B'nei Mitzvah Program

“At twelve/thirteen one accepts responsibility for doing mitzvoth”

-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

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 Jewish 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’nai 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
• 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, hesed, ritual and learning opportunities.
• To create community among the children and parents as they celebrate this milestone together.

“At twelve/thirteen one accepts responsibility for doing mitzvot”
Pirkei Avot 5:23
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 in the 5th, 6th & 7th grades.

• 7th grade students meet on Shabbat mornings to enhance their prayer skills. Appropriate Shabbat attire is requested.

• A Bar or Bat Mitzvah preparation class meet our rabbis.

• The Jewish Ethics class meets on Saturday morning. This class is mandatory for both students and parents to foster discussion and concept awareness. Specific class dates will be made available prior to the first class. All class sessions will begin at 9:00 a.m.

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 required on assigned class dates.

Tutoring & Resources
• Individual Bar and Bat Mitzvah preparation is provided by CBE approved tutors. If you need assistance, please contact the B’nei Mitzvah coordinator.

• A tutor is chosen approximately 9 to 12 months prior to the ceremony. The family should contact one of the six Beth El tutors (see Important Contact Information for names and numbers in the Appendix, page 14) to schedule lessons. Financial arrangements are to be arranged 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 of the family’s discretion in concert with an evaluation of the student’s skill level.
  d) Explanation of the Torah and Haftarah portion for the student’s writing of the speech.

• There will be regular communication between the tutor and the B’nai Mitzvah Coordinator about the student’s progress. Families will be notified in the event of any problems.

• Parents and student resources can be found online at: http://www.cbe.org/bar/bat-mitzvah.html

“Who is wise?
The one who learns from everyone.”
Ben Zoma
Parent’s Prayer
You will have the opportunity during the service to bless your child. See page 17 for the B’nei Mitzvah Guidelines. If you have any questions regarding the parents’ speech, please contact the Rabbi.

Meeting with the rabbis
Approximately 6 weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Rabbinic Assistant will contact you to set up meetings with a Rabbi. The first meeting is for the parents and Bar or Bat Mitzvah student to review the plans for the upcoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Additional meetings for the student will help him or her to write his or her speech.
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 Torah portion is about and what they have learned from it. They will make meaningful connections to their own lives and to the world today.

B’nei Mitzvah Shabbaton
Twice this year you will be invited to celebrate Shabbat as a group. This is an opportunity for the families to spend a Shabbat focused on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah students. The two retreats combine worship, learning and social activities. They are wonderful ways for our children to create connections with their fellow classmates as well as parents getting to know one another.

Participation is MANDATORY.

6th Grade Mini Shabbaton - February 2, 2018
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbaton - November 30 and December 1, 2018

Rehearsal
A dress rehearsal covering all aspects of the family’s participation with the Rabbi will be scheduled at 4:30 pm on the Thursday immediately preceding the date of your 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 is taken 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. As B’nei Mitzvah our 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 **Congregation Beth El members 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**

“Shabbat has a flavor of Paradise about it.”

Talmud Brachot 47a

**Timeline**

**Thursday prior**
- Student and family attend walkthrough of the service.
- Photos can be taken at this time

**Friday Evening**
- Family arrives 15 minutes prior to the beginning of service 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 service at 9:30 AM
- Parents bless their children and B’nei Mitzvah candidate responds

**Honor**

You are invited to choose those members of your family and friends whom you wish to honor with aliyot to the Torah or other service involvements. The list of Honors and Torah Blessings can be found in the Appendix section, page 15. 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.

**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 maintain our service each week have seats in the sanctuary to which they are accustomed.
Biography Essay and Photo for Shabbat Leaflet
Several weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah you will receive an email request from our rabbinic administrator 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 children 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 16, for past 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 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)

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 for your Mitzvah Project.
Proper Dress for Your Guests
Beth El means “House of God” and should be treated accordingly. Therefore, we hope that your guests will be dressed appropriately and modestly. We can not expect that you have any control over the way your guests dress, but please inform your family and guests receiving honors and coming to the Ark or the bimah before the congregation.

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 tennis or running type shoes, no t-shirts, no jeans, no shorts, tie is preferable, jacket recommended.

**Girls:** Modest dress, skirt and blouse, no tennis or running type shoes, no t-shirts, no shorts or jeans.

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, and if not longer. They are the children who your child will continue to see in Synagogue and USY programs. We will provide a class list upon request. Email jessie@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 Shabbat Dinner Friday, a Saturday Kiddush and/or Luncheon, and a Saturday Evening party in the Jacobs Family Community Hall.

