B’nei Mitzvah Program

“At twelve/thirteen one accepts responsibility for doing mitzvot.”

-Pirkei Avot 5:23
Dear Bar/Bat Mitzvah Parents,

As your family embarks on this most significant and exciting journey we wish to be among the very first to wish you congratulations, Mazal Tov!

Our entire Congregation Beth El family joins us in looking forward to your family’s celebration. Your child is entering a time of wonderful change. Their relationships, responsibilities, and thoughts will develop. Though change can be unsettling, with the support of your synagogue community, you and we will celebrate these changes and opportunities for growth b’simhah, in joy!

As we join with you in preparing your children to grow into being responsible Jews, we are delighted by the privilege to create with you this personal and memorable religious moment.

Our children become Bar and Bat Mitzvah at a formative time in their lives. As they become Jewish teenagers, this ceremony marks a transition for them from the learning and joys of their childhoods to the moral consciousness, religious privileges, and the imperative of their responsibilities as maturing Jews.

As their parents and teachers, we hold out great hopes and dreams for their coming years of discovery. In pride and with purpose, we seek to guide our B’nei Mitzvah students toward the development of an ethical awareness in their daily behaviors.

We wish you wonder, fulfillment, and happiness as you journey with your child into the meanings of Jewish identity and acquisition of the synagogue skills and religious concepts we hold dear as Jews.

We hope the information in this booklet helps you to plan for and anticipate your upcoming simhah. Please call on us for any support we can provide at this special time.

Mazal Tov!

Rabbi Ron Shulaman
Rabbi Avi Libman
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**1. INTRODUCTION**

"At twelve/thirteen one accepts responsibility for doing mitzvot."

Pirkei Avot 5:23

**Background**

The title of “Bar Mitzvah”– Son of the Commandments or “Bat Mitzvah” – Daughter of the Commandments are Aramaic and Hebrew terms derived from the Talmud as a description of every Jew over the age of thirteen. As Jews, we are each endowed with the responsibility to perform mitzvot (commandments) and the opportunity to guide our lives according to the values and ethics of Judaism. This status of Jew-ish maturity begins on the occasion of a child’s 13th birthday, whether or not they mark this event with a ritual celebration or synagogue service.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah are not verbs. Our children, and each of us, become Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Bar or Bat Mitzvah is not a party and not a ceremony at the synagogue. Being a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a lasting condition of a Jew’s life. Just as each child is in the process of attaining physical maturity at 12 and 13 years of age, so too does Judaism choose to mark every boy’s and girl’s moral, emotional and spiritual development through this sacred rite at this transitional time in their lives.

**Context**

Bar and Bat Mitzvah take place within the three Jewish contexts of every child’s life. At Congregation Beth El we prepare and celebrate with each Bar or Bat Mitzvah student in the context of his or her family with consideration of each family’s unique feelings and experiences. We also work with every student and their parents in the context of our synagogue and local Jewish community. This means that Bar and Bat Mitzvah observances take place in the presence of our larger community in addition to each student’s family and invited friends. This synagogue service also has a context, whereby we celebrate our children’s becoming B’nei Mitzvah primarily on Shabbat. This day represents the values and ethics of Judaism and is celebrated as mitzvot through ritual, prayer and Torah study.

**Personal & Family Meaning**

Congregation Beth El’s goal is to help every family celebrating a Bar or Bat Mitzvah to find meaning and enjoyment in this special milestone. The Rabbi and staff strive to individualize each student’s training and each family’s preparations. It is our hope that every Bar or Bat Mitzvah synagogue celebration also reflects personal connection and participation. In order to achieve this goal, we ask for assistance from our B’nei Mitzvah parents. To that end, we encourage you to attend Shabbat Services as often as possible with your son or daughter in order to become familiar with the ritual and style of our synagogue’s worship.

**Objectives of the B’nei Mitzvah Program**

- To develop a positive connection to Judaism, the Jewish people, the Jewish community and the Congregation.

