

Daniel Dorsch  
*Rabbi*

Shalom Lewis  
*Rabbi Emeritus*

Martin Gilbert  
*Executive Director*

Dear Parents,

Mazel Tov and Congratulations!

It is hard to believe that your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah is so close at hand. We are delighted to be sharing this milestone with your family.

Your child's education has been a long time in the making, and the preparation to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is much the same. We are happy to provide this handbook in hopes that it may guide you along the way.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call upon any of us. We are always here to assist you.

Again, a hearty Mazel Tov! Cherish these moments and enjoy the "process" leading to this most joyous occasion. It passes all too quickly – don't forget to enjoy "the journey!"

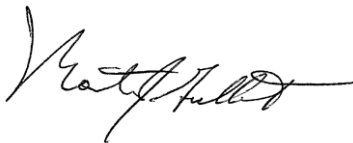
Cordially,



Daniel Dorsch  
Rabbi



Jamie Platt Lyons  
President



Martin Gilbert  
Executive Director



Debbie Deutsch  
Director of Education





# Congregation Etz Chaim B'nai Mitzvah Handbook

## Table of Contents

### Contents

Our Core Values .....	2
B'nai Mitzvah Date Assignments .....	3
Qualifications .....	4
Tutoring .....	5
Meetings .....	7
Our Religious Services .....	8
Honoring Family and Friends .....	9
Synagogue Decorum & Etiquette .....	12
Children and Younger Guests .....	13
Shabbat Customs at Etz Chaim .....	14
S'eudat Mitzvah/The Festive Meal .....	17
Things to Know .....	19
Forms .....	21
Blessings .....	29
Menus & Approved Caterers .....	33
Erev Shabbat Friday Night Oneg .....	35
Bagelicious Friday Night Oneg .....	36
Shabbat Morning Kiddush Luncheon Menus .....	37
Bagelicious Policies and Procedures .....	41
Congregation Etz Chaim Approved Caterers .....	42
Additional Resources .....	45
Approved Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tutors .....	47
Countdown to the Big Day .....	49
Who to Contact .....	51

# **Our Core Values**

## **A Nurturing Environment**

We want our B'nai Mitzvah program to be a nurturing and caring one. We strive to always be gentle, kind, considerate, patient and sensitive to our students and their parents. We want to create an environment that enhances the spiritual and religious experience of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## **Parental Involvement**

Parental Involvement is key to the success of our program and the entire B'nai Mitzvah experience. We highly encourage parents to get involved with their child's learning – at whatever level is of comfort.

## **Relationship Development**

The regular and continuous involvement of our professional staff with students and parents fosters an opportunity for relationship development. Lifelong bonds between students, parents, rabbis, teachers and tutors are created during the course of each student's progress through our program.

## **Excellence in Preparedness**

We want our children to achieve success. We want them to do the very best they are capable of doing and encourage each child to participate as much as possible and to the full extent of his/her ability. (The better prepared our B'nai Mitzvah, the more positive the experience.)

## **Putting God on the Guest List**

We want to emphasize the religious and spiritual significance of a B'nai Mitzvah. We want each child to connect and embrace their Judaism, family, Israel and our Jewish community.

## **B'nai Mitzvah Date Assignments**

### How is my Child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date determined?

At Congregation Etz Chaim girls may have their Bat Mitzvah any time after they have reached the age of twelve (12). Boys, however, must have reached the age of thirteen (13) per their Hebrew birth date prior to their actual Bar Mitzvah ceremony. During the spring of your child's 4<sup>th</sup> grade year, there will be a B'nai Mitzvah workshop for families that will help you understand the Torah and the Haftarah and identify the dates corresponding to the Torah portions, *parshiot*, that are closest to your child's Hebrew birth date. You will then be given a form to rank these dates and communicate any other options and/or conflicts. The date this form is returned to the education office will be taken into consideration as needed when assigning dates.

Once all requests have been received, the list will be reviewed by our Director of Education, and Rabbi Dorsch who will determine the final date assignments. You will receive a letter of confirmation shortly thereafter.

6 months after your date is confirmed, you will have a meeting with our Director of Education. The purpose of this meeting is to begin a conversation about your child's specific needs, interests and learning styles. We will also discuss your expectations of your child's level of participation in his/her service.

If you are interested in having your daughter become a Bat Mitzvah at 12, please contact our Director of Education, Debbie Deutsch, at [Debbie@EtzChaim.net](mailto:Debbie@EtzChaim.net) or 770.977.3384.

Generally, B'nai Mitzvah are held on Shabbat mornings. From time to time, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is permitted during the late afternoon on Shabbat, concluding with Havdalah, on Rosh Chodesh, or on Monday or Thursday morning when the Torah is read.

Questions about your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date should be directed to the Director of Education.

# **Qualifications**

## **Qualifications for becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

To qualify as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your family must be members of Congregation Etz Chaim, and your membership, including all dues and fees, must be in good standing. Your child must either be enrolled in our religious school, have attended an approved Jewish education program for at least 5 years or be enrolled in a Jewish Day School. Enrollment and attendance **through and including** the grade of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year is mandatory.

## **Religious School Attendance Requirements (Non Day School Students)**

Your child's religious education and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process are intrinsically linked. Religious school students are expected to be students in good standing at the Congregation Etz Chaim Religious School, including (but not limited to) complying with the attendance policy of our school.

## **Shabbat Attendance Requirements**

It is the congregation's goal that each student who becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Etz Chaim feels comfortable with religious services at Etz Chaim. In order to qualify for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child is required to attend services in our Radow Sanctuary (hereinafter referred to as "Sanctuary"). As such, the following attendance requirement has been adopted for all B'nai Mitzvah students:

In the eighteen (18) months prior to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each student is required to attend a total of twenty (20) religious services. This requirement should be completed two months prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Please also refer to your Religious School Parent Handbook for more details. These requirements familiarize the B'nai Mitzvah students with our services and make them more comfortable in our Sanctuary.

