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# B'NEI MITZVAH FAMILY GUIDELINES

Congregation Brith Shalom  
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Dear Parents,

We are pleased and proud that your child will become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Brith Shalom. Our congregation has a tradition of providing a B'nei Mitzvah experience that encourages children and their families to strengthen relationships and connections to each other, the synagogue, Judaism as a way of life, the local and global Jewish community, and to our Creator. Our philosophy can be described as “deeper, not broader”. The children are given the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the sacred texts they will read and the prayer services they will lead. Although each child is encouraged to take on as much learning as possible, meaning and understanding are emphasized over acquisition of a passing familiarity with more material. The congregation and the entire staff of Brith Shalom join in a commitment to foster a meaningful experience and prepare your child to assume active roles in the synagogue and the wider Jewish community.

We teach our young people that becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the beginning of a life-long commitment to Jewish living and learning. Your enthusiasm and cooperation will greatly enhance the experience, deepening the meaning and spiritual impact of this lifecycle event on your family.

It is our hope that this handbook will help you easily navigate the process as well as involve you in the educational, communal and spiritual dimensions surrounding this wonderful *simcha*. If there is anything we can do to assist you along the way, please feel free to contact us at any time. We are here to help make the entire process accessible, meaningful, educational, supportive, and fun!

With sincere prayers for a transformational and unforgettable experience,

Rabbi Ranon Teller  
Rabbi

Cantor Mark Levine  
Cantor

## **Brith Shalom Mission Statement**

Congregation Brith Shalom, a Conservative synagogue, is an intimate and welcoming community that nurtures every individual's Jewish journey through Torah (Jewish learning), *Chesed* (social action), *Kavannah* (spirituality) and *Kehillah* (community).

## **Brith Shalom Vision Statement**

Congregation Brith Shalom, an egalitarian Conservative synagogue, strives to be:

- An intimate community that welcomes everyone as family, encouraging personal relationships with our spiritual leaders and each other;
- A spiritual community that is created through personal growth and active participation;
- A compassionate community that cares for every member, for *Klal Yisrael*, and for all people in need;
- A learning community that seeks deeper knowledge of Torah and commitment to Jewish values; so that we are a sacred community that nurtures every individual's Jewish journey.

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## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

First and foremost, we are here to help you through the entire process. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions at any point in the preparation process. There are many people poised to assist you.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Moses never had a Bar Mitzvah! The ceremony simply did not exist in biblical times. Indeed, the Torah considers the age of twenty, not thirteen, as the threshold of adulthood. No one person invented the idea of Bar Mitzvah. The first reference to thirteen as the age of *mitzvot* is found in the Mishnah, the first part of the Talmud (*Avot* 5:24). The rabbis of antiquity, however, did not clearly delineate between pre and post-Bar Mitzvah responsibility. Generally a child began to observe individual ritual commandments when he showed an understanding and ability to do so – regardless of age. Until the medieval period, minors often wore *tefillin*, were called to the Torah for *aliyot*, and, except for a few special Sabbaths on the calendar, were permitted to chant the *haftorah*.

For a variety of reasons, some still the subject of debate, by the late Middle Ages those under the age of thirteen no longer performed these precepts. Because minors no longer engaged in such ritual activities, they became the defining aspects of arrival at the age of Jewish maturity. In the sixteenth century, we find the earliest reference to calling a boy to the Torah on the Shabbat that coincided with or followed his thirteenth birthday. It is here that we find the roots of the life cycle event we know today.

Unlike a *brit milah* or the religious requirements of a Jewish wedding, participation in a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is *not* a commandment. One automatically becomes a Jewish adult simply by attaining the age of thirteen on the Hebrew calendar. An individual over the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is no less a Jewish adult, even without the ceremony.

Until fairly recently, a girl's arrival at Jewish adulthood was not ritually observed. The first modern Bat Mitzvah ceremony took place in North America in the spring of 1922. It was celebrated by Judith Kaplan Eisenstein, the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist stream of Judaism. Today, the observance of Bat Mitzvah in one form or another is common throughout the Jewish world, even within many Orthodox communities. Jewish law established the age of maturity for girls as twelve and one day in recognition of the fact that they mature more quickly than boys do. As many egalitarian synagogues do, we generally schedule the celebration of B'not Mitzvah around the time of a girl's thirteenth birthday for the sake of keeping classes together and to ensure the completion of religious educational requirements.

Until a generation or two ago, the celebration of Bar Mitzvah was rather low key. A child would be called for an *aliyah* on the first Torah reading day that followed his thirteenth birthday, whether on a Monday, Thursday, or Shabbat morning. On weekdays, those present might drink a *l'hayim* to the family's health and eat a piece of cake before going to work. In all likelihood, the Bar Mitzvah boy would attend school after the morning service.

There certainly was none of the elaborate planning and preparation that often accompanies contemporary celebrations of the event. Critics of the manner in which B'nei Mitzvah are observed today point to the excesses of certain celebrations and the manner in which the event can become little more than an excuse to indulge in conspicuous consumption. With some justification, they rue the fact that at times the "bar" all but eclipses the mitzvah. It is important for youngsters and parents to remember that the ultimate litmus test of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah's success has nothing to do with the cost of the party, but the extent to which the event represents a spiritual rite of passage in an individual's life.

This life cycle event nevertheless offers tremendous opportunities for involvement and education both for the child and his/her family. Bar/Bat Mitzvah presents an unparalleled chance to bring youngsters into intensive and sustained contact with the synagogue and its programming. The Jewish community must continue to seek ways to take advantage of this life cycle event's potential as a powerful tool to promote Jewish identity.

(Excerpt from Jacksonville Jewish Center B'nei Mitzvah Handbook)

# OVERVIEW OF THE B'NEI MITZVAH PROGRAM AT CONGREGATION BRITH SHALOM

Congregation Brith Shalom is committed to providing and personalizing a meaningful Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience for every child.

## OVERVIEW

Many children celebrate becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Friday evening - Saturday morning Shabbat services, in preparation for which they learn to read their *Haftarah* and Torah readings, and to lead services. The Rabbi will guide your child through the study of the meaning of Torah text and help each child write a *D'var Torah*.

The prayer services are taught in a specific order, for both pedagogical and practical reasons. The order is:

- Torah Service
- Ma'ariv Service
- Birchot Hashachar
- Pesukei D'Zimra
- Shacharit Service
- Kabbalat Shabbat Service
- Musaf Service

Although we encourage each child to take on as much learning and participate as fully as possible, in keeping with Brith Shalom's philosophy we emphasize mastery, meaning and understanding of selected prayer services and readings over acquisition of a passing familiarity with more material. The formal process begins one year before your *simcha* date.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR B'NEI MITZVAH AT BRITH SHALOM

A child of a member of Congregation Brith Shalom must be born of a Jewish mother or have undergone conversion to Judaism to be eligible to celebrate becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Brith Shalom. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate at Brith Shalom must be successfully completing a minimum of five years of Hebrew and religious school education, grades 3-7, i.e. aleph-hay. During the course of the school calendar year that the child will become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the child must be enrolled and regularly attending classes at either a Jewish Day School or Congregation Brith Shalom Religious School. Brith Shalom members' children who are enrolled and regularly attend classes at a Jewish Day School are not required to attend Religious School classes. However, families with children in the sixth and seventh grades are expected to continue attending the Congregation Brith Shalom Religious School.

