



# מדריך לבני מצוה

A GUIDE TO B'NEI MITZVAH  
AT TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM

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## WHO'S WHO AT TOS

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## ***B'ruchim haba'im—Welcome!***

Welcome to your journey toward bar/bat mitzvah here at Temple Ohabei Shalom!

We are a diverse community—we come to this journey from various places and with varied experiences. Some of you are continuing a tradition of generation after generations in your family and we applaud you for your dedication to carrying forward this important tradition. Some of you have chosen to join the Jewish people and we are inspired by your commitment to a community that you have chosen. Some of you are not Jewish but have partnered in raising your children as Jews and we salute the love and devotion that brings you to celebrate a tradition that is not your own. Together, you weave the fabric of this colorful and beautiful community. Individually, you are navigating the road to a fulfilling, meaningful and joyous occasion. The entire staff of Temple Ohabei Shalom is eager to help you find your own way on that road. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to further enrich the b'nei mitzvah process.

*Mazel tov.* Throughout this journey, may you and your family go from strength to strength.



Rabbi Audrey Marcus Berkman



Rabbi Daniel Schaefer



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## ***BECOMING A JEWISH ADULT AT TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM***

The Hebrew word *mitzvah* means commandment. It means a sacred obligation, something to which you are committed. And the words *bar* (for a male) or *bat* (for a female), when combined with *mitzvah*, form an idiom that means, “one who is obligated to fulfill a commandment.” (At TOS, we use *b’nei mitzvah*, the plural, as a non-binary way to encompass all genders.) At the age of 13, a Jewish child becomes a Jewish adult, responsible for a new kind of relationship to their Jewish identity. They become *bar/bat mitzvah* upon turning 13, whether or not they mark the occasion by leading parts of a service or chanting from the Torah. A *bar* or *bat mitzvah* is one who commits themselves to engagement with Judaism and the Jewish community as a Jewish adult. The *bar/bat mitzvah* service marks a new kind of connection between the emerging young adult, their Jewish heritage, and their relationship to the Jewish people.

At TOS, we are committed to helping every student meaningfully mark their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Recognizing that each student is created *b’tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God, with all of their unique learning challenges and opportunities, TOS strives to create a meaningful and supportive *b’nei mitzvah* experience which meets each family and student where they are as they transition to Jewish adulthood.

## ***GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR YOUR B’NEI MITZVAH JOURNEY***

The process of becoming a Jewish adult doesn’t simply begin and end with a *bar* or *bat mitzvah* service. It is a lifelong commitment, and the educational and communal programs at TOS are designed to help your family learn together, connect to the Jewish community, and create meaningful moments of spirituality and connection.

As you begin to think about the *b’nei mitzvah* process, we ask that your family considers the following questions.

How will this experience...

- be meaningful to me and my family?
- be personal, honoring my family structure and learning style?
- help me connect to my family history?
- connect me to the various communities of which I’m a part?  
    To the Jewish community? The TOS community? My community of friends and family? The greater Boston community?
- be grounded in Jewish learning that I can take with me through my life?
- prepare me to be a Jewish adult?
- be personally spiritually relevant?

## ***EDUCATIONAL & COMMUNAL GOALS & EXPECTATIONS***

As a community, we have specific expectations for *b’nei mitzvah* education. They include:

- Enrollment in the Ansin Religious School (or an approved equivalent)
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum @ ARS lays the Hebrew groundwork and biblical understanding for the *b’nei mitzvah* service.

- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum @ ARS includes Torah chanting skills (trope) and learning and review of all blessings and prayers that the b'nei mitzvah will lead during the service.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum @ ARS reviews Hebrew and Torah skills, as well as an exploration of Jewish identity and adulthood through the Jewish life cycle and an examination of the Holocaust.
  - If your family joins TOS after fourth or fifth grade, an educational plan will be created with the ARS Director and clergy
- A commitment to complete Hebrew school during your B'nei Mitzvah year. There is more to learn, a shift in focus, and it is crucial to participate in the community for the entire experience.
- B'nei Mitzvah Experience family programming begins in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and continues through the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Attending these programs as a family is a requirement for b'nei mitzvah at TOS.
- Monthly attendance at services (Saturday mornings or Friday evenings) for the year leading up to b'nei mitzvah
- A commitment to continue with Religious School through Confirmation. B'nei mitzvah is not the end of the journey; it is simply one significant moment along the way and the beginning of a lifetime of Jewish engagement!
- Creation of a Mitzvah Project and Service to the TOS community
- Inviting all of your ARS classmates to your b'nei mitzvah celebration. As a caring community, the joy and responsibility of b'nei mitzvah belongs to all of us. We believe that this is an important component of being a synagogue family.

## ***B'NEI MITZVAH STUDY AND PREPARATION***

### **GRADE FIVE YEAR**

- In the fall of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, b'nei mitzvah dates are distributed at a family program
- Attendance at B'nei Mitzvah Experience meetings
- Grade Five curriculum includes Hebrew finesse, prayer skills, and Biblical stories and history

### **GRADE SIX YEAR**

- Attendance at B'nei Mitzvah Experience meetings
- Grade Six curriculum includes Torah chanting skills (trope) and learning and review of all blessings and prayers that the bar/bat mitzvah will lead during the service.
- Digital audio files of all Hebrew learning will be made available.

