

YOUNG ISRAEL



OF CENTURY CITY



Prepared by Rabbi Elazar Muskin

*Planning a Bar or Bat Mitzvah
can be bewildering. With this concise guide,
it's never been easier!*

*This guide is sponsored by
Carol and Adam Reich
In honor of their son,
Matthew's Bar Mitzvah*

Mazal Tov on the forthcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah in your family! Because this is such a special time we would like to assist you in making your Simcha both spiritually memorable and enjoyable so that it will have a lasting impact on your son or daughter.

Questions abound. You are probably wondering: Which teacher should we hire to teach our son or daughter? What are our son/daughter expected to do on their Bar/Bat Mitzvah? Where will the family sit on Shabbat morning in Shul? What kind of candies should we throw after the Bar Mitzvah's *Aliyah*? How many *Aliyot* will we be able to distribute? May we choose the *Hazanim* who will lead the services? When do we need to meet the Rabbi to discuss our *Simcha*? And so forth.

Rather than find answers to these questions via the proverbial "grapevine," Young Israel of Century City has created this guide to offer guidance and address issues that you will encounter as you plan your *Simcha*. You also will find a form at the end of this guide to complete and give to the *Gabbaim* with information about who will lead the services and who you wish to receive *Aliyot*. Please return this form to the *Gabbaim* two weeks before the *Simcha*, to allow enough time for clarification and changes to be made if necessary.

Please remember that we are here to assist you in creating a *Simcha* that you will remember for a lifetime. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have and we will try to address all issues in the most efficient way possible.

SETTING YOUR BAR/BAT MITZVAH DATE:

Please contact the Rabbi as soon as you know the date you want for your Simcha. The Shul policy permits one Bar or Bat Mitzvah on a *Shabbat*, so that each child will have his/her own *Simcha*. We strongly encourage that you reserve the date as soon as possible, even years in advance. This way you will have a greater chance to have the date you wish.

Make sure to discuss with the Rabbi the exact *Torah* portion and *Haftorah* that your son will be reading or that the Bat Mitzvah's father might be saying in honor of his daughter's Bat Mitzvah. Remember that sometimes *Maftir* is read from a second *Sefer Torah* and the *Haftorah* isn't the one printed in the *Chumash* for the *Torah* portion (e.g., *Shabbat Rosh Chodesh*, *Machar Chodesh*, *pre-Pesach Shabbatot*, etc.).

Please note that we do permit an *Aufrof* or naming of a baby on the same *Shabbat* that we celebrate a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. In such cases, however, you are considered the primary *Simcha* and we will work together with you and the other *Baal Simcha* to arrange a wonderful *Shabbat* for both families.

BAR AND BAT MITZVAH WORKSHOPS:

a) Every calendar year there is a two-session *Tefillin* workshop with Rabbi Muskin for all forthcoming Bar Mitzvot usually held between October – December. The exact date is listed in the Shul's Program Calendar. The workshop is for the Bar Mitzvah boys and their fathers. The sessions are held on Sunday evenings and include a special presentation about *Tefillin* by a *Sofer*. Please plan to attend this program. Both fathers and sons will find it meaningful.

b) Every calendar year there is a two-session Bat Mitzvah preparation workshop with Ruhama Muskin for Bat Mitzvot girls and their mothers usually held between October – December. The exact date is listed in the Shul's Program Calendar. Please plan to attend this program. Both mothers and daughters will find it meaningful.

TEACHERS FOR BAR/BAT MITZVOT:

a) You can engage anyone you wish to teach your son or daughter for his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If you need a recommendation please call the Rabbi and he will offer some suggestions.

b) When choosing a Bar Mitzvah teacher make sure that the teacher emphasizes teaching the proper pronunciation of each word. This is the most important aspect that needs to be taught.

c) Learning to read the *Torah* or *Haftorah* or even leading *Musaf* should not be geared for a one time performance restricted to your son's Bar Mitzvah. Hopefully, the Bar Mitzvah will master the "art" of *Laining* and *Davening* that will be used throughout his life. Make sure that the teacher you choose teaches Trop, the musical notes for reading the *Torah* or *Haftorah*, and not just rote memory of a specific portion or *Haftorah*. This way your son will be equipped to read any other *Torah* portion or *Haftorah* in the future.

d) Every Bar Mitzvah teacher will want his student to practice on the Torah that he will use on his Bar Mitzvah. To arrange such a practice session, please contact the Shul office so that you will have access to the building and will be able to open the *Aron HaKodesh*.

EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS:

Bar Mitzvah



a) When planning your son's Bar Mitzvah please remember that each child is unique, possessing special talents. Some children have musical talents and wonderful memory skills while others do not. Some children have wonderful stage presence

while others do not. Do not force a child to do that which he simply can't achieve just because you think "everyone" is doing it.

b) Today there is no one expectation for a Bar Mitzvah. Some boys will read the entire *Torah* portion while others only a few *Aliyot*. Some boys will only read their *Haftorah* while others don't read the *Haftorah* at all. Some boys will lead *Musaf* while others will not. Some will speak in Shul while others will not. Remember - there is no ONE right way for your son to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah. Most important – it should be a spiritually rewarding and educationally memorable experience. The Rabbi is available to assist you in tailoring your son's participation based upon his talents, preferences and unique challenges.

Bat Mitzvah

a) A Bat Mitzvah should learn more than just material for her *Dvar Torah*. This is a wonderful opportunity for a girl to learn the unique role of a Jewish woman and the *Halakhic* responsibilities assumed when she becomes Bat Mitzvah.

b) There is no ONE right way to celebrate a Bat Mitzvah. Some girls deliver a *Dvar Torah* in Shul on *Shabbat* morning while others only speak at the celebration. Both are wonderful venues for a young girl to celebrate this important moment in her life.

MEETING WITH RABBI:

Bar Mitzvah Meeting

a) Please call Rabbi Muskin at least two months prior to the date of the *Simcha* in order to schedule a personal meeting with the Rabbi. Rabbi Muskin will meet with the parents together with the Bar Mitzvah. At this meeting the Rabbi will listen to the Bar Mitzvah read his *Torah* portion and *Haftorah* making sure he is ready for his Bar Mitzvah, and if the Bar Mitzvah will be delivering a *Dvar Torah* in Shul, the Rabbi will review the *Dvar Torah*. In addition, the Rabbi also will review the special laws that pertain to reading the *Torah*.

b) The Rabbi will ask questions about the Bar Mitzvah and family in order to personalize his remarks in Shul on the *Shabbat* of the Bar Mitzvah, making this day special for you, your family and the Bar Mitzvah. Please share any vignettes that you may have about the Bar Mitzvah that capture his personality.

c) Please let the Rabbi know if any special dignitaries (e.g., rabbis, political personalities, family members etc.) will be present so that he can properly welcome them from the *Bima*. Please also notify the Rabbi if there are any family concerns of which he should be aware. Also, let him know if any non-Jews will be present in Shul on *Shabbat* morning.

Bat Mitzvah Meeting

a) Please call Rabbi Muskin at least two months prior to the date of the *Simcha* in order to schedule a meeting with him. Rabbi Muskin will meet with the parents together with the Bat Mitzvah. At this meeting he will review the *Dvar Torah* that the Bat Mitzvah will deliver.

b) To help make this day special, the Rabbi will ask questions about the Bat Mitzvah and her family in order to personalize his remarks in Shul on the *Shabbat* of the Bat Mitzvah. Please share any vignettes that you may have about the Bat Mitzvah that capture her personality.

c) Please let the Rabbi know if any special dignitaries (e.g., rabbis, political personalities, family members, etc.) will be present so that he can properly welcome them from the *Bima*. Please also notify the Rabbi if there are any family concerns of which he should be aware. Also inform him if any non-Jews will be present in Shul on *Shabbat* morning.

FIRST ALIYAH:



According to Jewish law, a male becomes obligated to keep the commandments (Bar Mitzvah) when he reaches his thirteenth birthday according to the Hebrew calendar. This usually occurs during the week before the *Shabbat* on which the Bar Mitzvah celebration is held. Please check

with the Rabbi, and he will ascertain the exact date that will apply to your son. Your son should receive an *Aliya* on that date, or the closest date thereafter when the *Torah* is read.

If you wish, the Rabbi can help you arrange for that *Aliyah* to take place at one of the Shul's morning Minyanim, or you can arrange for an *Aliyah* at the Yeshiva Day School that your son attends. After the Bar Mitzvah boy's *Aliyah* the father says the special blessing of *Baruch Sheptarani* (without God's name – found in the Artscroll Siddur on the top of page 144) recited when a son reaches Bar Mitzvah age. If the Bar Mitzvah boy wishes to read the *Torah* at the *Minyan* please inform the Rabbi in advance. It is traditional to offer some refreshments after the *Minyan* in honor of this occasion.

