



זמן שמחתנו

Z'man Simchatenu

The Time Of Our Joy

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook 2018

Compiled and Edited by
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INTRODUCTION

Mazel tov to you and your family on the occasion of your forthcoming *simcha*! Celebrating this milestone in our congregation, and in the context of religious service, expresses the profound link between the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Jewish community, and God. We hope that the religious significance of the joyous event remains central to your plans and guides the way you celebrate this important occasion.

Planning for this event can seem overwhelming. The information in this booklet will explain some the customs and traditions of our synagogue with regards to this religious rite of passage, and will answer many of the questions that arise as a family prepares to celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Should you have additional questions, or different ideas, please do not hesitate to call or email.

SETTING THE DATE

Selection of a date is made by the family in consultation with Cindy and is based on the child's Hebrew birthday and his/her Hebrew reading ability. Boys may celebrate once they turn 13. Girls may celebrate when they are 12 or 13.

Please note that Beth Radom sees its sanctuary as a place where all are welcome to worship. We are welcoming of and sensitive to children (and adults) with special needs. Parents with children who have special needs can make arrangements for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah by speaking with Cindy to arrange for an individualized education plan and tailored Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

WHAT IS BAR/BAT MITZVAH?

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is more than the celebration of the thirteenth birthday. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the age at which young Jewish men and women assume the responsibility of Torah and the fulfillment of *mitzvot*, commandments. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah demonstrates his/her acceptance of that responsibility by publicly reading from the Torah, and declaring acceptance of his/her Jewish heritage and his/her commitment to a Jewish way of life. Thus, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah should not be seen as the end of Jewish education and involvement, but just the beginning. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not a graduation but a commencement of Jewish adulthood.

ROLE AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH CHILD

Education Requirements

- The family will meet with Cindy prior to selecting a date for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At this meeting, previous Jewish education will be discussed and an assessment of Hebrew fluency will be done.
- After the initial meeting, Cindy will consult with Chazzan Jeremy and a program recommendation will be made based on the child's readiness for Bar/Bat Mitzvah and coordination can take place with the synagogue office.
- Registration and payment for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program must be completed before lessons can begin.

Tutorial Sessions

- Approximately 1 year prior to the date of the simcha, Chazzan Jeremy will be in touch to discuss the private tutorials.
- Lessons will occur on a weekly basis, for 30 minutes each time. Your child will be provided with a Bar/Bat Mitzvah study guide as well as voice recordings necessary to help in their study.
- There are 2 locations available for lessons:
 - Promenade Mall Offices – Mondays after school/evening
 - Beth Radom – Tuesdays after school/evening

Sunday Bar/Bat Mitzvah Club

- Once per month, all Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates gather for a youth group-style meeting at Beth Radom (9:30-12:00)
- The focus of this group is on Mitzvah Projects – a group project as well as individual projects
- Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate will choose a Mitzvah Project that is based on community service rather than on fundraising. We ask the students to take what they are passionate about and try to find or create a project that is of interest to them.
- At the time of the *simcha*, the child will prepare a poster or brochure to be shared and will incorporate his/her project into the *d'var Torah*.

Synagogue Attendance

- We believe that the basic skills of participating in Shabbat morning services can only be learned by active participation in such services. As such, families are expected to attend, along with their children, as often as possible.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH'S ROLE IN SERVICES

- During the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, the celebrant chants the blessings before and after the Torah reading, the maffir portion from the Torah, the blessings before the Haftarah, the Haftarah, and the blessings after the Haftarah. In addition, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate delivers a brief D'var Torah that introduces the Torah reading and the Haftarah.
- Some children would like to lead additional parts of the service and we welcome this additional participation. This could include the Torah service, further Torah reading, the Introductory Service (*P'sukei D'Zimrah*) and/or the Morning Service (*Shacharit*). Those Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates wishing to lead the congregation in these additional areas should consult with the Rabbi.
- All Bar and Bat Mitzvah candidates are required to wear a tallit when reading from the Torah. Usually, this is a time when the family purchases a tallit for the child to keep and use. All Bar Mitzvah candidates are required to, and all Bat Mitzvah candidates who so desire, may also purchase a set of *tefillin*. Instructions on the use and meaning of *tefillin* and tallit will be provided during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah classes.

