



B'nei Mitzvah Handbook

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Welcome to the B'nei Mitzvah Program

We are delighted you have chosen to celebrate your child becoming a bar/bat/b'nei mitzvah¹ with us here at Congregation Beth Israel. This booklet has been written to provide you with streamlined, easily accessible, and up to date information regarding this significant life cycle event in your child's Jewish journey.

It is our hope that every family who participates in our program feels confident about the process. If you have any questions or concerns, we have not addressed in the following pages please contact us.

A Brief History

The phrases "bar mitzvah", "bat mitzvah", and "b'nei mitzvah" are **titles** (such as Doctor or Rabbi) bestowed upon any Jew on their 13th birthday. The meaning of the title is "One Who Is Subject to the Commandments". Bar, bat and b'nei mitzvah does not refer to a service or other event. In other words, turning 13 in Judaism is similar to turning 18 in the American legal system. It is the time one becomes responsible for all the sacred duties and privileges of Jewish life. Thus, a person does not "get bar mitzvahed" or "have a bar mitzvah." Rather, a person **becomes** a bat, bar, or b'nei mitzvah, similar to "she became a doctor." or "he became a Hall of Famer" or "they became a lawyer".

Since the title belongs to your children for the rest of their lives, our hope is they will return often to participate in the prayer life of our community and to help lead our services. At Congregation Beth Israel, we empower recent students to contribute to the community in several ways; by inviting them to read/chant Torah on the anniversary of their Torah portion, during the summertime, and during the High Holy Day Season.

Program Philosophy

Here at Congregation Beth Israel, we look forward to fostering young Jewish adults who feel confident in their studies, at home in their synagogue, and have pride in their achievements. We see all our students as the individuals they are and do our very best to accommodate their unique learning styles.

Our staff intensive program provides the opportunity for our students to form strong, lasting, personal relationships with their teachers and members of the Clergy Team. These personal connections reinforce our students desire to continue their Jewish education with us. This continuation, including Confirmation and Post-Confirmation, is an expectation of our b'nei mitzvah program.

¹ To be used when your child's pronouns are they.

Pronouns

As we continue to meet our students' individual needs, we are understanding and accepting that your children's pronouns may change. While Hebrew is a very gendered language, we are keeping up to date with adaptations being made within the Reform Movement. As we continue the work of inclusivity within our b'nei mitzvah program we ask that you keep us up to date as your child grows and develops their own sense of self.

Officiants

While your clergy team does their best to co-officiate all our families' celebrations there may be times when one team member may be absent. Should someone need to be away you will hear from them directly with as much notice as they are able to give.

Friday Night Participation

We expect our students to participate in leading our Friday evening service the weekend of their celebration OR a Friday evening in the weeks leading up to their celebration. Leading our community in prayer on Friday helps work out some of the nervousness and gives students a taste of being on the bimah with a full sanctuary. The clergy team looks forward to inviting your family (parents/guardians, student, and siblings) to light our shabbat candles as well as hold the tallit over the children in attendance at the service for the children's blessing.

Date Selection Process: Guidelines and Considerations

Date Selection

- Dates are chosen using an online survey tool. Parents will receive an email with the link to the survey. Parents are invited to take the survey two-three years prior to their child's eligibility. Parents will be asked to choose four possible dates and rank those dates in order of preference.
- In alignment with the Union for Reform Judaism (our governing body) all children celebrate being called to the Torah on or after their 13th birthday. The youngest a child may be is 6 weeks prior to turning 13. *Any dates selected outside of this window of time will not be considered a possibility.*
- We do not offer b'nei mitzvah dates on Thanksgiving weekend, during the month of July or during our High Holy Day season beginning with *Selichot* through *Simchat Torah*.
- More information regarding date selection is given during the early spring of 4th or 5th grade (depending on your child's birthdate).

Partners/Sharing

At Congregation Beth Israel we are fortunate to celebrate Shabbat morning on the first Shabbat of each month and whenever a life cycle event is scheduled, with a prayer service. When your family selects their date, they are sharing the morning with their greater temple community. Adding a classmate to the date does not in any way limit the participation of either student. It simply adds to the joy of the morning!

