

**The Bar and Bat Mitzvah Experience  
at  
Temple Sinai**

**A Handbook for Families**



**458 Lakeside Drive  
Stamford, Connecticut 06903  
(203) 322-1649**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

So... you're planning to celebrate a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. *Mazel tov!*

Are you feeling kind of overwhelmed? A little stressed? A bit inadequately prepared? That's normal! Perhaps it's been too long since your own Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Maybe you didn't have one. Maybe you didn't even grow up in a Jewish home or community.

Not a problem!

Here are three very important things you should know before you begin. Remember them throughout the process:

### **1. There are no "Official or Universal" Bar/Bat Mitzvah rules.**

As your family participates in this experience, and as you join the celebrations of your child's friends and classmates, you will see that Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations vary by community, by congregation, by family and by the individuals involved.

### **2. If there were "official, universal" rules, they definitely would not require stress and anxiety on the part of the family.**

**3. You are not alone in this.** Everyone at Temple Sinai wants to help you make the process and the day itself very special for your whole family.

Are there unusual circumstances in your family? Call on us. There's a pretty good chance that another Temple Sinai family has already worked out a way to deal with a similar situation.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience is a high point of a Jewish child's life, the marking of a most significant milestone. The preparation for it can also be a time of growth for your child and for the rest of your family.

Temple Sinai's B'nai Mitzvah Committee, in coordination with our Rabbi, Cantor and Educator, has developed this Handbook to help you. It will answer many of your questions. Keep it in a convenient place and refer to it often.

In this Handbook you will find the requirements that are specific to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Sinai. You'll also find some background information and some suggestions that may help you in your planning.

Always remember that each Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is unique. The service led by your child should reflect the preferences, traditions and circumstances of *your* individual family.

The Rabbi, Cantor, B'nai Mitzvah Committee, officers and staff of Temple Sinai all rejoice with you in this celebration and are happy to help you with your preparations.

If you have questions at any point in this process, please do not hesitate to call the Temple at 203.322.1649 and ask how to contact a member of the B'nai Mitzvah Committee. Any member of the Committee will be happy to help.

*We wish you all the best!*

Rabbi Jay TelRav

Cantor Micah Morgovsky

## 2. WHAT IS A BAR OR BAT MITZVAH?

Most of us think of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a ceremony in a Temple including Hebrew readings by a 13-year-old child, followed by a big party and gifts.

First of all, Bar/Bat Mitzvah is neither a ceremony nor an event. It is the individual; it is something you become. The words themselves mean son or daughter of the commandment. Someone who is a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is considered old enough to be responsible for performing *mitzvot*, the commandments of Jewish life.

### How did Bar/Bat Mitzvah Celebrations Come to Be?

The public celebration of someone's becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is relatively new in Jewish tradition. None of the patriarchs, and certainly none of the matriarchs, whom we study in the Torah, became Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Most cultures have some way of marking the transition from childhood to adolescence or adulthood. In Biblical tradition, boys were considered adults at the age of twenty, when they qualified for mandatory army service and for priestly service.

The early rabbis, whose commentaries and interpretations created the Judaism we know today, lowered the age of majority to thirteen sometime during the first centuries of the Common Era. In the rabbinic literature of that time, a "Bar Mitzvah" is a young man who has reached the age of thirteen years and one day.

The ceremony acknowledging becoming a Bat Mitzvah did not begin until the last century (in 1922), and it was many years before it became commonplace. Bat Mitzvah represents Liberal Judaism's desire for full equality among men and women. Here at Temple Sinai there is no difference in preparation or experience between a Bar Mitzvah and a Bat Mitzvah.

Celebrating becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a Jewish *tradition*, not a *law*. However, Jewish law did recognize the following for a boy who is thirteen and one day:

- He becomes responsible for *mitzvot* and is obligated to perform them
- He could count in the requirement for a quorum (or *minyan*) for certain services
- His vows are legally binding
- He could be a member of a *bet din* (a Jewish court)
- He could buy and sell certain items of value (but not real estate)

In the Reform Jewish world, these details apply to our daughters just as they do our sons.

Today we recognize that a child is not ready to be totally responsible for everything at age thirteen. However, the age of thirteen is still a milestone. It is at about this time that many parents begin to recognize the limits of how much they can control or influence their children. It is at this time that parents have to come to terms with the fact that their child will determine the direction and achievements of his/her life, regardless of the parents' hopes or dreams.