Additionally, students are highly encouraged to attend Saturday Morning services on the Shabbat which directly precedes their actual ceremony.

To maximize the learning experience that attending services provides, students are expected to arrive at 9:30 a.m. when services begin. Students will be expected to follow the service and remain in the Sanctuary for its duration. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are expected to observe proper etiquette at all times. Please see page 12 for more information on Synagogue Decorum and Etiquette.

As always, parents are highly encouraged to attend services with their children so they may learn and develop commitment through example.

# **Tutoring**

## **When should my child begin tutoring?**

A portion of our Religious School curriculum includes the learning of *tefillah*, prayers for the Shabbat morning and Friday evening service. As the year prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah approaches, we begin to integrate an individual tutoring component to help prepare each child for his/her specific Bar/Bat Mitzvah. All parents will meet with the Director of Education, Debbie Deutsch, and Rabbi Dorsch approximately 1 year before your child's date to discuss tutor options and match your family with the tutor that will best meet your child's learning style and needs.

Tutoring may begin earlier at the request of parents who feel that additional preparation time is necessary. Please speak with the Director of Education for more information.

## **With what will the tutors be helping my child?**

Tutors will work closely with their students to ensure they are expertly prepared. This instruction will be tailored to each student's individual level of learning and tutors will provide the necessary materials for instruction. Tutors will also provide individual Torah readings with the appropriate audio and visual aids necessary, for those honored with a reading from the Torah. However, be aware that there may be an additional charge per hour for this service if more than five recordings need to be prepared.

B'nai Mitzvah tutoring will prepare each student to lead the Torah Service, chant their Maftir Torah reading, the blessings before and after the Torah reading, the haftarah and haftarah blessings and the Musaf service. They will then instruct your child on leading the remainder of the Shabbat morning services as well as the Friday night services. The Mincha/Ma'ariv/Havdalah Services will be taught to those students who will lead that service.

## **What does the tutoring cost?**

Religious School tuition includes 17.5 hours of tutoring, including rehearsals. This is usually thirty-five (35) tutoring lessons at thirty (30) minutes each. Some tutors, however, prefer sessions of 45 minutes in duration, and they factor the total time frame into the lessons. Any tutoring needed over and above this amount can be negotiated between your family and your tutor. If you must change a tutoring appointment, please provide your tutor with at least 24 hours of advanced notice. If you fail to keep a tutoring appointment and do not give adequate notice, your tutor *will* charge you for that session.

**What other preparation should my child be doing?**

During the year prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, in addition to their individual tutoring, **students are expected to study at home a minimum of 30 minutes a day, excluding Shabbat and major holidays.** In most cases additional study will be required. Students should be reminded to wear a kippah while studying. Parents should periodically listen to their child during his/her preparation and keep track of how much time their child is studying.

**Approved Bar & Bat Mitzvah Tutors**

See page 47 for a list of approved tutors.



# **Meetings**

Our professional staff is always available to meet with you throughout this process. In addition, you can expect the following...

## **From the Rabbi**

Three (3) months prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, Rabbi Dorsch will email you a family learning project to begin preparing in advance of your first appointment as a family. After this time, your child will begin meeting with your officiating Rabbi. These meetings are for the Rabbi and your child to become better acquainted, explore your child's Torah and Haftarah portions, and guide your child in writing his/her D'var Torah. After the initial meeting, the Rabbi and family will determine how many more meetings will be needed. Please call the synagogue office at 770.973.0137 and speak with Betsy, the Office Manager, to arrange a meeting with your officiating Rabbi.

## **From the Director of Education**

Approximately one (1) year prior to your simcha, you will be invited to meet with the Director of Education to discuss your expectations for your child's simcha.

At least six (6) months prior to your simcha, the Director of Education will be in touch with you and your family to answer any questions you may have.

# **Our Religious Services**

## **The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Services**

### **Friday Night – Erev Shabbat**

To enhance the experience of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, all B'nai Mitzvah students, along with their family and guests, are expected to attend the Friday evening service which precedes their Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbat Service.

Friday Night Services begin at 6:30 p.m. with Kabbalat Shabbat in our Sanctuary or Levine Family Chapel and conclude with the evening service.

Please let us know the number of expected guests for Friday night, so we can plan on the correct prayer space. See page 17 regarding the Erev Shabbat Friday Night Oneg.

### **Shabbat Morning**

Shabbat Morning Services are comprised of the following four services: P'sukei De-Zimra, Shacharit, Torah Service & Musaf.

Shabbat Morning Services begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. in our Sanctuary and end at approximately Noon.

### **Shabbat Evening**

These services are comprised of the following three services: Mincha (the afternoon service), Ma'ariv (the evening service) and Havdalah (the celebration of the completion of Shabbat).

For those celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah on Shabbat evening, or at any time other than Shabbat morning, a fee of \$2,000 will be incurred. Please speak with our Executive Director, Martin Gilbert if you have any questions.

We realize that every child and family is unique and therefore every child's level of participation in leading services as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be different. Our goal is to have children participate at their highest level possible so that they have a positive experience where they feel successful, challenged and supported.

## **Honoring Family and Friends**

It is the custom of Etz Chaim for families to honor relatives and friends during Shabbat Morning Services. There are many opportunities for both Jewish and non-Jewish family and friends to be honored.

Assigning Shabbat honors is a very important part of your simcha. It is always an honor to participate in services, but during one's B'nai Mitzvah it is extra special to be on the Bimah.

It is imperative that all honored family members and/or friends abide by our synagogue's decorum. Please inform your honorees of the standards of dress, head coverings and tallit requirements. Please refer to our **Synagogue Decorum and Etiquette Policy** on page 12 of this handbook.

