



# **BAR/BAT MITZVAH HANDBOOK**

**5779  
2018-2019**

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Dear Friends:

Welcome and congratulations to you as we embark upon a special year in the life of your child and your family.

This year presents a wonderful opportunity for learning, growth, celebration and involvement with the Knesset Israel community. You and your family will have an opportunity to find personal meaning in this significant passage as your child begins a life-long journey as a Jewish adult.

At Knesset Israel, we work together to prepare for the *simha* - the day of celebration - without losing sight of broader goals. We hope this Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook helps you and your family to contextualize the experience, keep track of all the details and stay in tune with the higher values that are the foundation of this life cycle celebration. We offer support, help and guidance along the way. We welcome your questions and value your suggestions and observations. Most importantly, we hope you will enjoy this process of Jewish celebration.

*Mazal Tov!*

Rabbi David Weiner

## CONTEXTS FOR CELEBRATION

In the spring of 2010, the Knesset Israel community created a Statement of Purpose for our synagogue:

Welcome.

We are here to nourish mind, heart and soul.

We are here to inspire through word and deed.

We are here to accompany each other on life's journey.

We are here to celebrate in community.

We are here to bring to life the wisdom and values of Torah.

We are here to transform our world.

The bar/bat mitzvah program aims to invite the newest full members of the Jewish people – teenagers celebrating bar/bat mitzvah – into the experience of all seven of these statements, which describe Knesset Israel at its best. Through hospitality, classroom education, inspiration, sensitivity, rabbinic guidance, personal tutoring and a unique mitzvah project, the congregation aims to enable students to experience the best of Jewish life in community. We recognize, accommodate and celebrate the diversity of our students and their families. Our hope is that all family members, irrespective of their age, religion, sexual orientation or marital status, will feel comfortable celebrating their loved one's bar/bat mitzvah at Knesset Israel. Even as student, parents, teachers, rabbi and community work together to create a superior experience in the present, we keep one eye trained on the future, imagining what the next Jewish step might be for each student and every household.

### MITZVAH

Jewish life is marked by the performance of *mitzvot* – words, deeds and guidance that affirm and enact the covenant between God and the people of Israel. Rabbinic lore suggests that there are 613 of these *mitzvot*, but, with all their details and subtleties, the number but scratches the surface. Based on Torah and spelled out in more detail in the literature of Jewish law, *mitzvot* come in many different forms. While some concern relationships among people, others prescribe duties between the individual and God. Many *mitzvot* involve refraining from particular behaviors – abuse, betrayal, hurtful speech; others – *tzedaka*, Shabbat candlelighting - require performance to be fulfilled. All intend to point us in the direction of holiness, meaning and purpose. These responsibilities help the Jewish people express gratitude, hold fast to hope, care for each other, remain on the right path and find the potential for the extraordinary in everyday moments.

### BAR/BAT MITZVAH

At the age of 13, Jews become responsible for the performance of *mitzvot*, eligible for the blessings that come as a result of *mitzvot* and subject to the consequences of setting them aside. This transition enables young adolescents to serve as the community's representative for *mitzvot* – leading prayer, reading Torah, bearing and, at times, even alleviating the burden of those in need. Responsibility and empowerment go hand in hand.

The ceremony of bar/bat mitzvah must carefully balance celebrating the achievements of an individual child with recognition of her accepting her place among the Jewish people as a student of the Torah and responsible member of the community. For the student to find particular *mitzvot* that speak to him is of great importance to his spiritual and religious growth; experimenting with more of them and opening the door to all of them are two keys to the process.

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH ON SHABBAT

The ceremony of bar/bat mitzvah has, in most Jewish communities, settled on Shabbat morning, a time when the student can lead services, chant selections from the Torah and the prophets (*haftara*) and when the community can comfortably gather to celebrate. The secular Zionist thinker Ahad Ha-am once wrote, “*More than the Jewish people have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish people.*” The practice of Shabbat – setting aside one day in seven for prayer, study, reflection and gathering in community – has been critical to the continuity of the Jewish people and provides an ideal setting for bar/bat mitzvah.

As with so many *mitzvot*, traditional practice of Shabbat includes action and refraining from action. Avoiding work, the handling of money, the lighting of fires, gardening and crafts frees time for contemplation and rest, essential for making sure we don’t get lost in our hectic lives. Having prepared for its beginning on Friday evening, Shabbat can be about being in the present moment and enjoying it. Knesset Israel aims to maintain a Shabbat atmosphere on the grounds of the synagogue throughout Shabbat; Shabbat policies restricting photography, deliveries, cooking, the preparation of food for after Shabbat, note-taking and the like are a part of that effort.

Even with the stepping back from ordinary life, it still helps to act decisively to distinguish Shabbat from the week. Knesset Israel’s Hebrew School teaches students about the rituals of Shabbat – the kindling of Shabbat candles, the blessing said over a cup of wine at a meal on Friday night or Shabbat morning, the special prayers that accompany the day. Every Shabbat the congregation gathers to celebrate being a congregation through song, prayer and study, and b’nai mitzvah intensify the joy.