### I'd Like to Become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Too!

Sometimes adults who did not have the opportunity to publicly celebrate becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah at age 13 wish to do so as they learn more about their child's ceremony. That's great! You too, can become an adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Sinai, as have many members of our congregation. For more information see the "adult education" section in this Handbook.

### 3. REQUIREMENTS FOR CELEBRATING A BAR/BAT MITZVAH AT TEMPLE SINAI

#### Educational Requirements

Temple Sinai's educational program is based on a commitment to learning and to worshipping through a community experience.

To celebrate becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student must meet the following educational requirements, developed by the Religious School Committee:

- Successfully complete (in good standing) at least three years of Temple Sinai's Religious and Hebrew School. **Students who attend local Hebrew Day Schools or who have completed religious and Hebrew studies in another community before affiliating with Temple Sinai** are required to attend Temple Sinai's Religious School for the 7th grade year. Of course, they are welcome to attend from Kindergarten on up.
- Be enrolled and an active participant in Temple Sinai's Religious and Hebrew School during the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- Be comfortable with and achieve the student's highest possible level of proficiency in the most common Shabbat prayers. Prayers are learned in Hebrew School beginning in kindergarten and continuing to seventh grade. In addition, as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, B'nai Mitzvah students have 20 minutes of private Hebrew and B'nai Mitzvah tutoring per week beginning up to 12 months prior to the Bar/Bar Mitzvah date. The first nine months, the students meet with a tutor, and the last three months they study directly with the Cantor.
- Prepare to chant a Torah and Haftarah reading with the Cantor. This usually begins after prayer fluency is achieved and continues until the week of the celebration.
- Work with the Rabbi to better understand the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah and to prepare a D'var Torah. This usually begins eight weeks before the celebration.
- Complete the 13 Mitzvot program, under the guidance of the student's private tutor. More information can be found on the Temple's website on our B'nai Mitvah page.
- The use of one-on-one outside tutoring as a substitute for meeting the educational requirements is not encouraged. Families with special needs should confer with the Rabbi and Director of Education, who will help the family plan for exceptional circumstances.

#### The Seventh Grade Year

The focus of study this year is on developing one's Jewish identity and becoming a part of the Reform Jewish community.

Community building activities include a 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat at a sleepaway camp as well as year-long group mitzvah projects.

During 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Hebrew language learning becomes individually-based and part of the student's private tutoring sessions.

### 3. REQUIREMENTS FOR CELEBRATING A BAR/BAT MITZVAH AT TEMPLE SINAI (continued)

#### Attendance at Services

Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are ***strongly encouraged*** to attend a minimum of 2 Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat services with their families in the year ***prior*** to becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah themselves. Increased attendance at Shabbat services builds the confidence of the child, thus increasing his/her comfort level during his/her own service. Children and parents will also develop an increased sense of community within Temple Sinai.

On weeks during which a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is scheduled, Saturday's Shabbat services will begin promptly at 10:30 a.m.

**All Temple Sinai services are open to the entire community.** No invitation is required to attend any service, whether or not a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is being celebrated. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students and their families are encouraged to attend other Bar and Bat Mitzvahs at Temple Sinai to get a sense of what to expect at their own. The community is welcome even if they are not "invited."

#### Community Service

Connecting a momentous occasion with community service deepens and enriches the meaning of the day. For that reason, Temple Sinai Religious School students are expected to complete the 13 Mitzvot program. Please see the 13 Mitzvot handbook on the Temple's website for additional information.

#### Family Programming

Students and their families are expected to attend and participate in all family educational programs developed by the Religious School.

#### Participation in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Peer Community

Every Bar and Bat Mitzvah student is part of a peer community in addition to the congregational family. The service celebrating the Bar/Bat Mitzvah includes the public reading of Torah in front of the Temple community, friends, family and peers.

For many students, this period of early adolescence is one of difficulties in dealing with social relationships. We strongly encourage families to invite all of the students in the class to attend the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. It is the hope of Temple Sinai that parents use this experience to encourage their students to live in the spirit of "Acts of Loving Kindness," and not choose to omit just a few of their classmates.

