



CHOICES

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook

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(Revised March 2023)

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PREFACE

Helen Keller once said, “Life is a glorious adventure or it is nothing at all.” The same could probably be said of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. However, there are times when we get so caught up in the minutiae of the proceedings that we lose sight of the wondrous substance of the occasion. This Handbook is an attempt to remove, or at least lessen, the distractions of worrying about the details so that you are free to appreciate the glorious adventure upon which your whole family is about to embark.

We have tried to spell out, in as uncomplicated a form as possible, the steps involved in becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We have attempted to anticipate your concerns and address common questions that have been brought to our attention. It is our hope that, with some of the mystery removed, you will be able to relax and truly enjoy your journey.

This Handbook was originally written by Rabbi Rachlis and then was updated by a committee of dedicated volunteers who have devoted countless hours to this task.

INTRODUCTION

“In the Spirit of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah”

Dear Haverim,

No day is more sacred, special, anxious and uplifting to a Jewish child than the Shabbat of his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Years of Hebrew schooling, months of preparation with a private tutor and then meetings with a Rabbi propel adolescents into the public arena in a way that gives meaning to “today I am an adult Jew.” At University Synagogue, we take our B’nai Mitzvah (plural of Bar/Bat Mitzvah) very seriously. **The candidate and his/her family choose readings, songs, and innovations in order to create a unique service, one that is meaningful to the whole family and one that heightens everyone’s sense of Jewishness and spirituality.**

Sometimes B’nai Mitzvah families don’t recognize the degree of their Jewish transformation until after the event and regret that they didn’t invest more time in their child’s simcha. (Liturgy CDs of the basic prayers are available from the University Synagogue office. Also, consider learning or improving your Hebrew the year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.) In addition, parents are often sorry that they didn’t plan an affair in consonance with the spirit of the day.

At University Synagogue – through our services, adult classes and religious school – we try so hard to convey the importance of Jewish tradition, not as an end in and of itself, but as a path towards articulating values and sharing in the uniqueness of the Jewish people. We speak of transparent rituals – deeds that point beyond themselves to ethical action and human sensitivity. We emphasize tzedakah – living justly and giving generously – as an act that is central to Jewish consciousness. In that spirit, please consider the following values when planning a Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

1. The day is Shabbat – a day of rest, reflection and renewal. To leave services and drive far away kills much of the spirit created at the morning service. Our ancestors knew better – simplicity is elevating. Consider a luncheon at the Synagogue. It’s not that we Reconstructionists prohibit Shabbat riding, rather we emphasize the themes of rest and renewal on Shabbat. Think “simplicity and proximity.”

2. A Seudah – In Jewish tradition, the celebration that follows a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not a party, but a seudah – a religious feast. Therefore, it should be joyous, memorable and Jewish, as well. Kippot at the table, a “Motzi/Motzia” blessing over the challah and some Jewish music add so much. That is not to say that other forms of music are inappropriate; rather our goal should be to continue the Jewish “tam” (flavor) of the service through the rest of the celebration.

3. Kashrut/Dairy – Reconstructionism emphasizes kashrut or dairy (which, of course, includes vegetarian and most “non-shellfish” fish) at all Jewish functions for a sense of K’lal Yisrael (Jewish peoplehood). Our Talmudic sages spoke of Shabbat as a foretaste of the Mashiachzeit, a time in which Eve and Adam’s paradise would be recreated. The Torah legend of the Garden of Eden describes Adam and Eve as vegetarians. We, too, can symbolically recreate paradise and “taste” the Olam Ha-Ba with a Bar/Bat Mitzvah meal that respects the whole of creation.

4. Gifts and Money – It is customary in Jewish tradition to give a tzedakah donation to the synagogue and various other Jewish charities at the time of a simcha like a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In addition, what better way to begin adulthood than with a mitzvah that reminds us that all Jewish adults must be responsible? A parent should explain how much he/she is giving and help the Bar/Bat Mitzvah decide where his/her gifts (ideally, 10% of the value of the gifts that he/she receives) should go. The Torah states that “you shall teach your children (mitzvot) diligently.” Many of our B’nai Mitzvah and their families give a gift to Mazon, A Jewish Response to Hunger. Mazon asks that 3% of the cost of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah be sent to the synagogue office (payable to Mazon) to feed Jews and non-Jews who suffer the pain and degradation of hunger. Now is the time to teach your children how to take responsibility for themselves by living up to the values of our people. Mitzvot should not be turned into idle platitudes. Rather, they are the foundation upon which your children’s Jewishness and adulthood will be built.

5. Jewish Education – University Synagogue begins with a Parent-Tot program and Pre-School, then Religious School and continues through high school. I co-teach a class for 9th - 12th graders. (By the way, if your child would like to read Torah or Haftarah on High Holy Days, please let the synagogue know at least three months before.)

Jewish summer camps can be a child or teenager’s most meaningful Jewish experience. Consider Camp Havaya (Reconstructionist). Informal study, Shabbat and holiday celebrations, and concern for Jewish ethics and values infuse the day-to-day life of summer camps. Please speak to the Director of Congregational Learning well in advance of the summer so that we may plan such an experience for your child or teenager.

A trip to Israel can open up a teenager (or adult) to a kaleidoscope of Jewish life, language and land. To see Jews from all parts of the world familiar with Jewish history, customs and Hebrew, living as a majority in a society, expands an American Jew’s vision of what Judaism is and gives meaning to all of the years of Hebrew and Jewish studies that he/she learned as a child. Few gifts will be as memorable for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a trip to Israel (taken at age 13 or delayed until 15 or 16).

6. For the rest of us – Every member and friend of University Synagogue is invited to each Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These services give us a chance to share in a community simcha. One need not be personally invited to a Bar/Bat Mitzvah to feel joy at the achievement of one of our University Synagogue young people. **However, we ask that you invite all the children in your child's Hebrew School class so that everyone feels included.** Please come and share in the beauty of these special Shabbatot.

7. For those who wish to give presents – consider a Jewish gift. Books, CDs, DVDs, mezuzot, posters and so much more that are most appropriate for a Jewish occasion. The synagogue also provides a number of Jewish gifts to your son/daughter.

I am happy to say that many University Synagogue B'nai Mitzvah follow the patterns outlined in this letter. In fact, many of these ideas were generated by B'nai Mitzvah and their families in my meetings with them and I am grateful for their sensitivity and advice.

One closing note: A Bar/Bat Mitzvah gives rise to a myriad of feelings – among them the desire to impress others and a concern for giving your child “the best” by creating a memorable time. Be memorable in a different way. Avoid the ostentatious and the competitive. Donate more money to tzedakah and less to caterers. Plan a “seudah/celebration” that reinforces the Jewish joy of the morning service, the spirituality of the day and the values that we struggle so hard to teach every day at University Synagogue.

I look forward to the many B'nai Mitzvah that I will be planning with you. Please do not hesitate to call me for advice even if your simcha is a few years in the future.

B'shalom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arnold Rachlis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Rabbi Arnold Rachlis

P.S. If you have any ideas for improving our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program, please let me know.

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE

Feel free to fill in your own dates on the blank lines. Refer to the Handbook's Table of Contents if you have any questions regarding items mentioned in this time line.

1 YEAR BEFORE OR MORE

- _____ **Your child is required to be enrolled in the Religious School for the full academic year of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah. (For example: An August Bar/Bat Mitzvah child would need to be in Religious School at least through May of the following year.)**
- _____ Be sure to read this timeline and the entire Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook so that you are aware of your responsibilities
- _____ Obtain your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date from the office and confirm with your \$600 non-refundable deposit
- _____ Attend Bar/Bat Mitzvah workshops led by the Rabbi and Cantor
- _____ Begin to investigate the different options for a Mitzvah Project with the Director of Congregational Learning.
- _____ Plan on attending the 12 required services
- _____ Ensure that all University Synagogue dues and tuition payments are current

7 MONTHS BEFORE

- _____ **Ensure that your Bar/Bat Mitzvah balance has been paid in full or appropriate arrangements have been made** in order for your child to attend the Cantor's 4-week class and before your tutor can be assigned
- _____ Start collecting readings to personalize your service and your Booklet
- _____ Have your Mitzvah project submitted to the Director of Congregational Learning for approval
- _____ Arrange tutoring appointments with the Cantor, who will give your child a copy of the whole Torah portion of the week with commentary

3 MONTHS BEFORE

- _____ Call the office to arrange for meetings between your child and the Rabbi. Your child should come to the first meeting with a written D'var Torah/speech, at least one page of summary, one page of commentary and a paragraph of "thank yous" (See Page 23)
- _____ Ask the tutor for a clean copy of the Torah and Haftarah portions for the booklet reflecting only the text that your child will be chanting and the interpretation of the whole portion from www.myjewishlearning.com.