The Etz Chaim Shabbat Honors Form must be filled out no later than 2 weeks prior to your ceremony and approved by your officiating Rabbi. Please see our "FORMS" section for further information.

### **Torah Service Honors**

#### **Processional/Ark Opening**

The Processional is the start of the Torah Service. Family members or friends (up to 6) ascend the Bimah and Open the Ark and then the curtain. They will then follow behind the Bar/Bat Mitzvah while the Torah is carried around the Sanctuary.

#### **Aliyot**

An aliyah is the honor of being called to the Torah to recite the blessings before and after a Torah passage is read. Parents and Grandparents (as a couple) are permitted to chant the aliyah together. In all other honoring instances, only **one** person can chant the blessings per aliyah. B'nai Mitzvah families are allowed to assign up to four (4) aliyot to their honored guests. **Please note** that it is customary for those who are Kohein/Bat Kohein or Levi/Bat Levi to be assigned the first (Kohein/Rishon) or second (Levi/Sheini) aliyot.

(For your convenience, a copy of these blessings can be found in the BLESSINGS section of this handbook.)

Please note: Congregation Etz Chaim is an egalitarian synagogue and does allow Bat Kohein and Bat Levi aliyot. Those honored with an aliyah must indicate if they are a Kohein or Levi, as those are designated aliyot.

### **Torah Readers**

Reading Torah is a skill acquired through study and dedication. Families are permitted to assign all Torah readings. Your tutor should provide you with your readings, necessary for study, as well as vocalizations for trope. Honored guests may only read directly from the Torah (Hand written notes or transliterations are not acceptable). Torah readers are subject to approval by your tutor at least two (2) weeks prior to your ceremony.

### **Gelilah**

Gelilah is the act of “dressing” the Torah. Please select one person.

Please note: The Hagbah honor, which precedes the honor above, is assigned only to designated Etz Chaim congregants. Congregants wishing to be approved for Hagbah may meet with the rabbi two weeks prior to the simcha for instruction.

### **Torah Holder - Haftarah**

This person will sit next to the Torah while sitting on the Bimah when the Haftarah is being read by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Please indicate your selections on the HONORS FORM found in the FORMS section of this handbook.

### **Prayer for Our Country**

Page 177 in the *Siddur Lev Shalem*

Led in English. May be assigned to Jewish or Non-Jewish family and/or friends, please select no more than two people.

### **Prayer for the State of Israel**

Page 178 in the *Siddur Lev Shalem*

Led first in Hebrew and then in English. May be assigned to Jewish or Non-Jewish family and/or friends; please select no more than two people.

### **Prayer for Peace**

Page 178 in the *Siddur Lev Shalem*

Led in English. May be assigned to Jewish or Non-Jewish family and/or friends, please select no more than two people.

### **Recessional/Ark Closing**

The Recessional concludes the Torah Service. Up to six (6) family members or friends will gather at the Bimah to parade the Torah around the Sanctuary. After which they will ascend the Bimah to return the Torah to the Ark. They will then close the curtain as we begin the Musaf Service.

### **Recessional Torah Carrier**

Of the six (6) family and/or friends, one (1) person should be designated to carry the Torah and walk with it around the Sanctuary.

### **Additional Shabbat Morning Service Honors**

Siblings, family members or friends may also be honored by joining the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the lower Bimah to lead:

#### **Ashrei**

Page 181 in the *Siddur Lev Shalem* – It is customary for the entire 7<sup>th</sup> grade class to join the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the bimah to lead Ashrei

#### **Ein Keloheinu**

Page 204 in the *Siddur Lev Shalem*

#### **Adon Olam**

Page 211 in the *Siddur Lev Shalem*

### **Lobby Greeter**

All 7<sup>th</sup> grade families are required to serve as Shabbat Lobby Greeters from 9:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for each other's celebrations. Greeters help to direct attendees, answer questions, and pass out programs, candy, and Kippot. A sign-up genius will be distributed prior to the beginning of the school year for families to choose their dates.

### **The Presentation of Tallit/Parents Honor**

Before the Torah Service, the B'nai Mitzvah will be presented with the tallit by the parents. He/She will recite the b'racha (blessing) over this tallit. Parents will then recite the *She'hechyanu*, to bless their child and share some brief words to them. For your convenience, a copy of the *She'hechyanu* may be found in the APPENDIX section.

\*\*Please note this tallit must be different from the tallit used by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, if they are leading P'sukei D'zimra and/or Shacharit.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**All of the above honors must be indicated on the  
"B'nai Mitzvah Shabbat Honors" form which can be found in the FORMS  
section of your handbook**

# **Synagogue Decorum & Etiquette**

Please remain quiet and refrain from conversation during services.

One should not leave the Sanctuary during the following times: When the Rabbi is delivering his sermon or addressing the congregation, when the ark is open, when the Torah is being read or when the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is delivering his/her D'var Torah.

## **Gifts**

Please ask friends and family not to bring gifts including gift cards/envelopes to the synagogue the morning of the service.

## **Kippot**

Please ask ALL men and boys to wear Kippot (Yarmulke), at all times while in the synagogue building, even after the service concludes.

## **Cell phones/Electronics**

In observance of Shabbat and Festivals, all cell phones must be turned off and/or silenced so as not to disrupt the service. Cell phone or electronic usage of any kind is prohibited on Shabbat throughout the building and on synagogue property.

## **Smoking**

On Shabbat, smoking is prohibited everywhere on synagogue property. This includes the entire building, bathrooms, hallways and parking lot.

## **Photography and Videography**

No photography or videography, including photos taken by cell phone is permitted by family or guests during services or while on synagogue property.

## **Children and Younger Guests**

Families with young children should make every effort to ensure the dignity of the service and your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, who has worked hard to prepare for this day. Please discuss the following guidelines with any guests to whom they might apply:

Parents with newborns or infants should be seated in a space that allows easy access to the doors should it be necessary to leave the Sanctuary to avoid noise disruption of the service. We also have babysitting or a parent-child program available every Shabbat, which they are welcome to participate in.