We recognize that in most cases it may not be financially or logistically possible to invite all of the student's peers to a party or other celebration after the service. Members of the B'nai Mitzvah Committee are available for suggestions on how to handle this situation. Class lists for inviting peers to the service are available in the Temple office.

#### 4. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN? (Temple Sinai's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Timetable)

Following is an abbreviated timetable for planning your family's Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. Please note that you may have to make adjustments for holidays, school vacations and celebrations that occur in the early fall.

You may want to fill in a target date for each step.

| <u>WHEN</u>                                    | <u>ACTIVITY</u><br><b>ANTICIPATED DATE OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATION</b>   | <u>YOUR TARGET DATE</u> |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| <i>At least four years prior:</i>              | Enroll your child in Religious and Hebrew School (the earlier the better!)  | _____                   |
| <i>Two years prior:</i>                        | Receive form from Temple Sinai office to assist you with date selection.  | _____                   |
| <i>One year prior:</i>                         | Make sure you are in good financial standing with the Temple.   | _____                   |
| <i>6<sup>th</sup> grade year:</i>              | Attend meetings for upcoming B'nai Mitzvah students and their parents to discuss the B'nai Mitzvah year, expectations, process, etc.  | _____                   |
| <i>7<sup>th</sup> grade year/1 year prior:</i> | With the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee paid in full, the student begins weekly lessons with the B'nai Mitzvah tutor.  | _____                   |
| <i>1 year prior:</i>                           | Begin working through the 13 Mitzvot program.   | _____                   |
| <i>3 months prior:</i>                         | The student begins weekly lessons with the Cantor.  | _____                   |
| <i>8 weeks prior:</i>                          | Make an appointment to meet with the Rabbi for work on the D'var Torah. (Note: the first meeting will be with the whole family)   | _____                   |
| <i>2 months prior:</i>                         | If you wish to provide a booklet explaining the service, begin preparing this. (See Page 7: Saturday morning, The Day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah)   | _____                   |
| <i>2 months prior:</i>                         | Biography page from this Handbook should be submitted to the Temple to be included in the Temple Bulletin. (See Appendix G.)  | _____                   |
| <i>The week prior:</i>                         | Student and all family members have final rehearsal in the Sanctuary.   | _____                   |
| <i>Day of:</i>                                 | Be sure to bring: <b>Yad</b> (if the student made one during Religious School, or you have your own – otherwise, student can use the Temple's)<br><b>Student's Prayer Book</b><br><b>Parents' speech(es)</b><br><b>Tallit</b> (if family has chosen to use a personal one)<br><b>Kippot (yarmulkes)</b> (if family has chosen to get personalized ones)<br><b>Torah, Haftarah and D'var Torah</b> |                         |

## 5. SHABBAT WORSHIP SERVICES

### Friday Evening Service (Erev Shabbat)

While Saturday morning (Shabbat) will be the day your son or daughter celebrates becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the Friday night service is a spiritually moving way to begin this celebratory Shabbat weekend. It helps to set the tone for the weekend and enhances the experience for both family and friends.

It is expected that the child and his/her family attend this service. The honor of reciting the blessings over the wine and candles is usually extended to the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Besides the blessings, the student will be introduced to the congregation and receive some gifts.

Details about saying these blessings, and their phonetic pronunciation, are included in **Appendix B. DO NOT PANIC**, the Rabbi and Cantor are available in advance to assist you. You will have your prayer book on the Bimah with you. The prayer book also includes the phonetic transliteration. To practice these blessings, visit the Temple's website to listen to recordings.

Although your child will not be reading from the Torah until he or she becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, this participation in the Erev Shabbat service is very exciting for him/her. In addition, Erev Shabbat provides a safe opportunity for the student to be on the Bimah in front of a full sanctuary to "see what it's like."

### Friday Evening Service: Family Responsibilities

**The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family customarily provides Flowers for the Bimah** (although you are more than welcome to use the silk flowers already on the Bimah.) In lieu of flowers, some families choose to decorate the Bimah with large **baskets of food** that are later donated to one of the shelters or food pantries in our area. Baskets of flowers or food (or other donated items) should be delivered to the Temple by 11:00 AM on Friday.

Friday night (Erev Shabbat) is a time for the entire congregation to worship and share in one another's life-cycle events. Everyone present at Friday night services is invited to remain after services and share in the Oneg Shabbat that follows.

