



B'NEI MITZVAH ORIENTATION MANUAL

B'NEI MITZVAH GUIDELINES

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I. INTRODUCTION

This manual was prepared to explain the Bar/Bat Mitzvah policies of Congregation Rodeph Sholom. We urge you to read it and use the information so that you and your child will have a happy, meaningful and successful simcha. The synagogue staff and leadership are prepared to answer all questions and assist you in any way as you plan and prepare for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The Rodeph Sholom fiscal year begins June 1. Note that this manual, policies and fees are for the current fiscal year. Published policies and fees are subject to change without notice.

We hope that the preparation for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Rodeph Sholom will encourage you and your child to be proud of your Jewish heritage. The guidelines and expectations contained in this manual are designed to help you do this.

MESSAGE FROM THE RABBI - CANTOR

I want to welcome you to Rodeph Sholom and to our Bnei Mitzvah class. We will be working together, hand and hand through all this incredible and fun process. Together we will get ready for the great day, but most important we will get ready for life.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah day is only one day, a very important one, but it's just the beginning of an exciting life long journey. We will study Torah, Haftarah and Tefillah.

With all the knowledge that you will receive, you will be able to stand in front of the Congregation (any Congregation) and pray fluently. You will understand the service and be able to participate and lead.

Thank you for allowing me to walk with you during this journey.

Rabbi - Cantor Andres Kornworcel.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDUCATION DIRECTOR

"[The] Bar and Bat Mitzvah is a sacred mountain in Jewish time. We climb this particular mountain because it brings us closer to G-d, closer to Judaism, closer to our people, [and] closer to ourselves. And what modern Jews need, more than ever, is a way to really be there at the summit of this holy mountain." (Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin, Putting God on the Guest List)

The purpose of this Bar/Bat Mitzvah manual, and the wish of the staff and Clergy at Congregation Rodeph Sholom, is to help our families reach this milestone together and gain the most out of this important journey. In Judaism, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the transition from childhood into adulthood. It is also the culmination of many years of study and preparation in Jewish education. This is a time filled with excitement and wonder. This time can also bring with it a great deal of stress. I hope that along with the policies and information laid out in this manual, I can personally be of assistance to families throughout this busy time. My goal is to help make the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience one that will strengthen a child's commitment to Judaism as an important part of their growing and ever-changing identity.

Joshua Ackman, M.A.J.E.
Youth & Education Director
Rodeph Sholom Center for Jewish Learning

II. BACKGROUND

In Judaism, a child is exempt from performing the mitzvot, God's commandments. At age 13, as a child matures physically, he also, according to our tradition, becomes responsible for his/her actions and doing the mitzvot, including participating in community prayer. As one who is now obligated to pray with the community, the child is also eligible to lead the congregation in prayer. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrates the first time the child assumes this honor.

Since the Middle Ages, boys have celebrated coming of age in a public ceremony. Today, we believe that both boys and girls should be called to the Torah and lead the congregation in prayer. Thus, we recognize this milestone with Bar Mitzvah for our sons and Bat Mitzvah for our daughters.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah event should not be regarded as a graduation after which Jewish education ceases. Instead, it marks the end of the primary phase of religious instruction so that further, more advanced study may commence. Through Rodeph Sholom's upper division classes for 8th & 9th grade and Confirmation program for 10th grade, post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah students have a variety of opportunities for continuing their Jewish education and, as a congregation. It is our expectation that families will avail themselves of these incredible opportunities.

III. PREPARATION FOR THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH

A. Selection of the Date

Guidelines

The congregation maintains the following guidelines for scheduling a Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

1. Families should schedule a Bar/Bat Mitzvah as soon after your child's 13th Hebrew birthday. A Bat Mitzvah may also be scheduled anytime after your daughter's 12th Hebrew birthday.
2. The synagogue will not schedule B'nei Mitzvah during the summer months, Jewish Holidays, and most major American Holiday weekends. Children whose Hebrew birthdays fall within this time period should discuss alternatives with the Education Director.
3. Families, who wish to schedule a Bar/Bat Mitzvah outside of this time frame, may do so once they have received the date preference form from the Education Director.
4. Families who wish to switch Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates may contact the Education Director to discuss options, as long as the 13th Hebrew birthday guidelines are maintained.
5. The synagogue is aware that some children may have needs or concerns that may necessitate an exception to the aforementioned rules. Should that be the case, the family should set up to discuss these challenges with the Education Director and/or Rabbi - Cantor, prior to the date setting meeting which occurs in the spring.
6. No Bar/Bat Mitzvah is scheduled on a date when the Rabbi - Cantor is unavailable.