### **GRADE SEVEN YEAR**

#### **1) WEEKLY ARS ATTENDANCE**

- Attendance at B'nei Mitzvah Experience meetings
- Grade Seven curriculum reviewing all Hebrew skills, as well as an exploration of Jewish identity and adulthood through the Jewish life cycle and an examination of the Holocaust

## 2) INITIAL FAMILY MEETING

The bar/bat mitzvah student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) meet with the clergy approximately seven months before the bar/bat mitzvah date to review the B'nei Mitzvah process, receive the student's individual preparation binder, answer questions and begin the journey.

## 3) MITZVAH PROJECT AND SERVICE TO THE TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM COMMUNITY

A mitzvah project is one of the first responsibilities we ask you to assume as you become an adult in our community. *Tikkun olam*, repairing the world, is central to who we are at Ohabei Shalom and to the b'nei mitzvah process. It teaches our children that Torah "learning" and "doing" go hand in hand.

Your Mitzvah project should represent a substantial commitment of time and energy to a project of your choice.

### **Guidelines for completing a meaningful mitzvah project:**

- Your project should involve at least 15 hours of community service.
- Projects can be done individually or as a small group.
- Be as creative as you like.
- Every project includes at least three of these key elements:
  - o Hands-on work (time spent working) with the organization
  - o Advocacy for the cause
  - o Educating others about the issue
  - o Collecting items or *Tzedakah* (money) for the cause

### **Service to the TOS Community:**

Give back by donating three or more hours of your time to Ohabei Shalom. (e.g. babysitting, mailings, yard work or library work, Mitzvah Day volunteering, etc.)

## 4) TORAH CHANTING PREPARATION

Individualized instruction begins approximately six months before the bar/bat mitzvah date with weekly 30-minute lessons. Students will learn to chant their Torah portions and review all other Hebrew elements of the Shabbat morning service. These sessions will be with Rabbi Daniel Schaefer or Cantor Maayan Harel, and are scheduled by parents using our special program, MitzvahTools (see separate MitzvahTools FAQ on our website). Students traditionally receive 26 30-minute lessons over this time.

## 5) D'VAR TORAH PREPARATION

Students will prepare a *d'var Torah*, a teaching rooted in Torah, with guidance from the clergy. It will draw from traditional and modern interpretations of the Torah text as well as from his/her own life experience. The five 30-minute meetings with the clergy begin three or four months prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date.

## 6) REHEARSAL

There is a final rehearsal for the student and parent(s), which is generally scheduled to take place from 3:15 – 4:45 pm two Fridays preceding the bar/bat mitzvah service. TOS will be in touch with your family to schedule and confirm

this rehearsal time. Parents should bring the completed Honors Form (see page 18) and their Parent Blessing (see page 8) to the rehearsal.

## ***THE B'NEI MITZVAH SERVICE AT TOS***

### **EXPECTATIONS OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH STUDENT**

These expectations are designed to both challenge the student and set an attainable goal. Of course, each student is unique, and we do not believe in a one-size-fits-all model. We adapt and individualize the experience for each student, and want each family to feel a sense of ownership over this ritual.

We take becoming a bar/bat mitzvah seriously and we expect our students to do so as well. Occasionally a student fails to make satisfactory progress. In this case, we will contact you promptly. Sometimes there are external causes. In those cases, we make adjustments as needed. At other times the student has failed to progress due to his/her own lack of effort. Additional support from home typically corrects the problem. On those extremely rare occasions when it does not, other steps may be necessary up to and including postponing or canceling the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.

Typically, bar/bat mitzvah students are responsible for the following service elements:

- Candle Blessings, long Kiddush and Hamotzi on Friday night
- Short Kiddush and Hamotzi on Shabbat morning
- Leading part of the Shabbat morning service or the Haftarah service
- Torah service prayers
- Blessings before and after the Torah reading
- Chanting approximately 12-15 verses of Torah
- *D'var Torah* (speech)

As mentioned previously, we want the service to fit the student and family's needs, so this can be adjusted through conversations between the family, educators, and clergy.

## **FAMILY PARTICIPATION**

### **TORAH CHANTING BY PARENTS**

A very special way in which families can participate in the b'nei mitzvah process is by reading Torah. This might be an opportunity to refresh your Torah chanting skills or the motivation you need to actually learn how to chant! Either way, you will be showing your child what it means to continue growing, learning and participating as an adult member of our community. We will be glad to make a recording of the Torah reading and to help you in this process.

### **USHERING**

Families are required to serve as ushers for the bar/bat mitzvah service which directly precedes their own. By welcoming visitors, distributing prayer books and giving direction, greeters help to create a warm and participatory environment for our community worship experience. You will receive the ushering schedule via email, and if you have any questions, please contact Naomi Fisher ([nfisher@ohabei.org](mailto:nfisher@ohabei.org)). Guidelines for ushering can be found on page 14.

## FRIDAY NIGHT

Erev Shabbat services typically run one hour and fifteen minutes in length, and begin at 6 pm. The exception to this is Shabbat B'yachad (Shabbat Together), our once-a-month communal Shabbat experience. Shabbat B'yachad starts with a dinner at 6:00 pm followed by the service at 7:00 pm. If Shabbat B'yachad falls on your bar/bat mitzvah weekend, we welcome you to reserve a table for family and friends by being in touch with our Event Production Coordinator at [sboisvert@ohabei.org](mailto:sboisvert@ohabei.org).

