



Bet Mitzvah at Congregation B'nai Shalom

A Guide to Frequently Asked Questions

January 2024



Congratulations as you approach your child's *Bet Mitzvah*. This guide will provide you with information about upcoming activities to calendar, decisions to make, and services that Congregation Bet Shalom will make available to you to support both the spiritual simcha and the celebration of the day.

This guide was written to provide answers to some of the questions we typically receive from *Bet Mitzvah* families and via our CBS *Bet Mitzvah* Parents Facebook Page.

We strongly recommend you check the CBS website for any updates prior to making any decisions.

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- Please provide a summary of the Planning and Logistics Schedule
The office staff will reach out to you in the timeframe noted below to schedule the following.

| Before Bet Mitzvah Date | Event |
|-------------------------|--|
| 18-24 months | If you would like to use the Temple facilities as a venue for your celebration, please contact Steve Winer, Executive Director . Option details are included in this document. |
| 13 months | Rabbi Eiduson and Sharon Brown Goldstein will reach out to schedule one-year-out appointments with each of them. These meetings are to discuss your overall <i>Bet Mitzvah</i> preparation and responsibilities and to receive your Torah portion. |
| 10 – 12 months | Rabbi Eiduson will assign a tutor to work with your child. You will set a schedule with your assigned tutor, who will work with your child on the Torah portion, the Haftarah portion and service readiness. |
| 4 months | <p>As you get closer to your date, you and your child will meet with Rabbi Gurevitz and Sharon Brown Goldstein to discuss your child's <i>Bet Mitzvah</i> learnings and to begin preparing for the day.</p> <p>You will get an email to schedule the 7 appointments that are spread over the two months leading up to the <i>Bet Mitzvah</i>.</p> <p>The FINAL rehearsal is always from 3 – 5 p.m. the Wednesday before the <i>Bet Mitzvah</i> and includes parents. Please block your calendars now.</p> |
| 2 months | You will get communication from the office about various options available to enhance the service – information is at https://www.cbnaishalom.org/form/Bnai-Mitzvah-Info |
| 2.5 months | With your permission, your child's picture will be included on the lobby electronic display board announcing their upcoming Bet Mitzvah. |
| 2 months | If you have indicated you are having a Kiddush at the Temple following the service, you will receive a form asking for details |
| The week before | We'll confirm the details of your event. |
| Week of | <p>Wednesday, 3-5pm – final rehearsal.</p> <p>If you're having a Kiddush in the social hall, the Executive Director will work with you to confirm the room setup.</p> <p>If you have personalized kippot and programs, bring them into the office when you arrive for your final rehearsal.</p> |

2. Can you recommend a vendor for Photography, DJ, Venue, etc.?

The [CBS Bet Mitzvah Parents](#) Facebook page is a wonderful resource for recommendations from parents in our congregation. You can join the [CBS Bet Mitzvah Parents](#) Facebook group by going to the main [CBS Facebook](#) page and asking to join.

3. Can I use the social hall for all or part of the celebration?

You have the option to host a Friday night dinner for your family, a Kiddush luncheon or full reception after the Saturday service, or a Saturday night party at the temple. More information is listed below, but you should confirm your space planning needs as early as possible to ensure availability. Additional Information is in this document at [Social Hall Rental Details](#). You can find the link to the social hall rental form here: [Social Hall Rental Form](#).

4. How can family and friends be included? What about family members who are not Jewish?

At your first meeting with Rabbi Gurevitz, she will give you the *Bet Mitzvah* Participation List and discuss the various roles members of your family can fill during the service.

5. Can I make changes to the Service Program?

Congregation B'nai Shalom will print programs for your *Bet Mitzvah*. You can opt to print your own program, but please be advised that custom programs will need to be approved by Sharon Brown Goldstein.

6. How can I make the day special?

There are a number of options, including Oneg sponsorship, flowers for the bimah, video options, and honoring your student with a leaf on our Tree of Life or a prayerbook dedication. Information on these options is below, and more information is available on our Bet Mitzvah Information Form

7. How will the sanctuary be decorated for the service?

Many Bet Mitzvah families choose to decorate the bimah the day of the event. You may bring in live flowers for the bimah, or, as many of our families do, rent the temple's silk flower arrangements. Your donation for use of the flowers goes to the Temple's Landscape Fund to help us beautify our grounds. Bimah decorations other than flowers are permitted only with permission from the Rabbi. Please contact the Executive Director for further information.