You may request someone to be your child's partner, or you may allow a partner to be assigned to you. If you have selected a partner, be sure that you and your partner family request the same dates, in the same order of preference, when taking the survey.

If another family becomes interested in a date *after* you have received the date assignment confirmation email, Sarah Avner will reach out to you to begin the conversation regarding sharing. No partners will be randomly assigned to any dates.

B'nei Mitzvah Fee

We are proud of the staff intensive, personalized approach we take with all our b'nei mitzvah students and their families. To support this program, there is a b'nei mitzvah fee of \$1200/student. This fee covers:

- 8-10 months of weekly tutoring with our b'nei mitzvah tutor
- teachers for our weekly b'nei mitzvah prayer class that your child will be invited to attend two months into their studies with our tutor
- materials (prayerbook, torah commentary booklet, and a yad)

A \$100 deposit towards this fee will be required at date selection. Dates will be fully confirmed on the temple calendar once the deposit is paid. Your family can then make arrangements to pay the remainder of the fee over the next two years leading up to your family's celebration. Of course, if you need any assistance with this fee please speak directly with Pam Hanna (phanna@bethisrael.org). *All communications regarding finances are confidential and no family is turned away from our program for financial reasons.*

Supporting your Child in Preparation

Here are some helpful things you can do to be supportive:

- **Regular participation** in our education programs on Sundays.
- **Attend Shabbat services as a family on a regular basis.** The more your child hears and sings along with the prayers, the easier it will be for them to prepare for the big day. We cannot emphasize enough how important this is to your child's success! Be sure to check the calendar on our website to see when we are meeting.
- **Practice with your child at home.** Even the best teacher cannot prepare a child well unless the student puts in time outside of their lessons at the Synagogue. Check your student's study folder for the weekly assignment. You don't need to be able read Hebrew to listen to your child practice.
- **Encourage your child along the way** letting her/him/them know their hard work has not gone unnoticed.
- **Stay on top of the timelines and schedules.**
- **Consider lightening your child's extracurricular activities,** at least for the six months prior to your child's celebration.
- **Be members in good standing of Congregation Beth Israel.** All Temple financial obligations must be current, or with appropriate arrangements made, at least three months prior to the service.

Timeline of Preparation Process

Grades 3 & 4 – Enroll in both Sunday School and Hebrew School. If Hebrew School is not a possibility, please work with Carly Cera to formulate an alternative. Depending on your child's birthdate, 4th grade families may be invited to attend a date selection meeting.

Grades 5 & 6 – Enroll in Sunday School and Hebrew School. If Hebrew School is not possible, please work with Carly Cera to formulate an alternative. Depending on your child's birthdate, 5th grade families may be invited to attend a date selection meeting.

Grades 7 through 10 – Enroll in Sunday School. It is an **expectation of our community** that your child register and maintain regular attendance in our Sunday Religious School program throughout the bar/bat/b'nei mitzvah process and through Confirmation in 10th Grade. We see the bar/bat/b'nei mitzvah ceremony as a significant marker in our student's life-long journey of Jewish experience and community, but not as the end point. We expect that all our students will continue with their involvement in our Religious School, so that they can continue to develop and nurture their Jewish identity and their connection to the synagogue community and Jewish tradition. We believe that incredible gifts await them as they continue to bring their developing questions, doubts, and insights to their rabbis and teachers here at CBI following their celebration in the synagogue. *If you have any questions about your family's ability to fulfill this expectation, please see Cantorial Soloist Sarah Avner.*

Eighteen Months Out: Service Attendance. All students are expected to attend Shabbat worship services 18 times (14 mornings and 4 evenings) during the months leading up to their celebration. Attending services enables students and families to connect more deeply with our community and provides familiarity with the expectations of the day. Both our Erev and Shabbat morning services meet on a weekly basis. On Friday evenings we gather at 6:30 p.m. and on Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. You can check the calendar on our [website](#) to see which mornings celebrate a young adult being called to the Torah.

All worship services attended at URJ summer camps and CYJ count as well as during our High Holy Day season. All services offered by us are available 24/7 on our [YouTube channel](#). While we hope that you will attend either in person when possible or as we are streaming live you may attend services on days/times that are convenient for your family. Please record the services your child attends on the sign-in sheet provided in your child's Google folder. If you have not received an email from Sarah Avner containing the link, please email her so she can set this up for you.