2 MONTHS BEFORE

- _____ Begin to fill out the Bar/Bat Mitzvah information sheet (including Hebrew names, names of service participants...) so that it will be ready for the rehearsal
- _____ Submit your selected readings to the Rabbi
- _____ If you wish, you may purchase kippot for your guests at the service
- _____ Make sure your child has his/her own kippah, tallit and tallit bag. For more information, see Page 30.

Continued on next page

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE (Cont'd.)

1 MONTH BEFORE

- _____ Complete and confirm names of service participants
- _____ Prepare parents' remarks, if applicable (**Limited to 4 minutes**)
- _____ Submit and discuss special song requests with the Cantor
- _____ Hand in completed Mitzvah Project forms to the Director of Congregational Learning

2 WEEKS BEFORE

- _____ Send all your service readers an advanced copy of their readings (English and/or Hebrew) and inform your service participants of their responsibilities
- _____ Inform the office if you will be taking photos **before** services
- _____ Review picture taking rules with your photographer and videographer (See Page 29)
- _____ Review with your child's tutor and your child which prayers he/she would like to recite alone and which he/she wants to do with the Cantor (See enclosed form)

AT THE REHEARSAL

- _____ Give a copy of the *Complete* Service Booklet or *Supplement* to the Rabbi, one that includes the names of your selected readers written at the top of their reading
- _____ Deliver the Service Participants Form to the Rabbi (This is the form you filled out earlier. See Page 40)
- _____ Present the Cantor with the list of which prayers your son/daughter will do

ON THE DAY

- _____ Arrive at least 45 minutes early to take care of last-minute details
- _____ Ushers should arrive at least 30 minutes early (The usher duties are explained on Page 17.)

RELAX, SIT BACK, AND ENJOY THIS VERY SPECIAL DAY! MAZEL TOV!

AFTER THE DUST HAS SETTLED

- _____ Please deliver 5 copies of your Service Booklet or Supplement to the office
- _____ If you have an extra copy, a sample invitation would also be appreciated

COST OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee is presently \$1600 per child, \$2200 for siblings who are sharing a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, or \$1100 *per family* for two separate families sharing a date. A non-refundable deposit of \$600 *per family* towards the total fee is required when the date is reserved.

Approximately 6 to 12 months prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, Cantor Braier will teach a 4-week class and your tutor will be assigned who will begin 6 months before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

Tutoring cannot be scheduled until full payment is received 1 month prior to the tutor being assigned.

Payment plans are available and you will be sent these options when you select your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH REQUIREMENTS

In order for your child to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah, he/she must meet the following requirements: *

1. Reading knowledge of Hebrew;
2. Knowledge and experience of Friday and Saturday Shabbat services – attendance is required at 12 services (Friday night, Saturday morning, or Bar/Bat Mitzvah in any combination) beginning a year prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date;
3. Knowledge of Jewish holidays, observances, liturgy, history and culture;
4. Minimum of 4 years of Jewish education or the equivalent prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah; special situations can be discussed with the Director of Congregational Learning.
5. **Completion of the full academic year in Religious School in which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah takes place. (For example: An August Bar/Bat Mitzvah child would need to be in Religious School at least through May of the following year.)** We strongly encourage continuing through both Confirmation (10th grade) and high school (12th grade);
6. Attendance at a *minimum* of two meetings and a rehearsal with the Rabbi;
7. Ability to chant the Torah portion, the Haftarah portion, blessings and prayers;
8. Understanding the significance of his/her training, the ceremony, the meaning of the Torah and Haftarah portions and the presentation of a D'var Torah (speech) of Jewish significance at the service;
9. Completion of a mitzvah project consisting of a minimum of 18 hours of community service;

* If you have questions or concerns about these requirements, please contact the Director of Congregational Learning or the Rabbi.

THE FRIDAY EVENING SHABBAT SERVICE

(Page numbers refer to pages in Kol Haneshamah, the Reconstructionist Prayerbook)

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration officially begins on Friday night, with the Kabbalat Shabbat service to welcome Shabbat.

The Barchu (Page 57 of the prayerbook) is chanted by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, whose parents will open and close the Ark. More may be chanted if he/she wishes. Please discuss with the Cantor.

The service is followed by an Oneg Shabbat sponsored by the family. (See Page 27 of this handbook for more information about the Oneg).

The Saturday Morning Shabbat Service for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Nigun (Melody without words)

- Led by the Cantor (often with clapping)
- A universal way to involve everyone

Introduction/Welcome by the Rabbi

- Rabbi comes down from the bimah (pulpit) to begin the service and make everyone feel welcome

Donning of the Tallit and its Blessing – (Optional) – Pg 143

*Baruch atah Adonay, Eloheinu melech ha-olam,
ah-sheer kid-sha-nu b'mitzvo-tav v'tze-vah-nu
le-heet-atef ba-tzee-tzeet*

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah wears a kippah from the start of the service and can also wear their Tallit.
- Optional Tallit (prayer shawl) Ceremony:
- Presentation can be by parents, grandparents or other designated person(s).
- Tallit is outstretched with the decorated or Hebrew-lettered side facing the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, who will take it, say the blessing, kiss each side and put it over his/her shoulders. Presenters return to their seats.

Readings (one or more)

- Readers don't need to be Jewish.
- Readings are selected by the family and reviewed with the Rabbi.
- There are opportunities here and later in the service to insert readings.
- Supplemental booklet can contain several readings but not all selections will be read aloud.

Opening of the Ark for the Barchu

- Rabbi calls up first set of Ark openers.
- The Ark Openers are selected by the family. At least two in each group of openers (one for each side of Ark) should be Jewish and over age 13.
- When giving out the honor, explain to Ark Openers that they should bring their Prayerbooks or booklets and face the Ark. Wearing kippot and tallitot is encouraged

- Rabbi instructs everyone to rise

Barchu (Call to Prayer) – chanted – Pg 247

*Barchu et Adonay hamvorah
Baruch Adonay hamvorah le'olam va'ed*

- Ark is opened. Everyone faces the Ark.
- Led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Body Movements
Barchu/Baruch – Knee Bend
(et) Adonay – Waist Bend
[after] hamvorach – Rise

← Shows humility and respect for God/Torah. Symbolic for kneeling.

Yotzer (God in Nature) – spoken

*Baruch atah Adonay eloheynu meleh ha'olam
yotzer or uvorey hosheh oseh shalom
uvorey et hakol*

- Ark is closed. Attendants return to seats

The Shema, Mi Hamocha and Amidah Preparation

Additional readings

Shema (Affirmation of Monotheism)
followed by **Ve'ahavta** – Pg 277

Shema yisra'el adonay eloheynu adonay ehad.
Baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed.

Ve'ahavta et adonay elohecha
bechol levavecha uvchol nafshecha uvchol me'odecha.
Vehayu hadevarim ha'eleh asher anochi metzavecha hayom al
levavecha,
Veshinantam levanecha vedibarta bam
beshivtecha beveytecha uvlechtecha vaderech uvshochbecha
uvkumecha.
Ukshartam le'ot al yadecha vehayu letotafot beyn eynecha.
Uhtavtam al mezuzot beytecha uvisharecha.

Prayer over Tzitzit – Pg 285

Vayomer adonay el moshe leymor. Daber el beney yisra'el
ve'amarta aleyhem ve'asu lahem tzitzit al kanfey vigdeyhem
ledorotam venazenu al tzitzit hakanaf petil tehelet. Vehayah
lahem letzitzit uritem oto uzhartem et kol mitzvot adonay
va'asitem otam velo taturu aharey levavechem ve'aharey
eyneychem asher atem zouim ahareyhem. Lema'an tizkeru
va'asitem et kol mitzvotay vihe-yitem kedoshim leyloheychem.
Ani adonay eloheychem asher hotzeyti ethem me'eretz mitzrayim
lihyot lahem leylohim ani adonay eloheychem. Adonay
eloheychem emes.

Mi Hamocha (Gratitude for escape from Egyptian bondage) – Pg 291

Mi hamochah ba'elim adonay. Mi kamochah nedar bakodesh
nora tchilol osef felech.
Shirah hadashah shibechu ge'ulim leshimecha al sefat hayam.
Yahad kulam hodu vehimlichu ve'ameru.
Adonay yimloch le'olam va'ed.