If your son is technically Bar Mitzvah prior to the *Shabbat* celebration, we encourage you to arrange that your son read the *Torah* in Shul at *Mincha* on *Shabbat* afternoon the week before the Bar Mitzvah as well as Monday and Thursday morning prior to the Bar Mitzvah. This offers your son a wonderful experience reading publicly before the *Simcha* itself. Please discuss these possibilities with the Rabbi.

ACTUAL BAT MITZVAH:



Since a girl becomes obligated to keep the commandments (Bat Mitzvah) when she reaches her twelfth birthday according to the Hebrew calendar, that date often will occur prior to a public Bat Mitzvah celebration. Please check with the

Rabbi and he will tell you the exact date when your daughter becomes Bat Mitzvah. On that date you should celebrate her Bat Mitzvah by arranging a nice family meal at which time she should wear a new dress and recite the blessing of *Shehechyanu* marking her transformation into a Bat Mitzvah.

DVAR TORAH:

a) A Bar and Bat Mitzvah are wonderful occasions for parents to learn with their son and daughter sources that can then be used in writing the speech. Some parents prepare the *Dvar Torah* for their children while others ask for professional help either from the Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher or other educators. If you should need assistance don't hesitate to ask.

b) A wonderful opportunity for your son/daughter to speak in public prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah is offered at our *Shabbat* afternoon program, *Lilmod U'Leleamed*, at the Shul's weekly *Seudah Shlishit*. This will give your son/daughter the experience to speak in a more relaxed environment. May we suggest that you sign up your child to speak at least once during the year before their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please call the Shul office for assistance.

c) There is no obligation for a Bar Mitzvah boy to speak in Shul on *Shabbat* morning. Please keep in mind that after reading the *Torah*, *Haftarah* and maybe leading *Musaf*, he will physically be tired and his voice may also be strained. You might consider having your son deliver a *Dvar Torah* at the celebration that you will hold for family and friends. If, however, you desire to have your son speak in Shul, we will be honored to have him do so.

d) Crucial to a successful speech is its delivery and audibility. Please spend time practicing with your son or daughter, or arrange professional instruction, so that their speech is successful. You may practice in Shul, with your child standing at the *Bima*. To arrange such a session, please contact the Shul office so that you will have access to the building.

e) All speeches delivered in Shul must be approved in advance by the Rabbi.

f) The speech should be no more than five to seven minutes in length. Limit personal thank you comments about family and friends in the *Dvar Torah*. Such comments should be made at the family meals or the party.

READING THE TORAH:

There are a number of *Halakhot*, Jewish laws, pertaining to reading the Torah that are important to know. The following are some of the essential laws:

a) Each word must be read from the *Torah* scroll and not from memory. One must be careful not to skip the last word or two at the end of a column, but should carefully read each word before starting the next column in the Torah.

b) The *Baal Kriah*, the one reading the *Torah*, should hold the left *Torah* handle while reading the *Torah* and the *Oleh*, the one honored with the *Aliyah*, should hold the right handle.



c) From the conclusion of *Shacharit* until *Kiddush* is recited, one may not eat or drink anything. No water bottle, therefore, should be brought on the *Bima*.

d) While reciting the *Brakhot* for the *Aliyah* the *Oleh* should hold both *Torah* handles.



PHOTOGRAPHY:

If you would like to have pictures/video taken in Shul before or after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah please call the Shul office and arrange a time to have the sanctuary available for your use. If you would like to have the photographer take pictures/video of your son reading the *Torah*

on a Monday or Thursday morning please speak to the Rabbi in advance of the date for guidance and instructions.

ALIYOT AND KIBBUDIM:

We appreciate your need to honor as many family members as possible. In order to assist you, the Shul policy is as follows: You will have all the *Aliyot* available after *Yarzheits* and other *Chiuvim* (e.g., *Aufrof*, naming of a baby girl, father of a new son on the Shabbat before his *Brit*, *Hatan* during week of *Sheva Brakhot*) are assigned. We will know exactly how many *Aliyot* this will entail a week before your *Simcha*. On a *Simcha Shabbat* we allow two extra *Aliyot* (*Hosafa Aleph* and *Acharon*) if needed.