If your child is not enrolled in a Jewish Day School, Congregation Brith Shalom Religious School or the BJE's *Kesher* program, please consult the Rabbi or Cantor to discuss your options.

Students who have recently transferred from other Houston-area religious schools or recently moved to Houston are entitled to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Brith Shalom provided that they meet the other requirements. These children must immediately be enrolled in and attending classes at either a Jewish Day School or Congregation Brith Shalom's Religious School. The Cantor will assess each child's level of religious knowledge and Hebrew skill.

Families who celebrate their B'nei Mitzvah at Congregation Brith Shalom must be members in good standing of the synagogue. Consult the Executive Director or the Financial Vice President with any questions.

## SETTING THE DATE

Approximately two years before your child's thirteenth birthday, you will be contacted indicating the Hebrew date of your child's thirteenth birthday, its counterpart on the Gregorian calendar, and a request for your



top three date choices. Based on the family's choices, you will be sent a date assignment letter in December. You will be asked to sign and return the letter to lock in your date. If you would like to modify the date, please contact the Executive Assistant. In the interest of fairness and equal access to the calendar for all families, all synagogues in the Houston area coordinate the mailing of the date assignment letters on the same date in December.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

We are committed to providing education, training and experience to *all* Jewish children as they become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Every child is unique and has unique talents, interests, and abilities. The B'nei Mitzvah program at Brith Shalom is able to tailor the training and service to each child's and family's individual circumstances. At your convenience and comfort level, you are invited to share your child's or family's situation with Rabbi Teller and Cantor Levine. Of course, you know your child best and suggestions you have for maximizing the quality, ease, and meaning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience for your child and family will be important in tailoring the program for you.

## **SYNAGOGUE STAFF**

There are many people poised to take you through the process of your child becoming a B'nei Mitzvah. In addition to Rabbi Teller and Cantor Levine; the Executive Assistant is a resource for you. The Executive Director is the point person for all synagogue logistics and facility oversight. Brith Shalom is committed to a strong partnership between staff and dedicated volunteers. Please contact us whenever you need us. We are here to help you.

# STUDY AND PREPARATION PROCESS

## SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY SERVICES

An absolutely essential part of B'nei Mitzvah preparation is attendance at Brith Shalom services on a regular basis. Coming to services ensures that your family and especially your child will become familiar and comfortable with the prayer services and the Shabbat community at Brith Shalom. Ideally, the family attends together. It is expected—and extremely helpful to your child—to begin regular attendance in the 5th grade and continuing in 6th grade, as the 7th grade year may be full of classmates' and friends' *simchas* that you will want to attend at other synagogues. We strongly recommend a minimum attendance of twice a month. Please consult the service attendance requirements in this booklet for guidance as to the appropriate amount of attendance required to lead additional parts of the service for a student's Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Please refer to service attendance requirements in the appendix.

## TUTORS

After completion of the preparation classes, your child will be assigned a tutor, who will teach the specific *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions and the appropriate trope. The tutor will also be responsible for making sure your child knows the prayer services he/she will be leading.

The tutor begins working with your child 12 months prior to their *simcha*. They will meet once a week for 30 minute sessions. The tutor will guide the students. However, students are expected to spend significant time on their own to practice, reinforce, and master their portions. Students also will meet with Cantor Levine bi-monthly throughout their learning as a checkup and to set goals. Parents are encouraged to attend these meetings with the Cantor. Two months prior to their *simcha*, the student will begin working with the Cantor regularly. There is a \$1000 fee which covers the cost of the tutor. This should be billed on 7/1 following the date assignment. This fee may be paid out in payments, but must be paid in full at least 60 days prior to *simcha*.

## D'VAR TORAH

Each B'nei Mitzvah student prepares a *D'var Torah*, an original interpretation of the week's Torah portion, which they will deliver during the Shabbat service. Each *D'var Torah* is unique, reflecting a particular student's learning, interests, style, language and personality. It provides an opportunity for each student to share a message learned from the portions and process of study.

Although students write their *D'var Torah* at home, the Rabbi guides the process, helping each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student develop a speech that is true to its writer, appropriate for the occasion, and infused with valuable Torah. Three appointments will be arranged with the Rabbi for this purpose. The first of the three appointments to include the parent(s).

During the weeks of preparation, most students are happy to bounce ideas and drafts off of their parents; others prefer to wait until they are comfortable with a mostly finished product. Either way, parents should support and encourage their child's writing yet ensure that the *D'var Torah* represents the words and beliefs of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The executive assistant will contact you a few months before your *simcha* date to arrange a time to meet with your family, to study the Torah portion with your child and supervise the writing of the *D'var Torah*.

## PRACTICING ON THE BIMAH

Your tutor and Cantor Levine will schedule ample time for your child to practice on the *bimah*, including time to practice reading from the Torah scroll and rehearsing their *D'var Torah*. Your child will have a final rehearsal will be held on the *Bimah* in the week preceding your *simcha*.

# THE SERVICE & FAMILY PARTICIPATION

## FAMILY & FRIENDS PARTICIPATING

There are several opportunities during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah services on Friday night and Saturday morning for the participation of family and friends, including:

- presentation of the *tallit*
- leading prayers in English
- having an *Aliyah* – (reciting the blessings)
- opening and closing the ark
- lifting and dressing the Torah scroll
- serving as greeters

Parents will have the opportunity to give a blessing and briefly address their child. Comments should be kept to a combined total of **600 words**. The honors worksheet and a copy of the traditional parent blessing are included in the appendix.

Family members or friends may also be asked to chant the Torah portions. These honors should be reserved for people who have demonstrated a level of proficiency with Torah chanting. Please contact the Rabbi if you have any questions and to determine the number of available portions. Torah readings will be held for family members until two months prior to your Simcha. The readings then become available to members of the congregation who would like to read.

## PARTICIPATION BY NON JEWISH FRIENDS OR FAMILY

The Jewish tradition has always sought to be inclusive of non-Jews within a religiously appropriate context. Everyone, whether Jewish or not, is invited to attend our services and share in the joyful occasion. Parents and other members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child's family who are not Jewish may participate after consulting with the Rabbi.

## LIVE STREAMING OF SERVICES FOR HOME-BOUND RELATIVES

Congregation Brith Shalom has the capability to allow family members who are unable to travel or attend the service the ability to watch the live stream on YouTube via their computer or other internet device.. The link to the livestream is available via the Brith Shalom website [www.BrithShalom.org](http://www.BrithShalom.org). The link can be found under the “Prayer” heading.

## INVITING CLASSMATES

It is the tradition at Brith Shalom that the family invites to the ceremony all the children in the celebrant's Religious School or Day School class as well as everyone in their B'nei Mitzvah year, regardless of whether or not they are personal friends. We encourage you to abide by this practice so as to avoid creating hurt feelings. Please contact the synagogue office if you need a complete class address list. Also, it is considered polite to send an invitation to the Rabbi, Cantor, your child's tutor and Religious School teacher.