- To study prayer and the rites, rituals, and individual skills related to the Shabbat service and reading of the Torah.

- To provide opportunities for a family experience through sharing social, tikkun, hessed, ritual and learning opportunities.

- To create community among the children and parents as they celebrate this milestone together.
2. BAR & BAT MITZVAH PROGRAM

Formal Classes

- All B’nei Mitzvah candidates must be enrolled in a formal program of Jewish education, a Jewish Day School, or some other form of Beth El approved Formal Religious and Hebrew instruction.

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Synagogue skills are taught during B’nei Mitzvah class hours.

- B’nei Mitzvah students meet on Shabbat mornings to enhance their prayer skills. Appropriate Shabbat attire is requested.

- A Bar or Bat Mitzvah preparation class with our Rabbis.

- Jewish Ethics & B’nei Mitzvah Prep Class
  7th Grade students, preparing to become B’nei Mitzvah, and their parents study with Rabbi Shulman on 10-12 Shabbat mornings from 9:00 to 9:40 a.m. Each session explores Jewish concepts relevant to celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah including Jewish ethics and values. We use various quotes and texts from Jewish tradition as well as contemporary vignettes and events to guide our discussion. Attendance is required.

Shabbat Attendance

It is our goal for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony to be a meaningful ritual for our children and for the family. The best way to understand the meaning of the ceremony is to see it as a link in the great chain of Jewish tradition which connects parents to children and families to families. Attending these services will ensure that all members of the family are comfortable not only with the rituals surrounding the ceremony, but also with the particular practices of our congregation. Shabbat morning attendance is re-quired on assigned class dates. Services conclude at 11:45 am.

Tutoring

- Individual Bar and Bar Mitzvah preparation is provided by CBE approved tutors. If you need assistance, please call the office and ask for Michele, the Rabbinic Assistant at 858-452-1734 ext. 225

- A tutor is chosen approximately 9 to 12 months prior to the ceremony. The family should contact one of the six CBE tutors (see Important Contact Information for names and numbers in the Appendix, (page 13) to schedule lessons. Financial arrangements are to be made directly between the family and their chosen tutor.

- Tutoring minimally covers:
  a) The Maftir portion of the Torah
  b) The Haftarah & Associated Blessings
  c) Additional Torah portions—which can be read by the student, in concert with an evaluation of the their skill level.

- Parents and student resources can be found online at:
  http://www.cbe.org/bar/bat-mitzvah.html
Parent’s Prayer
You will have the opportunity during the service to bless your child. See page 16 for the B’nei Mitzvah Guidelines. If you have any questions regarding the parents’ speech, please contact the Rabbi.

Meeting with the Rabbis
Approximately 8-12 weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Rabbinic Assistant will contact you to set up three meetings with a Rabbi. The first meeting is for the parents and Bar/Bat Mitzvah student to review the plans for the upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Additional meetings for the student will help him or her to write their speech. Plan an hour for the first meeting and 1/2 hour for each subsequent meeting.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah will write and deliver a D’var Torah (speech), where they become teachers of Torah for the entire congregation. It is the time students will explain what their Haftarah portion is about and what they have learned from it. They will make meaningful connections to their own lives and to the world today.

Rehearsal
A dress rehearsal, covering all aspects of the family’s participation with the Rabbi, will be scheduled during the week preceding the date of your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. The rehearsal time is for the immediate family; others honorees do not need to attend. At this rehearsal, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah goes through the service, rehearsing their parts so that there will be no surprises during the ceremony itself. Not only is this time used to ensure that the service will run smoothly, but we also want to make sure that everyone in the family feels comfortable with the service and their role in it.

If you’d like to photograph this event, the rehearsal is your opportunity. Still photography is prohibited on Shabbat. Please arrange for your photographer to join you before or after the rehearsal.