Consult the synagogue office to verify the time of service for the weekend of your celebration. **It is expected that the bar/bat mitzvah student and his/her family attend the Friday night service the evening before the bar/bat mitzvah.** The bar/bat mitzvah student leads the candlelighting at the beginning of the service, and the Kiddush and Hamotzi at the conclusion of the service.

## SATURDAY MORNING

The immediate family will meet with the Rabbis at 10:00 am. At this point the family will present the bar/bat mitzvah with a *tallit* (a traditional Jewish prayer shawl, worn on Shabbat mornings). Families can either purchase or create a *tallit* for the occasion. Alternatively, the *tallit* might be passed down from a family member. A *tallit* is typically worn only by Jews who have become bar/bat mitzvah.

## SERVICE HONORS

Temple Ohabei Shalom provides opportunities for the family and friends of the bar/bat mitzvah to participate in our weekly Shabbat service. After deciding which friends and family members you would like to include in the bar/bat mitzvah, complete the Honors Form (found on page 18) and return it to the clergy or Naomi Fisher no later than the week before the bar/bat mitzvah. Bring a copy of the Honors Form to the rehearsal the week before the bar/bat mitzvah. The following honors are available on Saturday mornings:

**Ark Opening:** There are two separate opportunities for up to three people to open the Ark (at the beginning of the Torah service and at the end of the Torah service.)

**Undressing the Torah:** This honor consists of removing the decorations, mantle, etc., before the Torah is placed on the table to be read.

**Aliyot:** One who is called to recite the blessings during the reading of the Torah receives an *aliyah* (plural = *aliyot*). The family is invited to participate in a total of three *aliyot* (blessings of the Torah). Recitation of the Torah blessings is an honor reserved for adult members of the Jewish community. A non-Jewish spouse and/or children under the age of 13 may accompany those who are reciting the blessings. The first *aliyah* is customarily for grandparents or other close relatives or friends. The second *aliyah* is usually for parents. The third *aliyah* is reserved for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The *brachot* (blessings) are in the Resources Section of this manual (see page 20) and are on the Torah table (in both Hebrew and transliteration) during the Shabbat service. You can also listen to the blessings on our website at: [www.ohabei.org/bneimitzvah.html](http://www.ohabei.org/bneimitzvah.html)

**Hagbah** (lifting the Torah scroll): After the Torah is read, it is lifted up and held high for the congregation to see. (The scrolls are heavy! Please assign someone strong; it is also easier if this person has some advance training in Torah lifting.)

**Gelilah** (rolling and dressing the Torah): This honor consists of rolling the Torah scroll, tying the sash around it, and putting on the mantle and the decorations/silver.

**Parental Blessing:** Parents are asked to prepare and read an individualized blessing for their child. This blessing should be brief (no more than 200 words). Guidelines for this blessing can be found on page 13 of this handbook.

### **THE SERVICE ITSELF**

- Shabbat morning services at Temple Ohabei Shalom begin at 10:30 am. and conclude at approximately 12:15 pm. Some families choose to list 10:15 am. as the starting time on their invitations to minimize disruption to the service due to late arrivals.
- Services can be held in the Sanctuary or in the Chapel, at the option of the family.
- If desired, families may distribute customized programs explaining the service. We have templates that we are happy to share with you. Please allow the clergy to review your text at least two weeks before the ceremony.
- If you have questions or requests regarding music for the ceremony, please let us know well in advance of the service. We traditionally have piano accompaniment, but this is not required; some families choose to have no instrument accompaniment.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PARENT BLESSING**

Following the bar/bat mitzvah's *aliyah*, parent(s) will be asked to offer a blessing. The blessing affords parents the opportunity to express the love, pride and joy they feel in their son/daughter. Ideally, the blessing will itself teach and embody Torah.

The blessing should express the bar/bat mitzvah's essence as a person and honor them for the wonderful, loving son/daughter that they are. Preferably the blessing will also include a Jewish text or teaching and a prayer oriented toward the future. The blessing should *not* recite exhaustively a long list of accomplishments and outstanding personal qualities of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Those can be expressed in writing or later at the reception.

The blessing should be 1-2 paragraphs or 1-2 minutes in length, prepared in advance and put in writing. Please don't hesitate to ask the clergy if you have any questions.

### ***SPECIAL TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM TRADITIONS***

#### **THE DOME**

Part of celebrating the milestone of bar/bat mitzvah is becoming part of a long-standing tradition. At Temple Ohabei Shalom, this involves an escorted trip up to the Dome, where new b'nei mitzvah are given letters written by their parents many years before at the TOSTY Shul-in (parents who did not write a letter; please let us know as there is still an opportunity to do so). At this time, the new adult members of the community are also invited to sign their name on the wall of the Dome.

#### **FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP SERVICES**

Students who have become bar/bat mitzvah have gained extremely valuable skills! Good

Torah readers are always in high demand. Please speak with our clergy about opportunities to participate in synagogue worship such as chanting Torah or leading part of Shabbat services or at the High Holy Days at Temple Ohabei Shalom.

