	Joy Delight...term referring to social gathering to celebrate Shabbat
Talmud Torah	“The study of Torah” - Mitzvah of Jewish Study
Tzedakah	Righteousness or helping others
Hamotzi	Blessing over Bread
Challah	Bread
Kippah/Yarmulke	Head covering

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Announcement Form

Bar/Bat Mitzvah announcements are printed in the Temple Sinai Tablet one month prior to the special day. Color photos are acceptable (No Polaroid's please). Please email them to: mickietablet@gmail.com. The form and photos should be returned no later than 2 months prior.

CONTACT PERSON:

TELEPHONE (daytime):

ADDRESS:

(someone we can call if there are any questions)

First, Middle, Last: _____

son/daughter of _____

of (city) _____

will be called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah on _____ (day/date)

A student at: (middle school): _____

He/She is (list honors, religious activities, hobbies, organizations, sports, etc.)





FAQs:

Q: Does Temple Sinai require my child to have a mitzvah project?

A: Yes and a tzedakah project!

Q: What's the difference between mitzvah and tzedakah?

A: mitzvah is doing with hands taking your time and effort, students can donate their time or talent - a little bit of their treasure! When you become a Jewish adult, you make the world a better place so becoming a bat or bar mitzvah means *actively* working to make the world a better place tzedakah is giving to charity - raising money for an important cause, typically seen as a moral obligation

Q: What do parents do during the morning service?

A: During the service, the parents will give charge to their child, present their child with his/her tallit, and be called up for an aliyah blessing for the reading of the Torah.

Q: Are siblings allowed to be involved in the service?

A: YES! Siblings can open the ark, dress the Torah, read a prayer or sing a blessing. Siblings over the age of 13 may also be called to the Torah for an Aliyah blessing or to chant from the Torah.

Q: If there are certain prayers, readings, etc. that are special to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, are we able to include them in the service?

A: You may ask the Rabbi or Chazzan about any specific prayers or songs.

Q: Do both parents speak?

A: Both parents are welcome to speak, but are not required to do so.

Q: Who do I speak to regarding practice sessions and general questions?

A: Chazzan

Q: What time should my family arrive at Temple on Friday night and on Saturday?

A: Your family should arrive at 5:15pm on Friday to welcome family, friends, and congregants at our Oneg (Welcome Reception). Services begin at 6:00pm. On Saturday, your family should arrive 30 minutes prior to the start time of your service. Morning service begins at 10:30am. If you want to take photographs beforehand, you should do that from 9:00am - 10:00am. Evening service begins at 5pm so your family should arrive at 4:30pm - photographs can be anytime before that.

Q: Is a Saturday evening service an option for us?

A: Yes, it will be a 5pm service, including Maariv and Havdalah, ending at 6:30pm.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH INFORMATION SHEET

NAME: _____

B/BM DATE _____

PARASHA _____

TOTAL Torah portion _____

Total Haftarah Portion _____

Read through your Torah portion in English (if you don't have a Torah commentary book in your home, we recommend using Sefaria.org) and write down three main ideas you found in the text and/or three interesting parts of the story that stand out to you. You're going to fill out this form in the order of your favorite/most interesting parts. Please bring this with you when you meet with Rabbi Kahn for your initial meeting. Call Gveret Bethany if you have any questions about the process and contact Rabbi Kahn if you've read your entire portion and don't have any choices.

1. In Chapter ____, Verse ____ it says:

And I think this means...

2. In Chapter ____, Verse ____ it says:

And I think this means...

3. In Chapter ____, Verse ____ it says:

And I think this means...



KEEP
CALM
AND
MAZEL
TOV