Mitzvah Project
A mitzvah project is one of the first responsibilities we are asking our B’nei Mitzvah candidates to take on as new adults in our community. One of the hallmarks here at Congregation Beth El is the commitment to social action and social responsibility. Our B’nei Mitzvah students must also take on the responsibility of Tikkun Olam – repairing the world – as an affirmation of their commitment to Jewish adulthood. We invite them to choose a project (see below for suggestions) and share in our community’s dedication to bringing more wholeness into the world. The entire family has the opportunity to instill this value in the home so that this value continues to be reflected in their lives after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Our community’s vision is that Congregation Beth El members become active in community projects. Sending financial donations is wonderful and very necessary, but actually going out into society and creating a better environment, with your own two hands, is what it’s all about.

Bar/Bar Mitzvah candidates are certainly welcome to choose their own project. We offer the following list as suggestions; Habitat for Humanity, SOVA – food pantry, Jewish Family Services, American Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces, The Jewish Federation of San Diego, Rachel Women’s Center, and Jewish National Fund.
3. MY SHABBAT

Timeline- For the Week of

Rehearsal... (The Rabbinic Assistant will assist in setting up a date and time)

- Student and family attend a walk through of the service
- Photos can be taken at this time

Friday Evening

- Family arrives 15 minutes prior to the beginning of services, which start at 6:15 PM
- Mother or female family member reads English prayer before the candle lighting

Saturday Morning

- Family arrives 15 minutes prior to the beginning of services, which start at 9:30 AM
- Parents bless their children and B’nei Mitzvah candidate responds

Honors

You are invited to choose those members of your family and friends whom you wish to honor with an Aliyot to the Torah or other service involvements. The list of Honors and Torah Blessings can be found in the Appendix section, page 14. You may also find additional resources online at http://www.cbe.org/bar/bat-mitzvah.html.

Other Celebrations

With such a large and vibrant community, there is always a possibility of other celebrations taking place on the same Shabbat as your son/daughter’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah. An Auf Ruf, baby-naming, or another celebratory event/speaker may be scheduled. While we will do our best to notify you in advance, there is always the possibility of a last minute simcha. If this is the case, we will work with both families to help coordinate co-sponsorship for that Shabbat kiddish.

Seating

In the Sanctuary, the first two rows to the left of the shulchan are reserved for the immediate family of the Bar/Bar Mitzvah (this will be reviewed during the rehearsal). The guests of the family are invited to sit with the rest of the congregation on a first come first served basis. Please be aware and respect that Shabbat regulars who attend our service each week have seats in the sanctuary to which they are accustomed.

"Shabbat has a flavor of Paradise about it."

Talmud Brachot 47a
Biography Essay and Photo for Shabbat Leaflet

Several weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah you will receive an email request from our Rabbinic Assistant for a high resolution photograph and biography (350 words max.) for the Congregation Beth El Shabbat leaflet. This will give our community an opportunity to learn more about your child as they celebrate their Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

All materials should be emailed and pictures should be sent in high resolution JPEG or EPS/TIFF format.

Please see the Appendix, (page 15), for past essay examples.

Format of Essay:

Section #1-Personal Information

• Tell us who you are, where and when you were born.
• Tell us about your parents – names, what they do, where they were born.
• Tell us about your family – siblings, their ages and/or special relatives
• Tell us about where you go to secular school, your subjects of interest and future career aspirations, if any.
• Tell us about your interests, hobbies, activities.
• Tell us about your Jewish Education – where you go to school (Viterbi Torah School or day school or Hebrew High)

Section #2 – My Parashah

• Tell us the name of your Parashah and include a brief summary of the contents.
• Tell us about the Haftarah – who is the prophet or where the writing comes from.
• Include a brief summary of the Haftarah and the connection to the Parashah.

Section #3 – My Mitzvah Project

• Tell us about your Mitzvah activities or interests, which organization, agency or group you have chosen to engage with.
Proper Dress for Your Guests

Beth El means “House of God” and should be treated accordingly. Therefore, we expect that your guests will be dressed appropriately and modestly. We ask that you inform your family and guests, especially those who are given honors and are coming to the bimah, of the expected proper attire. For those receiving any honors, please note our dress code:

**Men:** No jeans; jacket, and tie preferred. No tennis or running type shoes. Kippah for all men, and Tallit for all Jewish men.