8. Can I photograph or Video the Service?

Photographers and videographers are not permitted during the service itself. However, CBS does have a variety of video services available. You can read about all of the options here: [Video Options and Order Form](#).

Photographs are permitted prior to the service. For single Bet Mitzvah, interior pictures including those with the Torah can be taken from 9:00am when the temple opens to 9:45 when the Rabbi begins her family briefing. Shared Bet Mitzvah families will receive specific information.

9. How do I add my family to the Tree of Life?

Some Bet Mitzvah families choose to commemorate the special day in their family's lifecycle by purchasing a leaf for the "Tree of Life". The purchase of a leaf helps Congregation B'nai Shalom fulfill its mission and provides a permanent touchstone to mark this event. Details are available on the Temple website under the 'Donate' tab at the top of the home page, or from the Temple Office.

Information about the Tree of Life and Prayerbook Dedication, and silk flower rental and order form can be found here:

10. Do I need to provide kippot?

You may order kippot to be used for your child's Bet Mitzvah. Bring them to the Temple Office during the week of the service. If you do not choose to do so, the ushers will put out the synagogue's collection for use by your attendees.

11. Does my child wear a Tallit to lead the service, and do we need to purchase one?

Kippot and Tallitot in keeping with the spirit of Reform Judaism, the wearing of a Kippah (a.k.a. Yarmulke, head covering) or Tallit (prayer shawl) is an individual option. The material wrapped around us creates a feeling of God's presence close to us as we prepare to do something holy. The Tzitzit are reminders of our connection to God through acts of Mitzvot. It is important for parents to discuss the meaning and option of Tallit-wearing with their child so that they can participate in making this choice. For those who choose to wear a tallit, some families buy a tallit for their child, some use an inherited tallit, and some use a tallit from the basket that is available for congregants at the temple.

12. Do I need to provide Challah for the service?

You don't need to worry about the challah, unless you have a family member or friend baking a special challah for the bimah (and if so, please tell us). The forms you complete with an estimated headcount ensure that we will buy the right amount of challah for the lobby.

13. Is the Friday night service part of the Bet Mitzvah?

The Bet Mitzvah weekend begins Friday night at the Erev Shabbat service when your family will light the candles and your child chants Kiddush. Services begin promptly at 6:45 pm. Please arrive 15 minutes before the start of the service. If you are hosting a family dinner, please plan accordingly.

14. Could we host a family dinner in the social hall on Friday night service prior to the service?

If the hall is available, yes of course. More details are included below.

15. Who provides the Oneg Shabbat after the Friday Shabbat Service?

Many families opt to honor their child by sponsoring the Friday Evening Oneg or providing additional goodies for the congregations and those joining our community as part of their special weekend, by enhancing what the Temple Sisterhood provides at the Oneg Shabbat. Our Sisterhood does a wonderful job of setting up the Oneg Shabbat. They'll be in touch with you about details, many of which are on [the form](#) you'll receive about 3 months prior to the event.

16. What time should we arrive on Saturday Morning?

If you are not arriving early to take photos, families and other service participants will meet with Rabbi Gurevitz at 9:45am in the sanctuary.

17. What is the best way to direct people to the reception after the service?

At the end of the service, the Rabbi will make "announcements". The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Participation List* includes space for you to provide the information. Some families opt to rent a school bus to transport young guests, while others choose to arrange carpools.

18. What time does the service end?

The service begins promptly at 10:15am. A single Bet Mitzvah generally ends between 12:00 and 12:15, while a shared Bet Mitzvah generally ends between 12:15 and 12:30. You can use these general times to inform caterers, reception halls, buses, parents for pickups, etc.

19. What is the dress code for the Bet Mitzvah?

Please see [Bet Mitzvah Handbook](#) for details.