### SHOULD MY CHILD'S FRIENDS ATTEND SERVICES WITH THEIR PARENTS?

Your child's friends are always welcome at the synagogue. We ask that when you invite your child's friends, please stress that their parents are also invited and are encouraged to sit with their children. The presence of the parents will encourage family togetherness on Shabbat and minimize the potential for disruption during the service. The ushers will assist with decorum as much as possible.

## **BRITH SHALOM TALLIT POLICY**

It is the practice of Congregation Brith Shalom that Jewish adults over Bar/Bat Mitzvah age (egalitarian position with no distinction between men and women) wear a head covering and tallit when officiating on the *bimah* (i.e., performing public leadership functions) in the following roles:

- Chanting from the Torah
- Chanting the *Haftarah*
- Acting as *Gabbai Rishon* or *Sheini* (the two congregants who call participants to the Torah, recite the blessing over them, and assist the Torah readers)
- Acting as *Shaliach Tzibbur* (lay Cantor)
- Acting as Lay Rabbi (except for evening services, since a tallit is required in the evening only on Yom Kippur).

The policy does not apply to congregational honors such as an *aliyah* (being called to recite the Torah blessings), opening or closing the ark, or reading a prayer or psalm in Hebrew or in English.

## **HEAD COVERINGS AND ADDITIONAL RELIGIOUS BELONGINGS**

All males must wear a *kippah* or other appropriate head covering at all times in the synagogue. Both men and women, including the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child, must wear a head covering when on the *bimah*. Young children participating in the services on the *bimah* are also encouraged to wear a head covering. Women and girls will need to wear a head covering even if they have bows or ribbons in their hair. In addition to their *kippah* (or head covering), all students are required to have their own *tallit*. Also, students are encouraged to have their own set of *tefillin* and their own *siddur*. Students are responsible for bringing either their *siddur* or religious school *siddur* packet to each of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons.

## **SHOPPING FOR SYNAGOGUE CLOTHES**

To sanctify Shabbat, we present ourselves differently when we attend services than we do the rest of the week. It is therefore appropriate that we wear something to synagogue that is in keeping with the holiness of Shabbat. Please keep this value in mind when selecting outfits for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah child and family. It is advisable for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child to wear shoes that are comfortable enough for long periods of standing and that have heels low enough to ensure safe carrying of the Torah scroll. Please be aware that the *bimah* is a raised platform. Girls should choose a skirt that is at least knee length to avoid the potential for discomfort when sitting on the *bimah* and maintains the value of modesty on the *bimah* and in the synagogue. In addition, girls' arms should be covered; sleeveless outfits should not be worn on the *bimah* or in the sanctuary.

## **HELPING MY NON JEWISH GUESTS UNDERSTAND THE SERVICE**

A pamphlet explaining the Shabbat service and B'nei Mitzvah ceremony is available for your guests upon your request. Please contact the synagogue office at least two weeks in advance if you would like additional copies of these brochures distributed at the service.

## **TIMING**

Friday evening services are at 6:15 PM and last approximately one hour. Saturday morning services begin at 9:30 AM and are generally concluded by noon.

**Please plan to arrive at least 20 minutes prior to the start of each service.**

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

### FAMILY EDUCATION

Rabbi Teller and Cantor Levine will hold a series of B'nei Mitzvah Family Education workshops during the school year. These Sunday-morning sessions, offered during religious school hours, will give you an opportunity to learn about and discuss with your child important components of Jewish living, such as prayer, *mitzvot*, ritual, and values. There will be a question and answer period, as well as time to socialize with the other families in your B'nei Mitzvah year. Full participation in these sessions is a required part of the B'nei Mitzvah Program.

### TIKKUN OLAM PROJECTS – (Community Service)

Observing the *mitzvah* of *tikkun olam* is one of the most valued principles of our tradition; it imparts righteousness, justice and loving kindness. As an expression of the significance of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and to add to the meaning of the experience, each child will choose a *tikkun olam* project. We encourage the family to research organizations and charities together, but suggest that the choice be something especially meaningful to the student. Our hope is that the student will develop an affinity for the cause they selected and continue their efforts after the Simcha.

For the ***tikkun olam* project**, the child will select one or more community-service, direct-service or social-action projects to begin approximately 10-12 months *before* the *simcha*, and hopefully to continue after. Brith Shalom staff are available for guidance to help students choose and accomplish projects. A mitzvah project guide can be found on the synagogue website. Families should contact the Cantor Levine to give final approval on the *tikkun olam* project before beginning.

Make sure the synagogue office has the contact information about your child's *tikkun olam* projects to list in the *Madrich*. Some congregants and guests may choose to honor your child with a donation in his/her honor!

### AFTER THE SIMCHA

Because it is so important to stress that Jewish learning is a life-long process, parents are strongly encouraged to continue their children's Jewish education beyond B'nei Mitzvah. Some ways families have chosen to continue their children's Jewish living and learning are:

- Enrolling in a Jewish Day School or in Kehillah High (Houston's community Religious High School)
- Participating in Brith Shalom Youth activities, USY or other Jewish youth groups such as BBYO or Young Judea
- Reading Torah and/or Haftarah at future Shabbat and holiday services
- Continuing to come regularly to *shul*
- Attending a Jewish summer camp\*
- Visiting Israel on a teen trip\* or with family
- Continuing to do social action
- Reading books with Jewish subjects and themes
- Researching Jewish topics on the Internet
- There are opportunities for the whole family to participate in learning at CBS. Ask the Rabbi about our innovative and personalized adult learning programs.
- Working as a *madrich/a* in the Religious School

\*Congregation Brith Shalom's Scholarship Committee offers financial assistance for children who desire a Jewish summer-camp or Israel experience. Applications and guidelines are available from the synagogue office staff.

## KITCHEN AND LOGISTICS

### CATERING AND KITCHEN

Congregation Brith Shalom utilizes the services of Noshier Catering for its own events. Noshier offers an array of great menu options at competitive prices to CBS congregants for their *simchas* and other life cycle events throughout the year. Here are some highlights of our arrangement with them:

- The CBS kitchen is kosher dairy. Please contact the office for details of the CBS kashrut policy.
- Congregants will be charged a \$200 facilities fee for events outside of kiddush lunch.
- Congregants may utilize the services of any kosher caterer. Please be advised that the synagogue charges outside caterers a \$300/day kitchen use fee (subject to change) for each day of use including the day of the *simcha*. The fee (charged to the caterer) also includes a person to be in the kitchen during those times an outside caterer is using the kitchen.
- The caterer will provide all labor and servers for the event (unless a congregant chooses to invite their friends/family to serve at the *oneg*).
- The caterer can also cater a Shabbat dinner for friends and family on Friday night after services, if desired. Menu options will be available upon request for these dinners.
- Billing for *simchas* and sponsored *onegs* are arranged directly with the caterer.
- Members may use the synagogue's glassware and flatware. Please be advised that caterers charge fees for cleaning before and after the *simcha*, setting up and putting away these items. The member is responsible for breakage.
- Bake dates will be coordinated through the Executive Director and does not involve the caterer.