**Women:** Modest dress. No mini skirts, jeans, spaghetti straps or other clothing allowing the woman to have bare shoulders.

**Boys:** No jeans; jacket, and tie preferred. No t-shirts, No shorts, No tennis or running type shoes

**Girls:** Modest dress; No jeans, No mini skirts, No t-shirts, No shorts, No tennis or running type shoes - girls shoulders must be covered.

Please advise your guests ahead of time about proper attire.

Please accept these guidelines in a positive spirit for they are designed to enhance the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Attention should not be drawn away from your child to people who are wearing clothing designed to attract attention or that demonstrate a casual attitude towards the worship service.

Inviting Classmates, Teachers, and Others

When preparing your guest list, it is our policy that all students in your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah class are invited to the ceremony and party. These are students with whom your child has been studying with for at least a year, if not longer. They are the children your child will continue to see in Synagogue and USY programs. We will provide a class list upon request. Email Ariel@cbe.org for the list.

Being left out at this age can be a trying and hurtful experience. By inviting the entire class, you are demonstrating the value of Jewish community.

Your child’s teachers have been an important part of his/her development. We encourage you to invite those individuals who have worked with your child, over the years, including both Jewish and secular teachers as well as tutors, counselors, school administrators, and other special people in your child’s life.

Rabbi Elazar ben Shamu‘a taught:
The reverence for your teacher should be as great as your reverence for God.

— Pirkei Avot 4:15
4. SIMCHA CELEBRATION OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

Drawing upon the teaching of a Talmudic sage, the 16th century Rabbi Solomon Luria ruled that a Bar/Bat Mitzvah meal was a religiously commanded festive meal on the same spiritual level as the wedding feast, known as the Seudat Mitzvah. In this tradition, we encourage each family to host a Kiddush Luncheon immediately following the service.

When you book your date, in addition to the Shabbat Service on Saturday, we reserve the synagogue facilities for you to host a private Friday Shabbat Dinner, a Saturday Kiddush and/or Luncheon, and a Saturday Evening party in the Jacobs Family Community Hall. Please confirm these reservations at least six months in advance. Contact Valentina, at valentina@cbe.org. If we do not receive your confirmation, of your planned usage, the spaces may be released to other events.

We ask that you contact our Event Coordinator- Valentina, at valentina@cbe.org, as soon as possible if you plan to utilize our facilities for your celebrations at Congregation Beth El.

Friday Night

Friday Private Shabbat Dinner

Families frequently host a private Friday Shabbat Dinner at Congregation Beth El in the Jacobs Family Community Hall following the Friday night service and Oneg. There are no room rental fees for your Friday night dinner. You may choose any of the caterers from the Congregation Beth El Approved Caterers List to provide the meal. Please contact the Event Coordinator- Valentina at valentina@cbe.org, to confirm your reservation. If there is a Congregational Dinner (i.e. during Hanukkah), you are welcome to register your family to attend and other special arrangements, such as reserved seating, can be arranged.

Oneg Shabbat

It is a custom and tradition at Congregation Beth El for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family to sponsor the Oneg following the Kabbalat Shabbat Service. The B’nei Mitzvah $500 fee includes sponsorship for a basic Friday and Saturday Kiddush, (challah, wine/juice, and some cookies), following services. For an additional fee, you may choose other Kiddush options.

Your sponsorship is also recognized in the weekly leaflet.

To sponsor the Oneg please contact our Event Coordinator Valentina at valentina@cbe.org, at least 2 months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Shabbat Day

Throwing Candy

The Custom of Throwing Candy

It is customary to throw candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah when he/she has completed his/her Haftarah, to wish him/her a “sweet” life as he/she makes the transition into adulthood. Even though the candy will be distributed in advance, please save it so it can be thrown at the conclusion of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s Haftarah.