Included, at the end of this guide, is a form for the *Aliyot* that you will distribute as well as the names of the *Baalai Tefilah*. Please complete the *Aliyot* form by filling out the Hebrew names of those you will be honoring. This will expedite the distribution of all *Kibbudim* on the *Shabbat* of your *Simcha*. We recommend that *Aliyot* only be distributed to family members in order to avoid choosing one friend over another. Please note that you will be able to distribute the honors of

opening the *Aron HaKodesh* for *Anim Zemirot* and taking out the *Sefer Torah*, *Haggbah* and *Gelilah*, holding the *Torah* for the prayers for the State of Israel, as well as choosing who will serve as *Hazanim* for *Pisukei DeZimrah*, *Shacharit* and *Musaf*. Please indicate on the form who will receive each honor.

WHERE TO SIT IN SHUL:

Bar Mitzvah

In the men's section the family should sit in the front rows near the Rabbi. The Bar Mitzvah boy should be seated with his father in the seats adjacent to the Rabbi so that he will have easy access to the *Bima* for the speech and gift presentation by the Rabbi. Guests are welcome to sit in any seat they wish. Please let the Shul office know in advance if you expect a large crowd that will necessitate our arranging extra seating in the Main Sanctuary.

In the women's section the family should sit in the center rows of the main section. Guests are welcome to sit in any seat they wish.

Bat Mitzvah

In the men's section the family should sit in the front rows near the Rabbi. Guests are welcome to sit in any seat they wish. Please let the Shul office know in advance if you expect a large crowd that will necessitate our arranging extra seating in the Main Sanctuary. The Bat Mitzvah girl should enter the men's section at the end of *Adon Olam* and sit next to her father in the seats adjacent to the Rabbi so that she will have easy access to the *Bima* for her speech and gift presentation by the Rabbi.

In the women's section the family should sit in the center rows of the main section. Guests are welcome to sit in any seat they wish.

SEATING FRIENDS OF BAR OR BAT MITZVAH:

In order to make the *Shabbat* morning celebration in Shul meaningful for the friends of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the Shul has designated assigned seating in both the men and women's section just for the kids. The boys should sit right behind the family and the girls should sit in the front two rows on the far left of the main *Ezrat Nashim*. Please arrange for a chaperone to sit with the children and supervise their behavior in Shul. We request you arrange for a teacher or another responsible adult to serve as the designated chaperone for each 15 children in attendance.

KIPPOT:

The Shul supplies *Kippot* for any man who might not have his own. If you will need a large number of *Kippot* please notify the office in advance of your *Simcha*. If you would like to bring your own personalized *Kippot* please arrange this with the office.

CANDY THROWING:



Candy is customarily thrown during a Bar Mitzvah after the Bar Mitzvah receives his *Aliyah*. In order to avoid any accidents with candy hitting someone in a dangerous fashion we request that you follow these rules:

- a) Candy may be thrown only from the women's sections.
- b) Only soft candies should be thrown.
- c) All candies must be marked kosher and be approved by the Rabbi.
- d) If you wish to store the candy in Shul, please bring it to the Shul office on Friday morning before your *Simcha*.

GIFT PRESENTATION:

The Shul is pleased to present each Bar and Bat Mitzvah a gift of *Sefarim* personalized with a name plaque on the cover of each volume indicating the name of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the date and *Parsha* of the *Simcha*, as well as the Rabbi's name. It is our hope that this gift will be used in the years ahead and will remind the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of their special relationship with our Shul. The Rabbi will also present the Bar or Bat Mitzvah with a gift of a *Siddur* from the West Coast Orthodox Union.

Rabbi Muskin will make the presentation of the gifts at the end of his speech. He will call upon the Bar or Bat Mitzvah to come forward at that time to receive the gifts.

Please remember to take the gifts home with you or put them away for pick up after *Shabbat*. They may get misplaced or lost if left in the Shul.

KIDDUSH:

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family traditionally hosts a *Kiddush* in honor of the *Simcha*. The type of hosted *Kiddush* is left to your discretion. Please call the Shul office for a description of the different options and for approved caterers.

If there will be an *Aufrof* or baby naming on the *Shabbat* of your *Simcha* we encourage you to co-sponsor the *Kiddush* with the other family. In such a situation you will be the one who chooses the type of *Kiddush* being served.