Eighteen Months Out: Mitzvah Hours. Rabbi Tarfon said, "You are not required to complete the work, but neither are you free to abstain from it." This quote expresses the Jewish value of working to help those who are in need. We expect b'nei mitzvah students to have completed at

least 18 hours of volunteer work before their celebration. We encourage students to choose “hands-on” projects involving meaningful and personal service. Please refer to the appendix for some ideas or reach out to Carly Cera for suggestions. Just like for Shabbat Service attendance, a sign-in sheet will be provided for you in your child’s Google folder.

Twelve Months Out: Hebrew Assessment. Approximately twelve months out, Sarah Avner will meet with students to assess their Hebrew and prayer skills. After the assessment, she will make a recommendation regarding the start date for prayer class and b’nei mitzvah tutoring. If necessary, she will suggest additional tutoring (at the family’s expense) to bring up the Hebrew reading skills to the necessary level for prayer class and b’nei mitzvah tutoring. A parent (s) must be present at this meeting as timelines and expectations will also be discussed.

Twelve to Eight Months Out: Individual Tutoring for Torah/Haftarah. Approximately eight to twelve months before the date of your celebration (depending on the results of the Hebrew assessment), all students will attend* individual, weekly, 30-minute study sessions with our tutor, Ellen Sable. The purpose of the tutoring is to learn the Torah and Haftarah portions and refine prayers. Ellen is a wonderful teacher who is experienced in teaching all styles of learning. After the Hebrew Assessment with Sarah Avner, she will introduce you to Ellen so you can schedule a mutually workable meeting time. **At least one parent is required to attend the first meeting with their child.** Study materials will be provided to the student at the first lesson. Tutoring with Ellen is included in the b’nei mitzvah fee. Lessons with Ellen **do not** follow the Religious School calendar and continue over the summer and through holiday breaks. **Please note that 24-hours’ notice is required for cancellation of lessons or change of lesson time with Ellen. If a cancellation or change is made less than 24 hours in advance, a \$36 fee will be assessed.** *For sudden illness or emergency, please contact Ellen via text, phone or email, as soon as you know your child will not be able to attend the session.* ***Either online over Zoom or in person or a combination of the two.**

Twelve to Eight Months Out: Prayer Class. Once your children begin their weekly meetings with Ellen, they will also begin to attend our prayer class, which meets on Sundays from 10:00-11:00 am. Prayer class is led by Jacob Jew, a gifted teacher who grew up in our community, and Ellen Sable, our talented b’nei mitzvah tutor. Prayer class is a wonderful way for our students to master the main prayers of the worship service. While the class participants are all at different stages in their studies, by working together they build community, as they support and encourage one another. Prayer class tuition is included in the b’nei mitzvah fee. Generally, prayer class follows the Religious School calendar with the exception that it may meet a few times throughout the summer. **Consistent attendance is expected.**

Seven to Four Months Out: Rabbi Meetings. Our Executive Assistant to the Clergy will reach out to your family to schedule 4 meetings with your children and one of the Rabbis in order to study their *Torah* portion and help prepare their *d’var Torah* (short speech that includes a lesson

from the *Torah* portion). **At least one parent is required to attend the first d'var Torah meeting with their child and the Rabbi.**

Four to Three Months Out: Event and Facility Information. You will receive an email from our Director of Community Engagement, Sarah Jew, inquiring about photography, flowers/bimah decorations, and security on the morning of your celebration. Please see the “Event and Facility Information” on page 15 for more details.

Three to Two Months Out: Invitations. It is our policy that you invite your child's **entire Religious School Grade** to the service. By supporting this policy, your family will ensure every child feels included and help us to create *kehila kedosha*, sacred community. Before sending out the invitations, please reach out to the Education Office (education@bethisrael.org) to get an updated class list.

Two Months to Four Weeks Out: Erev Shabbat Participation. Students will be invited to join their clergy team in leading their greater temple community in prayer at a Friday night service. Ellen Sable will communicate directly with each family when it is time for your student to participate in this way.