Amidah preparation

Tzur Yisrael

Tzur yisra'el kumah be'ezrat yisra'el. Ufdey hinumecha yehudah
veyisrael. Go'aleynu adonay tzeva'ot shemo kedosh yisra'el.
Baruch atah adonay ga'al yisra'el.

- See earlier note
- Rabbi explains bringing together Tallit fringes (Tzitzit) and wrapping around right index finger – symbolic of bringing together people of the world
- Rabbi explains Shema – an important statement or declaration that there is only one God
- Remain sitting (standing or sitting position is determined by what precedes the Shema)
- Close/cover eyes for Shema to achieve Kavanah (focused, centered, engaged mindset for prayer)
- Led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with Cantor

- Led by the Cantor
- Kiss fringes of Tallit each time we say "tzitzit" and at the end after "emet"
- Rabbi says to release Tallit fringes then explains Mi Hamocha

- Mi Hamocha with guitar and clapping
- Led by Cantor and Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Rabbi comments about the importance of the Amidah – everyone rises
- Rabbi, Cantor and Bar/Bat Mitzvah face Ark

Amidah (the “Standing Prayer”) – Pages 294-322

Body Movements at start of Amidah
3 steps back and 3 steps forward

Avot Ve'imot (Respect for Ancestors – egalitarian) – Pg 295

Body Movements
Knee bend/bow at Baruh atah Adonay

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu veyloheey avoteynu ve'imoteynu
elohey avraham elohey sarah
elohey yitzhak elohey rivkah
elohey ya'akov elohey rahel
elohey le'ah

Ha'el hagadol hagibor vehanora el elyon gomel hasadim tovim vekoney hakol vezohar hasdey avot ve'imot umevi ge'ulah livney veneyhem lema'an shemo be'ahavah. Meleh ozer umoshi'a umagen. Baruh atah Adonay magen avraham ve'ezrat sarah.

Atah gibor le'olam adonay rav le'hoshi'a.

In summer: Morid hatah.

In winter: Mashiv haru'ah umorid hageshem.

Mehalkel hayim behesed mehayey kol hay berahamim rabim someh noflim verofey holim umatir asurim umkayem emunato lisheney afar. Mi hamo'ha ba'al gevurot umi domeh lah meleh memit umhayeh umatzmi'ah yeshu'ah.

Vene'eman atah leha'ayot kol hay. Baruh atah adonay mehayey kol hay.

Gevurot (Divine power) – Pg 299

Body Movements
Knee bend/bow at Baruh atah Adonay

Nekadesh et shimecha ba'olam keshem
shemakdishim oto bishmei marom
kakatur al yad nevi'echa vekara zeh el zeh ve'amar:
Kadosh kadosh kadosh adonay tzeva'ot
melo hol ha'aretz kevodo.
Az bekol ra'ash gadol adir velazak
mashmi'im kol mitnasim le'umat
serafim le'umatam baruh yomeru:
Baruh kevod adonay mimekomo
[Abbreviated]

Kedusha – Pg 303

Body Movements
Raise up on toes 3 times at Kadosh,
kadosh, kadosh (Holy, holy, holy)

Ledor Vador – Pg 301

Ledor vador nagid godleha ulnetzah netzahim
Kedushateha nakdish veshivha eloheynu mipinu lo yamush
le'olam va'ed ki el meleh gadol vekadosh atah.
Baruh atah adonay ha'el hakadosh.

Yismechu (Song of Shabbat) – Pg 309

Yismechu bemalchuteha shomrey shabbat vekorey eneg. Am
mekadeshey shevi'i kulam yisbe'a veytanegu mituvcha.
Vehashevi'i ragzita bo vekidashto. Hemandat yamim oto kirata
zeher lema'asey vereyshit.

- Rabbi instructs congregation to continue reading silently and points out alternative Amidah readings.
- Rabbi, Cantor and Bar/Bat Mitvah turn to face congregation. Rabbi announces conclusion of Amidah and singing of Sim Shalom

Sim Shalom (Song of Peace) – Pg 321

- Led by Cantor with guitar

Preparing for the Torah Service

Eyn Kamoha (Introductory Prayer) – Pg 383

*Eyn kamoha va'elohim Adonay ve'eyn kema'aseha
Malhuteha malhut kol olamim umemshalteha behol dor vador
Adonay meleh Adonay malah Adonay yimloh le'olam va'ed.
Adonay oz le'amo yiten Adonay yevareh et amo vashalom.
Av harahmim hetivah vitzoneha et tziyon tivneh homot
yerushalayim.*

Ki veba levad batahnu meleh el ram venisa adon olamim.

Pg 385:

*Ki mitziyon tetzey torah udvar Adonay mirushalayim.
Baruh shenatan torah le'amo yisra'el bikdushato.*

- Rabbi calls up second set of Ark openers
- Prayer led by the Cantor (facing the Ark)
- Rabbi calls up Gabaim (Torah Helpers)
- Roles such as Gabaim and Torah lifter should be Jewish but there is some flexibility – e.g. a husband who is Jewish and wife is not
- Rabbi explains the history of our Torah and describes the Torah procession.
- The Ark is opened.
- The Rabbi talks about the Torah then removes it from the Ark. An Ark opener removes the crowns.

Torah Transmission Ceremony – (Optional)

Shema – Pg 393

*Shema yisra'el Adonay eloheynu Adonay ehad.
Ehad eloheynu gadol adoneynu kadosh shemo.
Gadelu l'Adonay iti unromemah shemo yahdav*

↑
Bow

↑
Rise

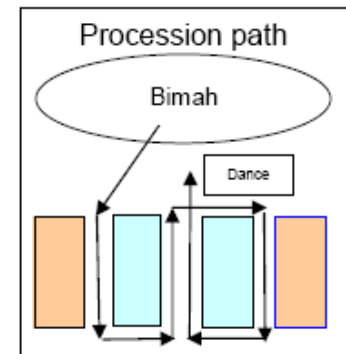
- Close/cover our eyes during Shema
- Cantor sings then Congregation repeats.
- Face the Ark. Sing together. Include bow.

Procession and dancing

(Procession is an important ritual demonstrating that the Torah belongs to the community)

*Leha Adonay hagedulah vehagevurah vehatiferet
vehanetzah vehahod ki hol bashamayim uva'aretz
leha Adonay hamamlahah vehamitnasey lehol
lerosh.*

Procession is led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Upon return to bottom of the Bimah steps, the Rabbi and a small group dance around the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.



Ki Mitziyon – Pg 385

Ki mitziyon tetzey torah udvar Adonay mirushalayim.

- Cantor leads song through the procession and preparation of the Torah

The Rabbi and Bar/Bat Mitzvah return to the bimah. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah puts the crowns on the first Torah which the Rabbi returns to the Ark and removes a different Torah. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah helps to remove crowns and closes the Ark. The Rabbi continues to prepare the Torah and places it on the Shulchan (table/lectern). He then invites people to look at the Torah while sharing interesting facts about it. He also ensures that the right people are on the bimah and has the Gabaim hold each Torah roller (Aytz Chayim, plural: Atzeh Chayim). The Rabbi explains that our prayers are different (more inclusive) and describes how the Aliyah process will work, then instructs everyone to rise and put their arms and Tallitot around each other.

Torah, Haftarah and Speeches

Blessing before reading of the Torah

(Aliyah – “to go up”) – Pg 399

Barchu et Adonai hamvorah

Baruch Adonai hamvorah le'olam va'ed

Baruch atah Adonai eloheynu melech ha'olam asher

kervanu la'avodato venatan lanu et torato

Baruch atah Adonai notayn hatorah

Congregation says entire blessing for the first aliyah. Subsequent aliyot, congregation says 2nd line only.