If you are not interested in observing this custom please let us know. Congregation Beth El will provide the appropriate number.
Kiddush Luncheon (Seudat Mitzvah)
It is Congregation Beth El’s policy that the Kiddush luncheon must be open to the entire congregation, and we do not permit private lunches. Because this is a community simcha, please include an additional 60 congregates to your guest list for lunch. You are not charged a facility rental fee for the Kiddush Luncheon, however the luncheon must end by 2:00pm. If the luncheon exceeds the time limit, hourly rental fees will be incurred. Please revert to the list of approved Kosher caterers. To set up a Kiddush, please contact Valentina, our Event Coordinator, at valentina@cbe.org
The Kiddush Luncheon is part of the Shabbat observance, therefore decorations and music should remain appropriate for Shabbat. Out of respect for the congregation, only Israeli or similar Jewish themed music may be played until 1:00 pm. In addition, still photography and videography is prohibited until this time. At 1:00 pm, your orchestra/DJ is free to play secular music and still photography and videography may commence.

Sponsored Kiddush
As an alternative to hosting a Kiddush Luncheon, your family is encouraged to sponsor a Kiddush through the synagogue (similar to the Friday night Oneg). Please contact Valentina our Event Coordinator for more information.

Continue the Celebration
Saturday Evening Celebration at Congregation Beth El
The Bar or Bat Mitzvah party is the late 20th century evolution of the Seudat Mitzvah. Congregation Beth El is a fantastic place for your private celebration. The Jacobs Family Community Hall can be decorated in a number of ways, and the Turk Family Plaza is perfect for your cocktail reception. To discuss having your private Bar/Bat Mitzvah party at Congregation Beth El, please contact Valentina, our Event Coordinator at valentina@cbe.org for more information.

Memorialize the Simcha
Tree of Life Leaf or Stone
It has been a long standing tradition to commemorate the B’nei Mitzvah student’s achievement with purchasing a Tree of Life leaf or stone engraved with their name and B’nei Mitzvah date. The leaf or stone is prominently displayed in the foyer of the Jacobs Family Community Hall. Please refer to the order form in this packet and turn it into the CBE Front Desk.
5. After the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

When you become an adult member of the Jewish community, you are expected to continue studying and developing your Jewish identity. Congregation Beth El and the greater San Diego area offer several gateways for you to enter and explore your life as a Jewish adult. Whether it is participating in Thursday Night Teens, our teen education program, serving as a madrich at the Viterbi Torah School, volunteering with the Tikkun Committee, spending summers at a Jewish Summer program experience, or USY, you will quickly find that you are able to relate to our vast tradition in a more knowledgeable and mature way. We encourage you to both study formally and to actively participate in your synagogue and community programs.

“Turn the Torah and turn it again, you will find everything in it.”

Pirkei Avot 5:22
6. APPENDIX

Important Contact Information

Congregation Beth El
858.452.1734
For all communications, please contact the Rabbinic Assistant. Office hours are Mon-Thurs 9:00 am -5:00 pm and Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Rabbi Ron Shulman..........................858.452.1734 x227 rshulman@cbe.org
Rabbi Avi Libman..............................858.452.1734 x228 rabbiavi@cbe.org
Rabbinic Assistant-Michele Alexandria..............858.452.1734 x225 michele@cbe.org
Event Coordinator-Valentina Sharabi.....................858.452.1734 x241 valentina@cbe.org

*B’nei Mitzvah Tutors:

Hannah Anbar hganbar@hotmail.com 858-247-5147
Holly Gail Baumann chayagittle@aol.com 760-310-1673
Jessie Birnbaum tutoring@jbirnbaum.com Please use email
Sharine Kaufmann mommysharone@yahoo.com 858-794-8886
David Lipsitz david@cbe.org 858-952-4132
Edna Yedid saftaedna@yahoo.com 619-851-3559