Six Weeks Out: Mentor Rehearsals. Students will be paired with an adult mentor from our community. They will meet 3-4 times in our prayer space for 1 hour, during the final four to six weeks leading up to the ceremony. Our mentors are caring volunteers who transition our students from learning their materials to training them to become the service leader for their Shabbat. With their mentor they will review the cues in their prayer books, rehearse the Hebrew and English readings, practice reading from the Torah as well as reciting their d'var Torah. Our mentors devote significant time to this process. Ellen Sable, with Sarah Avner's assistance, will match each student to a mentor and will send out a note of introduction about eight weeks out.

Four Weeks Out: Communication from Clergy Suite. Parents will receive an email communication from the Executive Assistant to the Clergy where the honors form will be shared as well as links to examples of the [parent's blessing](#). Please be sure to complete the [Honors Form](#) and email it back to our Assistant in a timely manner. Additionally, be sure to [email](#) our Associate Rabbi, Kelly Levy, a copy of your Parent's blessing for review no later than two weeks prior to your celebration.

One Week Out: Final Rehearsal. Within the final 10 days prior to the service itself, your family* will meet with Sarah Avner in our prayer space to go over the key points of the service. This rehearsal lasts 1 ½ to 2 hours giving students (and parents) the opportunity to ask any last-minute questions and work out any nervousness they may have. Parents do not actually say their parent blessing during this time but they do get to practice their parts including, but not limited to, lighting Shabbat candles, holding the tallit over their children, as well as their role during the

Torah service. Our Executive Assistant to the Clergy will be in touch to solidify the date and time of the rehearsal. **It is critical that the parent(s) and siblings attend the Final Rehearsal. We have adapted our Torah service to include more family participation and look forward to rehearsing this with all who will be participating. We will be in touch to confirm the date and time.*

The Big Day. Please instruct all family members, including those with honors, to arrive by 9:50 am on the morning of the ceremony to meet the clergy team member in the Sanctuary for a final practice. Have a great day! You have earned it!

Parent and Family Roles During the Torah Service

Each family is encouraged to invite extended family to participate in the service. Here is a list to help as you plan:

Honor	Who? How Many People	Jewish/Non-Jewish Participation
Ark Openers	1-2 – often, younger cousins or friends of the honoree	Either
Passing of the Torah	As many grandparents or meaningful adults as are available.	Either
Torah Carrier	1 – only when one family is celebrating on a given Shabbat	Jewish
Torah Dressers	2-3 – again, often younger cousins or friends of the honoree	Either
Torah Holder	1 – an adult who will be able to hold the heavy Torah for 15-20 minutes while seated.	Jewish
Aliyot – Torah Blessers	As many as you would like to include in the first two aliyot	Jewish family members will lead the blessing, non-Jewish family members are welcome to join them.

You can find the honors form on our [website](#).
Please keep reading to learn about these honors.

Opening/closing the Ark

At the beginning of the Torah Service, a member of the clergy team will invite parents/guardians up to the bimah as well as those individuals who have been asked to open/close the ark, grandparents who will be involved in the passing of the Torah, and the Torah carrier in the case of one family celebrating on a given Shabbat. Once everyone has arrived on the bimah, the Rabbi will nod to the volunteers to let them know the ark doors need to be opened. *Jewish and non-Jewish family members are welcome to participate in this honor.*

Removal of the Torah from the Ark/Passing of the Torah

Once the ark openers and loved ones involved in Torah passing are on the bimah and the ark doors have been opened, a member of the Clergy Team will remove from the ark one of the lighter Torahs. After the recitation of some liturgy, they will then pass the light Torah to the first person in line for the passing of the Torah. That person will then pass the Torah onto who is next to them, etc. ending with the parents OR older sibling (when applicable). The ark doors remain open throughout the passing of the Torah and the parent blessing. *Jewish and non-Jewish grandparents or important loved ones are encouraged to participate in passing the Torah.*

Parent's Blessing

Once the Torah has been passed to the parents/guardians they will say a blessing for their child. The blessing is said **before** they pass the Torah to their child(ren). Feel free to speak to your child(ren) from the heart in a way that is prayerful, reverent, and gives members of the congregation an opportunity to say "amen" at the end. This is not a time for a 'speech'. Your private celebration is your opportunity to speak at length about your child(ren)'s personal history and accomplishments. For the sake of time and the flow of the service we ask that this blessing be **brief**. If you would like to see some examples of Parent blessings, please go to our website [here](#).