Other children are welcome under proper parental supervision. We ask that children should remain seated quietly while in the Sanctuary and be escorted out should they become disruptive.

For your convenience, our congregation offers several programs for children on Shabbat morning. Please refer to the Etz Chaim website for specific options.

If you anticipate having a large number of younger guests attending your simcha, please notify the Office Administrator, Betsy Fitzwater, in advance so we can staff accordingly.

Please contact the Director of Education for this year's Shabbat morning programs calendar.

# **Shabbat Customs at Etz Chaim**

## **Inclusive Philosophy**

Etz Chaim's Sanctuary was designed with inclusivity in mind, the lower bimah can be accessed via a ramp on either side of the bimah. Congregants and guests can also access the hearing loop as needed. Additionally, if any of your guests need special assistance, please contact our Executive Director.

## **Kippot and Ladies Head Coverings**

Bar/Bat Mitzvah families typically provide kippot and ladies head coverings for their invited guests. It is recommended that families order a minimum of 5 dozen Kippot and 2 dozen ladies head coverings, or enough for their invited male and female guests. These items will be displayed on the front reception table in our Gelernter Family Lobby on Shabbat morning and distributed by our Lobby Greeters.

Kippot and head coverings should be ordered at least 6 weeks prior to your simcha and may be purchased from our Sisterhood gift shop if desired.

## **Tallit**

It is our custom for all Jewish males above the age of Bar Mitzvah to wear tallit. Jewish women above the age of Bat Mitzvah may choose, of their own accord, to wear tallit as well. Tallit must be worn by both males and females while on the Bimah in the performance of any ritual act.

## **Sanctuary and Bimah Decorations**

Should you choose to use centerpieces for any part of your simcha weekend, our Sisterhood offers a rental option for your convenience. With your rental fee, you will receive a free JNF tree planted in Israel with a beautiful certificate of honor. Please see the order form in the Forms section of the appendix.

Please feel free to decorate our Bimah with fresh flowers and/or "Renterpieces" from JF&CS. You can find out more information about the "Renterpieces" including photos and prices at <https://jfcsatl.org/services/support-services/renterpieces> or call them directly at 770.677.9300.

## **Front Lobby Décor**

Families may choose to arrange for a centerpiece on the foyer table in our Gelernter Family Lobby. This front foyer table may also be used to display your kippot, ladies head coverings and programs. Please arrange for set up at least 30 minutes prior to your service.



### **Booklets and/or Programs**

Creating a booklet or program that identifies your honorees is a meaningful way to enhance the Shabbat experience. Samples of previous programs are available, and assistance with your booklet or program can be provided by the Director of Education.

Please submit a "rough draft" of your program to your officiating Rabbi for approval at least two weeks prior to your service. A minimum of 100 programs is recommended.

### **Candy**

It is a tradition at Etz Chaim that candy is GENTLY tossed at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah in celebration. All candies MUST have a Hechsher (Kosher Certification Marking) and be individually wrapped.

For a single Bar/Bat Mitzvah seventy-five (75) individually wrapped packets of candy should be prepared. Fifty (50) packets are to be placed on the Bimah prior to the beginning of the service; these candies are distributed to youngsters at the end of the service by our synagogue's President. The additional twenty-five (25) are distributed **only to adults** prior to the beginning of the service by the Lobby greeter or your designated appointee. Candy is gently tossed at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah after his/her Aliyah and Torah reading.

For a B'nai/B'not Mitzvah (double), EACH family should prepare fifty (50) individually wrapped packets. Families place half (25) of these on the Bimah prior to the beginning of the service, and the remaining twenty-five (25) should be distributed **only to adults**, by your designated appointee. Candy is tossed following the chanting of the Blessings after the Haftarah.

Please note: If your child attended the Etz Chaim Preschool, candy bags will be assembled for you. Please contact Debbie Deutsch for further details.

### **Deliveries**

As nothing should be delivered on Shabbat, please bring your kippot, programs and candy to Etz Chaim the day before your Simcha. A good time to do this is when you come in for photos. All items should be taken to the main office; your items will be put in the Gelernter Family Lobby on Shabbat morning. See page 19 for more information regarding deliveries.

## **Shabbat Attire**

### ***For the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:***

Boys - Suit or sport jacket with tie

Girls – Proper suit or modest dress, of appropriate length, which covers the shoulders

### ***For Invited Guests***

Men - Suit or sport jacket with tie or business attire

Ladies – Appropriate suit, dress or pants (Shoulders must be covered while in the Sanctuary)

### ***When on the Bimah***

Men – Kippot and Tallit must be worn

Ladies – Head Covering and Tallit must be worn

(Tallit does not have to be worn on the Lower Bimah while leading an English reading)

## **S'eudat Mitzvah/The Festive Meal**

The first word in the name of our synagogue is "Congregation". Here at Congregation Etz Chaim it is our mission to create meaningful and lasting Jewish experiences...we accomplish this through our sense of passion and feelings of warmth in our place of comfort and celebration.

All Simchas promote a sense of connection and community. In this regard, the most basic mitzvah we can perform is to break bread with our family, friends, and fellow congregants.

It is with this in mind, and the desire to sustain a congregation filled with warmth, comfort and celebration, that our Board of Trustees has adopted the following policy with respect to our Erev Shabbat Friday Night Oneg and our Congregational Shabbat Morning Kiddush Luncheon.

### **Erev Shabbat Friday Night Oneg**

It is the custom of our congregation that the B'nai Mitzvah family provides wine and *pareve* refreshments, in our Gelernter Family Lobby, prior to the 6:30 p.m. Friday evening service.