## **LOGISTICS**

### **SPECIAL FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS**

Every family is unique. If your family has specific concerns related to the ceremony, the reception, the role of parents or other family members, please consult with our clergy well in advance of the date of the event. Our goal is to ensure that the day of the b'nei mitzvah service is as happy, meaningful, and stress-free as possible for your child and your family.

### **TZEDAKAH**

A *simcha* (joyous event) is an opportunity to share one's good fortune with others who are in need. We encourage families to consider ways in which they can do this, in addition to the b'nei mitzvah student's individual Mitzvah Project. For example, families might consider decorating tables with "mitzvah centerpieces," centerpieces constructed of products, equipment or goods to be donated after the party to a particular cause or organization.

It is also customary to mark this wonderful occasion by making a donation to one of Temple Ohabei Shalom's funds in honor of your child, and encouraging your family and friends to do the same. We suggest a contribution to a fund that will honor the experience of becoming a committed adult Jew, like the Fund for Lifelong Learning, or Rabbi Berkman or Rabbi Schaefer's Discretionary Fund, or the Circle of Giving.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All membership accounts (including bar/bat mitzvah fees, ARS tuition and Temple dues) must be paid in full six months in advance in order for your child to become a bar/bat mitzvah at Temple Ohabei Shalom. Additional costs associated with the bar/bat mitzvah are:

- **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee:** This fee, which covers tutoring costs, the B'nei Mitzvah Experience, and clergy meetings, will be billed in two installments; one in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade year and one in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- **Rental Information:** We have two beautiful social halls at TOS; Penn-Spero and Lissner Hall. Both are available for rental for private parties. Contact our Event Production Coordinator: [sboisvert@ohabei.org](mailto:sboisvert@ohabei.org).

### **PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY/CELLPHONE USE**

Please note that photography is not allowed during the service. However, if you wish to take photographs prior to the service you may do so in the Sanctuary from 9:00 am to 9:55 am. If you would like to have a video of the entire service, we have a specific procedure for your videographer to follow in order to set up a camera in the balcony in advance. There is no live videography or photography allowed during the service. (Please email our Event Production Coordinator, Stacey Boisvert, for details: [sboisvert@ohabei.org](mailto:sboisvert@ohabei.org).)

Please advise your guests to refrain from using cellphones during the service for any reason.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

Accessible entry to the Sanctuary is available through the Temple parking lot on Marshal Street. For accessible entry into the banquet halls, it is necessary to exit the Sanctuary and reenter through the TCEE/ARS entrance on Marshal Street.

Large print books and assisted listening devices are available.

### **PARKING**

There is on-street parking available on Beacon Street and on side streets in the vicinity of the Temple.

Please do not park in TOS parking lot, as your vehicle is subject to towing at your expense. Be sure to inform your guests of this parking and accessibility information.

We are able to provide parking for a limited number of vendors/contractors who are servicing your event. Contact our Stacey Boisvert, our Event Production Coordinator ([sboisvert@ohabei.org](mailto:sboisvert@ohabei.org)) well in advance for details.

### **HIDDUR MITZVAH – MAKING IT BEAUTIFUL**

There is a Jewish concept called *hiddur mitzvah*, to beautify a sacred obligation. There are many ways in which we can participate in this important mitzvah and make the b'nei mitzvah service even more special.

**Kiddush Sponsorship:** Shabbat at Temple Ohabei Shalom is a community celebration. **It is, therefore, expected that everyone who attends the service will be included at the Kiddush—invited guests, members of the Temple Ohabei Shalom community, and all of the ARS 7<sup>th</sup> grade classmates.**

However, if you choose to have a private or offsite Kiddush luncheon for your guests, you are required to provide a small separate Kiddush for the congregation.

**Flowers for the Bimah:** Families often provide one (3-dimensional) 3 ½ - 4 foot flower arrangements for the Sanctuary. They will need to be delivered by 3 pm on the Friday preceding the ceremony. Alternatively, TOS can order the arrangement through our florist and the fee (approximately \$400) will be passed on to you.

**Candy Throwing:** There is a custom of throwing (soft) candy at the b'nei mitzvah student after they've completed leading the service, as we sing Siman Tov U'Mazel tov, blessing the b'nei mitzvah student with sweetness. If you would like to do this, please purchase either Swedish fish or Sunkist fruit gems; they should be delivered on Friday before the service with other ritual items (like kippot or programs). The clergy will help you to know when it is time to throw the candy.

As an additional special moment, on the Tuesday after the student's b'nei mitzvah, they are welcomed back to ARS with a special shehecheyanu blessing at *tefilah* (our weekly prayer service), and even more candy throwing.

**Kippot and Tallit:** Most families choose to purchase kippot (also known as yarmulkes)

to be used at the b'nei mitzvah. (If you choose not to do this, TOS has enough to share.) It is customary to wear a kippah in a Jewish service – traditionally for men, but increasingly, women wear one as well. We leave this to your discretion. If purchased, they should be delivered to TOS on the Friday before the service.

As mentioned previously, the b'nei mitzvah student wears a tallit on the *bima* (stage). Some families may have a tallit in the family which the student can wear; others may choose to purchase a new one. We are lucky here in Brookline to be able to purchase Judaica at Kolbo or at the Israel Book Shop, both on Harvard Street. Please ask the clergy or educators if you have any questions about purchasing a tallit.