**Catering information is subject to change annually. Contact the office for up to date catering information.**

### BAKE DATE

Anything that is served at Brith Shalom must be prepared and cooked or baked in the synagogue kitchen. Food prepared by a kosher bakery, restaurant or caterer is also allowed or you may hold a "Bake Date" to make desserts for the Friday night *oneg* or Saturday *kiddush* luncheon. At a bake date, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family invites friends and relatives to come to the *shul* and join in the fun of baking. The family brings all kosher/heckshered ingredients and other supplies to the kitchen. A person experienced in working on bake dates must be in the kitchen on the day of the bake date and can assist you in advance for preparing recipes and estimating quantities. There is a \$200 fee (subject to change) for the use of the kitchen.

Please speak with the Executive Director to arrange your date and confirm the availability of freezer space. You may also hire an outside kosher caterer to prepare baked goods.

If you decide to hold a bake date, you are responsible for supplying all of the kosher ingredients and storage boxes. An authorized kitchen representative will check ingredients and help locate proper cooking utensils. The *shul* will also provide all baking trays, ovens and freezer space (to store your baked goods). Although you are responsible for ensuring that the kitchen is left in the same condition as when you arrived, Brith Shalom will provide someone to wash all baking trays.

## FRIDAY NIGHT OPTIONS

Friday night dinner is a warm and traditional way for your family and friends to start Shabbat. Dinners can be held before or after the 6:15 PM Friday night service. They can be catered by the synagogue or held in a private home. Following the service, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family provides the grape juice or wine and challah, coordinated by the caterer. We ask that you stay a few moments after the service to allow the congregation to greet you before leaving.

Other options for Friday night are wine & cheese prior to services, light appetizers before or after services, or even a light sweet *kiddush* after services. Please contact Noshier Catering regarding your plans.

## SHABBAT LUNCHEON

The Kiddush luncheon, coordinated with the Executive Director and caterer, is an extension of the service and an important component of Shabbat. Bar/Bat Mitzvah families provide a *kiddush* luncheon after morning services and host everyone who regularly attends services (a normal Shabbat includes approx. 125 people) in addition to your personal guests. It is a mitzvah for the congregation and all guests to share in the family's *simcha*. Your child will lead *hamotzi* (blessing before the meal) and *birkat hamazon* (blessing after the meal). The Executive Director and caterer will go over all of the possibilities for the luncheon.

## TABLE DECORATIONS AND TABLEWARE

Bar/Bat Mitzvah families are expected to provide plates, cups, utensils and other tableware for *simcha* meals they sponsor at the synagogue. In the spirit of the Jewish value of *bal tashchit* – conserving precious resources - and an effort to increase sustainability of events, CBS requests that families use biodegradable tableware. Please do not purchase anything Styrofoam. Eco-friendly items may be bought online or at local supermarkets. You may also elect to order linens through the synagogue office. (Place order one month in advance).

Centerpieces are not required for the Saturday morning luncheon, although there are many ideas which may enhance your *simcha*. Flowers, ribbons, or “*tzedakah*” centerpieces are just a few ways to tie in your child's *tikkun olam* project with his/her *simcha*. Other possibilities for decorations in lieu of or in addition to flowers are “Centerpieces for *Tzedakah*” from Jewish Family Service [www.jfshouston.org](http://www.jfshouston.org), and centerpieces made of canned food, books, stuffed animals, school supplies and the like for donation after the *simcha*.

Decorations must be brought to the synagogue kitchen no later than Thursday before Shabbat. Please let the office staff know if you would like a few tables “Reserved” for family. Napkins, ribbons or any other packages may be dropped off in the office as early as the Monday before the *simcha*. Be sure to let the Executive Director know when to expect them.

The rectangle tables are 96 inches long and the round tables are 60 inches in diameter.

## USHERS

The congregation has a committee that will assign ushers. If you like, you can designate an additional two to four people to serve as greeters whose only responsibility would be to distribute the *kippot* and Shabbat program, *Madrish L'Shabbat* and, if needed, the pamphlet explaining our Shabbat services. The ushers will still be there, so your greeters do not have to worry about any other duty. Please ask your greeters to arrive at least 15 minutes before services start.

## FLOWERS

If you wish to use the congregation's two silk floral arrangements for the *bimah* and a tall arrangement for the dessert table for the Shabbat luncheon, please contact the Executive Director to make arrangements. For fresh floral arrangements: dimensions of the flower containers in the sanctuary are:

6 ½ -10" long x 16 ¼" wide x 9" deep (inside stand)/3' high (arrangement should not exceed 3' high).

You may also want to consider green plant arrangements that can later be replanted or ones that will last long term in their containers. This is sometimes a less expensive and "planet friendly" way to go!

Feel free to select any florist you wish; (Brith Shalom does not endorse any one florist). Some florists that are familiar with Congregation Brith Shalom's set-up are:

- Braeswood Florist
- The Flower Corner
- Plants N' Petals
- River Oaks Florist
- Westbury Florist

Please provide the florist with the synagogue phone number, 713-667-9201. Also provide the synagogue office with the florist's name and phone number. **You must ensure that the florist delivers by noon on the Friday of your *simcha*.**

After Shabbat, you may wish to donate your fresh flowers to Goldberg Towers, Seven Acres, a hospital, or another institution.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

In accordance with Jewish law, **no photographs or videos of any kind may be taken on the premises of Brith Shalom on Shabbat.** You may wish to arrange for family photographs at the synagogue before your *simcha*. Please notify the Executive Assistant of the date and time so that they can ensure that no conflicts arise during the photography session and so the sanctuary can be prepared for you. If you would like to include the Rabbi and the Cantor, please make arrangements with the Executive Assistant directly to schedule a mutually convenient date and time. Please note: pictures taken on Fridays must end by 4:00 PM unless prior arrangements are made with the Executive Assistant.

## BABYSITTING

The synagogue provides bonded babysitters at no charge during Shabbat evening and morning services. If you anticipate a large number of guests with young children on Shabbat morning, please inform the Executive Director at least one week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah so that additional babysitters can be hired.

## SHOMER SHABBAT GUESTS

If you have guests who do not drive or ride on Shabbat, Brith Shalom has several congregant families who live within walking distance of the synagogue and are willing to host your guests if needed. Please let the Executive Director know of your needs.

## TAKE HOME CENTERPIECES AND/OR LEFTOVER FOOD

In seeking to establish the fullest possible observance of the Shabbat at *shul*, we request that families discourage guests from bringing gifts to the synagogue, from bringing or removing food for the *oneg* or luncheon, and from removing *bimah* flowers or table centerpieces on Shabbat. Centerpieces, flowers, and leftover food may be taken home Sunday morning or Monday if you bring in new, disposable food containers before Shabbat. Please arrange a time with the kitchen or office to pick up your items. For sanitation reasons, any food that has been served must be discarded.



## HOW CAN WE TURN OUR CELEBRATION INTO A MITZVAH OPPORTUNITY?

An organized Jewish response to hunger, called *mazon* (Hebrew for "sustenance"), provides us with a mechanism to add a significant dimension of public service to our private celebrations. Through *mazon* you can voluntarily add 3% to the cost of your celebration as *zedakah* to help eradicate the scourge of hunger. Contributions are tax deductible. Visit <http://www.mazon.org> for more details.

Israel Bonds are an especially meaningful way to honor your Bar/Bat Mitzvah child or to show appreciation to friends and family.

These and other ideas for enhancing the meaning of your *simcha* will be discussed during the B'nei Mitzvah family education workshops.