Remember, please send a copy of your blessing to Rabbi Levy (klevy@bethisrael.org) no later than two weeks prior to the service.

Hakafah – Bringing the Torah to the Community – Torah Carrier

After the parent's blessing and the Torah is passed to the child(ren) we will pray three short prayers and then the child(ren) along with their parents will move through the greater temple community with the Torah. The Torah Carrier will be passed the other small Torah and will visit the opposite side of the room as the family (in the case of one family celebrating on a given Shabbat). The Torah to be read will be removed from the ark and placed on the podium. *The Torah Carrier should be a Jewish member of your family/extended family.*

Returning the Torah to the Ark/Closing the Ark Doors

Once both small Torahs are returned to the ark the doors will be closed and all participants, except for the b'nei mitzvah student will return to their seats in the congregation.

Torah Reading

Aliyot – blessings before and after the reading of the Torah

When we celebrate our b'nei mitzvah our students typically read 3 *aliyot* (3 sets of 3-4 verses of Torah/set). Families give the honor of an *Aliyah* (reciting the blessings before and after the Torah reading) to loved ones. On the honors form, specify your honorees for these *aliyot* and, when possible, include their Hebrew names. The first *Aliyah* is typically aunts, uncles, cousins and/or close family friends. The second ALWAYS includes parents, siblings if they have become b'nei mitzvah, and may extend to grandparents. The third is ALWAYS your child.

[The above paragraph is a guideline. Adjustments are made on a case-by-case basis. Some students prepare two *aliyot* while others prepare one.]

Occasionally, a fourth *Aliyah* is read. This might be a member of our greater temple community or a sibling or parent of the b'nei mitzvah who has learned the *maftir* (last few verses of the Torah portion) for the week. The clergy team looks forward to working out the details of honorees for your aliyot.

After the Torah Reading – Lifting and Redressing the Torah

At the end of the Torah reading the Torah will be lifted by a member of the clergy team. After being lifted ***it will be passed to a member of YOUR extended family*** to be held throughout the duration of the haftarah reading and the d'var Torah (speech) given by your child. Please also assign Torah dressing responsibilities to another loved one in your family. Younger siblings of the bar/bat/b'nei mitzvah, cousins, or the spouse of the person now holding the torah are possibilities. Just one or two people is enough. *The Torah holder should be a Jewish member of your family/extended family while the Torah dressers may be non-Jewish loved ones.*

Returning the Torah to the Ark

Once your child(ren) finishes their d'var Torah a member of the clergy team will take the Torah from the person who has been holding it. As the Torah is returned to the ark by the clergy team member, the honoree will return to their seat in the congregation.

Who can be asked to participate in these honors?

As listed above, Jewish and non-Jewish family members may be invited to participate. We do ask that non-Jewish family members join Jewish family members for the blessing before and after the reading of the Torah. Your non-Jewish family do not need to know the words of the blessing. You can explain that we are thanking God for giving us the Torah when we recite both the blessing before and after. We also invite you to keep in mind that there are times when non-

Jewish family members don't feel comfortable with honors during the service. Each family is different in this regard.

Honors Form

This is a document that will be emailed to you four weeks out from your celebration. You can also find a copy of it to be downloaded and completed from our [website](#).

Event and Facility Information

Bimah Decorations

Some options:

- Based on your child's mitzvah project, you may create baskets filled with donations highlighting what they have done. It is YOUR responsibility to get these baskets to their destination. *Please do not leave them at the temple.*
- Purchased cut, **unscented**, flowers from a florist to create 2 bouquets – one for each side of the bimah.
- No decorations are also completely acceptable.

Photography and Videography

Videography options:

- Hand-held camera devices (including cell phones) are **NOT** permitted at any time during the worship service itself.
- The worship service may be recorded with the video equipment we use to livestream the service. Please discuss this with Sarah Avner two weeks prior to your family's celebration.

