

---

CONGREGATION  
**SHEARITH ISRAEL**  
YOUR INTOWN SYNAGOGUE

# **Congregation Shearith Israel B'nai Mitzvah Handbook**

## **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 Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. We highly encourage parents to get involved with their child's learning.

### **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 to the full extent of his/her ability.

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

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

### **Identification with Jewish Community and History**

The B'nai Mitzvah process prepares children to fully participate in the Jewish community. The skills that are learned are designed to provide comfort in every Jewish community. The relationships that develop through this process provide a structure of support through the stages of life. The achievement of these goals provide confidence and commitment to involvement in the Jewish community through adulthood.

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

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

Approximately three school years before your child's thirteenth birthday, a list of potential dates will be made available to the class. Parents will prioritize three dates following the 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, according to the Jewish calendar. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah date will be assigned by the synagogue and the family will be notified. If you would like to discuss a possible change of date, please contact the Director of Congregational Learning.

Generally, B'nai Mitzvah are held on Shabbat mornings. From time to time, other service times, ideally when the Torah is read, are possible. Please consult with the Rabbi and Director of Congregational Learning.

## **Expectations**

### **Synagogue Membership**

To qualify as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your family must be members of Congregation Shearith Israel, and your membership, including all dues and fees, must be in good standing. Proven paths to success have been enrollment in Machaneh Shai, Day School, or an approved alternative educational program. Enrollment and attendance *through* the grade of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year is mandatory.

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

Your child's religious education and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process are intrinsically linked. Most meaningful paths to success are engagement in Machaneh Shai, participation in Minyan Shelanu, youth groups, and/or other alternatives approved by the Director. Machaneh Shai students are expected to be students in good standing.

### **Shabbat Attendance**

It is the congregation's goal that each student who becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Shearith Israel feels comfortable with religious services at Shearith Israel. The skills of B'nai Mitzvah are primarily practiced in communal services. We expect your family to regularly attend services in our Sanctuary.

We cannot emphasize enough the fact that families who regularly attend are more comfortable and are prepared for an experience with integrity and meaning.

The centerpiece of the ritual is the practice of prayer and study. Without regular familial practice in the years before and after B'nai Mitzvah, the ritual could be likened to a high school graduation without attending school.

Parents are highly encouraged to attend services with their children so they may learn and develop commitment through example. Families learn and grow together through this regular practice.

A final note, whatever your choices are for Saturday morning, a message will be communicated to your children about priorities. We ask that you consider this point carefully before committing to other obligations that will conflict with the priority of your family's Judaism.

**Formatted:** Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt,  
Complex Script Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt

## Tutoring

### When should my child begin tutoring?

The Director of Congregational Learning maintains a list of approved tutors for Shearith Israel. Each tutor has their own style and system for education. Please consult the Director of Congregational Learning if you need assistance choosing a tutor. There is a list of approved tutors at the end of this handbook.

Generally, about a year before the date of the simcha, the family will hire a tutor. Commonly, the tutor will arrange for weekly lessons to be conducted with the student. Each lesson is generally 30 minutes long. Your payment for the tutor goes directly to the tutor. Families will directly contact the tutor to discuss calendar and fees.

Families with students that have special needs or concerns or who may need more than one year of study can begin this process sooner. Please speak with the Director of Congregational Learning for more information.

### What will my child learn with the tutor?

The tutor works closely with the student to ensure they are expertly prepared. This instruction will be tailored to each student's individual level and style of learning and the tutor will provide the necessary materials for instruction. The tutor will also provide individual Torah readings with the appropriate audio and visual aids necessary for those honored with a reading from the Torah.

Each student will be prepared according to his or her own needs and learning style. We want to highlight your child's strengths and confidence.

**In general,** B'nai Mitzvah tutoring will prepare each student:

- to read the Haftarah, the selection from the Book of Prophets, with proper cantillation, with blessings
- their Maffir Torah reading (this is the reading at the end of the entire Torah reading)
- the blessings before and after the Torah reading
- Torah Service
- If time, they will then instruct your child on leading the remainder of the Shabbat morning service.

The tutor and Director of Congregational Learning remain in regular contact regarding the progress of the student.

**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 on a regular basis in between sessions.** 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.