# B'NEI MITZVAH TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST

## 2–3 YEARS

- Date assigned and letters sent.
- Confirmation of date/add to master roster.
- Check with the Executive Director to ensure you are a member in good standing with the synagogue.
  - Discuss any conversion or other family issues with the Rabbi.
- Shabbat Attendance Meeting (August, Grade 5)
- Continue regular synagogue attendance with your family on Friday evenings at 6:15 PM and Shabbat mornings at 9:30 AM

## 18–24 MONTHS

- Attend the Parent Orientation Session and B'nei Mitzvah Workshops (Grade 6).
- Begin planning how you will celebrate your child's *simcha*. Reserve caterers, venues, flowers, entertainment, photographers, etc. as desired. Brith Shalom facilities are available for rental by contacting the Executive Director.
- Put binder together—confirm texts.
- Consider beginning or expanding Shabbat and holiday family rituals at home.
- Make final arrangements with the synagogue for payment of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee.
- Executive Assistant calls to arrange a family meeting with Rabbi Teller and Cantor Levine for the planning process.
- Set up Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor/family meeting.

## 12 MONTHS

- Lessons begin with the tutor
- Help your child establish a routine for practicing at home.
- If you are considering making a *kippah* or *tallit* for your child, this is the time to start preparations.
- Research and choose a *tikkun olam* project(s), and begin making necessary preparations. If you'd like help choosing a project, please consult Cantor Levine. There is also a *tikkun olam* guide available on the synagogue website.
- Consider any family interests in chanting Torah for the *simcha* and notify the Cantor.
- Building reservation Finalized.
- Meet with the Executive Director to review account and financial arrangements.

## 10 MONTHS

- Rabbi or Cantor approval of mitzvah project.

## 9 MONTHS

- Reinforce the practice schedule, if necessary.
- Consider sending “save the date” notices to out-of-town friends and relatives.
- Begin shopping for a *tallit* with your child.

## 6 MONTHS

- Finalize arrangements for any family members or friends chanting Torah for the *simcha*.

- Order *kippot/yarmulkes* and *tefillin*.
- Meet with caterer to select the menu for the Saturday morning luncheon. Also plan the Friday dinner menu if this will be at the synagogue.
- Order invitations.

## 5 MONTHS

- Set up appointments for family and for student speech rehearsals.

## 4 MONTHS

- The Executive Assistant will contact you to schedule an initial meeting with parents and child to meet with the Rabbi and schedule additional meetings with your child to help with the writing of his/her *D'var Torah*.
- Discuss family participation and *aliyot* with the Rabbi.
- Schedule family pictures with the Executive Assistant. Pictures taken on Fridays must end by 4:00 PM, unless prior arrangements are made to stay later.
- Gather list of potential family Torah readers to discuss with Cantor
- Select Family members/Friends to read Torah and give names to the Cantor

## 3 MONTHS

- Send copies of “Torah blessings”, “Guide to taking an *Aliyah*” (see appendix), and recording if desired to guests receiving *aliyot* (Cantor).
- Contact a florist for flowers or plants to adorn the *bimah*, if desired. Silk flowers are available at no charge from the synagogue.
- If you choose to make your own desserts rather than have the caterer supply them, schedule a bake date with the synagogue office to take place four weeks before the *simcha*.
- Confirm Torah readers/Evaluation of readers (Cantor).
- Contact the synagogue office and confirm you are current on all of your financial commitments. Make arrangements with the Executive Director to become current prior to the *simcha* date.
- Complete Tikkun Olam project.

## 2 MONTHS

- Begin regular Tutoring Lessons with Cantor.
- Have a photograph taken of your child for the synagogue Boker Tov E-Blast and the Jewish Herald Voice, if desired.
- Send your child’s digital picture to the Executive Assistant for inclusion in the synagogue Boker Tov E-Blast and the monitor display in the lobby.
- Submit the B’nei Mitzvah honors worksheet to the Executive Assistant and keep a copy for yourself. Please include all Hebrew names for *aliyot*.
- Mail invitations to out of town guests.
- Begin shopping for Shabbat outfits for the family (consider waiting to hem boys’ pants).
- Students will begin regular sessions with Cantor Levine.
- Return the General Information, Honors Information, and Madrich Information forms to the Executive Assistant (see pages 25-29 in this manual).

## 4-6 WEEKS

- Begin practicing delivery of the *D'var Torah*.
- If desired, submit article and a photo to the Jewish Herald Voice. Contact the JHV at [www.jhvonline.com](http://www.jhvonline.com), Phone: 713-630-0391. There is a fee to print photos, but the article is complimentary.
- Ask friends to serve as greeters, if desired, for Friday evening and Saturday morning services. Please note that volunteer members of the congregation are automatically assigned to usher.
- Cantor Levine will schedule the first *bimah* rehearsal.

### **3-4 WEEKS**

- Contact the Executive Director to coordinate final details for your *simcha*.
- Send copies of English readings to those people to whom they have been assigned.
- Have first rehearsal on *bimah*, and the Cantor will schedule "final practice" on the *bimah*.
- Hold your bake date or arrange for purchase and delivery of kosher baked goods.

### **2 WEEKS**

- Have scheduled rehearsals on the *bimah* with your tutor and Cantor Levine.
- Give final guest count to the caterer.
- The remaining balance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah costs are due.
- Haircut if desired (best *not* to leave it until the week of the *simcha*)

### **1-2 WEEKS**

- Turn in parent prayer to Executive Assistant
- Have boys' pants hemmed.
- Begin breaking in shoes.
- Ensure your *kippot/yarmulkes* and women's head coverings have arrived at the synagogue.

### **1 WEEK**

- Take photographs in the synagogue. Please ensure you have scheduled this with the Executive Assistant.
- Have final practice with Cantor Levine on the *bimah*.
- Create folders with all documents you and your child will need for services, including *Haftarah*, blessings, *D'var Torah*, thank you speech, parent prayers, and "Honors List".

## PARENT CHECKLIST: What to bring to the synagogue for the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

### Friday Evening: Please arrive at 5:45 PM

Set aside in a special bag to bring:

- Your child's prayer book
- Your child's *tallit*
- Your child's *tallit* clips (if using them)
- Your child's *kippah*
- Kiddush cup, if you are using your own, and ensure it is on *bimah*
- Head coverings for family
- Tissues

### Saturday Morning: Please arrive at 9:00 AM

Set aside in a special bag to bring:

- Your child's prayer book
- Your child's *tallit*
- Your child's *tallit* clips (if using them)
- Your child's *kippah*
- Your child's binder, Bar/Bat Mitzvah notebook/folder with Haftarah and blessings, *D'var Torah*, parents' comments, honor's list, and any other documents you and your child needs or would like.
- Yad* (Torah pointer), if your child has one.
- Kiddush cup, if you are using your own, and ensure it is on *bimah*
- Head coverings for family
- Tissues

### Financial Recap

- B'nei Mitzvah Fee \$1000
- Facility Fee \$200/day
- Bake Date Facility Fees (if any)
- All balances due 2 weeks prior to *simcha*