Photography: You may schedule still photography at the following times:

- The Friday morning or afternoon prior to your family's celebration. Contact Sarah Jew (sjew@bethisrael.org) to schedule this.
- After the service.

Your clergy team is happy to be a part of your photos. If you would like members of your clergy team to be a part of your pictures, please contact Trish Ivey to help with scheduling. (clergyoffice@bethisrael.org).

Oneg/Kiddush

Oneg is a Hebrew word meaning joy so, "Oneg Shabbat", means joy of Shabbat. When we refer to our reception following an Erev (evening) Shabbat service we call it *Oneg Shabbat*, and when we refer to our reception following a Shabbat morning service, we call it *Kiddush*.

We are so excited to be returning to the tradition of sharing in a light nosh (snack) following our worship services here at Congregation Beth Israel. We would be honored if you or

members of your extended family, sometime grandparents, would sponsor both our Oneg and Kiddush on your weekend.

Option #1 – for a donation of \$150* per reception to our [Oneg Shabbat Fund](#) a CBI staff member will shop for and put together the oneg and kiddush on your family's weekend. This includes coffee, water, tea, challah, grape juice, assorted sweets (including gluten-free options), that will be nicely plated for you and all paper products.

Option #2 – you may choose from local caterers to have pre-made trays of food delivered to CBI ready to serve. Please be sure that any catered food is kosher style: No pork or shellfish. No meat and dairy served together. Deliveries must be made between 4-5:15 p.m. on Friday afternoon or between 8:30-10 a.m. on Saturday morning. Be sure to communicate directly with [Sarah Jew](#) delivery days and times so she can notify our staff.

If you choose option #2 CBI will provide challah, grape juice, coffee, water, tea, and paper products. A CBI staff person will also be sure the trays are put out for your guests and our greater temple community to enjoy.

**This donation includes enough food, beverages, and paper products for up to 200 guests. The donation will increase by \$50/additional 30 guests over 200.*

Questions? Be sure to email [Sarah Jew](#).

Security

At this time CBI is scheduling one person: either a Travis County Sheriff or plain-clothed security professional to be onsite every Friday evening and Saturday morning. If your family feels the need for more than one officer you must contact [Edward Cruz-Aedo](#) ASAP so he can make the arrangements for additional security. **At this time, he needs a minimum lead time of 6 weeks in order to hire an additional person.** The cost of this additional security will be at your expense.

Staff: We are here to help!

Administrative Staff

Sarah Jew, Director of Community Engagement: sjew@bethisrael.org; (512) 454-6806

- Your contact for reservation of spaces and general questions.

Pam Hanna, Director of Membership Services: phanna@bethisrael.org; (512) 454-6806 x203

- Your contact for Temple membership and finances. All b'nei mitzvah associated fees will be handled through her office.

Edward Cruz-Aedo, Facilities Director: ecruzaedo@bethisrael.org; (512) 454-6806

- Your contact if more than one security officer during your family's time at CBI is your preference. Nate needs a minimum of 6 weeks' notice to add another officer to either a Friday night or Shabbat morning service.

Clergy Suite

Trish Ivey, Executive Assistant to the Clergy: clergyoffice@bethisrael.org; (512) 454-6806 x214

- Handles the appointment scheduling for bar/bat/b'nei mitzvah d'var Torah writing sessions with members of the Clergy Team and gathers information about honors.

Rabbi Steven Folberg, Senior Rabbi: sfolberg@bethisrael.org

- Through group meetings with study partners and private meetings, Rabbi Folberg helps students' study and understand their Torah portions.

Rabbi Kelly Levy, Associate Rabbi: klevy@bethisrael.org

- Through group meetings with study partners and private meetings, Rabbi Levy helps students' study and understand their Torah portions. While looking at various commentaries, Rabbi Levy helps the students craft a d'var Torah based on what they have learned. Rabbi Levy also looks forward to previewing the Parent's Blessing two weeks prior to the service.

Sarah Avner, Cantorial Soloist: savner@bethisrael.org

- Beginning with date selection, to the twelve-month Hebrew check-in, to the dress rehearsal, to the Shabbat service, Sarah is involved every step of the way.