* B’nei Mitzvah tutors are not employees of Congregation Beth El. Private arrangements must be made with the tutors. Congregation Beth El is not responsible for enforcing or mediating any arrangements with a private tutor.
B’nei Mitzvah Aliyot & Honors

Open and Close Ark before Torah Service - immediate family

Open and Close Ark after Torah Service

Tallit Presentation - Parents

Aliyot - (feel free to assign more than one person for each Aliya)

#4 English Name(s)___________________________________________________________
Hebrew Name(s)___________________________________________________________

#5 English Name(s)___________________________________________________________
Hebrew Name(s)___________________________________________________________

#6 English Name(s)___________________________________________________________
Hebrew Name(s)___________________________________________________________

#7-Parents English Name(s)___________________________________________________
Hebrew Name(s)___________________________________________________________

Hagbah (lift Torah) English Name_____________________________________________

Gelilah (wrap Torah) English Name____________________________________________

English Readings

Prayer for the United States

English Name______________________________________________________________

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: The Rabbinic Assistant, Michele Alexandria, at michele@cbe.org - TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR BAR/BAT MITZVAH.
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Bio Samples

Noah Benhaim, Bar Mitzvah, August 24, 2019

Good morning! Thank you for waking up early on this Saturday morning to join us in services & to celebrate my Bar Mitzvah. My name is Noah Benhaim. I was born in San Diego on August 4th, 2006. I have three siblings, Nathan 14, Talia 9, and Liam 9. In the Fall I will be going into 8th grade at Pacific Trails Middle School. My parents, Yamia & Asaf Benhaim are American Israelis. My ema (mom) was born in Haifa, Israel and my aba (dad) was born in Ramat Hasharon, Israel. During the summers, our family travels abroad & visits our extended family in Israel. This summer, I turned 13 while visiting Israel and celebrated my bar mitzvah first at the Kotel, then again on the beach in Caesarea, where my parents were wed. Today, is the 3rd time I carry & read from the Torah for my Bar Mitzvah. In school, my favorite subjects are math and history. When I’m not doing homework or studying for my 3 Bar Mitzvahs, I enjoy mountain biking, wrestling with my dog, watching movies, & like most teenage boys--playing Fortnite. My Haftarah was written by the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah lived around 700 BCE and was born in Jerusalem. The words of Isaiah are set in the 6th century BCE during the Babylonian exile of the Israelis. Isaiah tried to console and reason with people who doubted their return to the promised land, having been forced out by the destruction of the Temple. My Haftarah is 2nd of 7 special Haftarot of Consolation which is read leading up to Shabbat Shuva, the Shabbat prior to Yom Kippur. For my Mitzvah Project, I joined a program called TVIA (Teens Volunteering In Action). Our volunteer organization helps less fortunate people and families throughout San Diego. We engage in many efforts to support organizations like Challenged Athletes, Ronald McDonald House, Feeding San Diego, & Jewish Family Services. We focus on providing resources such as food & basic life products to those in need. Sometimes we do things that benefit our community & environment, like beach clean up. Being a part of TVIA has taught me how fortunate I am for my family, friends, & health… and to never take that for granted. I am thankful to be a part of TVIA because it helps put things into perspective and reminds me what’s really important in life. In preparation for my Bar Mitzvah, I am especially grateful to Morah Sharone and the countless hours she spent in preparing me. Thanks to Rabbi Avi for our chats and for his commitment to making sure I understood the process & purpose of becoming a Bar Mitzvah. A special thanks to my parents & grandparents for their unwavering support & love. It’s been a long & intense ride getting here, but I did it--3 times! It’s been an incredible journey, and I am so grateful for the opportunities & experiences along the way!