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## GLOSSARY

<b>Aliyah</b>	honor given to a Jewish adult to come up to recite blessings over the Torah scroll during the Torah reading
<b>Aliyot</b>	plural of Aliyah
<b>Amidah</b>	central prayer of all services, said while standing
<b>Ark</b>	cabinet where the Torahs are kept
<b>Aufruf</b>	aliyah given to a couple who are about to be married
<b>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	a child who has reached the age of responsibility for fulfilling the commandments
<b>Bimah</b>	raised platform from which we conduct worship services
<b>Birchot HaShachar</b>	preliminary service in the morning
<b>B'nei Mitzvah</b>	plural of "Bar Mitzvah". Another way to say "Bar/Bat Mitzvah"
<b>Daven/davening</b>	Yiddish for "pray/praying"
<b>D'var Torah</b>	literally "a word of Torah" lesson the Rabbi and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child teach from the bimah, a D'var Torah can also open a meeting or class.
<b>Erev Shabbat</b>	Shabbat evening, Friday night
<b>Friday-night Kiddush</b>	blessing sanctifying the wine and the Sabbath day, said on Friday night
<b>Gabbai Rishon</b>	calls people up for aliyot
<b>Gabbai Sheni</b>	helps the Torah reader and corrects mistakes
<b>Gabbai Shleshi</b>	helps guide people receiving honor
<b>Haftarah</b>	portion read each week from the book of Prophets in the Hebrew Bible
<b>Havdalah</b>	ceremony marking the end of Shabbat
<b>Kabbalat Shabbat</b>	service to welcome Shabbat on Friday nights
<b>Kashrut</b>	Jewish dietary laws
<b>Kiddush</b>	blessing sanctifying the wine and the day said on Shabbat and holidays
<b>Kiddush Luncheon</b>	a luncheon given on Shabbat after morning services. The Kiddush is part of sanctifying the Sabbath day.
<b>Kippah</b>	yarmulke, ritual head-covering
<b>Kippot</b>	plural of kippah
<b>Kol hakavod</b>	literally "all the honor" congratulations, good for you

<b>Kosher</b>	conforming to the Jewish dietary laws
<b>Kvell</b>	Yiddish word meaning “burst with pride and joy”
<b>Ma’ariv</b>	the evening service
<b>Maftir</b>	portion read for the maftir aliyah. Usually part of the 7 <sup>th</sup> aliyah, but will be from a different place in the Torah for certain Shabbatot.
<b>Maftir aliyah</b>	aliyah reserved for the person who reads the Haftarah
<b>Mazal tov</b>	literally, “good luck”, congratulations
<b>Madrich</b>	literally, “counselor or assistant”. This is the name of the weekly printed information and announcement sheet distributed to participants as they enter services.
<b>Mishebeirach</b>	literally “May the One who blessed” (our ancestors also bless the recipient of the blessing). Said when someone takes an aliyah, to pray for those in need of healing, blessing for a simcha such as Bar Mitzvah, baby naming, aufruf
<b>Musaf</b>	an additional service said on Shabbat and holidays
<b>Pesukei D’Zimra</b>	“verses of song” service after Birchot HaShachar. Made up mostly of Psalms.
<b>Psalms</b>	religious poems found in the book of Psalms in the Hebrew Bible
<b>Ruach</b>	literally, “spirit or wind”. This is the name for our once-a-month, Friday night service that includes traditional liturgy that is set to Chasidic and contemporary melodies accompanied by Shabbat-appropriate instrumentation
<b>Seudat mitzvah</b>	feast to celebrate a simcha such as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, wedding, baby naming
<b>Shabbat</b>	the Sabbath, a day of rest, joy, delight, prayer, and family togetherness
<b>Shacharit</b>	main morning service, includes the shema and amida
<b>Shema</b>	three paragraphs from the Torah affirming the oneness of our Creator and instructing us to study, teach, and observe God’s commandments and teachings in the Torah
<b>Shul</b>	Synagogue
<b>Simcha</b>	joyous occasion
<b>Tallit</b>	prayer shawl worn for morning prayers every day of the week. The important part is the special fringes, called tzitzit, which we are commanded to affix to our four-cornered garments. Seeing the tzitzit remind to follow God’s ways.
<b>Tefillin</b>	leather boxes strapped to the head and forearm during weekday morning prayers. Inside are parchments with the Torah texts that tell us to wear tefillin



<b>Tikkun olam</b>	literally “repair of the world”, any direct service or social justice action
<b>Torah</b>	The five books of Moses, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, also used to mean the handwritten scroll we read at services, can also be used to refer to any kind of Jewish learning
<b>Torah service</b>	ceremony of taking the Torah scroll out of the ark, reading from it, and then putting it back in the ark
<b>Trope</b>	system of cantillation symbols that tell us how to chant the Biblical texts
<b>Tzedakah</b>	literally “justice, righteous behavior”, giving money or other resources to those in need.
<b>Yad</b>	pointer used to read from the Torah scroll. We do not touch the letters in the scroll, since they are handwritten, and could fade by the natural oils in our hands.
<b>Yarmulke</b>	kippah, ritual head covering

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Bar/Bat Mitzvah General Information

**Please complete this form and submit to the synagogue office 6 weeks prior to your event.**

**\*Use Back of Form for Additional Notes:**

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Parents: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Numbers: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mom's Work Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Mom's Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dad's Work Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Dad's Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Initial Meetings with (1) Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Caterer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Event Schedule Overview:**

Fri. Shabbat Dinner at Synagogue: <u>Yes/No</u>	Number of Guests Expected: _____
Fri. Evening Service:	Number of Guests Expected: _____
Sat. Morning Service:	Number of Guests Expected: _____
Sat. Kiddush Luncheon:	Number of Guests Expected: _____

Torah readers: Yes/ No      Approved by Cantor: Yes/No      Congregational readers: Yes/No

Photographer: _____	Phone Number: _____
Date & Time for Synagogue Photos: _____	With Rabbi _____ With Cantor _____
Florist: _____	Phone Number: _____
Synagogue Floral Arrangements: <u>Yes/No</u> (specify Bimah and/or _____)	Social Hall Arrangements _____
Caterer: _____	Phone Number: _____

Date Madrich Content & Honors List Due: **(due 4 weeks prior to event)** \_\_\_\_\_

Head Coverings/Kippot & clips ordered?: Yes/No

Kippot Basket Provided by: Synagogue or Family Greeters: Yes/No      Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in having the Bar/Bat Mitzvah read (same) Torah portion at Morning Minyan on the Thursday prior to *simcha*? Yes/No

All items to be delivered no later than Thursday by noon on the day of the event.  
 Remember not to "carry" on Shabbat; discourage guests from bringing gifts (checks or presents) to the synagogue.  
 Flowers, food and/or other items may be picked up on Sunday or Monday. Please call the synagogue to arrange.