Implementation

1. In the spring of their child's 5th grade year, a letter will be sent a letter with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date setting policy and a date selection form. Parents will be asked to select and prioritize 3 possible dates for their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, submitting these dates to the Education Director within 2-3 weeks.
2. Synagogue leadership will then take all preferences into consideration and assign dates.
3. Families will then be notified of their date via email and a confirmation phone call from the Education Director.
4. As long as the above guidelines are met, a date may be changed to one that is available, after all others have made their selections. However, the synagogue will only hold one date per child.

B. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Requirements

To qualify for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony at Congregation Rodeph Sholom, your child must satisfy the following requirements:

1. While a member Congregation Rodeph Sholom, the candidate must have attended either Religious School or a Jewish day school for at least 3 years prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year.

2. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are trained by the Rabbi - Cantor and must successfully complete the studies set forth by him.

3. The candidate must enroll in *Ha'Sadnah*: Congregation Rodeph Sholom Religious School throughout the 7th grade year, which meets on Sunday mornings from 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon. This includes all Hillel school students who are members of Congregation Rodeph Sholom. Students are expected to attend Sunday morning Religious School for the ENTIRE ACADEMIC YEAR regardless of when the Bar/Bat Mitzvah takes place. They are also encouraged to attend on Wednesdays throughout the year, which is held virtually from 4:45pm – 6:30pm

4. During the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year, your child's regular attendance is invaluable. It is the best way for students to become familiar with the service and develop a feeling of comfort in the synagogue. We encourage students to begin attending services well before they begin their Bar/Bat Mitzvah training, as it helps better understand the flow of the service, serves as an example of the components the child will be leading, and creates a sense of community and attachment to Rodeph Sholom that extends outside of class.

5. As an enrolled student, your child is automatically a member of Kadima (our Middle School youth program) and participation is strongly encouraged. Additional information on Congregation Rodeph Sholom youth program is available from the Education or Youth Director. The member must be ‘in good standing,’ current in balances of Communal Obligations including religious school. B’nei Mitzvah fees must also be made in accordance with our guidelines and paid in full before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Since our children learn more from what we do than what we say, it is important that, as parents, our actions reflect a concern with Judaism and Jewish education. Therefore, parents are encouraged to attend services with their child regularly on Friday evenings, Saturday mornings, and festivals during the year of Bar/Bat Mitzvah training. We also encourage parents to also become involved in our Adult Education programs at Rodeph Sholom.

C. Financial and Enrollment Policies

All 7th grade students must be enrolled in religious school on Sunday morning. Religious School fees must be paid in August upon registration.

The member must be “in good standing,” and current in balances of Communal Obligations including religious school. There is a separate B’nei Mitzvah fee of \$900, which will be billed to your account before training begins. At the time your child has the first appointment with the Rabbi - Cantor a \$500 initial payment is required. **The B’nei Mitzvah fee must be paid in full 90 days prior to your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah.** If you have any questions, please contact the Executive Director.

D. Orientation

All parents must have a meeting with the Education Director designed as an orientation session, before their child begins lessons with the Rabbi - Cantor (which normally begins approximately 8 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah). If a family cannot attend the general orientation session, accommodations will

be made for a private orientation session. Parents are expected to sign the agreement with the synagogue agreeing to comply with rules and regulations of the manual.

If during the following year you have any questions regarding policy, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Education Director.

E. Facility Usage and Rental Fees* (May be amended due to current health policies)

Facility Rental Fees are charged for the use of the Social Hall and/or Chapel for any event, including a Kiddush Luncheon. With this manual we have provided a Fee Schedule and sample Facility Agreement. It will provide you with the most current usage and rental fees for Congregation Rodeph Sholom. Please keep in mind that these fees are subject to change and the fees in effect at the time of your Facility Agreement will apply.