**The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family traditionally also sponsors the Oneg Shabbat.** You will arrange this through calling the Temple office. If you prefer to provide the desserts and fruit yourselves, you can find instructions for the Oneg Shabbat (what to bring, quantity and how to present it) listed in Appendix D.



## Saturday Morning Service (Day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah)

Helpful hints for a less stressful day:

- Plan to arrive at the Temple at least 45 minutes before the service begins.
- If you have chosen to have your photographer take your family pictures at this time, be sure to allow enough time to have them completed and all of the photographer's equipment out of sight *at least* 30 minutes before the service begins – by 10:00 a.m.
- Some families choose to provide personalized booklets to their guests. These booklets may contain a list of guests who are participating in the service (Honorees), information about the student, the service, the text of the Torah portion, and/or an explanation of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration itself.

Samples of personalized booklets that have been used at Temple Sinai are available from the Temple Sinai office. Also, the publishers of the book *Putting God on the Guest List* have granted permission for the copying and distribution of the chapter "What Non-Jews Should Know About the Bar and Bat Mitzvah Service."

- Please be sure to designate 2-3 guests to serve as ushers at the morning's service. They will welcome your guests as they arrive, provide prayer books and the personalized booklets and assist all attendees in finding seats.
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and his/her family will meet the Rabbi and Cantor in the Sanctuary Study (robing room) about 15 minutes before the service begins.
- The ushers will direct the guests to take their seats in the Sanctuary. See **Addendum H** for detailed information for Ushers.

## Saturday Morning Service: Family Responsibilities

- If you are having an evening celebration, you may want to offer a *Kiddush* luncheon for your guests and Temple congregants after the service. Please be aware that there will be a fee charged to cover additional set-up and clean-up costs. Please let the Temple office know as early as possible so that the Temple can assure room availability.
- If you plan to remain at the Temple for a luncheon after the service, then your family is asked to provide a *challah* for *motzi*. The Temple will provide the grape juice for *kiddush*.
- Providing cookies or cake is optional, and up to the individual family to decide.

## 6. THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE

### Kaddish

If you would like the Rabbi to read the names of deceased grandparents or other family members during Kaddish, please include that information on the Honors sheet (Appendix F).

### Proper Attire

**Girls:** Appropriate attire includes skirts, dresses or pant suits. While the Temple does not set specific requirements for clothing, families should remember the sanctity of the time and place. Shoes should be flats or have a very small heel to make it easier to carry the Torah around the sanctuary. Girls should bring the shoes they intend to wear to the rehearsal to be sure they can walk comfortably in them.

**Boys** should wear a suit or slacks and sport jacket with tie and dress shoes.

Proper attire is expected for anyone who will be ascending to the bima in honor of God, Torah and Shabbat. This is especially true of our B'nai Mitzvah community exemplars. There should be no immodest attire at our worship services.

### Kippah and Tallit

In Reform Judaism each service leader is free to choose whether or not to wear a *kippah* (yarmulke) or *tallit* (prayer shawl). Boys and girls are both encouraged to wear kippot and tallit during their service.

If your family has a special tallit, such as one that has been passed on from a relative, you may want your child to wear it, continuing the tradition. **If you do choose to have your child wear a special tallit, be sure to include the details on the Honors sheet for the Rabbi.**

Temple Sinai has plentiful *kippot* (yarmulkes) available for use by guests attending services. They are found immediately inside the doors to the Sanctuary.

Temple Sinai usually has a limited number of *tallitot* available for use by Jewish guests attending services. They are hanging immediately outside of the Sanctuary.

Families may choose to offer personalized Kippot and/or Tallitot for those attending Services. Be sure to have the *Kippot* placed in a basket that morning.

*Tallitot* and personalized *Kippot* can be ordered through the Temple Sinai Gift Shop.

### Photography and Videotaping

Temple Sinai's policy on photography is based on the fact that your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah is, above all else, taking place within the context of a religious service.

Our guidelines are provided in Appendix E. Please make sure your photographer and/or videographer understands our policy and has a copy of the guidelines.

## 6. THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE (continued)

### Ushers

Ushers are responsible for greeting guests, showing guests where to hang their coats, assisting people to seats and helping to maintain decorum especially among the young people.

Ushers also assist guests who arrive after the ceremony has started, giving them prayer books (and the personalized booklet) if necessary, allowing them into the Sanctuary at appropriate points in the service and showing them to available seats.