**D'var Torah (B'nai Mitzvah Speech)**

Over the course of six months to a year, the Rabbi will learn the content of the regular reading for the week of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah with your child. The student will be expected to draw relevant lessons from the ancient text and form the lesson into a speech to deliver to the congregation. This skill is how Torah remains our foundational text from generation to generation.

**Journey to Adulthood (J2A)**

Congregation Shearith Israel holds a series of 8 workshops over the course of 18 months. Parents and students will learn together and delve deeper into the meaning and practice of the Bar Mitzvah. We will meet periodically throughout the year on Sundays for an interactive discussion to build community and learn together as we journey together through this stage of your lives as families. All of the sessions are for parents and students.

## **Meetings**

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

### **Rabbi**

One year prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date a meeting will be scheduled with at least one parent and their Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. This meeting will begin with a text study to establish the context and meaning of the B'nai Mitzvah process. The second half of the meeting will be setting expectations and ideals to meet to create the most impactful experience.

Six months prior to the B'nai Mitzvah, your child will regularly meet with the Rabbi to study the content of the Torah reading for the week of the celebration. Often 30 minutes every other week is sufficient.

Through the study of the parasha, a relationship of learning will be formed between the Rabbi and the student. The goal of the learning will be to draw relevant lessons from the ancient text. The Rabbi will guide your child through the process of forming one of these lessons into a speech to deliver to the congregation.

In addition, the Rabbi will ask for a letter be written with the topic "My ideal Jewish life as I graduate high school" to be delivered at high school graduation.

### **Executive Director**

You should contact the Executive Director three months prior to your simcha, and then again one month prior to schedule meetings with Jodi Salomon to discuss financial and logistical arrangements. Please call Jodi at 404-503-9905 or email at [executivedirector@shearithisrael.com](mailto:executivedirector@shearithisrael.com) to schedule a meeting.

## **Our Religious Services**

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

#### **Shabbat Morning**

Shabbat Morning Services are comprised of the following four services: Pesukei D'Zimra, Shacharit, Torah Service & Musaf.

Shabbat Morning Services begin promptly at 9:00am in our main sanctuary and end at approximately noon. B'nai Mitzvah families are expected to be in the sanctuary by 8:55am on the day of their simcha.

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, meaningful experience where they feel challenged and successful.

## **Honoring Family and Friends**

It is the custom of Shearith Israel for families to honor relatives and friends during Shabbat Morning Services.

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 Bima. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a celebration in the life of the young adult as well as the Jewish family. It is strongly encouraged that family members participate in this event.

If a family member from out-of-town desires to chant a portion of the Torah reading, they must contact the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor or the Rabbi approximately one month before the service to chant their portion over the telephone with the tutor. It is at the tutor's or Religious Life Chairperson's discretion to approve the family member to chant the Torah portion at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The contact information will be in the synagogue office.

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, found later in this Handbook.**

The Shearith Israel Shabbat Honors Form must be filled out no later than 4 weeks prior to your ceremony and approved by the Rabbi. This will be an online form you will be able to access.

## **Torah Service Honors and Explanations**

### **Processional/Ark Opening**

The Processional is the start of the Torah Service. Family members or friends ascend to the Bima and open the Ark.

### **Aliyot**

An aliyah is the honor of being called to the Torah to recite the blessings before and after a Torah passage is read. The word *Aliyah* literally means "going up." Only **one** person can chant the blessings per aliyah. B'nai Mitzvah families are allowed to assign four (4) aliyot to their honored guests.

The maftir Aliyah is reserved for the person reciting the Haftarah. Generally this is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is *not* reciting the Haftarah, then a different Aliyah should be assigned.

Although a transliterated copy of the blessings is available on the *bima*, the family member should practice and be familiar with the blessing before the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

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

Please note: Congregation Shearith Israel is an egalitarian synagogue and does allow Bat Kohain and Bat Levi aliyot. Those honored with an aliyah must indicate if they are a Kohain 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. Torah readers are subject to approval by the Rabbi or tutor at least four (4) weeks prior to your ceremony.

### **Hagbah**

This person lifts the Torah and turns around to show the entire congregation several columns before it is dressed. This is done after the Torah is read, and should be someone who has had this honor before and is able to lift the Torah.

### **Gelilah**

This is the act of "dressing" the Torah. The word literally means rolling. Please select one person.