F. Meeting with the Rabbi - Cantor

Please discuss with the Rabbi - Cantor at the first meeting with any special situations that might affect your child's work. The Rabbi - Cantor generally meets with each student for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour per week.

The Rabbi - Cantor devotes a great deal of time to each child. It is expected that your child put forth effort by practicing the Bar/Bat Mitzvah material each day. **We recommend a minimum of $\frac{1}{2}$ hour practice time per day.**

G. Meeting with the Education Director: Speech Writing

After meeting with the Rabbi - Cantor, the Education Director will set up regular appointments with the child to study the Torah portion and develop the Bar/Bat Mitzvah speech. Parents are encouraged to read and discuss the Torah portion with the child at home as well. Some children are relatively comfortable writing a speech, while others find this task difficult. The Education Director will work with each child at his/her own level and give guidance appropriate for the individual child. Each child will rehearse delivering the speech from the pulpit several times. Parents are also encouraged to work on speech delivery with their child. A final copy of the speech will be submitted to the Education Director at least a week prior to the ceremony for final approval.

H. Mitzvah Project Requirements

All Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are required to identify and participate in a social action "mitzvah" project. At this age we hope to teach our students a sense of responsibility and how to make a difference in the community. The Mitzvah project is the real-world application of the concept of *Tikkun Olam* - Repairing the World. The Education Director has many reference books to assist your child in selecting an appropriate project that fits his or her personality and interests. If fundraising is involved in a candidate's project, he/she is required to provide a detailed plan for raising the funds needed.

The projects should be designed so that the child has interest and a personal stake in its success. The Education Director must approve the *mitzvah* project at least four months prior to the *simchah*. It is recommended that parents and students meet with the Education Director for approval.

I. Bar/Bat Mitzvah with Special Needs

At Congregation Rodeph Sholom we firmly believe that every child can become a Bar or Bat mitzvah and have an incredible and meaningful experience.

Parents, whose child have special learning needs will meet with the Rabbi - Cantor and Education Director to set reasonable goals for his/her child. Since we want to create an experience of Jewish growth for the child and the family, our goal is to have him/her participate in the service in a way that is appropriate and meaningful for the child, the family, and the congregation.

Families whose children have special learning needs may opt to celebrate the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on a time different than Shabbat Morning. These Bar/Bat Mitzvah services must be discussed with the Rabbi, Cantor prior and Education Director prior to being scheduled.

J. Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is essential to ensure that the child's goals are reached. Few children this age have ever participated in such an involved endeavor. Some will progress with little prodding, while others will need more parental guidance. Parents need to support and monitor the process with their child at home.

When your child enters Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons:

1. Evaluate his/her extra-curricular activities
2. Plan 30 minutes to an hour for practice each day with your child
3. When practicing at home, have your child practice out loud
4. Communicate regularly with the Rabbi - Cantor and the Education Director

A CHILD WHO IS NOT PROGRESSING IS NOT STUDYING AT HOME! Please be a partner in supporting the learning done at Religious School and with the Rabbi – Cantor.

K. Tefillin, Tallit and Kippah

Tefillin

A Jew begins to use tefillin in prayer at the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We encourage all parents to purchase tefillin for your son or daughter to celebrate becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah to be worn when attending any weekday services in their future.

Tallit

Boys and girls are required to wear tallit at their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

Kippah

For hundreds of years, the custom of our people has been to cover one's head as a sign of piety and humility. In our congregation, we ask all men to wear a kippah during the service. We encourage non-Jews to wear them as well, though we do not demand this (except for someone coming to the pulpit). There are many women who wear kippot as well and we support this. *Our practice is for all men and women coming to the pulpit to wear a head covering.*

Some families give specially embossed kippot to their guests. This is discretionary.

IV. SHABBAT SERVICE OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH

A. Week of Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah

You may schedule a time to have pictures taken by a photographer. Please contact the main office to schedule this either Wednesday or Thursday.