Refreshments may be supplied by the B'nai Mitzvah family or by an Etz Chaim approved caterer. If you choose to provide the reception yourself or have friends prepare it for you, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. All food and drinks must be kosher pareve and marked as such.
2. All food and drinks must be brought to the synagogue (unopened) for kosher certification no later than 11 a.m. on Friday. Please call Martin Gilbert earlier that week to schedule the time for check in.
3. The dairy kitchen refrigerator may be used to store your cold items.
4. Please provide brand new trays for your items as none of the synagogue's serving trays or serving pieces may be used.
5. The foyer and the Sunshine Family Kitchen (hereinafter referred to as "Kitchen") must be cleaned and empty of all your food/drinks before 7 p.m. Nothing should remain in the Gelernter Family Lobby except for those items that will be needed during Shabbat morning services (flowers, programs, kippot).

A suggested menu for the Erev Shabbat Friday Night Oneg can be found in our menus section on page 35.

If you have questions concerning the Kitchen or *kashrut*, please call the Executive Director.

### **Friday Evening Shabbat Dinner**

If you choose to have your Friday Evening Shabbat dinner at Etz Chaim, please contact Betsy, our Office Manager, to reserve the Hammer-Tritt Social Hall. The fee for renting the Social Hall on Friday night is \$500. Please see the list of approved caterers on page 42 when planning your meal.

### **Shabbat Morning Kiddush Luncheon**

We at Etz Chaim believe that a kiddush luncheon is the perfect way to cap off a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. To build community, families at Etz Chaim are required to provide a Kiddush luncheon at the conclusion of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbat Service. We are fortunate to have an inhouse caterer, Diamond Caterers/Bagelicious that we engage for this purpose. By using an inhouse caterer, there is continuity of quality, assortment, and presentation in the luncheons that are provided. In addition, we have been able to negotiate a fair and significantly reduced pricing structure for our congregants. Etz Chaim will pay for the A Menu kiddush luncheon of the 125 congregants who regularly attend services. The cost of paper goods for those 125 congregants will be included. Families will then pay for their invited guests. Should a family choose to provide a B or C Menu Kiddush, they are required to cover the difference in the cost of that menu and the A Menu for that initial 125 congregates, plus their invited guests. Families who choose to provide paper goods rather than pay the \$3.95 per person will need to provide paper goods for all congregants. Please see menus beginning on page 33 for the most current menus and pricing from BAGELICIOUS, our approved Shabbat Kiddush luncheon caterer.

An administrative fee of \$1000 is required for synagogue and maintenance services.

Any questions regarding food requirements and fees should be directed to our Executive Director, Martin Gilbert.

# **Things to Know...**

## **Deliveries**

All deliveries for your weekend events must be completed no later than 3 p.m. on Friday. Please notify our Office Manager, Betsy Fitzwater, of any expected deliveries.

## **Men's and Ladies Room Amenities**

You may choose to provide flowers and/or amenities for the Men's and Ladies restrooms, these items may include, but are not limited to the following: Specialty Hand Soap - First Aid Kit - Mouthwash & Cups - Hand Lotion and/or Sanitizer – Hairspray - Bobby Pins - Nail Care items – Combs - Feminine Hygiene Products

## **Shomer Shabbat Guests**

If you should require housing for any Shomer Shabbat guests, please contact our Office Manager, to make arrangements at least one (1) month prior to your simcha.

## **B'nai Mitzvah Announcement in the Voice of Chaim**

Please refer to the FORMS section to submit your child's announcement in our *Voice of Chaim* no later than the 1st of the month that precedes your simcha.

## **Invitations to Classmates and Friends**

We ask our families to please be sensitive to the feelings of 12 and 13 year olds. We require you to invite ALL of the students in your child's 7<sup>th</sup> grade Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. It is also appropriate to invite your child's 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher(s), the Director of Education, and the Rabbis to your simcha. The Education office will be happy to provide you with this list.

Parties and dinners held outside the synagogue should respect and follow the laws of Shabbat and Kashrut. Please consider a dairy or parve meal to avoid issues with Kashrut. To do otherwise diminishes the significance of the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony.

## **Photos**

Many Bar/Bat Mitzvah families choose to have formal photos taken in the Sanctuary with our Rabbis. Photo sessions are ONLY scheduled on Fridays (unless this conflicts with a Jewish holiday) and your session must be scheduled through the Office Manager. Please make these arrangements at least 4 weeks prior to your simcha.

Out of respect for Shabbat, photo sessions must conclude prior to 3 p.m.

# **Post Simcha Etiquette**

## **Celebrating Your Joy**

Many families like to celebrate their child's entrance into the adult Jewish community by making a donation to the synagogue in a way that is meaningful to their family. Purchasing a leaf for the Etz Chaim tree of life that hangs in the Gelernter Family Lobby is a beautiful way to commemorate your child's simcha. There are many additional opportunities for giving; please contact Martin Gilbert, Executive Director to learn more.

## **Acknowledgement of the Rabbis**

It is customary to show your family's appreciation to the Rabbi who worked with your child for his insight and guidance throughout the B'nai Mitzvah process. This can be done by making a donation to the appropriate discretionary fund or one of the synagogue's other donor opportunities. A list of all donor opportunities is available in the main office or on the synagogue website via the "Giving" link.

## **Thank you notes**

All B'nai Mitzvah students will receive gifts from Congregation Etz Chaim at the Friday evening service as well as on Shabbat morning. The Sisterhood and Men's Club present a silver yad to your child and the synagogue presents a Chumash from the congregation. Sending thank you notes from the Bar or Bat Mitzvah to the Sisterhood, Men's Club and synagogue President is an appropriate way to show appreciation after the simcha weekend has concluded.

# **Forms**





# B'nai Mitzvah Shabbat Honors

(Choose 4 Aliyot PLUS Maftir for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child)

*Mazel Tov* on your *Simcha*! Please complete this form to let our Rabbis know with whom you are sharing this joyous occasion.