### **Torah Holder - Haftarah**

This person will hold the Torah while sitting on the Bima when the Haftarah is being read by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The Torah sits on the Torah chair unless there are 3 Torahs in use for that Shabbat

### **Prayer for Our Country**

Page 148 in the *Siddur Sim Shalom*

One person leads in English. Please select no more than two people.

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

Page 149 in the *Siddur Sim Shalom*

Led in Hebrew or in English. Please select no more than two people.

### **Recessional/Ark Closing**

The Recessional concludes the Torah Service. Family members or friends gather at the Bima to take the Torah around the sanctuary. After which they will ascend onto the Bima and put away the Torah. They will then close the ark as we begin the Musaf Service.

### **Recessional Torah Carrier**

One (1) person is designated to hold the Torah and walk with it around the sanctuary.

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

Siblings, family members or friends may also be honored by leading the following two prayers from the lower Bima.

### **Ashrei**

Page 151-152 in the *Siddur Sim Shalom*

### **Ein Keloheinu**

Page 182 in the *Siddur Sim Shalom*

### **Adon Olam**

Page 187 in the *Siddur Sim Shalom*

Families may also wish to ask a friend or relative to pass out your candy.

### **Parents' Honor**

#### **Presentation, Charge and Blessings**

There is no prayer without prayers of the heart. We imagine that on the day of your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah, your hearts will be overflowing in prayer. You are invited to share your prayer with your child in a public way that honors your child and our community.

We invite your prayer to be **aspirational**. Choose to share your hopes for a Jewish future more than stories of what led to this moment.

We invite your prayer to be **appropriate in length**. A good guideline is about 100 words / minute. So 500 words would be about 5 minutes. We strive to finish the service in a timely way. **Five minutes should be sufficient for this prayer.**

We invite you to share **Torah** with your child. Lessons drawn from the text emphasize the value that you too find wisdom and guidance from our ancient text that we share with the congregation.

In every case, the Rabbi would like to see your words at least one week prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. He or she will be happy to assist if you so choose.

The time of this opportunity is generally after the silent Musaf Amidah, before the conclusion of Musaf with Kaddish Shalem.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**All of the above honors must be indicated on the "B'nai Mitzvah Shabbat Honors" form which can be found online.**

## **Synagogue Decorum & Etiquette**

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

### **Gifts**

Please ask friends and family not to bring gifts to the synagogue the morning of the service.

### **Kippot**

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

### **Cell phones/Tablets**

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 tablet usage of any kind is prohibited on Shabbat throughout the building and 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

Young children are always welcome in the main sanctuary. Our congregation knows that infants and children sometimes are restless and make noise. We trust parental judgment to help facilitate a positive experience for their children and the communal, holy space of the congregation.

For your convenience, our congregation offers a number of programs for children on Shabbat morning\*:

Babysitting      For children **4 years and younger**  
9:00AM to 1:00PM in the Youth Lounge

Tot Shabbat      For **children preK and below** in the multi-  
purpose room

Minyan Shelanu      For children and their parents in **2<sup>nd</sup> through**  
**6<sup>th</sup> grade**  
10:30AM to 11:30AM in the Maziar Chapel

\*Please check with the synagogue office, as these programs do not happen every week.

If you anticipate having a large number of younger guests participate in these Shabbat programs, please notify The Executive Director in advance so we can staff accordingly.

Additionally, if any of your guests need special assistance, please let us know.

## **Shabbat Customs at Shearith Israel**

### **Kippot and Head Coverings**

Bar/Bat Mitzvah families typically provide kippot for their invited guests. It is recommended that families order a minimum of 5 dozen Kippot or enough for their invited male and female guests. These items will be displayed on the reception table outside the Sanctuary on Shabbat morning.

### **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 Bima in the performance of any ritual act.

### **Sanctuary and Bima Decorations**

Please feel free to decorate our Bima with fresh flowers and/or "Renterpieces" from JF&CS. There are a variety of "Renterpieces" available with the proceeds supporting the programs of Jewish Family and Career Services (including emergency assistance funds and the kosher food pantry.) You can find out more information about "Renterpieces" including photos and prices at [www.yourtoolsforliving.org/renterpieces](http://www.yourtoolsforliving.org/renterpieces) or call them directly at 770.677.9300.