At KI, the Bnai Mitzvah celebration begins with Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday night, and continues with Shabbat services on Saturday morning followed by a Kiddush reception in the social hall

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH ON SHABBAT DURING TEFILLA (WORSHIP)

The Shabbat morning service is the most complex of the week and consists of several distinct parts. The bar/bat mitzvah student and family are invited to participate in many different ways. Throughout, the person leading a particular portion of the service (*shaliach tzibbur*) or chanting scripture (*ba’al keriah*) is taking responsibility for enabling and inspiring the prayers of the congregation. The bar/bat mitzvah student serving in this role underscores commitment to a Jewish way of life.

- *Birkhot Hashahar*, morning blessings, and *Pesukei DeZimra*, verses of praise, (*Siddur Lev Shalem*, pp.101-147) are a series of warm-up blessings and psalms that help worshippers cultivate a prayerful mood. Some are recited or sung out loud, while others are chanted quietly.
- *Shaharit*, the morning service (pp.147-167), includes *Shema*, the six-word declaration of God’s oneness, framed by blessings about Creation, Torah and redemption; and the *Amidah*, a series of seven blessings of praise, petition and gratitude. At KI, this *Amidah* is usually recited silently then repeated by the leader, with congregational participation.
- The Torah Service (pp.168-184) includes some time for congregational study of a relevant theme, alongside the reading of the weekly portion of Torah and a complementary section of the Prophets known as the *haftara*. On the morning of bar/bat mitzvah, the rabbi’s, president’s and parents’ speeches follow the *haftara*.
- *Musaf* (pp.184-211) includes another *Amidah*, concluding songs and mourners’ *kaddish*.
- Certain Shabbat services also contain other elements pertaining to the celebration of a new month on the Hebrew calendar or of a Jewish holiday.

## **CANDLE-TO-CANDLE**

During their year of study, students will become familiar with the rituals and prayers of Shabbat from the kindling of candles, which takes place before sundown on Friday night, to the candlelit ceremony of *havdala* that marks the end of Shabbat. The KI community supports students as much as possible in this ambitious learning project, which often extends beyond bar/bat mitzvah, and provides many opportunities for students to continue to practice Shabbat and lead Shabbat services from candle to candle and in between. Every B'nai Mitzvah student has the opportunity to lead the KI community through a Candle-to-Candle Shabbat.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Rabbi Weiner, the teachers and the KI staff respect the educational, intellectual and emotional needs and aspirations of every student and the uniqueness of each family. Open communication ensures that every student sets appropriate goals and reaches for them, in the context of our tradition and the community.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Knesset Israel community maintains a robust program for bar/bat mitzvah education and celebration because we care about our students as people and as Jews. Hebrew, Torah and prayer studies lay a foundation for a meaningful Jewish life; a forum for questioning and analysis in the context of a supportive community yields a sense of purpose, identity and pride. Bar/bat mitzvah is but one part of a lifelong journey, but it can play a central role in the formation of Jewish identity. Eventually the time will come to entrust the next generation with the future of our people, values and way of life; it is our hope that the preparation for and celebration of bar/bat mitzvah at Knesset Israel will make a difference.

## **FOR FURTHER READING**

### *On bar mitzvah*

Jeffrey Salkin, *Putting God on the Guest List*

Ronald Isaacs and Kerry Olitzky: *Doing Mitzvot: Mitzvah Projects for Bar/Bat Mitzvah*

### *On Shabbat*

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*

Noam Sachs Zion, *A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home*

Harold S. Kushner, *To Life!*

Nina Beth Cardin, *The Tapestry of Jewish Time*

Abraham Milgram, *Sabbath: The Day of Delight*

### *On prayer*

Lawrence Hoffman, *My People's Prayer Book*

Naomi Levy, *Talking to God*

Reuven Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer*

Lawrence Hoffman, *The Way Into Jewish Prayer*

## THE JOURNEY OF LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION

This year, bar/bat mitzvah students can expect to learn a great deal: reading and chanting Torah and *haftara*, leading and understanding the major prayer services, familiarity with the Torah, its stories, laws and teachings.

At Knesset Israel, students not only prepare for the *simha* – the day of celebration, but also for life as adult Jews. They acquire the abilities and self-confidence to participate and exercise leadership in the religious life of our community and our people.

### CLASSROOM STUDIES

The bar/bat mitzvah classes are a part of the overall program of the Knesset Israel Hebrew School. **All students are expected to attend every class session of Hebrew School and to come to class prepared, carrying all relevant materials.** This year all classes will take place at Knesset Israel. Please let Elisa know as soon as possible if you will be unable to attend any particular class so that we can make appropriate adjustments to our plans.

### Class Schedule

Fall-Spring, 2018-19

Saturdays, 9-12 – Jewish Studies & Tefilla

Wednesdays, 4:00-5:00 – Tefilla

5:00-6:00 – Teaching Torah

For the students whose Bnai Mitzvah is scheduled at the end of August and early September, classes with Elisa will be available during the summer around camp and vacation plans to support and sustain all that is learned during the year.