ALIYAH <sup>#</sup>	HEBREW NAME	ENGLISH NAME	TORAH READER
Kohein/Bat Kohein/Rishon			
Levi/Bat Levi/Sheini			
Shlishi			
R'vee'ee			
Chamishee			
Shishi			
Shvee'ee			
Maftir (Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child)			

<sup>#</sup>Choose 4 Aliyot PLUS Maftir for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child.

Processional (6 people at most, this includes Ark openers): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Gelila: \_\_\_\_\_ Torah Holder During Haftarah: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer for Israel: \_\_\_\_\_ Prayer for our Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer for Peace: \_\_\_\_\_ Recessional Torah Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

Recessional (6 people at most, this includes Ark closers): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ein Keloheinu \_\_\_\_\_ Adon Olam \_\_\_\_\_



# Voice of Chaim

## Bar/Bat Mitzvah Information Submission Form



### Biographical Information (Voice of Chaim)

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child(ren):

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

---

Son/Daughter of: \_\_\_\_\_ Siblings:

---

Parasha:

---

Hobbies & Interests:

---

### School Information (Voice of Chaim)

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade:

---

Number of Years in Etz Chaim Religious School:

---

Did your child attend Etz Chaim Preschool: ☐ yes ☐ no If yes, how many years?:

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D'var Torah Quote:

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**Mitzvah Project** (This information will be published in the Voice of Chaim and will also be posted on Etz Chaim's Facebook page, ☐ Check here to opt OUT of Facebook):

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## Photo

A digital, high resolution photo should be e-mailed to Bernice Isaac at [bernice@etzchaim.net](mailto:bernice@etzchaim.net). A color headshot photo is preferred. The size of the photo printed will be approximately 1 ¼" x 1 ¼". This photo will appear in the Voice of Chaim, Facebook and our Gelernter Family Lobby monitor.

☐ Check here to opt OUT of Facebook.

## Deadline

In order to guarantee that this information is included in the Voice of Chaim please be sure to submit this form and your photo to Bernice no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month preceding your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

# Let the *Etz Chaim Judaica and Gift Shop* help you with your Bar/Bat Mitzvah

We can order your kippot (at cost +\$18 service fee). We can have the topiaries on the tables for one. We have talism. If you would like to register for gifts to help your family and friends, we can assist you, as well.



The Gift shop is served by Sisterhood volunteers. Profits from the Gift Shop help to fund many of the Religious and Pre-School programs. Please think of us first and you will get very friendly assistance in your time of planning many things.

We are open during religious school on Tuesdays and Sundays, as well as 11:30-1:30 on Thursdays. If you need help at other times, please contact Reba Bachrach at [legs32@comcast.net](mailto:legs32@comcast.net) or (770)846-3237 or Lauren Gray at [Lauren.gray04@gmail.com](mailto:Lauren.gray04@gmail.com) or (770)402-0040.



# **Blessings**





## **Blessing the Torah – For the Honorees who will Bless the Torah**

Those honored with an *aliyah* or other honor ascend the *Bimah* on the left side (as you face the Ark). They will descend on the right side of the *Bimah*.

### **Torah Blessings**

You begin with:

**בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ.**

Barchu et adonai ha-mevorach

Congregation replies, then you repeat:

**בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.**

Baruch adonai ha-mevorach le-olam va-ed

and continue

**בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים**

**וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.**

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher bachar banu mikol ha'amim, v'natan lanu et Torato, Baruch atah adonai, no-tane ha-Torah

After the Torah reading:

**בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת**

**וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִטָּע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.**

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher natan lanu Torat emet, v-chayei olam natah b'tocheinu, Baruch atah adonai, no-tane ha-Torah

After you have blessed the Torah you will remain at the lectern during the next aliyah. Before leaving the *Bimah* shake hands with the *gabbaim* at the lectern, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Cantor, Rabbis and officers and descend the right staircase.

### Shehecheyanu – Blessing for Special Occasions

The *Shehecheyanu* blessing (“Who has kept us alive”) is recited to offer thanks for new and unusual experiences (such as seeing a baby's first steps, beginning a new year at school, dedicating a new house, tasting the first produce from a garden, etc.) This blessing is also often recited at the beginning of all the major Jewish holidays (e.g., on the first night of Sukkot) or to celebrate any long-awaited special occasion.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech haolam

שְׁהַחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה. [אָמֵן].  
Shehecheyanu vekiymenu vehigianu lazman hazeh [Amen]

“Blessed are You, Lord our God, Master of the Universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and has brought us to this special time.”

# **Menus & Approved Caterers**



Should you choose to provide the food for Friday Night Oneg, the following is a suggested menu.

## **Erev Shabbat Friday Night Oneg** **(Suggested Menu - Pareve)**

Hummus served with pita chips  
Vegetable crudités with pareve dip  
Smoked salmon pate and crackers  
Babaganoush  
Fresh Sliced Fruit

2 Bottles Kosher (Heckshered) Wine  
1 Red  
1 White

Soft Drinks/Lemonade  
Bottled Water

## **Bagelicious Friday Night One**

**Flat fee of \$250.00 to include**

Cheese, Crackers & Fruit

Or

Hummus and pita chips with celery, carrot sticks and dip

Paper Goods

Soft Drinks and Apple Juice

Trifle Bar – Optional

\$45.00 each trifle

Ice Cream Float Station – Optional

Root Beer and Coca Cola

Vanilla ice cream

Served with pound cake

\$250.00 flat fee

# Shabbat Morning Kiddush Luncheon Menus

## Etz Chaim Kiddush Luncheon "A"

Assorted Freshly Baked Bagelicious Bagels

*Served with Butter and Jelly, Peanut Butter & Nutella  
with Cream Cheese Flavors: Plain, Veggie, Scallion*