We ask that you contact our Event Coordinator as soon as possible if you plan to utilize our facilities for your celebrations at Beth El. Sixty (60) days prior to your event, if we are without confirmation of your planned usage, the spaces may be booked for other events.

Friday Night
Shabbat Dinner
Families frequently host a private 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 Beth El Approved Caterers List to provide the meal. Please contact the Event Coordinator for a current copy of this list and 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 Beth El for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family to sponsor the Oneg following the Kabbalat Shabbat Service. Challah, wine/juice, several trays of pastries, cookies, or brownies will be put out in addition to water and lemonade. Coffee/tea and fresh fruit is available as well for an additional fee. Your sponsorship is also recognized in the weekly leaflet.

To Sponsor the oneg please contact the Event Coordinator at least one month 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 to adulthood. Even though the candy will be distributed in advance, please save it so it can be thrown at the conclusion of Bar or 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 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 simchah, please include an additional 75 congregants to your guest list for lunch. You are not charged a facility rental fee for the Kiddush Luncheon, however the luncheon must end by 3:00pm. If the luncheon exceeds the time limit, hourly rental fees will be incurred. For a list of approved Kosher caterers, please contact the Event Coordinator.

The Kiddush Luncheon is part of the Shabbat observance, 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 pm. In addition, still photography and videography is prohibited until this time. At 1:00pm, 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 the Event Coordinator for more information.

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**Continue the Celebration**

**Saturday Evening Celebration at 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 the Event Coordinator for more information.

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**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 Yachad, 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.

Rabbi Ron Shulman .............................................858.452.1734 x227 rshulman@cbe.org
Rabbi Avi Libman..................................................858.452.1734 x228 rabiavi@cbe.org
Valentina Sharabi – Rabbinic Assistant ..............858.452.1734 x241 valentina@cbe.org
Eva Blank – Event/Simcha Coordinator ...............858.452.1734 x241 eva@cbe.org

B’nei Mitzvah Tutors*

Holly Gail Baumann chayagittl@aol.com 760.310.1673
Jessie Birnbaum tutoring@jbirnbaum.com please use email
Arielle Gereboff ariellegereboff@gmail.com 818.515.4305
Sharone Kaufmann mommysharone@yahoo.com 858.794.8886
Edna Yedid saftaedna@yahoo.com 619.851.3559
Hannah Anbar hganbar@hotmail.com 858.259.0079

* 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 Aliyah)

#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_____________________

Glilah (wrap Torah)  English name_____________________

English Readings

Prayer for United States
   English name ____________________________

Prayer for Israel
   English name ____________________________
**Bar/Bat Mitzvah Bio Samples**

**Chloe Alexander, Bat Mitzvah March 29th, 2014**

Hi my name is Chloe Alexander and I am 13 years old. I was born on January 25, 2001 in San Diego. My parents are Kevin and Laney Alexander. My dad was born in Riverside and my mom, like me, was born in San Diego. I have an eight year old sister, Cate, who is very fun and caring. I am currently in seventh grade and attend Muirlands Middle school. My favorite subject is English because I enjoy writing and being creative. In my free time I enjoy playing competitive soccer and spending time with friends and family. With my friends I like to go to the beach, play soccer and walk around the village. Family is very important to me because I live so close to my cousins and grandparents. For those members of my family who live farther away, I always look forward to getting together with them and having a good time.

My Jewish education is very important to me and I have been attending Viterbi Torah school since I was in preschool. My family has been a part of Congregation Beth El for many years. My mom went to preschool and Hebrew school at Beth El, and my Safta was the preschool teacher for over thirty years. I am lucky to have grown up celebrating the high holidays at Beth El with my friends and family.

My haftorah portion is about the prophet Ezekiel’s vision from G_d. In my haftarah, Ezekiel explains the vision to the Jews, who have been enslaved in Babylon. G_d’s vision states that one day the Jews will return to their homeland. Ezekiel shares G_d’s vision with the enslaved Jews to help give them hope. This hope is what kept the Jews from giving up. I have learned that hope is very important in life.

My mitzvah project is National Charity League (NCL) which as an organization that provides care and assistance for people in need. As a NCL member with my mom and friends, I volunteer for different types of charities such as Meals on Wheels, San Diego Food Bank and Operation Homefront. NCL is a great way to spend time with friends, while helping others and learning to appreciate what you have.

I would like to thank my friends and family for supporting me on this special day. I also truly appreciate Rabbi Graubart and Morah Edna for helping me prepare for my bat mitzvah.