### Tefilla (Prayer Education)

Students will learn and develop the skills that will enable them to chant Torah, chant *haftara* and lead services on the weekend of their *simha* and beyond. On many Shabbat mornings, as a part of this class, students will spend some time in the sanctuary to become more familiar with a particular part of the service. At the teacher's discretion, students may be required to sit together at services as a class, rather than with families. Elisa Snowise will be the primary teacher for this course and will work together with teen teaching assistants and support from other qualified adult instructors.

### Jewish Studies

Although skills acquisition is a primary concern during the year of bar/bat mitzvah preparation, it remains important for students to continue education in other fields. In 2018-19 the bar/bat mitzvah class will study Jewish history through cartography with Jilly Lederman.

### Teaching Torah

Rabbi Weiner's class will offer students an opportunity to explore and articulate their beliefs about the existence and nature of God, the nature of Torah and the reasons for their continuing engagement in Jewish life. Simultaneously Rabbi Weiner will also help students prepare their *divrei torah*.

### TUTORING

Elisa Snowise will assign a tutor to each student. The tutor and the family will establish a time for a one-hour weekly lesson. Lessons may take place at the student's home, the tutor's home, at Knesset Israel or at a mutually agreeable location. Each tutor will have responsibility for rehearsing with the student before the *simha* and will also take part in the *simha*.

## **HOMEWORK**

The bar/bat mitzvah program is rigorous and requires students to review material between class and tutoring sessions. Past participants report that twenty to thirty minutes a day of practice make a big difference in achievement and progress. More frequent practice enables learning to proceed at a faster, less frustrating pace; it can also make the difference between meeting expectations and exceeding them. Although the responsibility for practicing rests squarely on the student's shoulders, parents should make sure to support, listen (even if they don't read Hebrew), nudge and encourage.

In addition to reviewing services, Torah and Haftara, students will be asked to pre-write, write, revise and practice their *divrei torah* and thank-you speeches and implement their *mitzvah* projects outside of class time. Students who prepare in a timely manner and meet deadlines help improve the experience for the whole class. Rabbi Weiner and others are available for additional help as well as questions.

## **SERVICE LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION**

The celebration of a child's *simha* is not just what happens upon the day of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but rather is a journey entwined with the life and rituals of the entire KI community and the Jewish community in general. Each bar/bat mitzvah student will be given at least one opportunity during the winter months to lead the Torah service on Shabbat morning and *kiddush*, the blessing over wine, on Friday night. Although most students have led Junior Congregation, leading one service in the main sanctuary helps the student and family become more comfortable with the bar/bat mitzvah study process and invites the congregation to deepen its investment in each student's learning.

## **DEVAR TORAH**

Preparing for bar/bat mitzvah is not solely an exercise in learning liturgy. It is also a journey of increasing understanding that lays the foundation for future study of Torah. In the fall, Rabbi Weiner will work with the class on studying parts of every student's Torah portion. Students then choose which one of the following they will write and present.

- *Devar Torah*: Students choose a theme to explore with the congregation, based on the passage of Torah they have studied with their peers and Rabbi Weiner. They incorporate commentary, additional sources such as movies or literature and/or personal experience into a unified, clear, brief sermon. At best, students illustrate for the congregation how they've grown through Torah study during the year and offer a message authentic to their life experience.
- *Creative Devar Torah*. Drawing on the student's existing passion and artistic skills, the student creates a sophisticated artistic or dramatic *midrash* about some aspect of the Torah or Haftara passage and shares it with the congregation. One recent student painted a representation of the message of her Haftarah; another wrote and performed a monologue that offered a new perspective on a story from his Torah reading. Rabbi Weiner will help the student find a mentor for the artistic aspect of this project.
- *Bar/bat Mitzvah Speech*: The student will offer a short speech at the end of the service that contains the following elements: a summary of the content of the Torah reading, a statement of the meaning of *bar/bat mitzvah* to the student, explanation of a *mitzvah* with which the student identifies and why and some words of gratitude to family, teachers and community.

Any speech ought to reflect the student's insights; nevertheless, some students require parental support during the writing process. Meeting deadlines with quality work is important for the whole class, and Rabbi Weiner can provide additional support as needed. Rabbi Weiner makes an effort to respect school schedules during the writing process, which usually takes several weeks. Students

practice delivery with Rabbi Weiner and/or Jeff Cook during their rehearsals, close to the date of the *simha*.

### **THANK-YOU SPEECH**

Students usually have many people they would like to thank for being present at their *simha* or helping them with preparation. Before closing prayers at the end of the service, students offer a few sentences of gratitude. Generally included are parents, out-of-town family and friends and teachers. Students are asked to be brief (5-8 sentences) and to take extra care when considering whether to mention only some people by name. There may be some statements of gratitude more suited to a family dinner or celebratory party than to the sanctuary. Students will write and practice their thank-you speeches under the supervision of Rabbi Weiner and/or Jeff Cook. Parents may certainly help.