### **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 Executive Assistant.

Please submit a "rough draft" of your program to the Executive Assistant for approval at least 3 weeks prior to your service. Plan to print 50 additional programs for congregants attending Shabbat services. They should be delivered to the synagogue by 12:00 noon on the Friday before the simcha.

### **Table outside Sanctuary**

The table outside the Sanctuary may be used to display your kippot and programs. Please arrange for set up Friday at noon.

### **Candy**

It is a tradition at Shearith Israel that candy is GENTLY tossed at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah in celebration of a sweet life. All candies MUST have a Hechsher (Kosher Certification Marking) and be individually wrapped. Please note: **No chocolate is permitted.** Our recommended candy is "Sunkist Fruit Gems."

The baskets for this candy will be provided by the synagogue. It is usually distributed by younger family members during the service and is thrown at the end of the service (when the Rabbi gives a signal). This candy must also be delivered to the synagogue no later than 12:00 p.m. on the Friday before the *simcha*.

### **Deliveries**

As nothing can be delivered on Shabbat, please bring your kippot, programs and candy to Shearith Israel by Friday at noon before your *simcha*. A good time to do this is when you come in for photos. All items should be set up on Friday morning.

### **Shabbat Attire**

The clothing we wear convey an attitude of holiness and respect. Below are recommendations.

#### ***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

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

#### ***When on the Bima***

Men – Kippot and Tallit must be worn

Women – Head Covering and Tallit must be worn

(Tallit does not have to be worn on the Lower Bima 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 Shearith Israel it is our mission to create meaningful and lasting Jewish experiences and connections to others. 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 that the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah hosts the Kiddush luncheon.

### **Friday Evening Shabbat Dinner**

If you choose to have your Friday Evening Shabbat dinner at Shearith Israel, please contact Jodi Salomon, our Executive Director to reserve either Social Hall.

### **Shabbat Morning Kiddush Luncheon**

Families of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Shearith Israel host the Kiddush luncheon at the conclusion of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbat Service. Arrangements should be provided for 75 regular Shearith Israel congregants **in addition to** your number of invited guests.

**Sisterhood Simchas** is a cooperative-style program in which Sisterhood members create festive Kiddush meals for Bar/Bat Mitzvah families. Members volunteer for other members' simchas by shopping, cooking, or supervising serving staff. Families accumulate volunteer hours prior to their own event. In return, Sisterhood caters their kiddush for the cost of food, supplies and a nominal donation. Join our growing Simcha community, meet people, have fun, get tips on how to plan your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and help others make their simcha special.

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

## **Things to Know...**

### **Deliveries**

All deliveries for your weekend events must be completed no later than noon on Friday. Please notify our Receptionist of any expected deliveries.

### **Shomer Shabbat Guests**

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

### **B'nai Mitzvah Announcement in the e-bulletin**

Please refer to the FORMS section to submit your child's announcement in our Shearith Israel E-Bulletin no later than the 1st of the month that precedes your simcha.

### **Invitations to classmates and friends**

In alignment with our desired feelings and of creating a sense of *kehillah* – community, we ask our families to please be sensitive to the feelings of 12 and 13 year olds. We urge you to invite ALL of the students in your child's 7<sup>th</sup> grade class and J2A cohort. The synagogue 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. 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 Rabbi. Photo sessions are scheduled on Fridays between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., or Thursday afternoons from 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. (unless this conflicts with a Jewish holiday). Please make these arrangements at least one month prior to your simcha with the Rabbi and with the Executive Assistant.

Out of respect for Shabbat, photo sessions must conclude prior to 1:30 p.m.

### **Following Your B'nai Mitzvah**

Many families mark the milestone of their child's becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah by making a contribution to the synagogue in honor of the simcha. This is an occasion for them to learn the important value of *Tzedakah*. There are many options to do so. These include making a donation to any of the synagogue funds or making a donation of an item that the synagogue might need. Any of these opportunities for giving may be discussed with the Executive Director.