At Rodeph Sholom, it is customary for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child to conduct the Shabbat services. The Friday evening services begin at either 6:30pm or 7:30 p.m., depending on the time of year and Shabbat morning services begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. You and your family should be at the synagogue at least 20 minutes before the start of each service.

B. General Decorum

Photography, Videotaping, Cellular Telephones, and Pulpit Attire

At Congregation Rodeph Sholom, we strive to create an atmosphere that is warm, pleasant and dignified. Our synagogue observes the sanctity of the Shabbat and requests that you and your guests refrain from smoking in and around the premises. We also ask that the following guidelines be followed:

1. Cellular Phones and Electronic Devices: **Please ask your guests to turn off all cellular telephones and electronic devices before entering the sanctuary.** All these devices are not permitted to be in use in or around the synagogue on Shabbat.
2. Videography: Videotaping of Shabbat services is not permitted during Shabbat. You may arrange to videotape the rehearsal, morning minyan during the week or at another arranged time prior to Shabbat. With our LiveStream capabilities, a copy of the stream will be available for purchase after the ceremony. Contact the office to discuss purchasing.
3. Photography: Family photography with the Rabbi - Cantor, if the family wishes, may be done via appointment prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Appointments must be made with the Rabbi - Cantor, and the Administrative Assistant two (2) weeks in advance to schedule time. Families are responsible for assigning a family member or friend to take photos if they are not using a professional photographer. As a reminder, there is no photography allowed on Shabbat.
4. General Decorum
 - a. Young Adults: It is often the case that friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child sit together during the service. We strongly suggest that some parents sit nearby to remind the children of appropriate synagogue decorum.
 - b. Young Children: We encourage children of all ages to attend and enjoy our services. Children are the responsibility of their parents. If you would like to offer babysitting during services, contact the Education Director to make arrangements. Children under the age of 10 may not be left unattended either outside or within the building. Children's behavior is the responsibility of the parents or guardians.

5. Pulpit Attire: Men wear a kippah throughout the service and, on Shabbat morning, a tallit as well. All men and women coming to the pulpit must have their head covered.
6. *Tzniut* (modesty) is a long-standing Jewish value. Judaism believes that each person is made in the Divine image, thus, some things are not appropriate.
How we dress is a basic example of these values. **The following is *not* permitted:**
 - a. Clothing on which any profanity or inappropriate language, pictures, or symbols are written, printed or depicted.
 - b. Visible underwear
 - c. Tank tops, bare midriff styles, halter tops, see through blouses, strapless tops, backless tops, spaghetti straps, or undershirts worn as an outer shirt.

The following is suggested appropriate clothing for Shabbat morning:

FEMALES:

- Skirts or dresses at a minimum of fingertip length
- Blouses, knit shirts, sweaters with shoulders covered
- Dress sandals or dress shoes (no sneakers or flip flops)
- Kippot or head covering

MALES:

- Collared shirts, dress shirts or sweaters
- Long slacks
- Dress shoes
- Kippot

Please remember that celebrating the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a solemn rite and that being called to the bimah is an honor. One's manner and attire should reflect the dignity and sanctity of the occasion. For the comfort of our guests, the sanctuary temperature is kept at approximately 70°. For those easily chilled, a sweater or jacket is recommended.

C. Inviting the Entire Class

One of the primary goals of our congregation is fostering a sense of community. We teach acceptance and camaraderie in all grades of Religious School leading up to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. During that year, the students have a unique opportunity to build and strengthen their friendships with each other because our "community" expands in 7th grade to include the students of Hillel Academy of Tampa.

To foster class spirit and to prevent hurting any class member's feelings, Congregation Rodeph Sholom has the following **very important policy**:

Everyone in your child's religious school class **SHOULD** be invited to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah religious ceremony and the Kiddush Luncheon that follows. If you are having a post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration to which any of the classmates are invited then the right thing to do is to invite the entire class. The

invitation to the celebration may be solely addressed to each classmate and need not include the classmate's parents and siblings.