### **MITZVAH PROJECT**

For the Jewish people, *mitzvot* are not theoretical; they are best understood through practice: examples include feeding the hungry, hospitality, supporting the poor, sheltering the homeless, comforting the sick or bereaved, care for the environment and respect for the elderly.

The most meaningful and successful projects emerge from the passions of a student and a family. A student who is disturbed by poverty in the Berkshires might volunteer at a shelter or soup kitchen; an athlete might donate time to teach basketball to disabled children; someone who has a knack for connecting with the elderly might spend time at an adult day center or nursing home; an outdoorsy family might take on a clean-up project in one of the local state parks or find a way to support the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. Projects to raise money *in creative ways* for a worthy cause – in the Berkshires or beyond them - that is important to the student are also welcome.

Our hope is that the performance of *mitzvot* individually and in community will inspire each student to become a “Mitzvah Hero” again and again. Rebecca Caine will meet with the students to help them figure out their Mitzvah project and touch base throughout the year to offer support and guidance when necessary.



## MEETINGS, MILESTONES AND DEADLINES

Elisa Snowise will schedule, in conjunction with Rabbi Weiner, a series of events, programs and meetings as a part of the bar/bat mitzvah year. Each family will receive a personalized schedule. A general outline appears below. The most efficient way to turn in the fall and spring packets is to download them from [www.knesetisrael.org](http://www.knesetisrael.org), fill them out on a computer and email them to Elisa at [elisasatki@gmail.com](mailto:elisasatki@gmail.com).

### *September-October:*

- Classes (5 hrs/week) continue and tutoring begins.
- **September 8 - B'nai Mitzvah Family Meeting**, 12:15pm following services.
- **Fall packet is due** to [elisasatki@gmail.com](mailto:elisasatki@gmail.com) by **November 1**.

### *November-February:*

- Students lead a Torah service on Shabbat morning and kiddush at a traditional Friday night service. Each student has one opportunity for each.
- D'var Torah composition and Mitzvah project
- **February 3 - Tefillin Minyan Meeting** to discuss service assignment, Torah readings and bimah honors - Minyan at 8:45am, Brunch and Meeting at 9:30am.
- **Winter packet is due** to [elisasatki@gmail.com](mailto:elisasatki@gmail.com) by **March 1 for May/June families, and April 1 for Aug/Sept families**.
- Information is due to KOL KI by March 1 for May/June families and April 1 for Aug/Sept families.

### *March-May*

- Classes continue.
- D'var Torah is finalized.
- Rehearsals scheduled for May/June students and families (details in box)

### *June-August*

- Classes available for students who have not yet celebrated (schedule TBD).
- Rehearsals and ceremonies (details in box)

### **TWO WEEKS TO GO...**

The following events will take place during the two weeks leading up to the *simha*.

- A full sanctuary rehearsal with Elisa for the student alone (about two weeks prior)
- A public speaking tutorial/workshop with Jeff Cook; 2 sessions, 2 hours each
- A dress rehearsal for parent(s) and student with Rabbi Weiner (typically the Tuesday afternoon before the *simha*).
- Leadership of kiddush, and perhaps more of the service, on the Friday night before the *simha* (5:45 p.m.)
- The *simha* itself

## GIFTS

### GIFTS THE STUDENT RECEIVES FROM THE CONGREGATION

In the course of studies, each student receives a number of books which are used during the year and become a part of his or her personal library:

- *Siddur Lev Shalem*

The following are presented to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah as gifts on the day of the *simha*:

- *Etz Hayim Humash*
- *Tikun LaKorim* for reading Torah and *haftara*
- A certificate
- A Kiddush cup

### GIFTS THE STUDENT RECEIVES FROM THE FAMILY

#### Tallit

The *tallit* is a four-cornered prayer shawl that represents the unity of God, the behavioral expectations and responsibilities of the covenant and the Jewish community that transcends space and time. Jewish men at Knesset Israel are required to wear a *tallit* at morning services, and Jewish women are encouraged to do so. ***Both boys and girls wear a tallit the morning of their simha. Students should begin wearing a tallit on their thirteenth birthday, regardless of when the simha is scheduled.*** Customarily, parents or grandparents present each student with a *tallit*; they can be purchased online or in any Judaica shop.

#### Tefillin

Unique to Judaism, *tefillin* are a physical representation of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. Consisting of leather boxes containing handwritten scriptural passages attached to leather straps knotted in a particular way, they are worn on the head and arm at weekday morning services. Every boy celebrating bar mitzvah is required to own a set of *tefillin*, and girls are encouraged to do so as well. Rabbi Weiner will teach students how to put on *tefillin*. ***Parents are asked not to give the student a set of tefillin that are owned but not used by a living relative.*** Reasonably priced tefillin may be purchased from A.O.S. Greenfield at 1-866-888-8740, the Federation of Jewish Men's Club (FJMC) [www.fjmc.org/StoreTefillin.html](http://www.fjmc.org/StoreTefillin.html) and any reliable Judaica store; if the cost is prohibitive, please speak with Rabbi Weiner. ***Families should purchase tefillin ahead of time to allow plenty of time for adjustment to size, practice and for the February 3rd meeting.***

## KIBBUDIM – SERVICE LEADERSHIP AND HONORS

Knesset Israel encourages the fullest possible participation by the bar/bat mitzvah family in the service. Opportunities include chanting Torah, taking *aliyot*, and many non-speaking roles. Please be circumspect as you choose relatives and friends for roles in the service. Those who take roles in the service should be comfortable with them and should not be set up to embarrass themselves. Furthermore please try to be sensitive to family dynamics as you assign roles; everyone involved wants the primary memory from the *simha* to be one of joy, not of exclusion or being slighted.