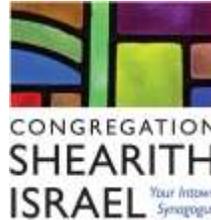
Many students at this time choose to do a Mitzvah project, like collecting items for a local agency. Others choose to donate a portion of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah gifts to an organization they want to support, such as Rebecca's Tent, which is the women's shelter attached to our building, or an organization that helps animals, plants trees in Israel, or a Jewish organization that feeds the hungry such as *Mazon*. It is a wonderful opportunity and sometimes possible to integrate the mitzvah project with your child's Torah portion, which extends the meaning. Families and students are encouraged to highlight the *simcha* by showing the importance of giving to others less fortunate. The Rabbi or Director of Congregational Learning can provide you with ideas for Jewish and secular charities that would welcome your assistance.

In addition, families are encouraged to honor the Bar or Bat Mitzvah day by purchasing a "leaf" on the Shearith Israel "Tree of Life" plaque outside of Zimmerman Hall. Please see the Executive Director to make this purchase.

Check with the [Atlanta Jewish Times](#) and other desired publications concerning placing an announcement, if so desired.

# Forms

# Shearith Israel E-Bulletin



## Biographical Information

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child(ren):

---

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date:

---

---

Son/Daughter of:

---

---

Parasha:

---

Hobbies & Interests:

---

## School Information

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

---

Number of Years in Machaneh Shai (if applicable):

---

D'var Torah Quote:

---

**Mitzvah Project** (This information will be published in the e-blast)

### Photo

A digital, high resolution photo should be e-mailed to Adam Klein at [marketing@shearithisrael.com](mailto:marketing@shearithisrael.com). A color headshot photo is preferred. The size of the photo printed will be approximately 1 1/4" x 1 1/4". This photo will appear in the e-bulletin and one the monitor in the lobby entrance.

### Deadline

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

# Blessings

### Blessing the Torah – For the Honorees who will bless the Torah

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

#### **Torah Blessings**

You begin with:

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ.

Barchu et adonai ha-mevorach

Congregation replies, then you repeat:

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Baruch adonai ha-mevorach le-olam va-ed

and continue

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים

לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה וְנָתַן

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:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת

וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִטְעַ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ: בְּרוּךְ 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 *Bima* shake hands with the *gabbaim* at the lectern, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Rabbi 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 יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam

שְׁהַחֵינּוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.  
Shehecheyanu vekiyemanu 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."

### **Prayer for our Country**

Our God and God of our ancestors: We ask Your blessings for our country – for its government, for its leaders and advisors, insights from your Torah, that they may administer all affairs of state fairly, that peace and security, happiness and prosperity, justice and freedom may forever abide in our midst.

Creator of all flesh, bless all the inhabitants of our country with Your spirit. May citizens of all races and creeds forge a common bond in true harmony, to banish hatred and bigotry, and to safeguard the ideals and free institutions that are the pride and glory of our country.

May this land, under Your providence, be an influence for good throughout the world, uniting all people in peace and freedom – helping them to fulfill the vision of Your prophet: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they experience war anymore." And let us say: Amen.

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

Avinu She-bashamayim, Rock and Redeemer of the people Israel: Bless the State of Israel, with its promise of redemption. Shield it with Your love; spread over it the shelter of Your peace. Guide its leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth. Help them with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of those who defend our Holy Land. Deliver them: crown their efforts with triumph. Bless the Land with peace and its inhabitants with lasting joy. And let us say: Amen.

## **SHEARITH ISRAEL MEMBER RENTAL FEES**

	Goldstein	Zimmerman	Sanctuary	Chapel	Lobby	Conference Room
<b>Rental with Catering (includes Setup and Cleanup)</b>	\$1000	\$650	N/A	N/A	\$550	\$375
<b>Rental without Catering (includes Setup and Cleanup)</b>	\$750	\$450	\$360	\$275	\$450	\$275
<b>Security (per hour/per officer/four hour minimum) *Security is required for all events with 35+ guests in attendance, and an additional officer is required for 175+ guests</b>	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40
<b>Deposit (Payable by check 6 months before event, or at the time of reservation, and refundable if there is no damage)</b>	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400

**\* These Fees DO NOT apply for Saturday Kiddush Lunch, unless a private space is required \***

Sisterhood Simchas - available to B'nai Mitzvah families for Shabbat Kiddush only, with cooperative participation at least one year prior to B'nai Mitzvah

Robin Rosen - robingrosen@yahoo.com or 404-285-2249

**APPROVED CATERERS AT CSI**

(in alphabetical order)