Guidelines for ushers are described in **Appendix H**.

### Bimah: Board of Trustees Representative

A representative of the Board of Trustees is present at services on Friday night. Many families choose to have the representative be someone who knows the family and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child.

If you would like to honor a particular Board member by having him/her participate in your child's service, please inform the Temple office at least three months in advance.

If you do not wish to choose a specific Board member, don't worry! Someone is assigned to every service, and he/she will be there for your celebration.

### Parent Comments

It is traditional, but not required, for one or both parents to address the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child on the Bimah. The Rabbi will discuss these comments with you during the first family meeting. Keep in mind:

- Your comments should be directed towards topics like your sense of your child's Jewish education, the Torah portion s/he is speaking about, his/her *D'var Torah*, your hopes for his/her Jewish future, and/or your child's place in the continuity of the Jewish people.
- Humor is certainly acceptable, but embarrassing childhood tales are not appropriate for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.
- Your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be an emotional event that has been known to throw some of the best public speakers a little off balance. It is a good idea to practice your comments the day before the celebration.
- Even if you have memorized your comments, and even if you are a terrific extemporaneous speaker, **be sure to bring an extra copy of your comments** with you before the service. Place that copy in the *Bimah* (podium).
- Do you tend to cry at emotional times? There are tissues in the podium as well.

## 7. MAKING THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH MORE MEANINGFUL

### ***Gemilut Chasadim - Deeds of Loving Kindness***

There are many wonderful, thoughtful and compassionate ways to help make your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony and reception an occasion that can really make a difference in this world.

In addition to the many gifts your son or daughter will take home, there is much more a child can "take home" by performing Acts of Loving Kindness. Perhaps you may wish to discuss some of these ideas with your child (or come up with your own!) Then truly, you and your family will be emphasizing the "mitzvah" component of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Some examples follow:

- Purchase a plaque on the atrium Mitzvah Wall in honor of your child's becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Donate a percentage of your gift money to Tzedakah - a charity of your choice or one of Temple Sinai's funds.
- Ask your guests to come to your Bar or Bat Mitzvah with a canned food item which you will donate to a local shelter or food kitchen. School supplies, toys and books may also be collected and donated to appropriate organizations.
- Donate centerpieces to local hospitals and/or nursing homes.
- Display new Jewish books appropriately plated with the name of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the names of the guests seated at that table, in lieu of floral centerpieces. Then donate the books to the Temple library.
- Donate leftover food to a local soup kitchen or shelter. (We can provide information on some of the shelters our Temple community actively supports.)
- Plant trees in Israel in honor of your guests or family members.
- Write an introduction and explanation of the Shabbat Service and Torah reading for your guests or family members who are not familiar with Jewish traditions.
- Make a donation to the Temple in honor of those who helped your child and your family make the celebration a special one. There are many funds to donate to, including both a Rabbi's Discretionary Fund and a Cantor's Discretionary Fund if you want to specifically single out our clergy. Please see the Temple's website or ask the Temple office for a list of all of the temple funds.

### **Continuing Education at Temple Sinai**

Bar or Bat Mitzvah marks only a milestone and not the culmination of Jewish education. For a mature Jew, learning is a life-long process, constantly contributing to and enriching personal growth. B'nai Mitzvah, as part of their Jewish commitment are expected to continue their Jewish education through Confirmation and beyond.

### **Grades 8, 9 and 10**

**Schiff Tichon Sinai** (Sinai's High School) meets every two weeks on Sunday mornings from 11:30-12:45. It is a three-year program in which students learn with Rabbi TelRav. The curriculum includes addressing students' understanding of the world in which they live, the politics they hear about, developing healthy life-long relationships and their existential questions about God, Death, Truth and more.

## 7. MAKING THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH MORE MEANINGFUL (continued)

Many of these students have also chosen to serve as a *madrich* or *madrichah* (student role models) in the classrooms of younger students. The schedule on Sunday mornings allows them to do both.

The third year culminates in a special service of **Confirmation**. This is a way for students to return to the statements and demonstrations of the bar/bat mitzvah three years earlier and to *Confirm* that they are still committed to the obligations they took upon themselves at the age of 13. This is a moving and emotional experience for students as well as for their families.