You may distribute honors but are under no obligation to do so. Below please find some general instructions; more details and charts to fill out appear in the winter packet. Respecting deadlines will help Rabbi Weiner and the lay leaders of the congregation ensure that the service runs smoothly.

It is important that participants be comfortable on the *bima* at Knesset Israel. You may wish to copy "Bima Basics" (available from the synagogue office) and send it to those who will be participating in our services but are less familiar with K.I. customs and rituals.

### CHANTING FROM THE TORAH

Please check with Elisa regarding exactly which aliyot of Torah reading and which services the student will be leading. Knesset Israel requires all Torah chanting to be at a high standard – words and melody should be accurate - and though the synagogue does not provide recordings, there are online resources (tracks for purchase via iTunes, for example) that can help. All readers must read from the Torah scroll, not from a study sheet, and should be aware in advance that the Torah scroll is written without vowels and cantillation marks. All readers must be Jewish according to *halakha* and over the age of bar/bat mitzvah. Please keep in mind that, while excellent Torah reading enhances the worship experience, poor Torah reading can make the Torah service uncomfortable and slow. **If you do not wish to distribute some or all of the Torah readings, the KI Ritual Committee will make the assignments.**

Rabbi Weiner will provide a breakdown of verses for the Torah portion and will make a note of any idiosyncrasies. Readings vary in length and difficulty.

### SERVICE LEADERSHIP

Any services not led by the student should be led by a Knesset Israel congregant, not by out-of-town guests, except by Rabbi Weiner's approval.

## ALIYAH TO THE TORAH.

Families may choose up to five individuals (over the age of bar/bat mitzvah) or couples to take aliyot the morning of the simha. Only individuals who are Jewish according to *halakha* may take aliyot. When two people share an *aliyah*, one should recite the blessing before and the other should recite the blessing after the reading.

Please be aware that bar/bat mitzvah takes place in the midst of a community. One or more Torah honors are reserved by the congregation for persons celebrating an upcoming wedding (*aufruf*), a baby naming or recovery from illness; they may also be commemorating the anniversary of the death of a loved one.

Knesset Israel asks that families designate two *aliyot* “for the congregation”. Generally one or both parents take *aliyah* #7.

Each honoree recites two short blessings, one before and one after each section of Torah is read. A copy of these blessings can be found in the back of this booklet. You may wish to copy and send them to those individuals you will be honoring in this way. Those who need assistance with chanting the blessings may visit [www.sidduraudio.com](http://www.sidduraudio.com).

### ***What is KI's kohen-levi-yisrael policy, and how does it work?***

Effective March, 2013, Knesset Israel adopted a new policy that permits any adult Jew over the age of 13 to take any *aliyah*. Although we will continue to call up descendants of the Temple priests – *kohanim* – and descendants of the Levites by their full names, they no longer automatically receive priority the first two *aliyot* and are no longer restricted from the other five.

## NON-SPEAKING RITUAL HONORS

Some honors are accessible to people who might not be comfortable reading or chanting Hebrew in front of a crowd, as well as to Jews under the age of bar/bat mitzvah. Jews of any age are eligible for lifting the Torah (*hagbah*, one individual), dressing the Torah (*gelilah*, one individual) and opening the ark (*petiha*, up to two individuals or pairs).

## ENGLISH READINGS

Gentiles or Jews may lead English readings, which vary in number and content from week to week. The bar/bat mitzvah family may designate up to three people to participate in this way; please speak with Rabbi Weiner for more information.

## **HIDDUR MITZVAH** (Above and Beyond)

Judaism has always encouraged not only fulfillment of the *mitzvot* but also the performance of *mitzvot* as ways of making communities friendlier and the world a better, more beautiful place to live. Accordingly there are many ways of enhancing the celebration of a bar/bat mitzvah. Some possibilities appear below.

### **13<sup>th</sup> Birthday Aliyah**

Because of the weather in the Berkshires and the structure of our education program, many KI bar/bat mitzvah students end up celebrating on a Shabbat well after their 13<sup>th</sup> Hebrew birthday. Regardless of when the community gathers for the *simha*, students are considered responsible for fulfilling the obligations of living as adult Jews from the time of their thirteenth birthday.

The life passage may be recognized by the student taking an *aliyah* and receiving a blessing at a weekday Torah service (usually Saturday afternoon, but Monday morning, Thursday morning or Rosh Hodesh by request) soon after the student's Hebrew birthday. Please contact Rabbi Weiner for more information.