RENTING SHUL SOCIAL HALL:

If you wish to rent the Shul's social hall rooms for family meals on the *Shabbat* of your *Simcha* please call the Shul office to arrange for the rental of the rooms. Please note that the Shul kitchen is very limited in size and therefore the

caterer who will be doing your *Kiddush* will need to be the same caterer for any meals you will be serving in the Social Hall rooms.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH PARTY:

If you are planning a party to celebrate your *Simcha* it is important to keep in mind that a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a special time to mark your child's spiritual and religious maturation. Make sure that *Diveri Torah* are incorporated into the celebration and use your creativity to teach your child how special this moment is in his/her religious development. This is a wonderful time for parents to address their children, expressing their dreams and aspirations for their future. Use themes for the party that stress this unique moment and make it a memorable event that will guide your child into adulthood.

TIME LINE:

Now that you have read this guide allow us to offer you a time line that will be helpful as you plan your *Simcha*.

a) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE -- reserve the date with the Rabbi. Notify the Shul office if you will be reserving rooms in the Social Hall for any part of your *Simcha*. (see p. 3 & 14-15)

b) ONE YEAR BEFORE BAR MITZVAH -- Engage a teacher to teach your son his *Torah* reading, *Haftorah*, etc. (see p. 4-5)

c) SIX MONTHS BEFORE BAT MITZVAH -- Engage a teacher to learn with your daughter and to prepare her for her *Dvar Torah*. (see p. 4-6 & 9-10)

d) THREE MONTHS BEFORE BAR MITZVAH -- Prepare Bar Mitzvah speech (if Bar Mitzvah will be delivering one). (see p. 9-10)

e) THREE MONTHS BEFORE BAR MITZVAH -- Let the *Gabbai* know exactly what your son will be doing in Shul (e.g., Reading the *Torah*, *Haftorah*, etc.). (see p. 5)

____/____/____
DATE

f) TWO MONTHS BEFORE SIMCHA -- Contact Shul office about your plans for the *Kiddush*. (see p. 14)

____/____/____
DATE

g) TWO MONTHS BEFORE SIMCHA -- Schedule meeting with the Rabbi. (see p. 6-7)

____/____/____
DATE

h) ONE MONTH BEFORE BAR MITZVAH -- Notify the Rabbi if your son will be reading the *Torah* at *Shabbat Mincha*, Monday or Thursday before his Bar Mitzvah. (see p. 7-8)

____/____/____
DATE

i) ONE MONTH BEFORE BAR MITZVAH -- Arrange with the Shul office for your son to practice in the Main Sanctuary reading from the *Sefer Torah* that he will use on his Bar Mitzvah. (see p. 4)

____/____/____
DATE

j) TWO WEEKS BEFORE SIMCHA -- Give the *Gabbai* your filled out *Kibbudim* list and notify the Rabbi if any special dignitaries will be present in Shul. (see p. 18)

____/____/____
DATE

k) TWO WEEKS BEFORE SIMCHA -- Arrange chaperones for the classmates who will be attending Shabbat morning in Shul. (see p. 13)

____/____/____
DATE

l) TWO WEEKS BEFORE SIMCHA -- Make arrangements with the Shul office for your son/daughter to practice their speech in the Main Sanctuary and to make arrangements if you would like to take pictures in the Shul. (see p. 9 & 11)

____/____/____
DATE

m) FRIDAY BEFORE BAR MITZVAH -- Bring candy to shul office. (see p. 13)

____/____/____
DATE

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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BAR/BAT MITZVAH GABBAIM FORM

This is only a request form. We will do our best to accommodate you, but we cannot guarantee that you will receive all the honors you request. Thank you for your understanding.

HONOR	ENGLISH NAME
Chazan for Pesukei D'Zimrah	
Chazan for Shacharit	
Open Aron for Anim Z'mirot	
Junior Chazan for Anim Z'mirot	
Open Aron for Torah Reading	
Reading the Torah	

ALIYAH	HEBREW NAME	ENGLISH NAME & RELATIONSHIP
Example	<i>Moshe Chayim ben Binyamin</i>	<i>Mark Goldfarb Uncle</i>
Kohen		
Levi		
Shlishi		
Revi'ie		
Chamishi		
Shishi		
Shevi'ie		
Maftir		
Hagbah (English Name)		
Gelilah (English Name)		

HONOR	ENGLISH NAME
Chazan for Musaf	
Junior Chazan for Ain K'Elokeinu to Adon Olam	