Arin Berger, Bat Mitzvah, October 26, 2019

Hello, my name is Arin Berger and I am 13 years old. I was born on September 20, 2006, in San Diego. I live with my parents, Jeanne and David, my 11-year-old sister, Dara, and my yellow lab named Bruno. My mom was born in Mexico City, and is a pediatrician. My dad was born here in San Diego and is a lawyer. I am in 8th grade at Muirlands Middle School. My favorite subject is science because it is interesting to learn about the world around us, and how it works. In my free time, I enjoy playing lacrosse, baking, and being with friends and family. My family has been a part of Congregation Beth El for a long time and I've attended the Viterbi Torah School since I was in first grade. My Parsha is Bereshit. This Parsha is the beginning of the Torah and tells us about how God creates the world, and everything that lives in it. The prophet who wrote my Haftorah is Isaiah. In my Haftorah, God makes a covenant between himself and the Israelites to treat each other with respect. Later, the Israelites get attacked and lose hope in God. But really, God was always there for them and gives them a second chance by welcoming the Israelites back into the Jewish community. The core message of my Haftorah is about second chances and new beginnings. This message connects to my parsha, because it is the beginning of the Jewish people’s story. This year, my family and I have participated in volunteering projects around San Diego. Some of my favorites have been preparing food for families at the Ronald McDonald House, sorting items at the food bank, and cleaning trails with the San Diego River Park Foundation. I would like to thank everyone here today for coming to celebrate with me on this special day. I would also like to thank Hannah Anbar, Rabbi Avi and Rabbi Shulman for helping me prepare for today. Lastly, I’d like to say a special “toda raba” to my family for being so kind, funny, and supportive throughout my entire bat mitzvah journey.
Guidelines for *B’nei Mitzvah* Parents’ Prayer

Just before your son or daughter comes forward to the Torah for his or her Maftir Aliyah, we invite you to offer a brief and personal Parents’ Prayer in their honor. This is a special and often emotional moment. Occasionally, parents choose not to speak, preferring a more private expression of their feelings. You may choose whether to offer a public or private prayer and we have included guidelines below.

Please note the following guidelines for your Parents’ Prayer:

a. The content of your prayer is an expression of gratitude. Please reflect on your child’s character and special spirit rather than recount his or her many activities or accomplishments.

b. Less is more! In sensitivity to the flow of our service and your child’s comfort, limit your total prayer to 200 words, please!

c. We rabbis hope you can appreciate our request to review your prayer prior to your family’s celebration. In that way, you and we can know we achieved our goals for this experience. We’re also happy to help you craft your prayer, if you would like assistance.
B’nei Mitzvah Timeline

10-11 Months Prior

• Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate should begin meeting with a tutor. Refer to page #13 for the list of tutors.

6-9 Months Prior

• Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate should attend Shabbat services as often as possible in order to be more comfortable and familiar with Congregation Beth El’s Shabbat service.

• Families meet with the Event Coordinator to finalize non-ritual details.

• Families interested in reserving a room for a private dinner or party for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration should contact the Event Coordinator, Valentina - 858-452-1734 ext. 241

2-3 Months Prior

• Schedule three B’nei Mitzvah D’var Torah/speech meetings and the rehearsal with a Rabbi. Contact Michele - the Rabbinic Assistant, at 858-452-1734 ext. 225/michele@cbe.org for scheduling.

• Family and friends who want to chant a Torah portion should contact the Rabbi.

• Make arrangements with the Rabbinic Assistant if you want to bring a photographer for a photosession on your rehearsal date.
3 Weeks Prior

- Personal Parent’s Prayer should be submitted to the Rabbinic Assistant- michele@cbe.org
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate submits their bio. and photo to the Rabbinic Assistant- michele@cbe.org — Refer to page # 8.
- Submit Shabbat Honors (see page 14) to Michele, the Rabbinic Assistant. Call her at 858-452-1734 ext.225

Week of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Rehearsal with the Rabbi
- Attend Friday night Shabbat services
- Family member reads a candle lighting benediction

Day of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- The family should arrive by 9:15 a.m., 15 minutes prior to the start of the service
  All others receiving honors should arrive by 9:45 a.m.
B’nei Mitzvah Checklist