### **Kiddush**

Traditionally a family enjoying a lifecycle celebration invites the assembled congregation, including invited guests and other worshippers, to a celebratory reception. General practice is for the family to provide a light lunch, but this is not an official policy. Families may prepare the food themselves or for each other, or may hire a kosher caterer. Synagogue policy requires that all food be prepared at Knesset Israel or in another *certified* kosher facility. Please consult the fall packet for more details. **Please share your plans with KI in the fall packet.**

### **Parents' Speech**

Parents are invited but not required to speak to their child and/or the community during the *simha*. Parents who opt to speak are asked to consider carefully the context of the message they are delivering and what, exactly, they want to say. Parents' speeches at bar/bat mitzvah can be among the most powerful moments of the morning. One or both parents may speak, for a total of no more than seven minutes. **Please let Rabbi Weiner know of your intentions at the dress rehearsal.**

### **Flowers/Food Basket**

It is customary for families to provide a decorative arrangement for the bimah. This can be flowers or a food basket or other items to be donated to a not-for-profit organization. **Please share your plans with KI in the fall packet.**

### **Tzedakah**

Families who wish to do so may dedicate a L'Dor V'Dor plaque for the tapestry in the sanctuary. Please contact Judy Cook at (413) 499-1544 for more information about this opportunity. Some families also choose to designate a portion of bar/bat mitzvah gifts for a worthy cause and/or to donate a percentage of the total cost of the *simha* to Mazon: a Jewish Response to Hunger.

### **Celebration/Party**

Many but not all families choose to enhance the celebration with a party for the student's friends and/or invited guests. Please keep in mind that Saturday night celebrations should not begin until after Shabbat has ended, and that is more than appropriate to begin these celebrations with *Havdalah*. It is also particularly fitting for the event to be catered kosher, or at least vegetarian, as the event is directly connected to the celebration of the acceptance of *mitzvot* that has taken place that morning. **Please share your plans with KI in the fall packet.**

### **Kipot**

Many families purchase kipot for the congregation for the morning of the *simha*. It is also possible to order special kipot and other ritual items to enhance your *simha* through an act of tzedaka. One such project is sponsored through *MayaWorks*, an organization dedicated to providing meaningful work and health care to poor women in rural communities in Guatemala. This is an organization discovered by Danny Siegel. They can be reached at

*MayaWorks*  
Kathleen Markert  
4421 N. Malden 3 N  
Chicago, IL 50640  
(773) 506-4905  
[mayaworks-chi@attji.com](mailto:mayaworks-chi@attji.com)  
[www.mayaworks.org](http://www.mayaworks.org).

You may also wish to consider

Lifeline for the Old (Yad L'Kashish)  
14 Shivtei Israel St.  
P.O. Box 78  
Jerusalem 91000, Israel  
[www.lifeline.org.il/store.html](http://www.lifeline.org.il/store.html)

### **Bentschers/Birkonim**

A kiddush luncheon at Knesset Israel concludes with the Grace After Meals. You may choose to use the synagogues booklets or order customized booklets as a keepsake for your guests. Many variations are available; please speak with Rabbi Weiner for more information.

## KNESSET ISRAEL DIRECTORY

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# APPENDICES



## TRANSLITERATED TORAH BLESSINGS

### *Blessings for Being Called up to the Torah*

1. Torah Reader will point to the beginning of the Torah portion to be read
2. Take corner of the Tallit (for men) and/or velvet cloth (provided for women) and touch it to where the Torah Reader is pointing to  
And, then kiss your Tallit corner.

Recite:

**בְּרַכּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה הַמְּבֹרָךְ:**

Barchu et Adonay hamevorach

First wait for the Congregation to respond and then recite:

**בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:**

Boruch Adonay hamevorach le'olam va'ed

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ**

Baruch atah Adonay, Elohaynu melech ha'olam, asher bachar banu

**מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־תּוֹרָתוֹ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,**

mikol ha'amim, venatan lanu et torato, Boruch atah Adonay,

**נוֹתַן הַתּוֹרָה:**

notayn hatorah

1. When reading is finished, Torah Reader will point to the end of the Torah portion that has just been read.
2. Take corner of the Tallit and touch it to where the Torah Reader is pointing to and then kiss your Tallit corner again.

Recite:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ**

Baruch atah Adonay, Elohaynu melech ha'olam, asher natan lanu

**תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַי עוֹלָם נִטְעַ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,**

torat emet, vecha'yey olam nata betochaynu, Boruch atah Adonay,

**נוֹתַן הַתּוֹרָה:**

notayn hatorah

## B'NAI MITZVAH FALL PACKET

*The following 3-page packet of information will help you plan the details of your simcha and help the Knesset Israel staff serve you effectively.*

*Please download this file from the KI website, fill it out on a computer and submit it electronically to Elisa Snowise (elisasatki@gmail.com). Please complete this packet by November 1.*

*Completion of this document is a prerequisite for financial aid.*

### **Bima Decorations**

Many families choose to decorate the bima with a floral arrangement or two in honor of a bar/bat mitzvah. KI particularly encourages decorations of the bima that are related to tzedaka projects (i.e., food to be donated to a local food pantry, etc...).