Avenue K – (770)578-1110

Bijan's Catering – Judith Bloom (404)329-0888

For All Occasions – Jodie Sturgeon (404)953-8157

Formaggio Mio –(678) 973-0360

Gourmet Catering by Alex (404)786-8133

Kosher Gourmet – Steve Gilmer (404)636-1114

A Kosher Touch – Sandra Bank (770)321-9592

The Spicy Peach – Lydia Schloss (404)334-7200

## **Countdown to the Big Day**

*A Quick Guide to Important Dates in this Handbook*

### 2.5 Years In Advance

**Date will be assigned by the Director of Congregational Learning and the family will be notified in writing.** In most cases, the assigned date will be the first Shabbat after the student's thirteenth birthday, according to the Jewish calendar. If you want to discuss a possible change of date, please contact the Director of Congregational Learning.

### 12-18 months in Advance

Meet with Rabbi to discuss the meaning of the ritual and any questions. The learning process and any modifications may be discussed here. Contact the Executive Assistant, Adam Klein, to schedule the meeting. He can be reached at 404-503-9914 or [marketing@shearithisrael.com](mailto:marketing@shearithisrael.com).

### 1 Year In Advance

**Be a member in good financial standing of Shearith Israel and be current in all financial obligations for one year prior to holding a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Shearith Israel.** If your family is new to Shearith Israel or you have concerns about this requirement, contact the Executive Director at 404-503-9905.

#### **Regularly attend services at Congregation Shearith Israel**

Bar or Bat Mitzvah students must regularly attend weekly Shabbat services with a parent in the year leading up to their simcha.

### 10 to 12 Months In Advance

#### **Schedule & begin tutoring with a Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor.**

#### **All B'nai Mitzvah tutoring fees are arranged with the tutor.**

The Shearith Israel tutor will arrange for weekly lessons to be conducted with the student, often on Sundays. All tutors must be assigned or approved by the Rabbi. **The current list of tutors is found at the end of this Handbook.**

**Consider doing a Mitzvah Project and get started on it!**

Many students at this time choose to do a Mitzvah project, like collecting items for a local charity. Others choose to donate a portion of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah gifts to a charity, such as a homeless shelter, an organization that helps animals, plants trees in Israel, or a Jewish organization that feeds the hungry such as Mazon. You may set up a meeting with the Rabbi or Director of Congregational Learning for meaningful and fulfilling mitzvah project ideas. One of the topics of the J2A workshop focuses on this.

### 6-12 Months In Advance

**Contact the Executive Director if you are interested in hosting a reception in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These are subject to availability.**

**Schedule regular meetings with the Rabbi to discuss the D'var Torah.**

The first appointment with the Rabbi will be for the student and her/his or her parent(s). After that, the student should be prepared to meet with the Rabbi six to ten more times without their parents to discuss the drafts of the D'var Torah. Contact the Executive Assistant at 404-503-9914 or [marketing@shearithisrael.com](mailto:marketing@shearithisrael.com) to schedule the meetings.

**Order Kippot**

Many families choose to provide kippot for their guests and/or the congregation on the occasion of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

**Order Tefillin**

Tefillin is imported from Israel and sealed in bags for Kashrut.

**Contact the Executive Director about Kiddush, logistics and room set up.**

Contact the Executive Director three months before your simcha. When choosing an outside caterer, please use the list provided; although other Kosher caterers can and will be approved.

### 1 Month In Advance

**Email Shabbat program to the Executive Assistant for approval prior to printing – [marketing@shearithisrael.com](mailto:marketing@shearithisrael.com)**

Your family will receive a return email with any corrections. Once you have made the corrections, please resubmit for approval. If you need samples, please contact the Executive Director.

**Email Aliyot/Honors Form to the Executive Assistant.**

Provided in this manual is a form which lists all of the honors that are available to your family for that Shabbat. Email to [marketing@shearithisrael.com](mailto:marketing@shearithisrael.com).

The week of the *Simcha*

**Drop off any Kippot, flowers, candy, and programs before 12:00pm the Friday before *simcha*.**

Flowers: The decorations on the bima are permanent and may be utilized by any family. If you wish to purchase fresh flowers or use bima baskets from JF&CS for your *simcha*, you must make arrangements to have them delivered to the synagogue by Friday at 12:00 p.m. prior to the synagogue office closing.