Ellen Sable, B'nei Mitzvah Tutor: ellenrose.sable@gmail.com; (512) 913-8245

- Ellen meets with all students on a one-on-one basis teaching the Torah and Haftarah portions as well as refining and reviewing the prayers. She is also one of the teachers of our b'nei mitzvah prayer class. Ellen and Sarah Avner communicate regularly regarding student progress and Ellen is an integral part of the b'nei mitzvah process. She will also be your contact person when it is time for your student to begin working with a volunteer mentor.

Education Office

Carly Cera, Director of Youth Education and Engagement: ccera@bethisrael.org ; (512) 454-1589

- Carly guides the educational journey leading up to and after your child becomes bar/bat/b'nei mitzvah.

Appendix 1: Mitzvah Hours

Rabbi Tarfon said, “You are not required to complete the work, but neither are you free to abstain from it.” This quote expresses the Jewish value of working to help those who are in need. **We expect b’nei mitzvah students to have completed at least 18 hours of volunteer work before the date of his/her bar/bat mitzvah service.** We encourage students to choose “hands-on” projects that involve personal service and fit your interests. We have provided some *suggestions* below. Many of organizations require parents to accompany youth volunteers.

At CBI/For the Jewish Community:

Mishloach Manot are Purim gift baskets filled with hamantaschen and other goodies. CBI gives them to our elderly and/or homebound congregants and those who have an extra need for caring that year. Sisterhood needs volunteers to help collect additional funds for the gift bags, put them together and deliver them. To volunteer, contact Ruth Siegel at ruthsiegel@yahoo.com.

Technology Assistance during our Erev Shabbat and Shabbat morning worship. If your child enjoys assisting with worship during Sunday school/Hebrew school by moving our slides ahead, then we could use their support on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings during our worship services. Contact Sarah Avner at savner@bethisrael.org for more details and to sign up.

Greeting on Friday evenings and Shabbat mornings. As your family works towards their shabbat attendance goal of 14 mornings and 4 evenings consider joining our greeting team. You would arrive 20 minutes early before either service and greet attendees as they arrive at the front door. This is an excellent opportunity for parent/child teams to support our greater temple community in a very meaningful way. Contact Sarah Jew at sjew@bethisrael.org for more details and to sign up.

Jewish Family Services is the division of the JCAA that provides mental health and social services to the Austin Jewish and general community. JFS offers trained volunteer outreach to elders who live in senior residential settings to bring meaningful, interpersonal connections and Jewish programs to them where they reside. For more information, visit the [JFS website](#) and complete a volunteer questionnaire.

Jewish Family Service: Project Tikkun Olam – Mitzvah project opportunities for b’nei mitzvah students:
Contact Joan Eisenberg Maniere for more information: joan.maniere@shalomaustin.org.



PROJECT TIKKUN OLAM

MITZVAH PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES FOR
BAR/BAT MITZVAH STUDENTS

We are honored you have chosen **Shalom Austin Jewish Family Service's Project Tikkun Olam** to guide you through your Bar/Bat Mitzvah project. Each mitzvah project is accompanied by a service learning component. Remote and in-person/on-site volunteer options are available. To get started, contact Volunteer and Community Experience Director, Joan Eisenberg Maniere at joan.maniere@shalomaustin.org



Bikkur Cholim:
Provide comfort to those who are ill and their families

De'agah L'Yetonim:
Offer care and support to vulnerable children (specifically, children and babies in foster care)

V'ahavta L'rei'acha Kamocha:
Exemplify love and empathy toward others in need

Kavod Zeykanim:
Share in Shabbat and holiday experiences with older members of the community

Kavod Habriyot:
Promote dignity each monthly cycle for neighbors in need through menstrual

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE
Client-Choice Food Pantry

Ha' achalat Re' evim
Volunteering efforts to support Jewish Family Service clients experiencing food insecurity

[Dignity Grows with Shalom Austin](#). Dignity Grows™ empowers our neighbors in need by providing menstrual and hygiene supplies for every body that needs them. We remove obstacles to better self-esteem and health by providing personal hygiene essentials each and every month. Volunteers and financial contributions are welcome. To learn more or to get involved, please contact Joan Eisenberg Maniere at joan.maniere@shalomaustin.org.