## 8. FEES AND FINANCES

There is a fee for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah's preparation. **This is not included in the Religious School tuition, Temple Sinai dues, building or other fees.** There is no special fee due to the Rabbi or Cantor or Temple Tutor; the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee covers the standard preparation as described in Section 4.

There are separate facility fees to use the Temple for Kiddush lunches and other events.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a service of membership that only some members utilize. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee supplements the additional expense associated with this event.

The Temple office will bill you approximately 12 months ahead. It is required that payment is made in full prior to the start of Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons, as well as all Temple Sinai obligations.

On the occasion of such an important ceremony in the life of your child, it is fitting, proper and necessary that obligations be kept current. Temple policy defines this as having all outstanding religious school fees paid in full and being current and up to date with all dues and other Temple indebtedness.

Some families decide their students require extra help with Hebrew preparation for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah and as such, hire an additional tutor. Those fees are the families' responsibility.

**You will be apprised of all appropriate fees the year of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.**

## 9. OTHER QUESTIONS

Still have questions that were not addressed in this handbook? Of course you do!

**Do not hesitate to call the B'nai Mitzvah Committee for any question, no matter how basic or how silly you may think it is.**

**If we don't know the answer, we'll find someone who does!**

**How to reach a member of the B'nai Mitzvah Committee?**

**Call the Temple office to get a referral.**

Families in our Temple community have already found ways to handle (among other things):

Single parents

Interfaith parents

Remarried parents

Uncooperative former spouses

Blended families

Unblendable families

Honoring deceased relatives

and much more!

## 10. RECEPTIONS AND OTHER SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

### Social Function Timetable

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>When you get your date or one year prior:</i> | Select reception facility, food, music, photographer   |
| <i>6 months prior</i>                            | Start putting together your guest list   |
| <i>4 1/2 months prior:</i>                       | Select invitations; order Kippot (optional) and purchase Tallitot (optional)   |
| <i>3 months prior:</i>                           | Order accessories - party favors, napkins, floral arrangements for Temple and reception                                  |
| <i>2 months prior:</i>                           | Mail invitations   |
| <i>1 month prior:</i>                            | Organize Oneg Shabbat at the Temple for the Friday night service.<br>Double check floral order for Temple and reception. |

Please consider the Sisterhood Gift Shop for Kippot, Tallitot, and gifts for your own celebration and others that you attend.

We encourage you to patronize the businesses that support our congregation with their advertisements in our monthly Bulletin.

### Using the Temple Facilities for Your Celebration

Temple Sinai can be a lovely place in which to celebrate your family's *simcha* – joyous occasion.

Arrangements for the use of Temple facilities can be made with the Temple office (203-322-1649).

All food brought into the Temple should be “Kosher-style.” That means that Temple Sinai prohibits any pork or shellfish products, as well as meat and dairy combined. It is not, however, required that food brought into Temple Sinai be certified Kosher.

### Bar/Bat Mitzvah Invitations

Our Shabbat morning service begins promptly at 10:30 am. **Many families choose to show 10:15 a.m. as the time on their invitations.**

If you want to include directions to Temple Sinai with your invitations, they can be found on our Temple website ([www.templesinaistamford.org](http://www.templesinaistamford.org)). The Temple office can also e-mail you an electronic version of these directions.

## 11. A TIME FOR PARENTS TO LEARN: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Some families wish to enrich their experience by having a deeper understanding of it. We have suggested some books to aid you in the study of Judaism and the ceremony of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Many of these books can be ordered through the Temple office:

- Diamont, Anita and Cooper, Howard, *Living a Jewish Life: Jewish Traditions, Customs and Values for Today's Families*, Harper, 1991
- CCAR, *Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Cycle*, 1979
- Einstein, Stephen J. and Kukoff, Lydia, *Every Person's Guide to Judaism*, UAHC, 1989.
- Salkin, Jeffrey K., *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah*, Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992.
- Salkin, Jeffrey K., *For Kids -- Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Bar or Bat Mitzvah*, Jewish Lights Publishing
- Soncino, Rifat and Syme, Daniel, *Finding God: Ten Jewish Responses*, UAHC, 1986.

## A TIME FOR PARENTS TO LEARN: INTERNET RESOURCES

- URJ.org - The place to learn about Reform Judaism.
- MyJewishLearning.com – A place to get all your questions answered.