Additionally, we ask that family members who are coming up to chant the Aliyah blessings wear a tallit, which we will have available at the bima for them, or if they'd like to wear one throughout the service, we have them available at the back of the sanctuary or chapel.

#### **A NOTE ABOUT ATTIRE**

Everything in a bar/bat mitzvah ceremony should reflect and enhance both the importance and the holiness of the occasion, including attire. Suits and ties or dresses are recommended. Proper *bimah* attire consists of covered shoulders, and skirts at a length that is suitable for sitting on the *bimah* facing the congregation. Formal wear, such as tuxedos and prom dresses, is not appropriate. If you have questions about appropriate attire for your child(ren), please ask.

## ***STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL CEREMONY***

### **PREPARATION AND SUPPORT AT HOME**

Good preparation is the key to a successful and fulfilling bar/bat mitzvah experience. It requires a significant commitment of time - about 2-3 hours a week. Parental support in this process is invaluable. Here are some guidelines.

- 1) Schedule: The last three to four months of b'nei mitzvah preparation are a time to focus on the work and significance of becoming a Jewish adult. If there is a way to cut down on extracurricular activities during this period your child will be substantially more relaxed and more likely to enjoy the process and find it meaningful.
- 2) Practice with your child. If you know Hebrew and can help, that's great. If you don't, please listen to your child practice and share in the experience. It makes a difference. (Ask your child to teach you!)
- 3) D'var Torah. We encourage parents to engage in discussion of the issues and lessons raised in the Torah portion. In the weeks before the b'nei mitzvah, parents should listen to their child practice reading their *d'var Torah* out loud. It's the same as any type of public speaking preparation – no specialized knowledge needed!
- 4) Parental Blessings. Rehearse Torah blessings in Hebrew and prepare a blessing in English to offer to your child. (See page 8 for details.)

### **PREPARATION AT ARS/TOS**

Our religious school curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in Jewish life. The academic prerequisite for bar/bat mitzvah is your child's completion of three years of religious education and continued enrollment in our religious school throughout the b'nei mitzvah year and then on through Confirmation. The school program provides the foundation on which preparation for b'nei mitzvah is built.

Specific training for the bar/bat mitzvah service takes place both inside and outside of school hours. During religious school classes in grades five and six, students will learn key prayers of the Shabbat morning liturgy and Torah chanting skills. This provides a good foundation to assist them in learning to lead the service and to chant their individual Torah portions. Please consult the bar/bat mitzvah timeline on page 22 for specific details.

### **B'NEI MITZVAH EXPERIENCE**

Participation in our B'nei Mitzvah Experience family education programs will enrich your child's experience—and your own—marking the b'nei mitzvah as a lifecycle tradition into “becoming a teen” that leads to personal growth and positive communal connection. (We've received a grant from Moving Traditions to implement curriculum which connects Jewish wisdom to the interpersonal and social elements that go along with this coming-of-age ritual; sessions aim to help you and your pre-teen explore what it means to be a guest and a host; how to navigate peer pressure, social media, and the experience of being the center of attention; what b'nei mitzvah is all about; and other social-emotional challenges and joys associated with b'nei mitzvah.) Additionally, these programs will cover the basics of the Saturday morning service, of mitzvah projects, and what becoming bar or bat mitzvah is all about. These required programs help to create and to strengthen a community of b'nei mitzvah families.

### **SHABBAT ATTENDANCE**

Understanding what the prayer service is all about and becoming part of the community at Temple Ohabei Shalom is an important part of the b'nei mitzvah process. In addition to the required six TOS Shabbat morning services, b'nei mitzvah students must attend three services at a synagogue other than Temple Ohabei Shalom; not every service is the same and your family will learn a lot from seeing different customs. (Not every b'nei mitzvah experience is the same. We hope you'll learn something from seeing how other Jews celebrate this momentous occasion.)

We highly recommend that parents attend with their child. This may include Friday night, Shabbat morning, Festival services or weekday worship. Regular attendance at services by the entire family remains the single most important factor in preparing for this day. Use the log at the back of this handbook to track your progress.

## **WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT**

*B'nei Mitzvah* students should put their whole selves into living Jewish lives: their heart, head, and hands.

### **TEFILAH (PRAYER)**



When a worship service works, it touches the heart. In fact, worship is known in Hebrew as *avodat halev*, “service of the heart.” The bar or bat mitzvah student brings his or her whole heart to leading us in prayer. Part of that includes reading and chanting in Hebrew from the prayer book, the Torah scroll (containing the Five Books of Moses). Hebrew itself is an expression of the heart. We refer to it as *lashon kodesh*, the holy language, and it has a power to move us beyond the meaning of its words. It connects us with our Jewish tradition and with Jews throughout the world.

Your comfort with the synagogue experience will both enhance your celebration of the day and show your child(ren) how important you consider this time in their lives. We encourage each family to develop a regular synagogue attendance schedule (if not once a week then once a month) to further understand and connect with the value of these activities.

- Attend at least 6 Shabbat morning services at Ohabei Shalom during the year before your bar or bat mitzvah. Also make a point to attend at least three Shabbat morning services at other synagogues. The more services you can attend prior to your own child’s bat or bar mitzvah, the more comfortable and familiar you will be with the service.