- 1st *aliyah* is said by the congregation, last is by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, for 2nd (and others, if done) the *aliyah* is done by someone else.
- If person doing an *aliyah* prefers the traditional version of the prayer, it is OK. If it's a group, they all need to agree on one version
- For each *aliyah*, the Rabbi calls up the person or group. They start on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's right side (Cantor's side) and after they move to Bar/Bat Mitzvah's left side, then they sit down after the next *aliyah*. Before and after *aliyah* they touch their Tzitzit to Torah then kiss Tzitzit.
- Afterward, Rabbi encourages people to congratulate/greet each other then sit down

The Torah Portion

Blessing after reading the Torah – Pg 399

Baruch atah Adonai eloheynu melech ha'olam asher

natan lanu torat emet vehayey olam nata betoheynu

Baruch atah Adonai notayn hatorah

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants Torah portion three lines at a time, separated by the *aliyah* blessings as described above

Lift and Tie the Torah

Cantor sings (P. 407) – *Vezot hatorah etz hayim hi lamahazikim bah vetomheha me ushar*

Yisrael v'oraita chad hu, Torah orah, halleluyah
(The Jewish people & Torah are one)

- Rabbi calls up people to lift and tie Torah
- Rabbi places Torah on lectern (shulchan)
- Lifter/Tier return to their seats
- Congregation is seated

Blessing before reading Haftarah – Pg 409

- Rabbi announces next steps
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah handles the entire Haftarah and blessing before/after
- Rabbi and Cantor are seated

The Haftarah Portion

Blessing after reading the Haftarah –

Pp 409-411

- Each time the Bar/Bat Mitzvah says, “Baruch Atah Adonai”, Rabbi and congregation say “Baruch hu u'varuch sh'mo”, then “Amen” at end of each blessing

The D'var Torah (Torah commentary)

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah gives speech including:
 - Simple explanation of Torah Portion
 - What Torah Portion means to them
 - Thank you comments
 - Optionally a description of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah project can be included

Comments from parents (Optional)

- Rabbi calls up parents. Limit to 4 minutes.

Rabbi's Speech

- Afterward Rabbi congratulates Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Concluding the Saturday Morning Shabbat Service

Shehecheyanu prayer & Mazel Tov (in booklet)

- Everyone rises, then sits afterwards

Special song by the Cantor – chosen by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family

- Rabbi and Bar/Bat Mitzvah sit during song

Returning the Torah to the Ark

Pg 433—*Hodu al eretz veshamayim vayarem keren le'amo tehilah lehol hasidav livney yisra'el kerovo halleluyah.*

Pg 441—*Etz hayim hi lamahazikim bah vetomheha me'ushar. Deraheha darhey no'am vehol netivoteha shalom. Hashivenu Adonay eleyha venashuva hadesh yameynu kekedom.*

- Rabbi invites up the next set of Ark openers and has everyone rise
- Everyone sings Hodu Al Eretz and Etz Hayim Hee while facing the Ark
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah places crowns on Torah
- Rabbi returns Torah to Ark
- Ark is closed and attendants return to seats

Gifts from the congregation

- Rabbi calls up presenter (a board member)
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah stands to receive gifts

Aleynu (Our hope for a better world)—Pg 445

Aleynu leshabe'ah la'adon hakol, latet gedulah leyotzer bereyshit shenatan lanu torat emet vehayey olam nata betohenu.

Va'anahnu korim umishtahavim umodim, lifney melech malhey hamelachim hakadosh baruh hu

Pg 449—*Vene'amar: Vehayah Adonay lemelech al kol ha' aretz. Bayom hahu yihyeh adonay ehad ushmo ehad.*

- Rabbi invites up the next set of Ark openers and has everyone rise. Ark is opened.
- Led by the Cantor
- Bow at "korim"
- Ark is closed and attendants return to seats
- Everyone remains standing

Kaddish Yatom (Mourner's Kaddish) – Pg 451

Yitgadal veyitkadash shemey raba be'alma divra hirutey veyamlich malhutey behayeyhon uvyomeyehon uvhayey dehol beyt yisra'el ba'agala uvizman kariv ve'imru amen. Yehey shemey raba mevarah le'alam ulalmey almaya. Yitbarah veyishtabah veyitpa'ar veyitromam veyitnasey veyit-hadar veyitaleh veyit-halal shemey dekudsha berih hu le'ela min kol birhata veshirata tushbehata venehemata da'amiran be'alma ve'imru amen. Yehey shelama raba min shemaya vehayim aleynu ve'al kol yisra'el ve'imru amen. Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh shalom aleynu ve'al kol yisra'el ve'al kol yoshvey tevel ve'imru amen.

- Rabbi reads names of deceased family members and invites congregation to call out others names

• Note: the Kaddish is in Aramaic, not Hebrew

Three steps backward

Sway side to side, knee bend then bow
Three steps forward

- Everyone sings "Oseh Shalom" with arms and Tallitot around each other

Blessing of Wine and Challah (in booklet)

Baruch ata adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam bo-re p'ri hagafen

Baruch ata adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz

N'varech et eyn hachayim hamotzi'ah lechem min ha'aretz

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah drinks some wine
- Congregation claps and sings "Siman Tov u' Mazel Tov"
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah & Rabbi go down to parents

DUTIES OF SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

NUMBER PARTICIPANT DUTIES

When people ascend the bimah, we prefer that they carry their prayerbooks and wear kippot and tallitot.

Minimum 2 Ushers – Ushers should be adults and arrive by 9:30 a.m.

They should wear a tallit and kippah, encourage the use of and distribute tallitot and kippot; distribute booklets; enforce no cell phones as well as the no smoking rule; find the Facility Manager and quiet people, if necessary, including asking people with noisy children to sit in the glass enclosed Family Room where they can see/hear the service and play with toys. A parent must stay in the Family Room.

2 Gabaim – Two people who hold the rollers (Trees of Life) of the Torah while it is being read.

1 Torah Tier – Places the securing strap around the Torah and mantle (cover) over the Torah.

1 Torah Lifter – Holds the Torah while the Tier performs above duties. Note: the Torah is moderately heavy and, depending on the time of year, usually unbalanced on one side or the other due to the amount of text on a given roller.

1+ * Aliyot – “Being CALLED UP to read the blessings over the Torah” – For every three verses of Torah your child reads, the person/s you have designated is/are called up to the bimah to recite the blessing before and after that 3-verse portion.

Minimum 8 Ark Attendants – Open and close the ark on four separate occasions:

No Maximum

1. Barchu

2. Beginning of Torah Service (these people will become part of the Torah procession and will be standing longer)

3. Returning the Torah to the Ark

4. Aleynu

1+ Tallit Presenter(s) – Hands the Tallit to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a sign of entrance into adult responsibility and may say a few brief words (less than a minute). **OPTIONAL**

1+ Torah Transmission Ceremony – Refers to a moment when the Ark is opened, Torah is removed and handed from grandparents to parents to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **OPTIONAL**

1 or 2 Speakers – Parents may give a Bar/Bat Mitzvah speech (not to exceed a total time of 4 minutes). **OPTIONAL**

* Note: It is our custom for Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates to read a **minimum** of two or more, 3-line Torah portions. The blessings before and after the first 3-line portion are said by the congregation and the final blessings are said by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. Every additional three verses entitle your family to one aliyah (blessing before and after the Torah portion). **We encourage our B’nai Mitzvah candidates to chant as much Torah as possible. Please send a copy in advance of our Reconstructionist Torah blessing to those who will be chanting it.**

THE BOOKLET

University Synagogue invites each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to help create a service that reflects the individual family's values. This is done by selecting readings to be used in the service. Some readings will be read aloud by friends or by family members whom you designate, others will be used for silent readings during the time of the Amidah. If you want specific readings to be read aloud or silently, please indicate that fact when you turn everything in to the Rabbi. Otherwise, he will put them in the order he feels is best.

1. There are two kinds of Booklets:

- A. A **Shabbat Morning Supplement** that will be used in conjunction with the prayerbook
- B. A **Complete Service Booklet** that contains the liturgy and that takes the place of the prayerbook
 - The Rabbi's secretary can email you the template for either the *Complete Service Booklet* or the *Supplement Booklet*.

2. Steps to follow in designing your Complete Service Booklet or Supplement Booklet:

- A. **Gather 8 to 12 poems/readings** that you want for the service.
 - 1. These can be poems, sayings, excerpts from existing works or originals. They do not all have to be written by Jews, but they should reflect something of your values and feelings about this special day.
 - 2. For inspiration, look through past Bar/Bat Mitzvah booklets (available in the office), in the back of our prayerbook, or use any literary work.
- B. **Decide whether your booklet will be a supplement or will also contain the liturgy.**
 - 1. For a supplement, title it "Shabbat Morning Supplement." If a complete booklet, title it "Shabbat Morning Service."
- C. **Optional additional inclusions in the booklet**
 - 1. A letter to your guests or to your child, explanations of some of the symbols and traditions appearing in the morning service or songs that will be sung.
 - 2. Remember, the Rabbi **must** approve everything before your booklet is ready for final printing.

