

Honors Worksheet for B'nai Mitzvah Services

Please fill out and bring this sheet to your family meetings with the Rabbi

Who can have an honor? As an inclusive community, Or Shalom opens participation to all. Nonetheless, it would be wise to consider questions of comfort and authenticity when assigning roles. There are plenty of possibilities for those unfamiliar with Jewish services.

Presenting the Tallit The student will need to have a tallit (Jewish ritual prayer shawl). This can be bought, made or borrowed from a family member, though best if the student can keep it after the service. Who will present the tallit?

Opening and Closing the Ark This is a non speaking role and happens 2 times. Each time can be from 2-4 people.

Passing the Torah One centerpiece B'nai Mitzvah ritual is passing the scroll from generation to generation, culminating with the BM student. **Generally this means grandparents, parents, older siblings.** Please list the names and relationship to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of the **people who will be physically present to pass the scroll.** **For people with disabilities, we can modify the ritual so that no one needs to climb stairs or take the full weight of the scroll.**

We often name and include any **grandparents who have passed away, or those who are at a distance**. If you would like to do so, please list them here and indicate whether they are at a distance or have passed on.

Aliyot: The Torah will be chanted from the scroll by the student or other service leaders. **In addition, other people have an honor to say the blessings before and after that chanting. The family can choose who is called up to lead the blessing.** One “aliyah” consists of the blessings as well as the chanting.

For the blessing, one or more people can come up at a time. The second aliyah is generally for parents, and the third for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah alone. **Only one person needs to say the blessing**, others can stand in affirmation if that is more comfortable and appropriate.

At least one person in each group who hold this honor must be prepared to sing in Hebrew. Parents, please allow time to practice if you need it. Rabbi Katie is happy to coach you. Your child can do so as well. The prayer is on page 399 of the red prayer books. Here is a [link to a video](#) with the Reconstructionist version of the prayer. **Do not leave this to the last minute please!**

Note -- You and your family members may use the traditional version which may be more familiar if you prefer.

Aliyah #1

Aliyah #2: (often the parents)

Aliyah #3: Bar/Bat Mitzvah—full name and Hebrew name

Prayer for the Country – This is a reading in English. Rabbi Katie or the BM student can be the reader, or this can be an honor. There are 2 versions of a prayer for the country in the prayer book that your family can choose from. One is on pg 418, and one is the English poem below the line on page 419. We are also open to other texts if you have one in mind.

Prayer choice: _____

Reader: _____

Lifting the Torah - This is a non speaking role for one person. This must be a person who is strong enough to hold the scroll aloft and has experience doing this honor. If you do not have someone like this, we can assign to someone in the congregation or teach someone ahead of time.

Dressing the Torah - This is a non speaking role. 1-2 people can participate. No experience needed, but it is best if they can come early to get instructions before the service.

Holding the Tallit as a canopy for the priestly blessing:

Family holds up the tallit over the head of the student as they receive a blessing. This can be up to 4 people and is often parents and siblings. Please list here.

Names to add to the Healing List: If you would like any names to be added to our list that will be read before the healing prayer please list them.

Names to add to the Kaddish list: If you would like Rabbi Katie to mention any recent losses (within a year) or yartzheits (the anniversary of a loss) that fall near the ceremony date please list them.

Additional Readings/Songs:

In addition, you may choose up to 2 more readings or songs in English to use throughout the service. Keep in mind that every addition lengthens the service.

You can pick readings from the prayer book. There is a section at the back of the prayer book organized by theme as well as readings throughout the book. Some favorites appear on the following pages: 61, 126, 127, 232,233,414, 422, 772.

You can also choose readings that do not appear in the prayer book, subject to the Rabbi's approval ahead of time.

You may also pick a song in English (or another language) to be led as an honor or by one of your guests or Alison. Examples would be, This Little Light of Mine, Lean on Me, Free to be You and Me, Circle Game, You've Got a Friend.

Reading/Song #1 _____

Reader/musician #1-- _____

Reading/Song #2 -- _____

Reader/musician #2 -- _____

Parent and Sibling Blessings: Towards the end of the service, parents (and possibly siblings) offer a **brief** blessing for the BM student. Usually each parent speaks, though sometimes one will speak for both. You decide (with the student) if siblings will speak as well.

These blessings are not "this is your life". They are not teachings about the meaning of Bnai Mitzvah. They are not a roast. Please try to avoid embarrassing the student (though sometimes just HAVING parents AT ALL is SO embarrassing, we know). So try not to make it worse with stories about breast feeding or potty training.

You might want to talk about the qualities you see in your child -- a short vignette that shows who they are. You might want to offer some hopes and wishes for their future. Definitely say some version of "I love you and I'm proud of you." **Please write it out ahead of time.**

Length – 1 page double spaced for each speaker max.