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

B/M Certificate   
  Kiddish Cup   
  Tanakh   
  Book Plates   
  JCC Membership Certificate  
 Madrich Approved   
  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXAMPLES OF SHABBAT MORNING BAR/BAT MITZVAH ONEG OPTIONS

### Option I

Assorted Greens Salad  
 Tuna Salad  
 Egg Salad  
 Lox Spread  
 Fresh tray of Tomatoes, lettuce and red onions and capers  
 Pasta Salad with pesto Sauce  
 Assorted Bagels Fruit Arrangement Coffee  
 Lemonade  
 Brownies

### Option II

Caesar Salad  
 Orzo Salad with roasted eggplant and pine nuts  
 Tuna Salad  
 Egg Salad  
 Lox spread Assorted Bagels Cream Cheese  
 Tomatoes, lettuce, red onions and capers  
 Puff Pastry stuffed mashed potato and mushrooms  
 Fruit arrangement  
 Coffee  
 Lemonade

### Option III

Greek Salad - Tossed greens topped with feta cheese & olives  
 Lebanese Cabbage and spinach salad  
 Mediterranean Roasted Antipasti: eggplant, cauliflower, zucchini  
 Hummus  
 Mediterranean Egg Salad  
 Tuna Salad  
 Assorted Bagels/Pita Bread  
 Cream Cheese  
 Tomatoes, lettuce, red onions and capers  
 Potato and Mushrooms Burekas  
 Israel, couscous salad-kalamata olives, sun dried tomatoes,  
 garlic, sunflower seeds, bell peppers in olive and balsamic  
 vinaigrette  
 Fruit Station Lemonade/Ice Tea Coffee

### Option IV

Tropical Green Salad with strawberries, mandarins and  
 caramelized almonds  
 Selection of fresh Baked artisan Bread  
 Smoked Salmon  
 Egg Salad  
 Assorted Bagels  
 Lettuce, Capers, red onions and tomatoes  
 Cream Cheese  
 Orzo with roasted eggplant and pine nuts  
 Tuna Salad  
 Cheese Blintzes or Noodle Kugel

### Option V

Greek Salad - tossed greens topped with feta cheese and  
 olives  
 Cherry tomatoes with pesto sauce and mozzarella  
 Mushroom and spinach quiche  
 Medallion of poached salmon served on the bed of  
 cucumbers in dill and basil cream sauce  
 Orzo Salad with roasted pine nuts and eggplant  
 Fruit arrangement Iced Tea/Lemonade Fresh Rolls  
 Coffee  
 Lemonade

### **CBS Caterer-Nosher Catering**

Shelley Rappaport  
 (713) 569-9161  
[kitchen@brithshalom.org](mailto:kitchen@brithshalom.org)

Fully customizable meal plans available.

Teens foods available as well! Fun options such as Pizza  
 Bagels, Mac & Cheese and more!

Samples of dishes available upon request!

Dessert options available as well!



Phone (713) 667-9201 • Fax (713) 667-8268 4610 Bellaire Blvd. • Bellaire, TX 77401 • [www.brithshalom.org](http://www.brithshalom.org)

Dear Friends,

Mazel tov on your child's upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah! Whether it's this year or later, this is an exciting family milestone to look toward and plan. Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Brith Shalom is a special experience. Our ultimate hope is that this process leaves your child feeling connected to our synagogue community.

Part of this process includes your child and family attending Shabbat services at Brith Shalom on a regular basis. For some, this might be a change in your Shabbat routine. But attending services regularly has huge, intangible benefits and helps ensure that your family's experience is rich and meaningful.

Attending Shabbat services specifically at Brith Shalom allows for a closer relationship and connection with our congregation. It provides the benefit of learning how to participate and lead our Brith Shalom service. Therefore, our Brith Shalom B'nei Mitzvah Attendance Requirements include Brith Shalom Shabbat services only.

We understand that as your child gets closer to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, they will be invited to attend their friends' B'nei Mitzvah that may be at other synagogues. This usually occurs around seventh grade. This is why we have established a B'nei Mitzvah Attendance system that begins in fifth grade and is geared to fulfilling the attendance requirements over the course of two years.

Benefits of regularly attending services at Brith Shalom include:

- Learning by osmosis: experiencing the flow and rhythm of the services
- Building self-confidence: practicing and becoming familiar actually chanting prayers
- Becoming connected: meeting and joining the synagogue community
- Enhancing the process: deepening the effect of their experience over time

Brith Shalom B'nei Mitzvah Attendance Requirements are attached. Remember, this is a two year commitment.

To receive credit for attendance, students must arrive no later than **10:00 AM** on Saturday mornings and no later than **6:15 PM** on Friday evenings. Each student will have a card in the "Shabbat Attendance Box" that will be located in the foyer outside the sanctuary. Your child will take their card out of the box, hold onto it, and turn it into Cantor Levine or Rabbi Teller following services. *The box will be promptly removed at 10:00 am and 6:30 pm.*

We will record the attendance after Shabbat and return the cards to the box for the following week. Periodically, we will send out an e-mail with your child's attendance update.

We are your partners in the Jewish education of your children and we appreciate your cooperation and your partnership. Thank you for your support and commitment. Feel free to call us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Cantor Mark Levine

Rabbi Ranon Teller

## Service Attendance Requirements

B'nei Mitzvah students will chant the *maftir torah* portion and the *haftarah* and lead some parts of the Shabbat service. This chart provides guidance as to the appropriate amount of attendance required to lead additional parts of the service for a student's bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Prayers</b>
18 Saturday morning services at CBS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 must be the main service in the sanctuary</li> <li>• 8 Friday night services at CBS</li> <li>• Friday Night Ruach counts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torah Service</li> <li>• Extra Torah Reading</li> <li>• Ma'ariv Service</li> </ul>
24 Saturday morning services at CBS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 must be the main service in the sanctuary</li> <li>• 8 Friday night services at CBS</li> <li>• Friday Night Ruach counts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birchot Hashachar</li> <li>• P'sukei D'zimra</li> </ul>
24 Saturday morning services at CBS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 must be the main service in the sanctuary</li> <li>• Friday night services at CBS</li> <li>• Friday Night Ruach counts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kabbalat Shabbat Service</li> </ul>
48 Saturday morning services at CBS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 must be the main service in the sanctuary</li> <li>• 24 Friday night services at CBS</li> <li>• Friday Night Ruach counts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musaf Service</li> <li>• Shacharit Service</li> </ul>

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date:
-----------------------

### Bar/Bat Mitzvah Honors Information

**Complete this form and submit to the synagogue office 6 weeks prior to your event.  
Please write legibly.**

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child English Name \_\_\_\_\_

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child Hebrew Name **(See important information below):** \_\_\_\_\_

Parent #1 English Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent #1 Hebrew Name **(See important information below):** \_\_\_\_\_

Parent #2 English Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent #2 Hebrew Name **(See important information below):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Important information:**

- Hebrew names are written as follows: name + ben/bat + father's name + v' + mother's name, e.g. Shimon ben Ya'akov v'Leah or Miriam bat Rafael v'Rifka. Please print Hebrew names in English letters. If there is a question about someone's Hebrew name, please consult the Rabbi. (You may also include the Hebrew spelling if you know it.)
- Any family members and guests receiving an honor should be in the sanctuary at the start of the service.
- Family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may fill six of the seven *aliyot* honors. These should be limited to no more than two people who are related. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah child receives the *Maftir aliyah* honor.
- The Religious Practices Committee will arrange for Torah readers from the congregation. However, if any of your family or friends would like to read Torah, please consult with the Cantor.
- Notify the Rabbi or *Gabbai Shlishi* of any guests who have special needs and may need assistance going up or down from the *bimah* for honors.
- It is the practice of Brith Shalom that all Jewish adults over Bar/Bat Mitzvah age wear a head covering and tallit when officiating on the *bimah* in the following roles: chanting from the Torah, chanting the *Haftarah*, acting as *Gabbai Rishon* or *Sheini*, acting as *Shaliach Tzibur*, or acting as Lay Rabbi (except for *Ma'ariv* services).