3. Include a copy of your child's Torah and Haftarah portions.

- A. These can be obtained from the tutor

4. Submit all of your readings for your Booklet to the Rabbi 2 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

- A. **Indicate whether you are producing a *Complete Booklet* or a *Supplement Booklet*.**
- B. Keep a copy of everything you turn into the Rabbi as he will reorder your pages and may put notes or other marks on the copy you give him.
- C. Be sure to designate any readings that you specifically want read aloud.

Continued on next page

THE BOOKLET – (Cont'd.)

5. The Rabbi will return your copy to you.

- A. Included will be a few introductory pages and necessary prayers.
- B. Everything will be in the order necessary for the final form.

6. Resubmit your booklet to the Rabbi no less than 3 weeks before the Bar Mitzvah for a final inspection before sending it to the printer

7. After the Rabbi's final inspection, take it to the printer for decisions on:

- A. The type and color of your paper
- B. The type and color of your cover page
- C. The type of binding that you want
- D. The number of booklets that you think you will need

You're done. Congratulations!

TIPS FOR PUTTING THE BOOKLET TOGETHER

- **Number your pages**
- **The booklet should open right to left, "Hebrew style"**
- **Leave a margin around your pages for binding**
- *Don't* fill every blank space with art
- *Don't* have any copy in light colored ink

(SUGGESTED COVER)

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE (SUPPLEMENT)

HEBREW DATE

ENGLISH DATE

BAR/BAT MITZVAH OF
(CHILD'S NAME)
(ARTWORK OPTIONAL)

UNIVERSITY SYNAGOGUE
3400 MICHELSON
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA

RABBI ARNOLD RACHLIS CANTOR RUTI BRAIER
JESSICA BRAM, DIRECTOR OF
CONGREGATIONAL LEARNING

AFFILIATED WITH
THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST MOVEMENT

CANTOR BRAIER'S TUTORING PROGRAM

Dear Bar/Bat Mitzvah Parents,

This program consists of 4 distinct parts. For those who wish, I will be glad to have a meeting with each family to discuss the program and to answer questions from families and students.

Part I: This is a four-week class that I teach on one afternoon per week.

Part II: Tutors will be assigned to each student for approximately six months of half-hour sessions prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. (If you want your child to learn more or begin earlier, we can arrange for extra tutoring at an additional cost.)

Part III: The final preparation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be completed during this phase of training. I will schedule private meetings with each student to make sure that he/she is fully prepared for the upcoming simcha.

Part IV: Rabbi Rachlis meets individually with the Bar/Bat candidates at least three times to work on the D'var Torah (speech) and to talk with them about the importance of becoming a young adult in Judaism. Parents and children can have as many appointments as they want.

I am looking forward to getting to know your family better and to be a greater part of your family's simcha.

We look forward to your participation in this program.

B'shalom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ruti Braier".

Cantor Ruti Braier

P.S. Please contact the Director of Congregational Learning directly about your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah project.

MEETINGS WITH THE RABBI

HOW MANY MEETINGS WILL THERE BE?

There will be at least three meetings with the Rabbi, approximately three weeks apart. The third will be a rehearsal. Call the Rabbi's secretary to schedule your appointments.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE FIRST MEETING?

The meeting is for the Rabbi and your child. It does not include the parents. This gives the Rabbi private time to get to know your child and to further enhance the whole Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

At this initial meeting the child should bring Rabbi Rachlis 8-12 readings for the Booklet. Also, please fill out the Bar/Bat Mitzvah General Information Form (Page 38) and give it to the Rabbi. You must also inform the Rabbi whether your Booklet will be a *Supplement* Booklet with selected readings only OR if you want a *Complete* Service Booklet that includes the liturgy for the entire service.

To prepare for the first meeting with the Rabbi, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate will have to read the **entire** Torah portion in English and write a D'var Torah (See Page 23 for details). If you have some questions or concerns, the Rabbi will be happy to meet with you before he meets with your child or at another time. Please tell his secretary that you want to meet with him when you're scheduling your child's appointment.

If there is some information about your child that you want the Rabbi to know, please feel free to email him listing interests, awards, hobbies, etc. Each meeting will last approximately 15 minutes.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE SUBSEQUENT MEETING?

At the second meeting, the Rabbi will review again your child's D'var Torah/speech.

WHEN IS THE REHEARSAL?

The rehearsal usually takes place one or two Saturdays before the candidate's Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Noon.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT REHEARSALS?

There are 3 rehearsals. There will be a run-through of the service with the Cantor at one of the rehearsals, of the Torah and Haftarah with the tutor at another rehearsal and for the Rabbi's rehearsal: **Please be sure to bring the following:**

- **A copy of your Booklet for the rabbi** that includes the names of your selected readers written above their assigned reading
- **The names of all the service participants.** (The form to fill out is included in this handbook on Page 40.)
- **The list of prayers your child will do.** (This form, for the Cantor, is also included in this handbook.)
- **The completed D'var Torah**

D'VAR TORAH AND PARENTS' SPEECHES

THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH'S D'VAR TORAH (SPEECH)

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is expected to write a D'var Torah. This will be read after he/she has chanted his/her Torah and Haftarah portions in Hebrew. A copy of this speech needs to be given to the Rabbi at the first meeting. He/she is given a summary of the portion, but we encourage him/her to read the whole Torah portion in English.

The verses that he/she chants are a “portion of the portion” and the speech can be written on **anything** in the whole portion. He/she doesn't have to speak about what is being chanted, but instead should focus on what is most relevant to him/her.

If there's a portion full of “irrelevant” information, like the details of animal sacrifices, that can be skipped and instead the student should focus on a broader idea such as: services now vs. services then, why do people feel a need to worship, or what kind of non-worship sacrifices do people make in life today – for their country or family or an idea. Broaden the D'var Torah and make it relevant.

The D'var Torah is broken up into four parts.

First Part: This contains an explanation, in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's words, of the Torah Portion. (1-1½ pages)

Second Part: Here the Bar/Bat Mitzvah explains what the Torah Portion means to him/her. How does this portion relate to his/her life? (1-1½ pages)

Third Part: This optional part contains information about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project. This may include things as: What was done; where it was done; what did you learn; how has this affected your life. “For my Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project, I ...”

Fourth Part: In this section, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah thanks those who have helped make it possible for him/her to accomplish Bar/Bat Mitzvah goals. Those thanked normally include the Rabbi, Cantor, tutor, family members, and/or others.

Besides practicing the D'var Torah at home, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be working on his/her presentation with the tutor and Rabbi.

THE PARENTS' SPEECHES

While this speech is optional, it's a wonderful opportunity to share with your child, in the presence of those in attendance, how very proud you are of her/him.

Parents often share examples of their pride in their child's values, hard work, ethics, and/or accomplishments. Some parents have even included how their child is like those after whom he/she is named or they may read a special poem to their son or daughter.

You also have choices as to who gives a speech. Both the mother and father, just one or the other, or one speech – with both parents alternating reading. (Note: No matter who speaks, both parents may stand on the bimah with their child.) **Keep the total speech time to a maximum of 4 minutes. (Note: If both mother and father are giving a speech, the total time is still 4 minutes.)** There is a book available from the religious school library of sample speeches called Bar and Bat Mitzvah Basics by Cantor Helen Heneman.

THE MITZVAH PROJECT

Repairing the world, Tikkun Olam, is a central mitzvah of Judaism. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate is expected to better the world through their Bar/Bat Mitzvah project. The type of project should be discussed among the parents and the soon-to-be Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

You should consider beginning this project 9 to 12 months in advance of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. With all of the activities in your busy life, give yourself plenty of time to enjoy the process and not feel rushed. *Please submit Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project ideas to the Director of Congregational Learning for approval.*

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project will be presented at our annual Mitzvah Mall, which is usually held on a Sunday morning in December or January. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student is required to prepare a backboard detailing the project they have completed or are working on. The Religious School students and congregants will tour the Mall, watch the presentations and ask questions about the projects. They may choose to donate some money to the cause. All collected funds will be disbursed to the relevant organization together with a letter explaining where they came from and the concept of the Mitzvah Project.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Getting started on your project may take a little brainstorming. The best way to start is to think about some of the following things and maybe even start making a little list to help you along in the process:

What are my strengths?

Examples:

If you are good at reading, perhaps you would like to tutor someone who needs some help. Or maybe you would be interested in reading to someone – in the neighborhood, at a school, in a convalescent home.

If baseball is your love, consider helping out in teaching others how to play the game or improve in a particular area. Maybe there is team in your area for children who are disabled.