D. Bimah Honors

Being called to the Torah is an honor, the spiritual importance of which is reflected in its name, "aliyah", which means, "ascending." On each Shabbat morning during the chanting of the Torah portion, seven individuals or couples are called consecutively to the Torah for *aliyot*.

Please note, the congregation reserves one of these seven to hand out to a member of the general congregation in attendance. A "how to" guide for an *aliyah* is enclosed in this manual. It is suggested that you give this guide to anyone who wishes to review the *aliyah* blessings and procedures. The *aliyah* blessings are also found in the Sim Shalom prayer book on pages 142-143 and on the pulpit in both Hebrew and transliteration.

The congregation prefers to follow the tradition of assigning the first *aliyah* to a *Kohein* and the second to a Levite. If you do not have a *Kohein* or Levite in the family, please consult with the Rabbi - Cantor regarding the assigning of these honors.

It is very important to submit **full Hebrew names** to the synagogue before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. "Full Hebrew names" means that each person is called to the Torah as "so-and-so" the son/daughter of "so-and-so" (for example, *Mordechai Lev ben Avraham v'Sarah*). Providing the Hebrew names in advance helps the service run smoothly. The form for Friday night and Shabbat morning honors can be found in the Appendix section of this manual. This form needs to be completed and returned to the Office Manager at least two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Start early because this can take a while.

The last two honors are *hagbah* (lifting the Torah) and *g'lilah* (wrapping the Torah). These honors require no reading of Hebrew. (On those *Shabbatot* when two scrolls are used, there are two *hagbah* and *g'lilah* honors.)

There are two ark openings on Shabbat morning. Each of these may be given to **two or four people** (two on each side of the ark). On Shabbat morning the Prayer for Israel can be recited in either Hebrew or English. All of the above honors are only for Jewish people in attendance.

In addition, the Prayer for our Country may be assigned to someone Jewish or non-Jewish and you may add the Prayer for Peace assigned to someone Jewish or non-Jewish. The *Misheberach* tallit may be assigned to someone Jewish or non-Jewish. There is an optional Friday night English reading you may choose to add to be assigned for someone non-Jewish.

Selecting Aliyot

When arranging the *aliyot*, keep the following in mind:

1. When giving out the *aliyot*, a parent should immediately precede his/her child.
2. The Maftir *aliyah* (the last *aliyah*) is always given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child.

E. Torah Readers

The family may select individuals who they would like to chant from the Torah. Readers need not be members of the congregation. These selections must be made at least three months prior to the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **The Rabbi - Cantor will assign the Torah portions** as well as make copies of the portion for practice, if necessary. The Rabbi - Cantor can assist families in choosing Torah readers. If a family cannot select the number of Torah readers needed by the three-month deadline, the Rabbi - Cantor will fill in the remaining spaces with willing congregants. No papers or “cheat sheets” may be used in the reading of the Torah. **The reading of the Torah is from the scroll only.**

F. Torah Procession

There are two Torah processions during the Torah service. Parents are encouraged to join their child as he/she carries the Torah around the sanctuary. The first Torah processional begins after the Torah is passed down the generations so the parents are already on the bimah next to their child. If parents want to join their child for the second processional, they need to join them as they come down from the bimah carrying the Torah. Parents are encouraged to join their child for at least the first Torah processional.

G. Including Non-Jewish Family Members

As the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration takes place during a Jewish worship service, there is limited participation for non-Jewish family members. It is helpful if you explain this to non-Jewish family members ahead of time so that they will not feel hurt or excluded.

Only Jews, as defined by the Conservative movement, are allowed to participate in the service. If you wish to assign a reading to a non-Jewish person, please discuss this with the Rabbi - Cantor. Non-Jewish parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may speak from the pulpit on Shabbat morning and will be called to the pulpit for the blessing of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child.

Honors that may be given to non-Jewish family members or friends are mentioned above in Section D – Bimah Honors

H. Greeters

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family may select the greeters. They should either be adult members or people who are familiar with the synagogue. There should be at least two greeters for both Friday night and Saturday morning services. Their role is to greet people, distribute Bar/Bat Mitzvah and congregational handouts, and orient guests to the synagogue. The congregation will supply additional trained greeters to assist you and your guests.