20. What is the role of the Assistant Family?

During a service prior to your child's Bet Mitzvah (typically in the weeks leading up to it), **both your child and you** will serve as an Assistant Family. This involves arriving at the temple at no later than 9:40am to welcome guests and to hand out prayer books prior to the service and then to receive them at the end of the service. **Most importantly, this is an opportunity for you and your student to experience what will happen on the day of your simcha.**

You will receive detailed instructions – and the Board member usher will be there to help guide you. In performing this manageable Mitzvah, you help us welcome the family and friends of another Bet Mitzvah student. If you know that your child has extracurricular activities in the weeks prior to their Bet Mitzvah, please call the temple office early and arrange for an appropriate Assistant Family date. The Bet Mitzvah student and family must plan to be available during the entire morning through the end of service.

21. Having a reception at CBS – the details

There are a few different types of receptions that can be held in the social hall. Basically, these are:

- Friday Evening Family Dinner - \$100
- Saturday Extended Kiddush (~2 hours) - \$400
- Saturday Luncheon Reception (~4 hours) - \$800+
- Saturday Evening Reception - \$1000+

For all, the Temple's dietary policy must be followed. Congregation B'nai Shalom is "Kosher Style". Please see the [Bet Mitzvah Handbook](#) for details. Additional details about the use of the social hall can be found in the [Building Use Policy](#) on the website beginning on pg. 4. To begin the rental process, please complete the [Bet Mitzvah Social Hall Rental Form](#) and return to Steve Winer, Executive Director.

Friday Evening Family Dinner

Families sometimes host dinners in the social hall before the Friday evening service. These run the gamut from self-catered buffets, to bringing in platters, or hot entrees, to fully catered dinners. Generally, they start around 90 minutes to two hours or so before the service begins, and all must be cleared 30 minutes prior to the start of the service so our Oneg can be set up.

If you are interested in hosting a Friday night dinner, please confirm social hall availability with the Executive Director, Steve Winer.

Congregational dinners, programs and events have priority for use of the social hall on Friday evenings. Extended families *may* be able to join a congregational dinner that is already on the calendar, subject to space. Please coordinate with the Executive Director on counts and payments.

If we have a planned congregational dinner, we are not able to host a separate Friday night dinner for your family.

Saturday Extended Kiddush

Typically, these are "Lox and Bagels" and the fixings...although some families have gone more elaborate – and generally served buffet-style. They start at the end of the service, and last anywhere from 1-2 hours.

Saturday Luncheon or Evening Reception

These generally include a DJ or band, more formal meal service, occasionally a 'cocktail hour', and are generally about 4 hours in length.

General Information

- Room setup is handled by our custodians. A few days before the event, work with the Executive Director and he will come up with a diagram for you. Samples are available.
- Setup – The tables will be set up after the Oneg Friday night. You or your caterer can come any time after the Temple opens at 8am.
- Storage – You can leave things in the pantry behind the kitchen during the week prior to the event. Just let the office know that you're coming. Limited refrigerator room is also available
- Tables, Chairs and other supplies.
 - We have eleven - 5'x6' oval tables (seat up to 10),
 - We have three – 5' round tables (seat up to 8)
 - We have twelve – 96"x30" rectangular tables (seats up to 10)
 - We have four – 72"x30" rectangular tables (seats up to 8)
 - The oval and round tables take round tablecloths 82" up to 96" (depending on how much you want to hang down), and the 8' tables generally get 10' long by 4-5' wide tablecloths.
 - There are also a variety of vases available for centerpieces.
- Caterer setup / deliveries – For Friday night dinners, the office is generally staffed until about 4pm, but we can arrange for you to have a key card to let the caterer in. On Saturday, we have a staff monitor here at 9:00 am, and the monitor will watch out for the caterer or other vendors, let them in and show them where to set up.
- What you **can't** do. Helium balloons are not allowed because of our ceiling fans. Candles on the tables are not allowed, but you can use candles as part of a 'candle-lighting ceremony'. We also don't allow chocolate fountains, because all that chocolate is very difficult to get out of the carpet.
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Remember – the Temple staff is here to help you make sure that this is the wonderful memorable day you want it to be. We are here for you. Any questions, you can email [Steve Winer](#) or the [Office Staff](#), or call us at 508-366-7191.