If you are a whiz at typing/computer, perhaps you could do some special typing or computer work for an individual or agency that could use your special talents. Consider typing job resumes and cover letters for people you know that are out of work and can't type.

Maybe you have a love for animals. Share that love by volunteering with an appropriate organization.

Continued on next page

Make a note of the hobbies that you enjoy – they might transfer over to a project idea:

Examples: Gardening – painting – reading – woodwork – bike riding – cooking – shopping

Perhaps you have a neighbor who has difficulty getting around – someone who is disabled or getting up in years that you could help with grocery shopping or chores around the house.

What are some of the areas that you would like to learn more about?

Examples: Homelessness, Literacy, Food Banking, Child Care, Visiting the Sick

Doing a volunteer community service project can be an opportunity to learn about something new!

NEXT STEP: Look over your lists and focus on an area that most appeals to you. What would you like to do, try or learn more about?

How do I find out where to go and volunteer?

There are many sources that can point you in the direction of finalizing the who, what, and where of your project.

Examples:

- Parents, teachers, Director of Congregational Learning, community leaders or other adults
- Online
- Tikkun Olam Committee of University Synagogue
- Heritage Pointe

What have other Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates done in the past?

Below are *examples* of just a *few* of the projects or places at which volunteering has been done in the past:

- Heritage Pointe Senior Citizens Residence
- Orange Coast Interfaith Shelter
- Senior Center of the Merage JCC
- Collect items to be shared within the community, such as clothing, books, socks, toiletries, etc. These items, listed below, as well as others, can be collected and handed out at places such as homeless shelters, preschools and convalescent homes. Contact an agency to make arrangements and get approval for your project before you start your collections.
- Blogs about personal journey's you've gone through
- Collecting blankets and towels for the animal shelter
- Arranging for a pet adoption day
- Beach clean-up
- Collecting money for cancer or other disease research

Continued on next page

Some additional considerations:

Mitzvah Projects do not have to raise funds for an organization. The litmus test is “will the world be somewhat of a better place after the project than it was before?”

If you are working with animals, you may have to get an updated tetanus shot or show proof that you have had one.

Some agencies will welcome your child’s participation in their program, but will request or need to hear that a parent will be on the agency’s property while your child is volunteering.

There are almost always Mitzvah Projects on display in the office of the Director of Congregational Learning and the Director is available to assist you with deciding on and participating in a project that is meaningful to you.

FRIDAY NIGHT ONEG SHABBAT

You have the honor of hosting the Oneg Shabbat the night before your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **The cost for the Oneg is included in your Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee.** The Oneg Coordinator will order the food for the Shabbat service for you.

Friday Night Dinner

- If there is a Shabbat dinner scheduled for the Friday evening before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you may want to consider inviting your guests to attend. The cost of the dinner will be advertised a month or so in advance or you can ask the office. Please call the office no later than the Tuesday prior to the Friday night to make reservations and pay for your guests.
- The Social Hall or Library is sometimes available for a Friday night dinner before Shabbat services for an additional rental fee. Please see the list of our preferred caterers and reserve the room as soon as possible to ensure availability.

SATURDAY KIDDUSH

We will provide for a small, 1-hour Kiddush immediately following the service that will be set up **in the foyer. The cost of the Kiddush is included in your Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee. All who attend the service are invited to the Kiddush.**

Our Facility Manager provides the following:

- Two long tables with linens
- Cups, napkins, paper plates
- Wine/Juice, punch bowl
- Baked goods
- Set up and clean up

LUNCHEON OR DINNER IN THE SOCIAL HALL

As of October, 2019, the rental fees **for a meal in the social hall** after a Bar/Bat Mitzvah are as follows:

- **Up to 2 hours: \$300**
- **2 to 6 hours: \$600**

The synagogue will provide the following, which is included in the rental fees above:

- Tables and chairs
- Set up and take down

Table cloths may be rented from an outside source, or you may use the synagogue's table cloths, if available. Prior arrangements must be made with our Facility Manager and a charge for laundering will be incurred.

Please contact our office to reserve the Social Hall at least a year in advance.

We have selected the following local catering companies as our preferred caterers, who have met insurance, food handling and safety licensing requirements:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| ▪ <u>Blueberry Hill Catering</u> | - (562) 981-8300 |
| ▪ <u>Parties By Panache</u> | - (714) 572-2190 |
| ▪ <u>Simcha Catering</u> | - (949) 233-3996 |

We encourage you to contact these companies to obtain competitive quotes and select the company that best meets your needs.

In addition to the companies listed above, if you have a catering company that is not included on this list that you would like to use or if you wish to bring in food from an alternative source, you *must* submit your preferred vendor to University Synagogue's Catering Coordinator for approval three months in advance.

We have a process to verify proper licenses and insurance as well as to communicate the rules and other requirements of our synagogue facility (such as our food policy).

PHOTOGRAPHY

PICTURES — Formal pictures may be taken before services until 9:30 a.m. and after the conclusion of the service at noon. (For other times, call the office.)

We have had problems with photographers and videographers in the past, which have created an uncomfortable situation for everyone involved. Due to these problems, we have had to establish very specific rules that must be followed. Please, let's avoid future problems by outlining the "rules" with your photographer and/or videographer, asking for his/her assurance that these guidelines will be followed.

- A tripod can be set-up in the "circle of life" walkway behind the wall of the last row of seats in the sanctuary.
- The tripod must be set up without blocking entry or exit into the sanctuary.
- Please remind your photographer to bring a telephoto lens and *not to use a flash*.

VIDEO — The video camera must sit on a tripod in the back of the synagogue, as well. No lights may be used on the video equipment.

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE: Families should not, under any circumstances, remove the cover from the Torah to take pictures before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. However, pictures may be taken at that time while holding the Torah with the cover on. After the service, you may have pictures taken with the cover off. Our Facility Manager must be present.

DECORATING THE BIMAH

Flowers are by no means mandatory either Friday night or Saturday morning. You can choose to do nothing, use potted plants, make decorations, or use flowers. If you are choosing one of these alternatives (or have come up with a creative one of your own), the following information may prove helpful:

1. Arrangements must be no taller than 3' which is the height of the lectern.
2. Arrangements may be brought to Friday night services as early as 6:00 p.m. and as late as a half hour before services begin and can be left in the synagogue overnight.
3. After your Bar/Bat Mitzvah is over, you can either take them to your celebration or leave them.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Do I need to give the Rabbi or Cantor a gift?

It is not necessary, but if you would like to do something, an appropriate gift would be a donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund and the Cantor's Discretionary Fund.

2. Should I send an invitation to the President of the synagogue, Director of Congregational Learning, Rabbi or Cantor?

An invitation need not be sent to the professional staff or president.

3. Do I have to give a "parent's" speech?

We encourage it, but it's not mandatory.

4. Do I have to buy a tallit and kippah for my son/daughter?

No. Your child needs to have a tallit and kippah and we encourage you to give it to him/her as a lifelong gift. However, you can make it, purchase it, borrow it, hand one down from someone special, etc.

5. Do all children start their tutoring 6 months in advance?

Six months is a good rule of thumb, but some children need additional help in Hebrew or may want to chant additional aliyot and may need 8-10 months of tutoring. The best way to determine the amount of tutoring that your child needs is to discuss it with the Cantor. Additional tutoring is available for an additional fee.

6. Must we invite everyone in our child's Hebrew school class to the service and reception?

Yes. We wish to encourage inclusiveness and friendship among our students. We want our students to develop social relationships with each other and, most importantly, we do not want any child to be left out or feel excluded. In this way, we are teaching important lessons of being part of a Jewish community.

7. Can my non-Jewish relatives and friends participate in the service?

Yes. Anyone, regardless of age or religion, can be an English reader. In order to participate in a traditional honor, a non-Jewish person needs to have a Jewish partner from whom he/she derives his/her "Jewishness." However, you may want to reserve activities that directly involve the Torah for your Jewish friends and relatives.

8. Is there a minimum age requirement for those who participate in the service?

Yes. Again, anyone can be an English reader, regardless of his/her age. However, children under 13 years of age must be accompanied by someone older in order to participate in a traditional honor.