### **LIMMUD (LEARNING)**



*B'nei Mitzvah* students reflect on the meaning of their Torah reading by sharing a teaching during the service. In Hebrew this is called a *d’var Torah*, which means “a word of Torah.” This is an opportunity for the student to bring their own values, experiences, and passions, into conversation with the richness of Jewish tradition. Out of this conversation, new and unique wisdom is created and then shared with the wider community.

- As a family, participate in all of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Experience sessions in grades 5, 6, and 7.
- Enroll in and complete grade 7 at ARS, continuing your studies through Confirmation.

### **TIKKUN OLAM (REPAIRING THE WORLD)**



One can’t live as a Jew without “doing” as a Jew. We ask our *b’nei mitzvah* students not just to feel and to think, but also to act. They do this through their Mitzvah Projects where they use their hands to assist others and to help repair the world (*tikkun olam*).

Your Mitzvah project should represent a substantial commitment of time and energy to a project of your choice. Guidelines for completing a meaningful mitzvah project:

- Your project should involve at least 15 hours of community service.
- Projects can be done individually or as a small group.
- Be as creative as you like.

Every project includes at least three of these key elements:

- Hands-on work (time spent working) with the organization
- Advocacy for the cause
- Educating others about the issue
- Collecting items or money for the cause



### **KEHILAH - COMMUNITY**

B'nei mitzvah is not just an individual or family celebration, but one for the entire community. As a community we welcome a new Jewish adult into our midst. The ceremony takes place during our regularly scheduled communal Shabbat service, so that the people who have been with your family at Shabbat B'yachad, who have rejoiced at your children's consecration during Simchat Torah, and who have worked side-by-side with your family at Mitzvah Day can be with you as your child becomes a bar or bat mitzvah. As a caring community, the joy and responsibility of b'nei mitzvah belong to all of us. We hope and expect that the ARS 7<sup>th</sup> grade class will be invited to each other's b'nei mitzvah celebration. We believe that this is an important component of being a synagogue family.

Because bar/bat mitzvah is the beginning of what we hope will be a lifetime of Jewish learning and living, b'nei mitzvah are expected to continue to be involved in Jewish learning and community through opportunities for Jewish learning and engagement at Temple Ohabei Shalom and in the broader community.

- Invite **ALL** of your ARS classmates to your bar/bat mitzvah service and kiddush.
- Donate three or more hours of your time to Ohabei Shalom. (e.g. babysitting, mailings, yard work or library work, Mitzvah Day Volunteering, etc.)
- Support your fellow b'nei mitzvah students by participating as an Usher at another's bar/bat mitzvah. (You will be contacted with your assigned date.)

## **GUIDELINES FOR USHERS**

B'nei Mitzvah families are required to serve as ushers at the bar/bat mitzvah immediately preceding their own. By welcoming visitors, distributing prayer books and giving direction, ushers create a warm, welcoming environment and help to ensure a smooth, participatory worship experience. Your participation is truly a mitzvah. Please read below to familiarize yourself with understanding warm welcome instructions, accessibility questions, and security protocols.

### **• Please stand at the center, interior Sanctuary doors by 10:00 am.**

Please stay at the doors until 10:45 am and then feel free to sit in the last row for the remainder of the service.

**• Welcome people as they enter.** Use words like, "Welcome, Shabbat Shalom," "Welcome, Good Shabbos," "Good morning!" or similar greetings.

• **Know the locations of:**

**Bathrooms –**

- There is a women's bathroom to the right as you enter the foyer from the street.
- There is a single user/wheelchair accessible bathroom to the left as you enter the foyer from the street.
- There is also a smaller single person bathroom on the left side.
- There is a full-size women's bathroom down the stairs on the left side (outside of Penn-Spero Hall).
- There is a full-size men's bathroom down the right side stairs as well as an accessible single user bathroom (outside of Penn-Spero Hall).

**Coat racks –** There are coat racks at both ends of the foyer.

**Elevators –** in the Administration Building lobby, across from the couch; and at the Marshal Street entrance (off the parking lot).

• **Hand out the temple bulletin, family program (if there is one), the Shabbat prayer book and the *Chumash* (Torah book).** The majority of these should be in the two book cases closest to the center doors, with any extras located in the other bookcases in the back of the sanctuary.

• **Tallit:** These are located in a rack in the foyer.

• **Kippot (Yarmulkes):** Will be in the 2 bins behind the last row of seats in the sanctuary.

• **Assisted Listening Devices:** These are located in the corner of the Sanctuary foyer, toward the accessible rest rooms.

• **Large print prayer books:** These are located on the bookcases by the rear center doors.

• **Wheelchair access to the Sanctuary:**

- The accessible entrance to the Sanctuary is through the parking lot on Marshal Street. Wheelchair users can be dropped off near the Sanctuary to be met and welcomed by a greeter.
- From inside the Sanctuary, the accessible entrance is at the front, to the right of the *bimah*. There is an inner door with power assist and an outer door. Make sure to leave the inner door open when you go out to open the outer door.

• **Please stay by the doors until 10:45 am,** and then feel free to sit in the last row for the remainder of the service.

• **A TOS staff member** will admit late arrivals through the Rosenfield entrance.

• **At the end of the service please be at the doors to collect books and guide people downstairs for the kiddush or luncheon.**

When in doubt about something, don't hesitate to ask one of our staff members. Thank you for contributing to the feeling of warmth and welcome for which our community is known.