For even more information, check out Dignity Grows homepage.

Around Austin

Austin Animal Center is the largest municipal animal shelter in Central Texas, provides shelter to 23,000 animals annually and services to Austin/Travis County. <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/individual-aac-volunteer>

Austin Yellow Bike Project is an all-volunteer non-profit initiative to put bicycles on the streets of Austin and Central Texas by operating community bike shops, teaching bike mechanics and maintenance, and acting as a local bike advocacy group. <http://austinyellowbike.org>

Austin Habitat for Humanity offers many ways for youth to volunteer- landscaping, planting trees, raising awareness or providing lunch for volunteers who are building. www.austinhabitat.org/youth

Austin Parks Foundation connects people to resources and partners to develop and improve parks. Volunteers participate in activities including erosion control, mulching, tree-planting, eradicating invasive species and trash pick-up. www.austinparks.org

Austin Pets Alive! is a volunteer run non-profit animal rescue group committed to promoting and providing the resources, education and programs needed to eliminate the killing of homeless companion animals. Must be 12 to volunteer. www.austinpetsalive.org

Bake A Wish is a volunteer run non-profit organization who provide free, homemade birthday cakes to neglected, abused and/or abandoned children and the elderly and disabled, who would not otherwise receive a birthday cake. Volunteers bake and deliver cakes. www.bakeawishaustin.org

Central Texas Food Bank is the largest hunger-relief charity in Central Texas, serving more than 46,000 people each week. There are family volunteer times when youth can participate. www.centraltexasfoodbank.org

Austin Humane Society's Humane Heroes Program allows kids 14 and under who are too young to volunteer at AHS on their own, to still be involved with the animals. By becoming a Humane Hero, kids get to have fun and make a big impact in the lives of homeless pets. <http://www.austinhumanesociety.org/volunteer/humane-heroes/>

Keep Austin Beautiful provides resources and education to engage citizens in building a more beautiful community. Volunteers work on service projects, including creek and road cleanups. <http://keepaustinbeautiful.org/volunteer>

Generation Serve (formerly Little Helping Hands) facilitates family volunteering by organizing and leading volunteer activities with various organizations. Opportunities are suitable for ages 3-17. For older kids and teens, they offer educational and leadership programs to enhance the learning that comes out of service experiences. www.generationserve.org

Meals on Wheels Central Texas-Greater Austin Area makes and delivers meals to homebound members of the community, including those age 60 and older. Volunteers deliver meals by car. www.mealsonwheelscentraltexas.org

Mobile Loaves & Fishes is a social outreach ministry for the homeless and working poor. Volunteers can help prepare and deliver meals through the St. John Neumann Commissary or work on the Community First Village homes and gardens. www.mlf.org/volunteer

Pitch-In for Baseball is a registered global non-profit that that is dedicated to helping kids around the world play ball who may otherwise not have a chance to. Volunteering will include gathering donations and fundraising. Carly Cera has an e-brochure with more information. www.pifb.org

Austin Jews for Refugees is an interfaith project that works with Muslim and Christian organizations to provide food, clothing, apartment setups, airport pickups and all kinds of other material logistical help to refugees arriving in Austin. We are partners with Refugee Services of Texas, but our sources of funding are 100% from donations. Donation money goes straight into helping feed, house or clothe families, most of whom arrive here with nothing.

Volunteer Activities can include:

- Setting up apartments with parents
- Helping to prepare meals at CBI
- Helping with clothing sorting with Chichi
- Working on publicizing our group on social media
- Helping middle school kids with schoolwork
- Working on Canva to spice up our newsletters

<https://austinjewsforrefugees.weebly.com/>

Sustainable Food Center runs the SFC Farmers Market and creates opportunities for individuals to make healthy food choices and participate in a local food system. Youth participation in volunteer opportunities will depend on the job. Volunteers must attend an hour-long orientation session.

www.sustainablefoodcenter.org

***Log hours on the form in your child's google folder. (Don't have one yet? Contact Sarah Avner and she will set one up for you.)**

***For more information and/or for personalized help with your service hours or project, please be in touch with Carly Cera: ccera@bethisrael.org; 512-454-6806 x204.**