UNIVERSITY SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY RESOURCES

For your information and enjoyment, the following books are available in our Children's Library –

NON-FICTION:

Bat Mitzvah – A Jewish Girl's Coming of Age by Barbara Diamond Goldin
Bar Mitzvah – A Jewish Boy's Coming of Age by Eric A. Kimmel
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Basics edited by Cantor Helen Leneman
All That You Want to Know About the Bar/Bat Mitzvah by Stephen Rittner
Sofer: The Story of a Torah Scroll by Eric Ray

FICTION FOR PRE-TEENS:

Pink Slippers. Bat Mitzvah Blues by Ferida Wolff
Bar Mitzvah Lessons by Dr. Martin Elsan
Good If It Goes by Gary Provost
Emma Ansky-Levine and her Mitzvah Machine by Lawrence Bush
You Are SO Not Invited To My Bat Mitzvah by Fiona Rosenbloom

PICTURE BOOKS FOR YOUNGER SIBLINGS:

My Brother's Bar Mitzvah by Janet Gallant
My Bar Mitzvah by Richard Rosenblum
The Narrowest Bar Mitzvah by Steven Schnur

RESOURCE GUIDES FOR MITZVAH PROJECTS:

Make A Difference 101 by Sande Hart
The Kid's Guide to Service Projects by Barbara A. Lewis
The Kid's Guide to Social Action by Barbara A. Lewis
A Kid's Guide to How to Save the Animals by Billy Goodman

RESOURCE FOR PRAYERBOOK SUPPLEMENT:

Great Jewish Quotations by Alfred J. Kolatch

GLOSSARY

A list of terms that may be helpful to you are found on these pages. You may wish to include some or all of these in your Bar/Bat Mitzvah booklet. Use the information to help explain the various parts of the service, specific items found in the sanctuary, symbols or something of significance in Judaism. Feel free to select any or all as they appear or rewrite them in a way that is meaningful to you.

Aliyah – During the course of the service, certain adults will be honored by being called to the Torah for an Aliyah, which is the blessing before and after the chanting of each Torah portion.

Ark – The Ark is a type of closet or case. It is located at the front of the room and contains the Torah. The original Ark was built to hold the stone tablets, which, according to tradition, Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai. Each time the Ark is opened, the congregation rises in respect for the Torah scroll that is housed within.

Bar Mitzvah – Bar Mitzvah literally means “son of the commandment.” A boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah at 13. This coming of age is rooted in antiquity and provides continuity with the past and the future. Each Shabbat throughout the Jewish world, the same section of the Torah, the Five Books of Moses, is being read by the Jewish community. (Plural, B’nai Mitzvah)

Bat Mitzvah – Bat Mitzvah means “daughter of the commandment.” While the Bar Mitzvah dates back to the 13th Century, the Bat Mitzvah ceremony was not introduced until 1922. (Plural, B’not Mitzvah)

The first girl to have had a Bat Mitzvah was Dr. Judith Kaplan Eisenstein, daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism. Both Bar and Bat Mitzvah signify the arrival of the age when, presumably, adult reason and responsibility commence.

Bimah – The bimah is the stage from which the services are conducted. To one side of the Bimah is a chair draped with a Tallit. This is a chair for the prophet Elijah. It reminds us of those who have been denied freedom and symbolically includes them in our service.

Eternal Light/Ner Tamid – The Eternal Light or Ner Tamid recalls the fire kept perpetually burning on the altar of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. Today, it reminds us of the eternity of the Jewish people and the continuous presence of the Divine.

Haftarah – The Haftarah is a selection from the writings of the prophets. It follows the reading of the Torah. It is thematically linked to the Torah portion.

Kippah or Yarmulke – This is the skullcap or head covering worn as a sign of modesty and reverence.

Continued on next page

GLOSSARY – (Cont'd.)

Reconstructionist Judaism – As Rabbi Arnold Rachlis has told us: “As Reconstructionists, we do not have a single definition of a good Jew. For some, the path is study, for others, worship. Still others find their way through social action, Israel, tzedakah, politics or the arts. Some people are especially fortunate to be able to find meaning in all of these manifestations of Jewish civilization.

As Reconstructionists, we define a “good Jew” as someone who identifies with the Jewish past, contributes to the Jewish present and ensures the Jewish future. How one does it is often personal, that one does it is a crucial necessity for our lives. We cannot be good Jews just for the sake of our ancestors or for the good of our children and grandchildren only. Rather, we must first be Jews for ourselves.

To be a Jew means to know, learn, teach, observe, criticize, improve, reject and embrace. Much of our struggle will be simultaneous – embracing one value and rejecting another. As Reconstructionists, we deem all paths potentially worthy, if they are followed with sincerity, conviction and commitment, for we are dedicated to Jewish empowerment and autonomy.”

Siddur – A Siddur is a prayerbook. The word means “order” of the service. Besides prayers, our Siddur contains readings and poetry. Reading right to left, it is written in Hebrew that links Jews around the world. Transliterations of Hebrew pronunciations are included as well as modern, gender free English translations. In Jewish tradition, we respect books and learning, therefore this book should not be placed on the floor.

Tallit – This is a fringed prayer shawl worn in accordance with Biblical law. The fringes (Tzitzit) and knots of the Tallit represent the 613 mitzvot (commandments) of the Bible. The four corners of the tallit symbolize the four corners of the earth. This serves to remind us that, regardless of which direction we take, we are always in the presence of the holy.

Torah – This is the scroll in which is written the Five Books of Moses – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books, which have been faithfully hand copied through generations for over 2500 years, tell the early history of the Jewish people and set forth the precepts of Jewish life. In its broadest sense, the Torah teaches us the everlasting values of the Jewish people. Each Shabbat (Sabbath), a consecutive portion of the Torah is read. It takes a full year to complete the reading of all five books.

THE SERVICE

The service consists of traditional prayers such as prayers for fulfillment, thanksgiving, peace, and the unity of all humanity.

Barchu – This is the call to community prayer. The passage was pronounced in the Temple of Solomon to summon the faithful to worship.

Shema and its blessings – The Shema is one of the oldest and most important Hebrew prayers. It is recited daily and fulfills the minimum requirement for the study of Torah. The Shema is Israel's affirmation of faith, proclaiming the oneness of God and all humanity.

Amidah – The Amidah is the central part of each Jewish service. It is recited while standing and comprises seven different prayers for fulfillment, meaning in life, holiness, restoration of Zion, the Sabbath, thanksgiving, and peace.

Torah Procession – After the Torah is removed from the Ark, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads a procession of the family and others wishing to join around the sanctuary.

Torah Service – This is the time the Torah is read. The purpose of the Torah reading is to fulfill the Biblical command to study the lessons of Torah and to engage us in study because in Judaism, study itself is a form of worship.

Haftarah – This is the time the Haftarah, a selection from the prophets, is read.

Mourners Kaddish – Towards the end of the service, the congregation will rise to recite this special prayer that affirms life and hope in the face of death and adversity. The names of those recently departed and the names of those whose anniversaries of death (yahrzeiten) occurred during the week will be read aloud.

Kiddush – This is the ceremony of sanctification, which occurs after all Sabbath worship services. We express gratitude for the gift of wine (fruit of the vine) and bread.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

**(Please make a copy for yourself and then return to the Director of Congregational Learning
12 months in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah)**

Child's name: _____

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date: _____

Torah Portion: _____

Tutor: _____

Current Grade in Hebrew School: _____

Years in Hebrew School: _____

If you are not enrolled in Religious School, your alternative program must be approved by the Director of Congregational Learning.

Description of Alternative Program:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project:

The student agrees to attend 12 services at University Synagogue during the year before his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Signature of Educational Director: _____

BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE PROJECT LOG

Please make a copy for yourself and return the form to the Director of Congregational Learning
6 Months in advance of Bar/Bat Mitzvah – for project approval
1 Month before Bar/Bat Mitzvah – with service project completion information

Name of Candidate: _____

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____

Date this form is being submitted for approval: _____

Project you will be doing:
(Please describe the project and include names, addresses and telephone numbers, as applicable)

[illegible]

Parent's Signature: _____

**Approval by the Director
of Congregational Learning:** _____

Date Approved: _____

Date Returned to Bar/Bat Mitzvah Candidate: _____

Candidate Name:

[illegible]

Total Number of Hours:

BAR/BAT MITZVAH GENERAL INFORMATION AND HEBREW NAME FORM

(Please make a copy for yourself and return this form at your first meeting with the Rabbi)

Name of Candidate _____

Tutor _____

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date (include year) _____

Portion (Name, Chapters and Verses) _____

You may write the Hebrew names (*) in Hebrew or in transliteration:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate's full name _____

Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate's Hebrew name _____

Father's English name _____

Father's Hebrew name _____

Mother's English name _____

Mother's Hebrew name _____

Are both parents Jewish? _____ If not, which one is? _____

* If you or your child do not have Hebrew names and would like them, please call Rabbi Rachlis as soon as possible.