## **SECURITY ROLE OF GREETERS AND USHERS (Always with a smile)**

If you are like most ushers, you have little or no background in protection or security activities. You may feel inexperienced interacting with people who are upset or question your ability to engage in these types of situations. You may be friendly in a quiet way or assertively outgoing. You probably thought your role as a greeter or usher would involve smiling, shaking hands, directing guests, and helping during services. Fortunately, those will continue to be your primary tasks.

However, we all share responsibility for the safety and security of the congregation. You are not expected to do it all yourself or act as a security officer, but you are expected to continuously observe people and the environment, assess the situation to see if there is danger, and respond appropriately.

1. Your primary security tasks are to observe and assess, then get assistance or take appropriate emergency action. The best way for you to fulfill your role is to be aware, alert and ready to get assistance.
2. Be balanced in your approach. You should not be stricter or more lenient than appropriate or base your actions on your personal likes or dislikes about people or behaviors. Your actions can have an impact on the reputation and welfare of the entire synagogue. When in doubt, get another opinion and assistance, unless the matter is an emergency.
3. Get assistance if you have a concern: If you need to talk to someone whose behavior concerns you or if you are checking on a suspicious situation, do not confront someone on your own unless you have no other choice. Ask a facility person, lay leader or another guest to assist you. Stay alert to such situations so you can assist others quickly. **IF YOU SEE, HEAR, OR SMELL ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS SAY SOMETHING!**
4. If you need to, call 911 or Press the Panic Button. We have a remote panic button that either the custodian or usher will be wearing. Simply press and hold the button for 5 seconds and the alarm company will automatically call the police.

## **BLESSINGS FOR AN ALIYAH**

### **Before the Reading**

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת-יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ!  
בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר-בָּנוּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן-לָנוּ אֶת-תּוֹרָתוֹ.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

*Ba-re-chu et A-do-nai ha-me-vo-rach!*  
*Ba-ruch A-do-nai ha-me-vo-rach le-o-lam va-ed!*  
*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,*  
*a-sher ba-char ba-nu mi-kol ha-a-mim, ve-na-tan la-nu et To-ra-to.*  
*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai, no-tein ha-to-rah.*

Bless Adonai who is blessed.

Blessed is Adonai who is blessed now and forever.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,  
who has chosen us from among the peoples, and given us the Torah.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

### **After the Reading**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכָנוּ.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,*  
*a-sher na-tan la-nu To-rat e-met, ve-cha-yei o-lam na-ta be-to-chei-nu.*  
*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai, no-tein ha-to-rah.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,

who has given us a Torah of truth, implanting within us eternal life.

Blessed are you, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

To hear these blessings chanted, go to [www.ohabei.org/bnei mitzvah.html](http://www.ohabei.org/bnei mitzvah.html) and click on the sound files.

**Honors for Saturday Morning**  
**Temple Ohabei Shalom ~ 1187 Beacon Street ~ Brookline, MA 02446 ~**  
**617.277.6610**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b>	<b>Hebrew Name:</b>
<b>Torah Portion (&amp; page)</b>	<b>Haftarah Portion (&amp; page)</b>	
<b>(I) Ark Openers</b> (may choose 1-4 persons for single; 1-2 persons for double)		<b>CUE:</b> Come up to the bima after prayers on page 244. Rabbis will call you up.
<b>(II) Torah Undressers:</b> (May choose 1-2 persons for single; 1 person for double)		<b>CUE:</b> Come up to the bima after prayers on page 244. Rabbis will call you up.
<b>(III) 1<sup>st</sup> Aliyah</b> (usually grandparents)	<b>Hebrew Name</b>	<b>CUE:</b> Please come to sit on the bima during or following the Torah procession.
<b>(IV) 2<sup>nd</sup> Aliyah</b> (parents) (1-2)	<b>Hebrew Name</b>	<b>CUE:</b> Please come to sit on the bima during or following the Torah procession.
<b>(V) 3<sup>rd</sup> Aliyah (bar/bat mitzvah):</b> <b>Hebrew Name:</b>		
<b>(VI) Hagbah: Torah Lifter</b> (one strong person)		<b>CUE:</b> Please come to the bima after the parent(s)' blessing.
<b>(VII) Gelilah</b> (Torah roller and dresser) (1-2)		
<b>(VIII) Ark Openers</b> (returning the Torah to the Ark) (1-4)		<b>CUE:</b> Please come to the bima after the Prayer for Israel on page 374.
<b>NOTES:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ark openers are an appropriate honor for either Jewish or non-Jewish family or friends.</li> <li>• Please let us know if anyone you have selected will need assistance coming to the bima.</li> <li>• You need not select someone for every honor listed. (Congregants are available to fill those positions.)</li> </ul>		





## **BAR/BAT MITZVAH INTAKE FORM – FAMILY’S COPY**

**Date of bar/bat mitzvah** \_\_\_\_\_

***Please print names below exactly as you wish them to appear in the Service Bulletin and online:***

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrew Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parents:** \_\_\_\_\_

***If you wish to reserve space for a private function at TOS on the day of your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please indicate your rental needs below:***

- Lissner Hall and kitchen (small social hall) for a Kiddush Luncheon (12:00 – 2:00 pm)
- Lissner Hall and kitchen for an evening function
- Penn-Spero Hall (large social hall) for a Kiddush Luncheon (12:00 – 2:00 pm)
- Penn-Spero Hall for an evening function
- All of our family’s celebrations will take place off-site **(Note that you are still responsible for providing a community Kiddush for the congregation.)**

The fees associated with the bar/bat mitzvah process are detailed on page 9 of this booklet. Space rental fees are separate and can be found in the Facilities Rules & Guidelines. Please contact Stacey Boisvert, our Event Production Coordinator, with any facilities questions: [sboisvert@ohabei.org](mailto:sboisvert@ohabei.org).