Bio for Shabbat leaflet: written by your student. Send an electronic file to the Rabbinic Assistant, Michele at michele@cbe.org, including the following information: your name, where and when you were born, parents’ names, what they do, where they were born. Information about your family, siblings, their ages and/or special relatives. Tell us about where you go to school, your subjects of interest and perhaps what you would like to be when you grow up. Tell us about your interests, hobbies, activities. Tell us about your Jewish Education – where you go to school (Viterbi Torah School or day school or Hebrew High). My Parashah, name of your Parashah and include a brief summary of the contents. Tell us about the Haftarah – who is the prophet or where the writing comes from. Include a brief summary of the Haftarah and the connection to the Parashah. Tell us about your Mitzvah activities or interests, which organization, agency or group you have chosen for your Mitzvah Project. Please see the sample Shabbat leaflet for your reference (350 words max.) (3 weeks before).

Photo for Shabbat leaflet and CBE e-blast: please send a high-resolution JPEG portrait style photo to the Rabbinic Assistant, Michele at michele@cbe.org to be included in the Shabbat leaflet and weekly CBE e-blast. (3 weeks before)

Shabbat Honors: please send the completed the B’nei Shabbat Honors Form including the Hebrew name and parent’s Hebrew name for all of those who are receiving an aliyah to the Rabbinic Assistant, Michele at michele@cbe.org, (3 weeks before). You may also access this form online at https://www.cbe.org/bar-bat-mitzvah.

Speech Meetings with the Rabbi: contact the Rabbinic Assistant, Michele at michele@cbe.org or 858-452-1734 ext. 225 at your earliest convenience to confirm and schedule your student’s meetings with the Rabbi to prepare for their speech. The first meeting will include the parent/s. (2-3 months before)

Guest count: please contact the Rabbinic Assistant, Michele at michele@cbe.org with the guest count (approximately) you are expecting for Kabbalat Shabbat and Shabbat Services to make sure we print enough leaflets for everyone attending. (2 weeks before).

Rehearsal: rehearsals are scheduled during the week prior to your child’s Bar or Bar Mitzvah. Please contact the Rabbinic Assistant, Michele at michele@cbe.org to confirm the rehearsal.

Photography and videography: photography and videography are not permitted in the sanctuary on Shabbat. Photos can be taken immediately after your Bar or Bat Mitzvah rehearsal in the Stone Family Sanctuary.
Tree of Life Leaf: to commemorate your student’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah you may purchase a Tree of Life Leaf. Please use the Tree of Life Leaf Order Form to place a request with the Executive Assistant, Maria at shalom@cbe.org or 858-452-1732. Allow 4 weeks for processing.

Kiddush sponsorship: to sponsor a Kiddush in celebration of your student’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please choose a Kiddush menu from the Kiddush Sponsorship list. You may sponsor the Kiddush on Friday, Saturday, or both. *(8 weeks before)*

Saturday Luncheon: to sponsor a luncheon in celebration of your student’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah, please choose a caterer from the List of Approved Caterers. Please contact the Event Coordinator, Valentina at valentina@cbe.org to confirm space reservation and assistance in coordinating the luncheon. *(8 weeks before)*

Diagrams: if you are planning to sponsor a luncheon or evening event, please use the Jacobs Family Community Hall and Turk Family Plaza diagrams to request a setup. Please send it via email it to the Event Coordinator, Valentina at valentina@cbe.org. *(4 weeks before)*

Bar Mitzvah evening celebration: the Jacobs Family Community Hall is reserved for your event on Saturday night. To confirm your reservation and plan your evening event, please contact the Event Coordinator Valentina at 858-452-1734 or valentina@cbe.org. *(6 months before)*

We all look forward to assisting you during this special time. If you have questions, please contact:

Michele Alexandria
Rabbinic and Administrative Assistant
Congregation Beth El
858-452-1734
michele@cbe.org

Mazel Tov