Greeter instructions have been included in this packet of information for you to copy and distribute to your greeters. Care should be taken in selecting greeters who are friendly and knowledgeable about the synagogue.

I. Candy Throwing

It is an old custom to throw sweets at a simcha. We permit this practice at Rodeph Sholom, though it is by no means mandatory. If you choose to do this, we permit the throwing of any soft kosher candy that is individually wrapped in a solid non-porous wrap. Clear lollipop bags are the perfect size and can be tied shut at the top with ribbon. Wrapped kosher candy to be brought to the synagogue before Shabbat services on Friday. The wrapped candy should be distributed during the *Misheberekh* Tallit prayer during the Torah service. The wrapped candy is thrown LIGHTLY during the song “*Siman Tov u’Mazel Tov*” after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child completes the Haftarah reading and blessings.

J. Presentations

The current President, President-Elect or their designee will present the gift from the Board of Directors, Sisterhood, and Men’s Club to your child on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day. Additionally, the Education Director, Youth Director, or Youth Group Board Member may provide additional presentations.

K. Parents’ Remarks

Some parents request time during the service to say a few words. At Congregation Rodeph Sholom, comments are presented on Shabbat morning during the Torah service after the Maftir *aliyah*. Parents should prepare comments they wish to share.

V. THE CELEBRATION

A. Observing Shabbat and Kashrut

It is strongly recommended by the Conservative Movement and our Ritual Committee that any post Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations take place after Shabbat (i.e., Saturday evening or Sunday).

We also strongly urge you to have a kosher celebration in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is only fitting that the celebration of the child’s acceptance of the mitzvot of our faith honors one of the oldest and most important of those mitzvot, namely Kashrut.

All deliveries and items brought to the synagogue must be completed before 3 p.m. on Friday of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah weekend. Decorations and other items may not be brought in on Shabbat.

B. Booking of the Social Hall* (May be amended due to current health policies)

Rodeph Sholom is fortunate to have a growing congregation. Once you have obtained your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, please do not assume that the synagogue is yours for the weekend. Please contact the Administrative Assistant or Education Director as soon as possible to reserve your space and obtain a Facility Agreement to start planning your simcha.

VI. LOGISTICS* (May be amended due to current health policies)

A. Food

At Congregation Rodeph Sholom we celebrate your simcha as a community and it is customary for the parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child to host a Kiddush luncheon at the synagogue after Shabbat morning services. The Kiddush is part of the Shabbat celebration and all members of our synagogue community are welcome to participate, regardless of whether they are invited to your simcha.

A family must include hosting 40 members of the congregation at their luncheon. For those families hosting a luncheon outside the synagogue, you are required to host a minimal Kiddush at the synagogue for those congregants who are not invited to your function. *Please reference the Fee Schedule and see the Executive Director for more information.

The synagogue does not allow foods baked in private homes, pizza, or other outside prepared foods, or pre-cut fruits/vegetables to be served in the social hall or from the kitchen. **Bubble gum or Blow Pops with gum are not permitted. Hershey's and Reese's candies, M&M's and Twizzlers** are kosher. For other candies and products, ask the Education Director or Rabbi - Cantor. Candy table items must be checked in when delivered to the synagogue.

Non-kosher foods including candy are not permitted in the synagogue building.

On the Friday nights during the service, two (2 lbs.) challah will be set out, as well as wine and grape juice. If you are hosting a family Shabbat dinner at Rodeph Sholom, the blessings and challah will be scheduled for you and your guests prior to the meal. If you choose to host a reception prior to services or an oneg after the service please contact the office for details.

B. Seating

The sanctuary seats up to 300 people. If you anticipate more people, please indicate this on the Information Sheet and speak with the Administrative Assistant no less than three (3) weeks in advance, thereby enabling us to set up the chapel with additional seating. Arrangements for handicapped seating are also available.