## BAR/BAT MITZVAH INTAKE FORM – TOS COPY

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

*Please print names below exactly as you wish them to appear in the Service Bulletin and online:*

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*If you wish to reserve space for a private function at TOS on the day of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please indicate your rental needs below:*

- Lissner Hall and kitchen (small social hall) for a Kiddush Luncheon (12:00 – 2:00 pm)
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- Penn-Spero Hall (large social hall) for a Kiddush Luncheon (12:00 – 2:00 pm)
- Penn-Spero Hall for an evening function
- All of our family's celebrations will take place off-site **(Note that you are still responsible for providing a community Kiddush for the congregation.)**

### OFFICE USE ONLY

#### GENERAL B'NEI MITZVAH CHECKLIST

- Intake Form received
- Meeting with TOS Office
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee paid in full
- TOS dues paid in full
- ARS tuition paid in full
- Flower fee received
- Kiddush sponsorship fee received

### FOR FAMILIES RENTING SPACE AT TOS

DATE

- Event confirmed on calendar
- Contract sent
- Contract returned
- Deposit received
- Full payment received
- Certificates of insurance received
- Room set up received
- Caterer/Food Handler permits/certifications

# PREPARATION TIMELINE

	 <b>WORSHIP</b> <i>Avodat halev</i> service of the heart	 <b>LEARN</b> Share your own teaching, or <i>D'var Torah</i>	 <b>TAKE ACTION</b> Do <i>Tikkun olam</i> (repair the world)	 <b>PLAN</b> your special day
<b>12+ Months Prior</b>	Study of prayers and Torah chanting in grades 5 & 6 at ARS. Plan to attend 9 Shabbat services during the 6th grade year.	B'nei Mitzvah Experience	Begin research and planning for your Mitzvah Project.	Contact Stacey Boisvert, Event Production Coordinator, to reserve venue for your facilities/community Kiddush. Must reserve one year in advance of b'nei mitzvah: <a href="mailto:sboisvert@ohabei.org">sboisvert@ohabei.org</a>
<b>7 Months Prior</b>	Continue to attend Shabbat services.	Initial family meeting with clergy. Discuss Torah portion, answer questions.	Continue Mitzvah Project planning.	Meet with the Stacey Boisvert, Event Production Coordinator, and <b>complete all facility arrangements.</b>
<b>6 Months Prior</b>	Continue to attend Shabbat services.	Student begins weekly learning sessions in preparation to chant Torah.	Begin active involvement in Mitzvah Project.	
<b>3 - 5 Months Prior</b>	Continue to attend Shabbat services.	Continue Torah chanting lessons.	Continue Mitzvah Project.	Obtain <i>tallit</i> and <i>kippah</i> . If desired, order printed <i>kippot</i> .
<b>2 - 3 Months Prior</b>	Attend Shabbat services. Confirm your ushering obligations.	Begin <i>d'var Torah</i> learning sessions. Continue Torah chanting lessons.	Continue Mitzvah Project.	Check in with Stacey Boisvert, Event Production Coordinator: <a href="mailto:sboisvert@ohabei.org">sboisvert@ohabei.org</a> Mail invitations, including to the entire b'nei mitzvah class.
<b>1 Month Prior</b>	Attend Shabbat services.	<i>d'var Torah</i> learning sessions have been completed. Continue Torah chanting lessons.	Continue Mitzvah Project.	Provide all vendor information to Stacey Boisvert: <a href="mailto:sboisvert@ohabei.org">sboisvert@ohabei.org</a> Submit floor plan for private Kiddush or reception. Pay all room rental fees.
<b>1 Week Prior</b>	Usher for the bar/bat mitzvah service prior to your own.	Continue Torah chanting lessons.	Continue Mitzvah Project.	
<b>Week of Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family comes to bar/bat mitzvah rehearsal (usually two Fridays prior to date, from 3:15 - 4:45 pm.)</li> <li>Make arrangements with Stacey for all deliveries (flowers, programs, etc.) for the day before (Fri.) by 3:00 pm at the latest</li> <li>Bring a copy of the completed Honors Form</li> <li>Bring a copy of the Parent Blessing</li> <li>Attend Erev Shabbat Service on Friday night. Bar/Bat Mitzvah will lead candle blessing, Kiddush and Hamotzi.</li> </ul>			
<b>Day of Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	<p><b>Remember to Bring:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your binder with the Torah text and your <i>d'var Torah</i>.</li> <li>Your <i>tallit</i> and <i>kippah</i> (bring bobby pins to keep it in place!)</li> </ol> <p><b>Timeline of the morning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photos prior to service from 9:00 - 9:55 am, if desired.</li> <li>@ 10:00 am family meets in Rabbi's study.</li> <li>Service begins at 10:30 am.</li> <li><b><i>Mazal Tov!</i></b></li> </ul>			