Cubed Cheese Bites with Bagelicious Bagel Chips

Mixed Green Salad with side vinaigrette

"CAROL'S" Special Selection of Assorted Cookies

Congregational Challah for Rabbi's Sanctuary Kiddush

Bagelicious' Famous Sweet Iced Challah

*Topped with Raisins, Cherries and Walnuts*

Regular and Decaffeinated Coffee Service

Assorted Soft Drinks

*Coke, Diet Coke and Sprite*

\$8.15

*Per person*

\$3.95

*Per person for paper goods*

*\*See our policy and procedures for additional rules, restrictions and fees.*

**Gratuity NOT included.** *Prices Effective through June 30, 2023. Please be aware  
we anticipate an increase of approximately 5% beginning July 1, 2023.*

## **Etz Chaim Kiddush Luncheon "B"**

Assorted Freshly Baked Bagelicious Bagels

*Served with Butter and Jelly, Peanut Butter and Nutella*

*With Cream Cheese Flavors: Plain, Veggie, Scallion*

Your Choice of Two Additional Luncheon Selections:

*All White Meat Albacore Tuna Salad*

*Egg Salad*

*Sliced Hard Boiled Egg Platter*

*Marinated Vegetable and Pasta Salad*

*Pickled Herring in Cream Sauce*

Optional – NOVA - \$3.50 per person

Mixed Greens Salad

*Raisins, Walnuts & Raspberry Vinaigrette Dressing*

The Above Served with:

Garnish Platters

*Sliced tomatoes, onions, lettuce, cucumber and peppers*

Seasonal Fruit Salad

Cubed Cheese Bites with Bagelicious Bagel Chips

"CAROL'S" Special Selection of Assorted Cookies

Congregational Challah for Rabbi's Sanctuary Kiddush

Bagelicious' Famous Sweet Iced Challah

*Topped with Raisins, Cherries and Walnuts*

Regular and Decaffeinated Coffee Service

Assorted Soft Drinks

*Coke, Diet Coke and Sprite*

**\$13.10**

*Per person*

**\$3.95**

*Per person for paper goods*

*\*See our policy and procedures for additional rules, restrictions and fees.*

**Gratuity NOT included.** *Prices Effective through June 30, 2023. Please be aware we anticipate an increase of approximately 5% beginning July 1, 2023.*



## **Etz Chaim Kiddush Luncheon Menu "C"**

Assorted Freshly Baked Bagelicious Bagels

*Served with Butter and Jelly, Peanut Butter and Nutella*

*With Cream Cheese Flavors: Plain, Veggie, Scallion*

Your Choice of Four (4) Additional Luncheon Selections from the Following:

*All White Meat Albacore Tuna Salad*

*Egg Salad*

*Whitefish Salad*

*Sliced Hard Boiled Egg Platter*

*Marinated Vegetable and Pasta Salad*

*Pickled Herring in Cream Sauce*

*Homemade Kugel*

*Plain, Raisin, or Spinach and Mushrooms*

*Warm Blintz Casserole*

*Served with Sour Cream and Preserves*

*Israeli Hummus*

*Served with Bagelicious Bagel Chips*

Optional – NOVA - \$3.50 per person

Mixed Greens Salad with side Vinaigrette

OR

Fresh Spinach Salad with Mandarin Oranges, Slivered Almonds and Greek

Vinaigrette

The Above Served with:

Garnish Platters

*Sliced tomatoes, onions, lettuce, cucumber and peppers*

Seasonal Fruit Salad

Cubed Cheese Bites with Bagelicious Bagel Chips

"CAROL's" Special Selection of Assorted Cookies

Congregational Challah for Rabbi's Sanctuary Kiddush

Bagelicious' Famous Sweet Iced Challah

*Topped with Raisins, Cherries and Walnuts*

Regular and Decaffeinated Coffee Service

Assorted Soft Drinks

*Coke, Diet Coke and Sprite*

**\$15.00**

*Per person*

**\$3.95**

*Per person for paper goods*

*\*See our policy and procedures for additional rules, restrictions and fees.*

**Gratuify NOT included.** Prices Effective through June 30, 2023. Please be aware we anticipate an increase of approximately 5% beginning July 1, 2023.



## **Bagelicious Policies and Procedures**

Sales tax is not included in quoted prices and will be added to your catering invoice.

A deposit of \$1,100.00 is required to be paid at the time of contract signing.

All leftovers that have been served out in the Hammer-Tritt Social Hall and that are considered edible by Caterer are available for the host family to take home. NOTE: Bagels from Kiddush Table **WILL NOT** be repackaged to take home due to sanitary reasons.

Caterer will provide one server to be included in our fee. We recommend one server per 75 guests. Additional servers are charged at a rate of \$150.00 each. **Gratuities are at your discretion however \$50 or more per server is suggested.**

The per person charge (but not the labor charges) set forth above is valid for any Kiddush Luncheon occurring on or before July 1, 2021 and is subject to an increase of up to 5% for any Kiddush Luncheon occurring on or after July 1, 2022.

The minimum number of guests (excluding children ages 5 and under) that the host family is responsible for could be changed at the request of Etz Chaim based on the results of periodic audited counts conducted by Etz Chaim.

Wine for sanctuary Kiddush is not provided.

### **Gratuities NOT included**

Carol Carola  
Bagelicious  
Diamond Caterers  
770-509-9505

# Congregation Etz Chaim Approved Caterers

## **FOR SHABBAT KIDDUSH LUNCHEON**

### **BAGELICIOUS/DIAMOND CATERERS**

1255 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 37  
Marietta, GA 30068  
Carol Carola  
770.842.4648 or 770.509.9505  
Clcbagel0418@gmail.com

## **FOR ALL OTHER CATERING NEEDS**

**Valid through June 30, 2022**

### **BAGELICIOUS/DIAMOND CATERERS**

1255 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 37  
Marietta, GA 30068  
Carol Carola  
770.842.4648 or 770.509.9505  
Clcbagel0418@gmail.com

### **TROPICS CATERING**

407 Stokesay Drive  
Lawrenceville, GA 30046  
Hector Sampson  
678.964.3574  
tropicscatering@yahoo.com

### **YUM! CATERING**

9955 Coleman Road  
Roswell, GA 30075  
Ande Baron  
812.220.5558  
ande.yum@gmail.com

\*(AKC) – Certified by the Atlanta Kashruth Commission  
If you require further information on Kosher catering or venues please contact Betsy  
Fitzwater, our office manager.