Please feel free to utilize the Temple's Adult Education and attend Shabbat Services as a way to learn even more.



## Appendix A

### GLOSSARY

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Aliyah      | “going up” refers to the honor of blessing the Torah  |
| Bar Mitzvah | “son of the commandment”  |
| Bat Mitzvah | “daughter of the commandment”   |
| Bimah       | “platform” refers to the altar area   |
| D’var Torah | Commentary and lesson based on the Torah portion that has been read                                   |
| Hagbah      | Person who lifts the Torah after it is read   |
| Haftarah    | A reading from the Book of Prophets that is an adjunct to the Torah reading                           |
| Havdallah   | The brief service that ends Shabbat on Saturday evening   |
| Kiddush     | The prayer over the Sabbath and/or festival wine. Also, the festive meal following a worship service. |
| Kippah      | “head covering” The more commonly used Yiddish word is <i>yarmulke</i> .                              |
| Ma’ariv     | Short evening service   |
| Maftir      | Last portion of the Torah recited before the Haftarah portion is read                                 |
| Mazel Tov   | Commonly meaning “congratulations,” or “good luck”  |
| Mensch      | Yiddish word meaning an honorable or decent person  |
| Mincha      | Afternoon service   |
| Mitzvah     | A good deed or commandment  |
| Motzi       | Blessing over bread   |
| Parasha     | Weekly reading from the Torah   |
| Shacharit   | Morning service   |
| Simcha      | A joyous occasion   |
| Tallit      | Prayer shawl with fringes on all four corners   |
| Torah       | The Five Books of Moses- the axis around which Judaism orbits   |
| Trope       | Musical notations for chanting Torah and Haftarah (different for each)                                |
| Tzedakah    | Generally means “righteousness” or “the doing of good deeds”  |

## Appendix B

### FRIDAY NIGHT BLESSINGS

All blessings can be found on the Temple's website

#### Candle Blessing

1. The Rabbi will announce that the candle blessings will be read. The Rabbi usually invites the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student, his/her parents and his/her siblings to say the blessings over the candles and wine.
2. Light the candles - before the blessing.
3. Read the English if the Rabbi indicates.
5. Wait while the Cantor chants the blessings.

#### Candle Blessing: To Practice or Memorize

*Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu melech ha-olam, asher ki'd'sha-nu  
b'mitz-vo-tav v'tzi-va-nu l'had-lik ner shel Shabbat.*

#### Friday Evening Kiddush/Challah

1. Rabbi will announce the Kiddush and ask the family to join her/him at the back of the Social Hall.
2. Holding the grape juice (Kiddush) cup – chant the Kiddush with the Cantor.

#### Kiddush: To Practice or Memorize

*Ba-ruch ata Adonai, El-lo-hei-nu melech ha-olam, bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen.  
Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu melech ha-olam asher ki-d'sha-nu  
b'mitz-vo-tav v'ra-tza va-nu, v'sha-bat kod-sho b'a-ha-va u-v'ra-tzon hin-chi-la-nu,  
zi-ka-ron l'ma-a-sei v'rei-sheet. Ki hu yom t'chi-la l'mik-ra-ei kodesh,  
zie-cher li-tzi-at Mitz-ra-yim. Ki va-nu va-char-ta v'o-ta-nu ki-dash-ta mi-il ha-a-mim,  
v'sha-bat kid-sh'cha b'-ha-va u-v'ra-tzon hin-chal-ta-nu.  
Ba-ruch ata Adonai, m'ka-deish ha-Shabbat.*

4. Blessing over the challah follows the Kiddush

#### Challah Blessing: To Practice or Memorize

*Ba-ruch ata Adonai Eh-lo-hei-nu melech ha'olam. Ha-motzi le-chem min ha-aretz.*

## Appendix C

### TRANSLITERATIONS OF TORAH BLESSINGS/SHEHECHEHYANU

DO NOT STRESS OVER THESE BLESSINGS!  
Recordings of these blessings can be found on the Temple Website

Many people already know them or choose to memorize them. For the rest of us, they are provided on a very large, laminated card right on the Rabbi's podium. It is fine to read them.

The type on this card is so large that most people don't even need their reading glasses. Try it out at a rehearsal!