**Louis Adler, Bar Mitzvah January 4th, 2014**

Hello my name is Louis Adler. I was born on December 24, 2000, at Scripps Memorial in La Jolla. I came early and ruined my Grandma Sharon’s Christmas Eve dinner. I am early and ruined my Grandma Sharon’s Christmas Eve dinner. I am in the seventh grade at Carmel Valley Middle School. My favorite subjects are P.E. and Social Studies. When I grow up I want to be a history professor. My parents, Julie Hyde and Mark Adler, are both CPAs, they both went to UCSB and they are both Southern California natives. I have one younger sister, Kathryn who is in 5th grade. I am on the Jr. USY board and attend the VTS here at Beth El. I enjoy video games and I study a style of Martial Arts called Tong Soo Do. My goal is to reach black belt next year.

My Haftarah for Bo is about how people who do not learn from their past and as a result, history will be repeated. In it, the Prophet Jeremiah delivers the message from G-d that the nation of Egypt would soon be defeated and exiled by the Babylonians. This was punishment for their failure to come to the aid of the people of Israel as they had promised when Israel was under attack and Jerusalem under siege by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylonia. This was also punishment for all of the hardships that Egypt had oppressed upon the Jews over the years. The Egyptians did not learn from their experience in the past with the 12 plagues and so G-d decided the time had come for payback.

For my Bar Mitzvah project I have been volunteering at the VTS on Sunday mornings helping out with the Kindergarten class and wherever I am needed. I have also been collecting the jackets left over from school lost and founds and have been washing them, folding them and sorting them for donation to the Monarch School in San Diego that services students that are impacted by homelessness.

I would like to thank Rabbi Avi for meeting with me and helping me with my speech and understanding my Haftarah portion. I want to thank my family and friends for showing their support, especially my Papa Edmund who is no longer with us, who I promised I would continue my Jewish education and complete my Bar Mitzvah. I would also like to thank my tutor Mora Yedid for her time and patience tutoring me for today.
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 his or her honor. This is a special and often emotional moment. Occasionally, parents choose not to speak, preferring a more private expression of their feelings. It’s now time for you to consider what you wish to say on the *bimah*.

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**

10-12 Months Prior

- Families interested in reserving a room for a private dinner or party for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration should contact the Rabbinic Office.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate should begin meeting with a tutor. Refer to page #14 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 Beth El’s Shabbat service.
- Families meet with the Rabbinic Office Assistant to finalize non-ritual details.

2-3 Months Prior

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate meets with a Rabbi to prepare a *D’var Torah*.
- Family or friends who want to chant a *Torah* portion should contact the Rabbinic Office Assistant.

2 Months Prior

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate submits their bio. Refer to page #9.
- Schedule the Bnei Mitzvah rehearsal with the Rabbinic Office Assistant
- Make arrangements with the Rabbinic Office Assistant if you want to bring a photographer for a photo session.
2 Weeks Prior

- Personal Parents Prayer should be submitted to the Rabbinic Office Assistant.

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, Valentina at valentina@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. I attached a sample Shabbat leaflet for your reference (350 words max.) (4 weeks before).

☐ **Photo for Shabbat leaflet and CBE e-blast:** please send a high-resolution JPEG portrait style photo to the rabbinic assistant, Valentina at valentina@cbe.org to be included in the Shabbat leaflet and weekly CBE e-blast. (4 weeks before)

☐ **Shabbat Honors:** please 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, Valentina at valentina@cbe.org. (4 weeks before). You may also access this form online at [https://www.cbe.org/bar-bat-mitzvah](https://www.cbe.org/bar-bat-mitzvah).

☐ **Speech Meetings with the Rabbi:** contact the rabbinic assistant, Valentina at valentina@cbe.org or 858-452-1734 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.

☐ **Guest count:** please contact the rabbinic assistant, Valentina at valentina@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 Thursday prior to your student’s Bar or Bar Mitzvah. Please contact the rabbinic assistant, Valentina at valentina@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 or Bat Mitzvah, please choose the from the Kiddush Sponsorship list. You may sponsor the Kiddush on Friday, Saturday, or both. (4 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 rabbinic assistant, 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 rabbinic assistant, 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 Eva Blank at 858-452-1734 or eva@cbe.org.

I look forward to assisting you during this special time.
Please do not hesitate to contact me anytime.

Valentina Sharabi
Rabbinic and Administrative Assistant
Congregation Beth El
858-452-1734
valentina@cbe.org