ROLE AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE FAMILY

- Families must complete all financial obligations as laid out in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah contract no later than 60 days before the *simcha*.
- It is your responsibility to keep all appointments, ensure that your child attends all lessons, and encourage your son or daughter to study and practice at home.
- Please inform Chazzan Jeremy or Cindy of any issues or problems that your child may be experiencing at home so that we can best help him/her.
- As described above, families must attend synagogue with their child/ren at least once per month in the year leading up to the *simcha*.

KASHRUT AND CATERING

The social affair celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is considered by Jewish Tradition to be a "*seudah shel mitzvah*" (a meal which celebrates a mitzvah) and thus an integral part of the entire Bar/Bat Mitzvah religious and spiritual experience. Therefore, all social celebrations connected with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, held outside the home, whether for children or adults, should adhere to the Jewish dietary laws (the laws of Kashrut).

- In keeping with the longstanding tradition of Beth Radom, Bar/Bat Mitzvah families are required sponsor the congregational *kiddush* on their *simcha* date. This sponsorship is included in your fees.
- Families are also required to fulfill the obligation of the *seudah shel mitzvah* by hosting a meal for their invited guests following the service in the synagogue.
- For parties fewer than 40 people, you may elect to join the synagogue's Kiddush. The cost for this is \$18/person.
- For parties above 40 people, you must contract our caterer, Mitzuyan Kosher Catering. Families should contact Norman Kay at 416-419-5260 to discuss the catering options for your luncheon or evening affair.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Kippot

- Traditionally, families supply personalized kippot for their guests to wear at their *simcha*. If you wish to provide these for your guests, please deliver them to the synagogue office or bring them to your rehearsal for safe keeping. A small basket is recommended for their display.

Candies

- As a joyous part of our celebration, congregants and guests will throw candies during the service to symbolize the sweetness of the day. Please provide soft gel type candies, wrapped, with a kosher symbol. These should also be in 2 baskets and can be handed out by younger family members during the service. These may also be brought to your rehearsal or brought to the synagogue office prior to noon on Friday.

Flowers/Centrepieces/Seating Cards

- All items must be delivered to the Synagogue by noon on the Friday before the *simcha*. Please be aware that nothing may be brought into or removed from the synagogue on Shabbat or Holy Days.
- All food items must be approved by the caterer prior to delivery to the synagogue.

REHEARSAL

The family is invited to the synagogue prior to the simcha to review the service and for the child to practise reading directly from the Torah. Often, families choose to dress in their Shabbat clothing and arrange a photographer to take family portraits and videotape the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reciting the portion.

The date and time for the rehearsal is usually the Thursday prior to the simcha. Cantor Jeremy and/or Cindy will arrange a time with your family.

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

Shabbat morning services at Beth Radom begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. and conclude by approximately 12:15pm. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is expected to arrive 15 minutes early so that they may greet guests and take their seats in the first row. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate is invited to sit on the bimah next to the Gabbai.

DISTRIBUTION OF HONOURS

There are a number of kibbudim (honours) and aliyot (Torah honours) distributed to men and women during the course of the Shabbat morning services. One month before your simcha, you will receive a Prayer Package that includes an Aliyah sheet. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah coordinator, Rabbi or Cantor will help you to complete the form. All people called to the Torah for an aliyah must be familiar with the Torah blessings, and the people called for hagbah and gelilah should be familiar with the important task of lifting and dressing the Torah. If instruction is required, please ask these guests to attend the rehearsal evening. All those ascending the bimah must cover their heads and dress appropriately. As an egalitarian congregation, all honours are open to both men and women, including Bat Cohen (daughter of Cohen) and Bat Levi (daughter of Levi)

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is one of several life cycle events celebrated in the synagogue sanctuary. Others include baby namings, special birthdays and anniversaries, and the coming of a bride and groom before God and community in celebration of a forthcoming wedding. These many life cycle events celebrated in our congregation are testimony to the vibrancy and youthfulness of our synagogue as well as its active religious life. As such, please note that on the day of your family's simcha, there may be another life cycle event as well as the celebration of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is with great happiness that we welcome these celebrations and trust that you share in the joy of our congregation. In the words of Psalm 136, "Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; His loving kindness endures forever."

MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT

No musical instruments or recorded music may be played on Shabbat. Orchestras and/or entertainers at a reception in the synagogue after Shabbat concludes may not bring their equipment into the congregation on Shabbat. They may bring in and test their equipment before noon on the Friday before, provided the synagogue office is notified in advance, or they must wait until the conclusion of Shabbat. For the exact time of the conclusion of Shabbat, please consult with the Rabbi.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND AUDIO/VIDEO EQUIPMENT

Cameras, video and audio recorders are not allowed in or around the synagogue on Shabbat.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

It is customary for males to wear a suit and tie to synagogue, along with a tallit and kippah. The synagogue has a number of extra tallitot in the foyer for guests to borrow. Some women in the congregation also wear a tallit and it is a most welcome custom at Beth Radom. It is customary for women to cover their shoulders in the sanctuary. We have several shawls in the foyer if a guest is in need. Parents may wish to pay special attention to the length of the Bat Mitzvah girl's skirt as she will be elevated on the bima and may not be able to sit comfortably if the length is too short.

YOUNG CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children are most welcome at Beth Radom. We have small plush Torahs that they are encouraged to hold during the service. We also run a children's program in our play room where we have crafts, stories, songs, and fun Torah lessons. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children are in one of the programs or otherwise supervised for their safety. If you are expecting a large number of children, we ask that you let us know so that we can plan an appropriate number of staff for the children's program. Pre-teens and teens are asked to participate actively in the service and support the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. Please remind your young guests that electronics are not allowed on the premises and behaviour ought to be respectful.

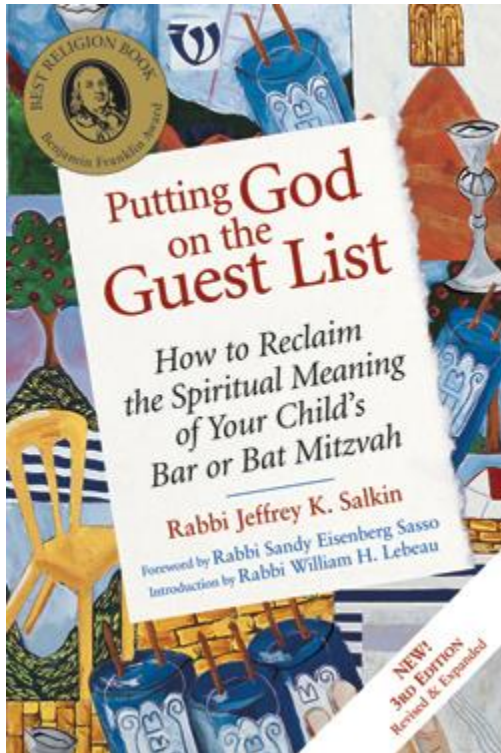
SUGGESTED TIMELINE

2-4 years before	Bar/Bat Mitzvah information gathering; start the conversation with your child
1-2 years before	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meet with Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator to choose date and do a reading assessment.- Sign contract and pay deposit.- Register for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program in Hebrew School- Contact Mitzuyan Caterers- Book photographer.- Book Florist or Arrange Donation Basket Centrepieces
September of school year before	Begin Sunday morning Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program
12 months before	Attend services on Shabbat once per month. Purchase tallit and tefillin.
6-12 months before	Begin private tutorials with Cantor.
5 months before	Order invitations. Confirm with Mitzuyan Caterers.
4 months before	Order kippot.
12 weeks before	Pay outstanding balances to synagogue.
8 weeks before	Mail overseas and Canadian invitations. Make final arrangements with Mitzuyan Caterers.
6 weeks before	Parents and child meet with Rabbi.
4 weeks before	Complete the Prayer Package and Aliyah list Ensure those receiving aliyot and kibbudim are prepared.
Thursday before	Rehearsal and photographs.
Friday before	All deliveries made before 12:00 noon.
Shabbat morning	Arrive at 9:15 for services and enjoy!

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Dr. Geoffrey Haber	Rabbi	416-636-3451	Rabbi.geoff@bethradom.com
Cantor Jeremy Burko	Cantor / Tutor	416-636-3451	cantorj@bethradom.com
Cindy Joseph	Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator	416-636-6302 (mobile)	cindy@bethradom.com
Miriam Sharpe	Office Administrator	416-636-3451 x24	m.sharpe@bethradom.com
Norman Kay	Caterer – Mitzuyan Catering	416-419-5260	norman@mitzuyankoshercaterer.com

SUGGESTED READING



Putting God on the Guest List, 3rd Ed

How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin

Foreword by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

Introduction by Rabbi William H. Lebeau