



HONORS and WORKSHEETS

Instructions for Parents to Fill Out Worksheet

In your honors meeting with the cantor, you will have received a worksheet to fill out. Depending on whether your child is participating in a single or partnered service, you will have a different set of honors to give out. Here are explanations of the different honors:

Friday night - The candle lighting is generally led by the families of our Bar/Bat/B'nei/B'not Mitzvah. After the candles are lit, we will chant the candle blessing as a community. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student leads Friday evening Kiddush, along with one of their parent(s).

For All Services

Aliyot to the Torah - The information required includes the English name and the Hebrew name. **Both men and women are asked to wear a tallit when called for an *aliyah* at Beth Am. Tallitot are available at the entrance to the Sanctuary.**

PLEASE NOTE

For every person called to an *aliyah*, we need a complete Hebrew name, i.e., *Rivka* (student's name) ***bat Avraham*** (father's name) ***v'Sarah*** (mother's name).

One parent's name is sufficient. For example, Shmuel ben Rachel, or Leah bat Mordechai.

Open the Ark - *P'ticha* - People who have *aliyot* to open the Ark will be called up to the *bimah* by their English names.

Lift and dress the Sefer Torah - *Hagbahah* and *G'lilah* - The person lifting the Torah needs to have some degree of upper body strength and a good amount of confidence. If s/he has never before lifted a Torah, s/he can step into their local synagogue to ask or we can teach her/him how to do this. The Torah dressers will be assisted by the Rabbi during the service. All of these people will be called up to the *bimah* by their English names.

Presenter of the Tzedakah Box - Beth Am Men (BAM) presents a tzedakah box to each child who is becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah. **All adult male members of Beth Am are eligible to present the Tzedakah Box.**

Presenter of the Kiddush Cup - **This person should be a member of Congregation Beth Am as well as a member of Beth Am Women (Sisterhood).** If none of your guests qualifies, the synagogue

Board member sitting on the *bimah* that day, or the Rabbi or Cantor, can make the presentation, which customarily takes place at the end of the service.

The *haMotzi* - is often recited by young relatives, but it can be recited by anyone you choose to honor by involving them in this way.

On the following pages are some sample honors sheets...

Sample Parent Blessings

1. On Shabbat, there will be eight aliyot of Torah read. An aliyah typically consists of three verses of Torah. Any number of people may be called up for an aliyah (Torah blessing). Each B'nei Mitzvah family may choose "blessers" for three aliyot. The third aliyah is usually given to the parents of the Bat/Bar Mitzvah, and the fourth is reserved for the Bat/Bar Mitzvah.
2. The family of the B'nei Mitzvah who reads the first four aliyot may offer friends and family the honors of opening the Ark and lifting and dressing the Torah once in the service. The family of the B'nei Mitzvah who reads the second four aliyot may offer family and friends the honors of opening and closing the Ark twice in the service. Each family may also designate a member of Beth Am Women to present the kiddush cup to the B'nei Mitzvah, any male member of Beth Am to present the Beth Am Men gift of a mezuzah to the B'nei Mitzvah, and a modest number of family and/or friends to lead the haMotzi.
3. The two B'nei Mitzvah will lead many of the prayers together; some will be led individually.
4. Two Torah scrolls will be passed "from generation to generation" (one for each family, and each Bar/Bat Mitzvah will carry a scroll through the congregation). Grandparents (or other close relatives if there are no grandparents) can be invited to come up to the *bimah* for this honor, along with the ark openers.

Parents' Blessings for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Before passing the Torah to your son or daughter, at the beginning of the Torah service, you will have the opportunity to offer your personal words of blessing in front of the Aron HaKodesh (Holy Ark). **We encourage parents to write a joint blessing up to one page in length, double spaced.** Either one or both parents may speak.

This is a time to reflect, with love and pride, on the significance of this sacred moment, its meaning for your family, and your hopes for the future. You may find it helpful to refer to the sample parents' prayers below when composing your own blessing; or feel free to use one of the texts below in lieu of creating your own.

In the weeks leading up to the service in which your child will be called to the Torah, your family will meet with the Rabbi who will be officiating at the service. Please bring a draft of the blessing with you to that meeting.