LIST OF PRAYERS FOR THE SATURDAY MORNING SHABBAT SERVICE

(Please make a copy for yourself and return this form to the Cantor at your rehearsal)

Check the following prayers that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will lead:

| Alone | With Cantor | |
|--------------|--------------------|---|
| _____ | | Tallit Prayer (Page 143) |
| _____ | _____ | Barchu (chanted) with Yotzer (spoken) (Page 247) |
| _____ | _____ | Shema with V'ahavta (Page 277) |
| _____ | _____ | Mi Hamocha (Page 291) |
| _____ | _____ | Avot Ve'imot/Ancestors (Page 295) |
| _____ | _____ | Gevurot/Divine Power (Page 299) |
| _____ | | Blessing before/after the Torah portion (Page 399) |
| _____ | | Blessing before/after reading the Haftarah (Page 409) |
| _____ | | Blessing of Wine and Challah (Page 465) |
| _____ | _____ | Other |

The page numbers refer to pages in Kol Haneshamah, The Reconstructionist Prayerbook

Name of Bar/Bat Mitzvah Candidate _____

SERVICE PARTICIPANTS FORM

(Please make a copy for yourself and return this form to the Rabbi at the rehearsal)

Ushers (2): _____

Tallit Presentation (Circle one): No Yes Names: _____

Ark Attendants (Minimum of 2 each) *

* Barchu: _____

* Beginning of Torah Service: _____

* Returning Torah to Ark: _____

* Aleynu: _____

Gabaim (Two): _____

Torah Transmission Ceremony (Circle one): No Yes Names: _____

Aliyot:

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| (English name) | (Hebrew name & parents' Hebrew names) |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|

| (English name) | (Hebrew name & parents' Hebrew names) |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| | |

[illegible]

Torah Tier and Lifter: _____

Parents' Speech (Circle one): No Yes Names: _____

Names of family members to be remembered during Mourner's Kaddish:

[illegible]

| | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| (Name) | (Relationship to Bar/Bat Mitzvah) |
|--------|-----------------------------------|

[illegible]

Our University Synagogue Simcha Tree of Life

Judaism is a tradition of celebration. We have an incredible number of holidays when the Torah tells us to “rejoice.” We celebrate lifecycle events – births, namings, birthdays, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, graduations, weddings and anniversaries - with “mazel tov” and singing “siman tov u’mazel tov.”

We have a Tree of Life, a Simcha Tree, situated in our Social Hall, to remind us of all the joys of our lives. We invite you to add your loved ones’ simchas to our Tree and share your nachas with our congregation or just add your loved ones’ names out of love. A leaf on our Tree of Life honors your friends and family and reminds everyone that life’s joys are not to be taken for granted. Life is short, so we need to celebrate, rejoice and feel deep gratitude for all of the blessings of our lives. L’chaim/To Life!

Several times a year, a dedication of all new leaves takes place.

DONATING LEAVES

1. \$360 for a single leaf
2. \$720 for a double leaf (larger)
3. Please complete this form and return it to the Synagogue office. Make checks payable to University Synagogue.

STYLE AND WORDING

1. Recommended maximum of 70 letters per leaf
2. Times Roman print style (same as this form)
3. For one person: In honor of: (father, mother, sister, child, friend, etc.) John Smith, (on his/her/their _____) from (a) the Cohen Family or (b) Bob and Hilda Cohen.
4. For two people: In honor of our parents, children, grandchildren, John and Judy Smith (on their _____) (a) the Cohen family or (b) Bob and Hilda Cohen.

Please complete and return to University Synagogue

Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

I will purchase a single leaf @ \$360 per leaf: \$ _____
I will purchase a double leaf (larger) @ \$720 per leaf: \$ _____

Wording for first leaf (please print clearly): _____

Wording for second leaf (please print clearly): _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____
Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard - Account # _____
Exp. Date: _____ Signature: _____

If you have any questions, please call the synagogue office at (949) 553-3535.

University Synagogue Tree of Remembrance

In our tradition, we are taught that love and memory are stronger than death. Judaism gives us the Kaddish prayer, Yizkor memorial services and an annual Yahrzeit to keep us connected to our loved ones. Our **Tree of Remembrance** reminds us as well, and we have the comfort of seeing our loved ones' names, as we honor their memories publicly in our congregation.

Through us, our loved ones still live. Through supporting our **Tree of Remembrance**, their values and vision, as well as our own, will live on into the future.

Several times a year, a dedication of all new leaves takes place.

DONATING LEAVES

1. \$360 for a single leaf
2. \$720 for a double leaf
3. Please complete this form and return it to the Synagogue office. Make check payable to University Synagogue.

STYLE AND WORDING

1. Recommended maximum of 70 letters per leaf
2. Times Roman print style (same as this form)
3. For one person: In memory of my/our beloved (father, mother, sister, child, friend, etc.) John Smith, from (a) the Cohen Family or (b) Bob and Hilda Cohen.
4. For two people: In memory of our parents, children, grandchildren, John and Judy Smith (on their _____) (a) the Cohen family or (b) Bob and Hilda Cohen.

Please complete and return to University Synagogue

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

I will purchase a single leaf @ \$360 per leaf: \$ _____

I will purchase a double leaf @ \$720 per leaf: \$ _____

Wording for first leaf (please print clearly): _____

Wording for second leaf (please print clearly): _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard - Account # _____

Exp. Date: _____ Signature: _____

If you have any questions, please call the synagogue office at (949) 553-3535.

UNIVERSITY SYNAGOGUE TZEDAKAH OPPORTUNITIES

Please send this form to University Synagogue,
3400 Michelson Dr., Irvine, CA 92612
or you can make a donation online at <http://universitysynagogue.org/product/donate-to-a-fund/>

Please be generous – at the time of a simcha or a sad occasion, when honoring someone in life or memory. These tax-deductible funds help us do the crucial work of sustaining and improving Jewish and general life. If you wish to endow a fund in someone's honor or memory or for a special purpose, please call the President of University Synagogue.

Date: _____

Donor Name: _____ Phone: _____

Donor Address (non-member only): _____

Send card to: _____

Address (non-member only): _____

Donation Amount: \$ _____

Please print name and relationship:

- ☐ In honor of: _____
- ☐ In memory of: _____
- ☐ Mazel Tov: _____
- ☐ Condolences on the death of: _____
- ☐ Refua Shelema/Get well wishes to: _____
- ☐ To commemorate: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Please indicate your choice of Tzedakah Fund:

- ☐ **General Fund** – for all the multifaceted activities of our active congregation
 - ☐ **Rabbi Rachlis' Discretionary Fund** – a way to assist charities that the Rabbi supports, often dealing with issues of justice, peace, Jewish education and hunger. Many members give to this Fund at the time of a wedding, funeral, unveiling, naming, Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **(Please make checks payable to Rabbi Rachlis' Discretionary Fund - RRDF)**
 - ☐ **Cantor Braier's Discretionary Fund** – for concerts and other musical enrichment programs at University Synagogue for adults and children. **(Please make checks payable to Cantor Braier's Discretionary Fund - CBDF)**
 - ☐ **Blaze Bernstein Memorial Madrich Fund** – to support our High School program
 - ☐ **Building Fund** – for all of the important needs of our building
 - ☐ **Choir Fund** – to support musical activities at services and for special programs
 - ☐ **Lutzky Fund for the Education of Jewish Children***
 - ☐ **Marianne Yesk Memorial Fund***
 - ☐ **Mazon** – Our participation in a national effort to feed the hungry. **(Please make checks payable to Mazon)**
 - ☐ **Ozan Family Library Fund*** - established by the Beral, Dienstag and Witkin families
 - ☐ **Pre-School Fund**
 - ☐ **Religious School Fund**
 - ☐ **Tikkun Olam Fund*** – founded by the Grossman/Swaiman Family to promote diversity and social action in our society
 - ☐ **Women's Connection Fund**
 - ☐ **US Cares Fund** – to offer financial support to congregants in need
- *Funds so designated are in honor of the designee (e.g. Marianne Yesk). Contributions are put in the General Fund.**
- ☐ I would like to purchase _____ packet(s) of tribute cards at \$50 per packet of 5 cards
 - ☐ A check is enclosed/attached ☐ Charge my cc on file

Credit Card (*Visa or MasterCard Only*): Card Number: _____ Exp.: _____