Tallit will be presented by \_\_\_\_\_ Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_

### Friday Evening Honors:

Honor	Name	Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah
Candle Lighting – p. 301		
Blessing over challah- p. 314		
A Shabbat Prayer – p. 14		

## Shabbat Morning Honors:

Honor		Name		Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah
Open Ark Beginning of Torah Service				
Aliyot Honors:	English Name	Hebrew Name Please write in English Letters	Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah	
1- Rishon:				
2- Sheni:				
3- Shlishi				
4- Revi'i:	*reserved for the congregation	*reserved for the congregation	*reserved for the congregation	
5- Chamishi:				
6- Shishi:				
7- Shvi'i:				
8- Maftir:			Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child	

Honor	Name	Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah
Lift Torah—Hagbah I <b>EXPERIENCEDLIFTERSONLY</b>		
Wrap Torah—Gelilah I		
Carry Torah After Reading		
Shomer		
Open Ark End of Torah Service		

Use the following if a 2<sup>nd</sup> Torah is needed (holidays and special days)

Carry 2 <sup>nd</sup> Torah (Before Reading)		
Lift 2 <sup>nd</sup> Torah—Hagbah 2		
Wrap 2 <sup>nd</sup> Torah—Gelilah 2		
Carry 2 <sup>nd</sup> Torah (After Reading)		

## Bar/Bat Mitzvah Madrich Information

Complete this form and email it to [exec.asst@brithshalom.org](mailto:exec.asst@brithshalom.org)  
at the synagogue office 4 weeks prior to your event.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child (English Name): \_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrew Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings\*:

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Grandparents Names\*:

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List Out of Town Family & Guests Attending Simcha: (name–relationship–city/state)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Tikkun Olam Project(s): include name, address & website of organization(s)

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Names of mentors/clergy/teachers you wish to thank for help on Bar/Bat Mitzvah journey

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Name(s) of kiddush luncheon hosts: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of bimah flower donors: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional notes & comments:

*\*Please denote if anyone is deceased. (z"l)*

*Feel free to use additional space if necessary.*



# PARENT BLESSING GUIDANCE

## **Step 1: The Brainstorming Session**

Write down some words or phrases that you wish for your child.

- Go beyond the ordinary wishes like “happiness” or a “good life”.
  - Get specific.
    - Example: education, passion and excitement, growth, travel and adventure, home, family and friends etc.
- Think about the uniqueness of your child.
  - Get specific.
    - What makes them unique and special?
    - What do you actually wish for?

## **Step 2: Formatting the Prayer**

Writing a blessing is much like writing poetry. Find a pattern or a rhythm. For example-

I pray that you \_\_\_\_\_

I pray that you \_\_\_\_\_

or

May you find \_\_\_\_\_

May you grow to \_\_\_\_\_

You may choose to use either or both of these patterns or create a pattern your own.

## **Step 3: The Finishing Touch**

Read your prayer. Reflect for a moment on what you’ve just done and what you hope it accomplishes. Then, use those ideas to create an introductory line and a concluding line.

**Submit your parents’ prayer to my office two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah morning. The maximum total length will be 300 words per parent.**

Blessings and Peace,

Rabbi Ranon Teller  
Congregation Brith Shalom

## **SAMPLE PARENT PRAYER**

God,

Thank you for the privilege of seeing Rachel attain this milestone;

Please bless her with a long, interesting, meaningful life, full of health, joy, and love.

Please watch over her, protecting her from harmful people and situations;

May all her education lead to wisdom, may her tenderheartedness inspire her to perform daily good deeds, and may she give back to the community and people who have given so much to her;

And, please grant us, her parents, wisdom, strength, and patience in raising her as she becomes a Jewish adult.

Amen

## Blessing before reading the Torah

Touch, Kiss, Blessing

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת הַיְּהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ

*Repeat line after congregation:* בְּרוּךְ הַיְּהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַיְּהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים

וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַיְּהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

## Blessing after reading the Torah

Touch, Kiss, Blessing

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַיְּהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת

וַחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַיְּהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

## **GUIDE TO TAKING AN ALIYAH**

### **(BEING CALLED TO BLESS THE TORAH)**

Thank you for honoring the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family and the congregation by participating in our services. Because many congregations observe different customs on their *bimah* (pulpit) during services, we would like to share with you Brith Shalom's observances for those being called up for an *aliyah* (Torah blessings). Your Hebrew name will already be given to the *Gabbai*, the person who calls people up to the *bimah*. The *Gabbai* will also use your Hebrew name for the *mishbeirach*, a blessing for you following your *aliyah*.

1. When the *Gabbai* calls you up, stand to his or her left. Take your tallit or use the belt that binds the Torah and touch the scroll where the Torah reader indicates. Then kiss the tallit or belt. Recite the blessings before the Torah reading. A large copy of the Torah blessings in Hebrew and English transliteration will be on the table. After the Torah reader reads the Torah portion, repeat touching the Torah and kissing the tallit or belt and recite the blessing for after the reading.
2. Face the *Gabbai* to your right, who will give you a blessing, called a "*mishebeirach*".
3. Walk around the Torah reader and stand next to the other *Gabbai*. You can follow the Torah reading from the *Gabbai's* book. Remain there until the next person who is called up has received their *mishebeyrach*.
4. You may then wish go over to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child and others seated on the *bimah* to greet them.

## Parent Reading: A Tallit Prayer

God is clothed in splendor and majesty,  
Wrapped in light like a garment.  
This *tallit* represents the garment of God.

As this *tallit* is wrapped around you,  
So may you be wrapped in God's loving presence.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַּן הַזֶּה.

*Barukh Ata Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha'olam  
sheh-heh-cheh-yanu, v'kee-ma-u, v'hee-gee-ya-nu, lazman hazeh.*

Praised are you, Adonai our God, source of all,  
for granting us life, for sustaining us,  
and for helping us reach this beautiful moment.

## PARENT BLESSING:

After Bar/Bat Mitzvah child has been called to the Torah for an aliyah.

FOR DAUGHTERS:

שְׁמַחַת אֱלֹהִים כְּסָרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה

Ye-si-mech E-lo-him k'Sa-rah, Riv-kah, Ra-chel, v'Leah

May G-d make you like Sarah, Rebeccah, Rachel and Leah.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנֶּךָ

יֵשָׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם

Ye-va-reh-cha Adonai ve-yish-meh-reh-cha

Ya-er Adonai panav Ey-leh-cha vee-chu-ne-kah

Yi-sa Adonai panav Ey-le-cha veh-ya-sem le-cha shalom.

May Adonai bless you and guard you.

May Adonai shine holiness upon you and be gracious to you.

May Adonai look upon you and grant you peace.

FOR SONS:

שְׁמַחַת אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֵּׁשׁ

Ye-sim-cha Eloheim keh-eph-ra-yim veh-cheem-na-sheh

May G-d make you like Ephrayim and Menashe.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנֶּךָ

יֵשָׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם

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