Prayer #1

Into our hands, O God, You have placed Your Torah, to be held high by parents and children and taught by one generation to the next. Whatever has befallen us, our people have remained steadfast in loyalty to the Torah. It was carried into exile in the arms of parents that their children might not be deprived of their birthright.

And now I pray that you... will always be worthy of this inheritance. Take its teaching into your heart, and in turn pass it on to your children and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew,

searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace. Thus will you be among those who labor to bring nearer the day when God shall be One and God's name shall be One.

**Prayer #2: What I Wish For My Daughter/Son
I Wish For All Our Children.**

I wish for you to be a
person of character
strong but not tough,
gentle but not weak.

I wish for you to be
righteous but not self-righteous
honest but not unforgiving.

Wherever you journey, may your steps be firm
and may you walk in just paths
and not be afraid.

Whenever you speak, may your words
be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build
and your heart preserve what is good
and beautiful in our world.

May the voices of the generations of our people
move through you
and may the God of our ancestors
be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people,
a rich heritage, to which you belong
and from that sacred place
you are connected to all who dwell on the earth.

May the stories of our people
be upon your heart
and the grace of the Torah rhythm
dance in your soul.

—Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

Prayer #3

May your eyes shine with the light of Torah,
May your face be radiant as the brightness of the sky.
May your lips speak words of wisdom.
And may the world you live in be the world of your dreams.

May you see your world created in your lifetime
May you see your visions come to be.
May your hope touch every generation to come
These are the prayers we have for you.

May you be blessed with understanding,
With wisdom and compassion in your heart.
May your tongue be filled with song,
And your lips sing out for justice.
These are the prayers we have for you.

(Words by Debbie Friedman, based on Talmud Berachot 17a)

Original Parents' Prayers

A Blessing for Michael

Lynn: Michael, as you will learn, every child born into a family is a special treasure. Today we treasure and honor and bless you. Most often we share these thoughts with you privately. However, our tradition gives us a special day to proclaim our love for you and honor and bless you in a very public way. Today is that day.

Rich: Watching you grow up has been an awesome experience. We are excited and humbled to reach this milestone in your life's journey – the day of your Bar Mitzvah celebration. We are proud of you for taking the responsibility to prepare yourself for this day.

Lynn: Your family, friends and the Beth Am community have gathered together to help you celebrate the first time you will be Called to the Torah. This is their gift to you.

By your willingness to share this day with the community, you have brought together family from all over the country to meet, become reacquainted and celebrate with you. And this is your gift to them.

Today is a joyous day.

Rich: Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, a famous 18th century Chasidic Rabbi who emphasized living life with joy and happiness, tells us "the entire world is a very narrow bridge and the main thing is crossing it without fear."

As you walk along this narrow bridge, we pray that you will be strong in spirit and character. That you will be a good friend.

That you will find a path in life that brings you joy and satisfaction.
And that you will seldom be afraid.
We love you very much.

Blessing for Jessica

Tim: Jessica, Judaism has a rich tradition of blessings. We have blessings for almost every aspect of life, blessings for special days, for ordinary days, for healing a broken heart, for celebrating the birth of a child. We have borrowed from blessings of our tradition to convey our most heartfelt feelings and wishes for you. We offer these blessings to you on our own behalf, and on behalf of our entire community, which is so richly represented today from across the country and beyond. You can be sure that this community, your community will always be there for you in love and support.

Chris: You have been a remarkable blessing for us. Your kind, caring, creative, compassionate, passionate and joyful way is your wonderful gift to all those you encounter and therefore you will be a blessing in this world.

Tim: As you grow into a woman, may you continue to grow as a woman of worth; using language of compassion, reaching out to those in need, using words of wisdom, remembering laughter and instilling trust in everyone you meet.

Chris: May God grant you a long life,
A life filled with friends and family
Love and laughter

Tim: A life of blessing and of peace
Of prosperity and of health

Chris: A life of *Tzedekah* and goodness
A life lived without shame

Tim: A life rich and honest
A life filled with the blessings of the Torah

Together: May your eyes shine with the light of Torah and your face reflect the brightness of the heavens.

Chris: May God make you grow like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah,

Tim: May God bless you and help you see all the blessings in your life.