C. Flowers and Decorations

Floral decorations for the bimah and social hall are optional and are at the expense of the family. A standard silk floral arrangement will be used on the center lectern if the family chooses not to purchase one. If using a florist, please notify the Administrative Assistant of the delivery time. Flowers need to be delivered and set up during synagogue business hours on Friday before 3:00 p.m. The policy regarding floral decorations is as follows:

Sanctuary:

Lectern measurements for bimah piece: 55" wide x 15" high

1. Flowers and greenery, which will fit in the space available, are allowed under the ark. Please note that these decorations run the risk of being stepped on during the service.
2. Please avoid highly scented flowers. Allergic reactions to flowers could dampen your happy event.
3. Additional lighting is not permitted in the sanctuary or social hall.

The use of glitter and Mylar confetti (less than 1" in diameter) is strictly banned. They are very difficult to remove from the carpets.

D. Programs

The synagogue compiles and distributes weekly synagogue announcements at each Shabbat service. The greeters should distribute this handout “Rodeph Weekly” along with the family’s program. It is customary, though not mandatory, for the candidate’s family to print a program for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. There is a template for the program available in Microsoft Word or Publisher available for your convenience. Contact the Education Director to receive an electronic copy. Suggestions for program content as well as samples from other B’nei Mitzvah at Rodeph Sholom can be provided.. The family can choose any paper, color and design. and is responsible for the printing of the program.

A draft of your program MUST be submitted to the Education Director for approval no less than TWO WEEKS PRIOR to your event.

Note: Be sure to print enough for your combined guest count of Friday night and Shabbat morning. The programs, like the kippot and candy, must be at the synagogue before Shabbat begins.

E. The Jewish Press

The Jewish Press, the Tampa Bay area semi-monthly Jewish publication will publish an article and photo about your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is your responsibility to submit this information directly to *The Jewish Press*. The required form for *The Jewish Press* is found in the back of this notebook or at www.jewishpress.com.

VII. FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

The celebration of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah can strengthen ties within the nuclear and extended family units. The family comes together to celebrate its Jewish commitment and continuity, but frequently issues arise before or during the event that should be attended to with care so as not to add stress.

During this time it is important to:

1. Stay focused on the event and the child. Remember that this is a milestone in the child’s religious education and that he/she needs your support, assurance and guidance through the entire process.
2. Make sure that you and your child express your personal feelings and desires to each other. Be willing to compromise.

3. Remember, the party is a personal choice and should reflect your values. Do what you can comfortably afford; the children have fun just being together. There are many ways to celebrate the occasion. Focus on your child and the real meaning of the event.
4. Due to the limited number of honors that are available, you may not be able to honor all members of your family and friendship group during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. We encourage you to explain honestly that a limited number of honors are available. You might consider the family Shabbat meal on Friday night and the post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah party as additional times to honor your family and friends.
5. Use this as a time to celebrate and strengthen family ties.

VIII. POST B'NEI MITZVAH EDUCATION

A. Ha'Sadanah: Rodeph Sholom Religious School Confirmation Program

Students will typically have their Bar/Bat Mitzvah during their 7th grade year in religious school. Upon completing the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process along with their 7th grade religious school year, **students should plan on attending Rodeph Sholom Post B'nei Mitzvah program for eighth, ninth, and tenth grades in order to be eligible for confirmation at Rodeph Sholom during their tenth grade year. Attendance in 8th – 10th grades is a prerequisite for being confirmed at Rodeph Sholom.**

Post B'nei Mitzvah education is designed by the students each year to address the issues and topics which are of most interest to the group. In addition, the class participates in cooking, art projects, and special programs. Experiential Judaism is also key to our program with community service projects, field trips and overnight trips to study southern Jewish history in Miami and other places.

B. Youth Groups

The youth groups at Rodeph Sholom provide a range of activities that will allow your child to continue his/her informal education and socialization with peers from our synagogue and the surrounding community. One of the best ways to keep Jewish teens committed to being Jewish is through Jewish youth groups that show the whole range of Jewish life. We participate in a variety of programs which include social activities, community service, religious programs and weekend conventions, just to name a few. The friendships and experiences will leave a lasting impression for the years ahead.