## **OTHER KOSHER CATERERS**

**Would need to join catering panel for events at Etz Chaim**

### **AVENUE K (AKC)**

David Covell  
770.578.1110  
david@avenue-catering.com

### **ALEX CATERING**

Alex Borukhov  
404.786.8133  
alexcaterring@earthlink.net  
Alexcaterring.net

### **AFFAIRS TO REMEMBER**

Yossi Ben'haim  
yossi@affairs.com  
404.872.7859  
Rich Wilner  
rich@affairs.com

### **ADDED TOUCH**

Mitzi Tillem  
770.321.9592  
mitzi@sandrasaddedtouch.com

### **CHEF CARY'S CUISINE**

Cary Eisen  
770.429.0060  
chefcarycuisine@mindspring.com

### **C. PARK CATERING**

Tara Teilhaber  
404.874.7644  
Cparkscatering.com  
Tara@cparkscatering.com

\*(AKC) – Certified by the Atlanta Kashruth Commission  
If you require further information on Kosher catering or venues please contact Betsy  
Fitzwater, our office manager.



# **Additional Resources**





## **Approved Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tutors**

**Donna Bierman**

770/823-4455

donnabierman@comcast.net

**Fern Meharg**

770/578-8587

fmeharg@yahoo.com

*"A child is not a vessel to be filled, but a lamp to be lit."* (Hebrew Proverb)

Fern has been tutoring and preparing Bar/Bat Mitzvah students for more than 20 years. One of her first students was her own brother, and since then she has worked with students of varying backgrounds and abilities.

Fern believes preparing for your Bar or Bat Mitzvah should be fulfilling on both a spiritual and personal growth level. She understands and works to meet the needs of each individual student and utilize different methods based on each student's learning style. She is passionate about teaching and tries to make the entire experience fun and meaningful for the student and the family. Her goal is that together we will create a spark that will fuel their thirst for lifelong Jewish learning.

Currently, Fern is teaching as the Haftarah trope specialist at Etz Chaim. She also taught as the Torah trope specialist at Temple Kol Emeth the last two years and previously taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade Hebrew as well.

Being on the bimah is natural for her. She has been davening and doing Cantorial work for as long as she has been teaching and has led High Holiday services in Miami, St. Louis and here at Etz Chaim. Fern loves Jewish music and loves to express that through prayer.

Fern is married to her best friend, Steve, and has three wonderful children, Jillian, Gabrielle and Reilly, who all attended Etz Chaim's Religious School.

**Linda Weinroth**

404-822-8332

mlweinroth@aol.com

Linda Weinroth retired in 2007 as Education Director of Congregation Etz Chaim after a thirty-one-year tenure. In addition to tutoring students for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, she also tutors students from middle school through the college level in all areas of mathematics, as well as Math SAT Prep. Some of her time is also spent as an educational consultant. When working with Bar/Bat Mitzvah students, Linda's goals are to make sure that her students feel comfortable on the Bimah and to make the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process meaningful for the entire family. She and her husband Michael are currently enjoying their role as grandparents to Noah, Jordi, Henry, Margot and Izabelle.



# **Countdown to the Big Day**

*A Quick Guide to Important Dates in this Handbook*

## **One Year Out**

Meet with the Rabbi and the Director of Education.  
Contact your tutor.

## **Six Months Out**

Meet with the Director of Education to check-in.

## **Four Months Out**

Call the Office Manager to arrange a meeting with the Rabbi.  
Once arranged the Rabbi will reach out to you with a copy of your Family Learning Project to be completed by your first meeting.

## **Eight Weeks Out**

Contact Carol Carola at Bagelicious 770-509-9505 to discuss your Shabbat morning Oneg.

## **Six Weeks Out**

Order kippot and head coverings for female guests.

## **One Month Out**

Reserve the Bayit for *Shomrei* Shabbat guests.  
Contact the Executive Director to discuss your guest list and number of guests.

## **Two Weeks Out**

Give your Shabbat Honors form and program to the Rabbis for proofreading.  
Have your Torah Readers chant for your tutor.  
Contact synagogue office to schedule photos.

## **Day Before**

Take photos.  
Deliver kippot, programs, candy, & Friday night Oneg items to the synagogue.

## **Day Of**

Take a deep breath, relax, and enjoy your child's accomplishment.

**MAZEL TOV!**



# Who to Contact

**Marty Gilbert**      [mgilbert@etzchaim.net](mailto:mgilbert@etzchaim.net)      770.973.0137

- Administrative
- Financial questions
- Questions about the Kitchen & Kashrut
- To make arrangements for guests with disabilities

**Betsy Fitzwater**      [betsy@etzchaim.net](mailto:betsy@etzchaim.net)      770.973.0137

- To reserve the Hammer-Tritt Social Hall, Bayit and/or Kitchen
- To schedule your photo session with the Rabbi
- To schedule deliveries
- To schedule your meeting with Rabbi

**Debbie Deutsch**      [debbie@etzchaim.net](mailto:debbie@etzchaim.net)      770.977.3384

- Educational requirements
- Arrangements/questions for young children
- Tutor assignment

**Rabbi Dorsch**      [rabbidorsch@etzchaim.net](mailto:rabbidorsch@etzchaim.net)      770.973.0137

- Rabbinic questions (D'var Torah, Services, Family Learning Project)