Chris: May you feel God's presence near you at all times.

Tim: May God give you peace and help you to bring peace to your own soul, to your family and to all the world.

Together: May this be your blessing, Amen.

Being Called to the Torah – *Aliyah La-Torah*

You are being called for the **Honor of Blessing the Torah**.

The Torah service begins about midway through the service. After the Torah has been removed from the Ark, brought forward and unrolled on the center table of the *bimah* (the raised pulpit area), the Rabbi will speak briefly to the Congregation. The Cantor will then call the people forward in turn. The Rabbi will announce each person's English name. When the Rabbi calls your name, please come forward promptly, approaching the *bimah* on the Rabbi's side. Take your place next to the person reading the Torah on his/her right hand side.

Both men and women are strongly encouraged to wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl) when called for an aliyah at Beth Am (*tallitot* are available at the entrance to the Sanctuary). If you wear a *tallit*, you may wish to follow the traditional practice of touching the open Torah (at the place where the reader will be reading) with one of the *tzitzit* (the fringes at the corners of the *tallit*), then kissing the fringe. The Blessings are then recited while holding on to one of both wooden handles of the Torah.

You need not bring a copy of the Blessings up to the *bimah* with you as there is a copy of the prayer on the table in large type, in both Hebrew and transliteration. However, if you are more comfortable doing so, you may bring a copy of the Blessings with you.

We strongly encourage those who do not recite the Blessings regularly to practice them ahead of time in order to reduce anxiety and nervousness. Feel free to ask a friend, a family member, one of the Rabbis or the Cantor for a refresher on the words or melody.

When you finish the blessing after the reading, please shake hands with the Rabbi, and then move to stand next to the Cantor. Remain there until the next person completes the blessings and comes to that spot. Shake hands with that person and return to your seat unless you have the final aliyah. In that case, please remain where you are until the Torah and its decorations have been carried away, then return to your seat.

Mazal tov and thank you for helping make the service a beautiful and meaningful one.

How to Learn the Melody to Chant the Torah Blessings on the Beth Am Website

<http://www.betham.org/worship/prayers-blessings>

- Scroll to bottom to "Blessing before reading from the Torah" and "Blessings after reading from the Torah"

Special Blessing for Non-Jewish Parent

A non-Jewish parent may recite a special blessing which can be found at the end of the next section, ALIYAH LA TORAH.

ALIYAH LA-TORAH

Each person called up to the reading of the Torah touches it with tzitzit (the fringes of the tallit), kisses the tzitzit, holds the handles of the Torah and says:

Blessing Before the Reading:

← Reader

← Congregation

← Reader

Reader: *Ba-r'chu et Adonai ha-me-vo-rach!*

Congregation: *Ba-ruch Adonai ha-me-vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.*

Reader: *Ba-ruch Adonai ha-me-vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.
Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eloheinu meh-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sher ba-char ba-nu mi-kol ha-a-mim,
v'na-tan la-nu et to-ra-to.
Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai, no-tein ha-to-rah!*

Praise Adonai, to whom our praise is due!

Praised be Adonai, to whom our praise is due, now and forever!

Blessed are You, Eternal One, our God, who has chosen us from all peoples by giving us the Torah. Blessed are You, Adonai, Giver of the Torah.

Blessing After the Reading:

← Reader

Reader: *Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu meh-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sher na-tan la-nu to-rat eh-met, v'cha-yei o-lam na-ta b'to-chei-nu.
Ba-ruch ata Adonai, no-tein ha-to-ra.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One, our God, Sovereign of the world, who has given us a Torah of truth, and planted in our midst eternal life. Blessed are You, Eternal One, who gives the Torah.

Special Blessing Made by Non-Jewish Parent During Torah Service

Before the Jewish parent's Torah Blessing, recite:

Blessed are You, Holy One of Being:
May the words of Torah be sweet to us and to our offspring,
May the values of Torah be inscribed in our hearts.
We praise you, Holy One, Giver of Torah.

After the Jewish parent's Torah Blessing, recite:

Blessed are You, Holy One of Being,
Who has given a Torah of Truth
Who has given eternal life and light
Blessed are You, Eternal One, Giver of Torah.