Kadima and USY are the two official youth groups of United Synagogue of America. USY Gesher is for 6th – 8th graders and USY is for 9th – 12th graders. Being a member of USY Gesher and USY gives your child the opportunity to meet hundreds of other Conservative Jewish teenagers. Our Southeast Ha Negev region is comprised of teens from all over Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee.

We encourage your child to take advantage of the very best in youth programming that Rodeph Sholom has to offer.

IX. Appendix

- a. B'nei Mitzvah Timeline
- b. Student Progress Tracking Sheet
- c. *D'var Torah* Outline
- d. Congregation Rodeph Sholom Contact information

A. B'nei Mitzvah Timeline

Timeline:

- **End of 5th grade**: the date selection information will be sent to each family by the Education Director then confirmed.
- **6th grade year** - Orientation meeting with the Education Director
- **8 Months prior to ceremony**: The Rabbi- Cantor will begin meeting with students approximately 30 minutes weekly or more often if necessary.
- **6 Months prior to ceremony**: Meetings will be held with the Education Director four to six months prior to the bar/bat mitzvah to go over speeches, logistics, and assist with any questions or concerns.
- **1 month prior** – Family appointment with Rabbi - Cantor to review the *aliyah* sheets and other final details of the service.
- **1 month prior**: all details and party logistics should be completed with the Education Director.
- **2 Weeks prior**: Aliyah sheets and program booklets reviewed by Rabbi - Cantor and Education Director.
- **1 Week Prior**: Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Parent speech is due 1 week prior to the Education Director.
- **Week of the ceremony**: there will be a walk-through (rehearsal of the service & speech), Thursday morning minyan led by bar/bat mitzvah student, and family pictures if desired.

B. Student Progress Tracking Sheet

Torah, Haftarah and Prayers for Service

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date: _____ **Parsha:** _____
Student: _____

Torah/Haftarah

1. The assigned תורה/Torah reading
 - a. Minimum is the מפטיר/Maftir
2. הפתלה/Haftarah

Completed on:

Completed on:

Completed on:

Prayers/Tefillot

1. Blessings – Page 142
2. Blessings – Page 146 - 147
3. שמע – Page 30 and 112
4. ואהבת – Page 30 and 112
5. קידוש – Page 49
6. שלום עליכם – Page 13
7. אשרי – Page 151
8. 3rd Paragraph of ואהבת – Page 31 & 113
9. חצי קדיש – Page 106
10. שמע/אחד/אחדו – Page 141
11. אין כמוך – Page 139
12. ויהי בנסע – Page 139
13. ברכו – Page 107
14. אבות – Page 115b
15. גבירות – Page 115b
16. קדושה – Page 116
17. קדיש שלם – Page 138
18. מי כמכה – Page 114
19. אין כאלקינו – Page 182
20. עליינו – Page 51 and 183
21. אדון עולם – Page 54 and 187

Completed on:

C. Dvar Torah Outline

דבר תורה

An important aspect of the service for our youth is the *D'var Torah*, speech, that (s)he will deliver on that day. This is the time when (s)he demonstrates understanding of the Jewish tradition and of life. This is the opportunity for the youth to teach us something that we do not know and apply Jewish learning to their own lives. Your child's *D'var Torah* is an excellent opportunity for you to learn by his/her side and to help them to discover his/herself. A suggested outline for a *D'var Torah* is:

1. Set induction –
2.
 - a. Introduce the subject
 - b. This can be a story, magic trick, joke, song, poem, you name it. It needs to get our attention.
3. A review –
 - a. Briefly summarize the *Parshah* and the specific part will be spoken about
 - b. Focus on the section that (s)he will be elaborating on and pulling their theme from.
4. Exploration of the deeper issue –
 - a. This is the meat of the *D'var Torah* when the youth will describe the lesson of the *Parshah* that (s)he would like us to learn
5. Personal –
 - a. This is when the youth have the opportunity to put the message to use in his/her own life.
6. Conclusion
 - a. Restate the set induction in a new way and bring it all together
 - b. Leave us knowing what we are supposed to do as a result of having heard the speech.
7. “Thank yous” to all of the people that (s)he wants to recognize.

D. Congregation Rodeph Sholom Contact Information

Office: 813-837-1911
Website: www.rsholom.org

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