Candy: It is customary during the service to throw candy at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah to wish the child a sweet life. Candy must be dropped off by Friday at Noon – remember, NO CHOCOLATE. The baskets will be provided by the synagogue. "Sunkist Fruit Gems" are the preferred type of candy.

## Whom to Contact

**Rabbinic Questions (D'var Torah, Services, Etc.)**

Rabbi Kaiman     [rabbikaiman@shearithisrael.com](mailto:rabbikaiman@shearithisrael.com)     404-503-9910

**Educational Requirements**

Nancy Gorod     [ngorod@shearithisrael.com](mailto:ngorod@shearithisrael.com)     404-503-9906

**To Reserve Social Hall and/or Kitchen; Financial Questions**

Jodi Salomon     [executivedirector@shearithisrael.com](mailto:executivedirector@shearithisrael.com)     404-503-9905

**Administrative/Scheduling Meetings with Rabbi Kaiman**

Adam Klein     [marketing@shearithisrael.com](mailto:marketing@shearithisrael.com)     404-503-9914

## Approved Tutors

Erin Chernow  
[erincherow@gmail.com](mailto:erincherow@gmail.com)  
678-595-6760

Erin began tutoring Bar/Bat Mitzvah students in Metairie, Louisiana many moons ago but returned to this role at Congregation Shearith Israel in preparation for her oldest son's Bar Mitzvah in 2013. Over the past 10 years, she has created and facilitated a variety of experiential multi-generational Jewish education initiatives such as Home School for Hebrew School (HS4HS) and JKG's Journey Program (Jewish Kids Groups B'nai Mitzvah program).

Rebecca Cheskes  
[rcheskes613@gmail.com](mailto:rcheskes613@gmail.com)  
404-372-9390

Rebecca has been tutoring students for B'nai Mitzvah at Congregation Shearith Israel for over 22 years. She has expertise with a wide variety of learners and enjoys getting to know the family as the student prepares for his/her bat mitzvah. Her philosophy is to meet each student where he/she is at, and bring them to a place of comfort with the service and traditions that surround the celebration of the bar/bat mitzvah.

Elise Halpern  
[halpern.eliseg@yahoo.com](mailto:halpern.eliseg@yahoo.com)  
404-234-4553

Elise has been tutoring students for Bar and Bat Mitzvah for the past 10 years, having served as B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator at Temple Sinai for 9 years after retiring from medicine as a Physician Assistant. She is a self-described "adult onset learner", having learned Hebrew after age 40 and then becoming an adult Bat Mitzvah. She has taught students with many different learning styles, tailoring study plans to match the student, successfully bringing over 170 students to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. She wants her students and families to experience the joy of the learning journey toward this significant life cycle event.

## Approved Tutors (cont'd)

Ben Levitt

[benlevitt2000@gmail.com](mailto:benlevitt2000@gmail.com)

404-281-1548

Ben Levitt is a sophomore studying at Emory University in nearby Decatur. He is an experienced Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor who has taught students of different abilities ranging from those who have trouble reading Hebrew to those who choose to read their entire Torah portion, Haftarah and lead additional tefillot. He caters his teaching style to fit each individual's needs and preferences. His availability is on Sunday afternoons from approximately 12:30pm to 5:00pm, and he will be based in the Shearith Israel building.

Ori Salzberg

[orisalzberg@gmail.com](mailto:orisalzberg@gmail.com)

404-333-2235

We'll create meaningful and prideful projects while engaging in rigorous Hebrew, trope and musical Tefilah lessons with fun twists. We'll use traditional cantillation techniques as well newer phonetic methods that are logical & cool. We'll adjust to the goals of the student and can complete different types of projects for Divrei Torah, media presentations and compositions. We'll work hard and come out with a Mitzvah of connection and pride.

**It is with great pleasure that we have shared this handbook with you. This is an exciting time in the life of your family and we look forward to sharing in the joy as you plan and prepare for your simcha. Please remember that Shearith Israel is never more than a phone call or an email away. We wish you a Mazal Tov as your child reaches this meaningful milestone!**

**THIS PAGE PURPOSEFULLY LEFT BLANK**