Please choose one:

- A) We intend to decorate the bima with a floral arrangement or food basket.*
- B) We do not intend to decorate the bima with a floral arrangement or food basket.*

To decorate the bima, please follow these steps:

1. Contact your chosen florist. You may use any florist that you would like. Naomi Schwartz, flower committee chair, recommends Viale and Bella Flora (at Guido's). You may decorate with either one or two arrangements (the first for the front of the rabbi's podium; the second for the front of the Torah reading podium). The color scheme is up to you. Please take into account that certain flowers may touch off allergic reactions that could mar the celebration.
2. Notify Naomi Schwartz **at least eight weeks before your Simcha of your intention to decorate the bima**. Naomi will submit the information to the KI bulletin and to the office for the weekly announcements. For example, "The decorative food baskets are in honor of the "Bar/Bat Mitzvah of ..... presented by..... and will be donated to .... this coming week."

For more information: Between April and November, please contact Naomi directly at home, 488-8043, or on her cell at 413-841-0006. From December through March, please contact Elaine Epstein for information, 443-6310.

## FALL PACKET p.2

### Meals and Catering

#### **KIDDUSH**

Traditionally a family enjoying a lifecycle celebration invites the assembled congregation, including invited guests and other worshippers, to a celebratory reception. General practice is for the family to provide a light lunch, but this is not an official policy. The following options are available to you. Please indicate your general approach, and the KI staff will follow up with you (Please select one):

- A) *Wine, challah, desserts and sweets, prepared and set out by family and friends*
- B) *Luncheon, prepared and set out by family and friends*
- C) *Catered luncheon, prepared and set out by a caterer and wait staff*

Caterer's Name and Contact Information:

As of fall 2015, local caterers approved to prepare food in the KI kitchen are Anna Gershenson, Dave Barile from *On a Roll*, Aura Whitman of *Berkshire Mountain Bakery & Pizza*, Jae Chung and Foremost (New Jersey) will send trucks. Other caterers are welcome, provided they receive approval from the rabbi.

D) Other \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed menu:

KI does not permit a luncheon reception on the synagogue premises for invited guests only. Please add 70 people to your count to accommodate the congregation during the school year or 90 during July and August. You may deduct any regular attendees you invite from your count.

#### **FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER**

Some families choose to hold a Friday night dinner at the synagogue the night before their celebration. Please indicate your choice, understanding that a facilities use fee to cover setup, cleanup, utilities, etc..., applies to options B & C. Please note: *We limit activity in the kitchen to one caterer per weekend. All events over the course of the weekend must be either meat or dairy.*

- A) *No Friday night dinner at Knesset Israel*
- B) *Dinner at KI, prepared by family and friends*
- C) *Dinner at KI, prepared by a caterer (Please note caterer information if different from above)*

**Celebrations**

**PARTY**

Many but not all families choose to enhance the celebration with a party for the student's friends and/or invited guests. Please keep in mind that Saturday night celebrations should not begin until after Shabbat has ended, and that is more than appropriate to begin these celebrations with *Havdalah*. It is also particularly fitting for the event to be catered kosher, or at least vegetarian, as the event is directly connected to the celebration of the acceptance of *mitzvot* that has taken place that morning.

KI's social hall and grounds are available as an affordable party venue under certain circumstances. Please speak with Rabbi Weiner or Chris Goetze if you're interested in finding out more.

Please describe in a few sentences the event you have in mind, including timing, venue and general nature of the party (kids only, bowling, ice skating, dinner & music, etc...).

## B'NAI MITZVAH WINTER PACKET

*The following packet of information will help you plan the details of your simha. Your answers to the questions included here will help the Knesset Israel staff serve you effectively.*

***Please complete this 6-page packet by March 1/April 1. Please download this file from the KI website, fill it out on a computer and submit it electronically to Elisa Snowise (elisasatki@gmail.com).***

### Publications

#### ***Kol KI – “The Bulletin”***

Bulletin editor Susan Miller is always excited to help families publicize their *simha* to the Knesset Israel community. Please fill out the appended **Kol KI Information Form** to help her write a profile of your child and turn it in to the synagogue office by **March 1/April 1**. *Please email a flattering, current, appropriate photograph directly with Susan – [sunpath2@gmail.com](mailto:sunpath2@gmail.com) – note **new** email address*

#### ***Service Outline/Program***

Many families choose to print a service outline to help guests better appreciate the service and understand what is happening. For some families, it makes sense to print a booklet noting the meaning and structure of the service; for others, it seems more intuitive to offer a page listing who is participating in what roles during the service. In either case, many include a brief message of gratitude. Rabbi Weiner has in his files examples of simple and more involved programs that you can edit and format to meet your needs. Rabbi Weiner *must* see your program before it goes to the printer.

### Photography

Many families wish to have photos or video taken to commemorate a bar/bat mitzvah. Because photography, audio recording and videography are not permitted at Knesset Israel on Shabbat, the congregation makes other opportunities available. The dress rehearsal with Rabbi Weiner is one such opportunity, although its primary purpose is not photography but rehearsal. Posed photos, as well as candid, may take place at that time. Please indicate your plans below.

\_\_\_ We intend to take photos at the dress rehearsal.

Photographer's name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ We intend to have video taken at the dress rehearsal.

Videographer's name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ We intend to have photos taken at the synagogue at a different time.

Please reserve the sanctuary for us on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(date) (time)

**WINTER PACKET, p.2**  
**Kol KI Information Form** (may continue on back if needed)

Name	Date of bar/bat Mitzvah
Best Phone Number	Best Email
Extended Family at KI	
Family Members who celebrated b'nai mitzvah at KI	
School and Grade Level	Formal Jewish Education Background
Camp/Jewish Camp Experience	Jewish Clubs or Activities
Favorite Aspect of Hebrew School	Favorite Subject at School
Extracurricular Activities	
Hobbies and Interests	
Awards and Recognitions	
Community Involvement (scouting, teacher's aide, etc)	
Tikkun Olam Project	

WINTER PACKET p.3

**Family Name Information**

Student Full Name	
Student Hebrew Name	
Parent 1 Name (Please be precise - i.e. “Becky” vs. “Rebecca”)	
Parent 1 Hebrew Name	
Parent 2 Name (if applicable)	
Parent 2 Hebrew Name (if applicable)	
Siblings’ Names & Ages	
Living Grandparents’ Names (Please note them exactly as you would like them mentioned; also, whether you expect them to be present at the <i>simha</i> .)	
Deceased grandparents and/or other relatives whose names you would like mentioned before mourners’ kaddish the morning of your <i>simha</i>	

**WINTER PACKET, p.4**  
**Service Leadership and Honors**

*You may distribute any and all of the following service leadership honors but are under no obligation to do so. Please check with your child's tutor regarding exactly which aliyot of Torah reading and which services s/he will be reading. Knesset Israel requires all Torah chanting to be at a high standard – words and melody should be accurate - and does not provide recordings. All readers must read from the Torah scroll, not from a study sheet, and should be aware in advance that the Torah scroll is written without vowels. All readers must be Jewish and over the age of bar/bat mitzvah. **If you do not wish to distribute some or all of the Torah readings, the KI Ritual Committee will make the assignments.***

*Rabbi Weiner or his designee will share a breakdown of verses for your Torah portion and make a note of any idiosyncrasies. Readings vary in length and difficulty.*

*Services not led by the student should be led by Knesset Israel congregants, not by out-of-town guests, except by Rabbi Weiner's approval.*

SERVICES	
<b><i>Pesukei DeZimra</i></b>	
<b><i>Shaharit</i></b>	
<b><i>Torah Service</i></b>	(Student)
<b><i>Musaf</i></b>	(Student)
TORAH READINGS	
Verses	Reader Name
<b>1</b>	
<b>2</b>	
<b>3</b>	
<b>4</b>	
<b>5</b>	
<b>6</b>	
<b>7</b>	
(rabbi use only)	
<b>Maftir</b>	(Student)



**WINTER PACKET, p.5**

Families may choose **individuals** (over the age of bar/bat mitzvah) to take aliyot the morning of the simha. Only individuals who are Jewish may take aliyot. As of March, 2013, there is no longer a requirement that the first aliyah go to a kohen or the second to a levi, nor is there any restriction on a kohen or levi from taking any of the seven aliyot.

The congregation asks that families designate two aliyot from among (#1-7) “for the congregation”. Generally parents take aliyah #7.

<b>ALIYOT</b>		
<b>1)</b>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Hebrew Name (“Reuven ben/bat Shimon”)</u>
<b>2)</b>		
<b>3)</b>		
<b>4)</b>		
<b>5)</b>		
<b>6)</b>		
<b>7)</b>	Parent(s)	
(Rabbi use only)		
<b><i>Maftir</i></b>	Student	

**WINTER PACKET, p.6**

Several ritual honors are accessible to people who might not be comfortable reading Hebrew in front of a crowd, as well as to Jews under the age of bar/bat mitzvah. While Jews of any age are eligible for these ritual honors, Gentiles or Jews may offer English readings. The number and content of English readings may vary from week to week. You may designate up to three people to participate in this way; please speak with Rabbi Weiner for more information.

<b>NON-SPEAKING RITUAL HONORS</b>	
<b><i>Petiha 1– Opening the Ark (beginning of Torah Service) Up to two people</i></b>	Name(s)
<b><i>Petiha 2– Opening the Ark (end of Torah Service) Up to two people</i></b>	
<b><i>Hagbah – Lifting the Torah (1 adult)</i></b>	
<b><i>Gelilah – Dressing the Torah (1 person)</i></b>	
<b>ENGLISH READINGS</b>	
<b><i>1</i></b>	
<b><i>2</i></b>	
<b><i>3</i></b>	

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