#### Before Reading the Torah

Reader: *Bar-chu et Adonai ha-m'vorach.*

Congregation: *Ba-ruch Adonai ha-m'vorach l'olam va-ed.*

Reader: *Ba-ruch Adonai ha-m'vorach l'olam va-ed. Ba-ruch ata Adonai Eh-lo-hei-nu melech ha'olam, asher ba-char banu mi-kol ha-amin, v'natan lanu et Torato. Ba-ruch ata Adonai, notain ha-torah.*

#### After Reading the Torah

Reader: *Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu melech ha'olam, asher natan lanu torat emet v'cha-yei loam nota b'to-chei-nu. Ba-ruch ata Adonai, notain ha-torah.*

At the conclusion of the service the family will come up to the Bimah to say the *Shehecheyanu*.

#### The Shehecheyanu

*Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu melech ha-olam, she'he-cheh-yanu, v'ki'yemanu, v'hig-gi-anu laz-man ha-zeh.*

## Appendix D

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR ONEG SHABBAT

It has been our custom for B'nai Mitzvah families to have the honor of sponsoring refreshments for the *Oneg Shabbat*, which follows the Friday evening Shabbat services prior to their child's B'nai Mitzvah the next day. If the family wishes to personally bake or purchase desserts to be served following the services that is wonderful.

However, if these options are not feasible, Temple Sinai will provide the Oneg Shabbat refreshments for you at an additional cost. Please contact the contact the office for more information.

#### What to Bring

- 1 quart regular milk
- 1 lemon
- 1 lb. electric perk decaf coffee
- An assortment of pastries

For an average Friday night (about 50-60 people), 4 to 5 lbs. of cookies, rugelach, etc. and 3 or 4 cakes are needed.

You may wish to substitute a fruit platter for one of these items. When buying cakes, try to select those that can be easily cut into smaller portions.

#### What Will Be Provided for You

- By early Friday afternoon the custodian will have already set up the tables with paper tablecloths.
- If you prefer to provide a particular color cloth, or wish to provide fresh flowers for the tables, please advise the Temple office before Friday.
- The Social Hall will be set up with 2 urns (coffee and hot water).
- Cups, saucers, plates, utensils, napkins, sugar, tea bags and paper cups for juice will also be set out.
- In the kitchen you will find silver platters, doilies, clear plastic wrap, sharp knives if these are needed to platter your desserts.
- At the appropriate time the Custodian will make sure it is all put out and ready to be served at the end of the service.

## Appendix E

### TEMPLE SINAI'S PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOTAPING POLICY

#### Still Photography

Photographs are wonderful keepsakes of this happy occasion. We welcome the taking of pictures but ask you to adhere to a few guidelines:

Still photography is **not permitted** during **any** worship service, either by guests or by professional photographers. In order to have photographs representing the service, including using the Torah, the following options are available:

Arrange a **“walk through” photography session earlier in the week**. This must be coordinated with the Temple office so that we can find a time when the sanctuary is not being used.

#### OR

You may take photographs on the day of the service in the sanctuary but you should schedule the session to begin with time to **conclude by 9:45 am**. Most families find that a 9:00 am arrival is sufficient for the pictures. You are welcome to continue taking pictures in the atrium after 9:45 but the sanctuary should be cleared out.

If you wish to have photos taken of your family with the Torah, we must turn off the silent alarm, unlock the ark and handle the scroll for you. Only clergy or their representatives may do this for you. Photographs **may not be taken with the Torah** without one of these designees. To have these pictures taken you can:

- 1) Plan to take pictures at the student's rehearsal with the Rabbi during the week prior to the celebration.
- 2) Schedule a photography session earlier in the week. This must be coordinated with the Temple Office to ensure that the sanctuary will not be in use and that the rabbi or cantor will be available to assist you with the Torah.
- 3) Depending on the availability of the Rabbi or Cantor, photos may be taken after the conclusion of the service on Shabbat morning.

#### Videotaping

Video recording of the service is welcomed. The video camera may be left running during the service provided that it is stationed in one of the **rear corners** of the Sanctuary, as inconspicuously as possible. It must be out of the way of the Torah processional. The Rabbi or his/her designee will show the videographer an appropriate spot.

The video camera must remain in one spot for the entire service and the videographer must be stationery and sitting down so as not to detract from the service.

**Under no circumstances may video lights be used during a service.** Lighting is not usually a problem: our Sanctuary is blessed with an abundance of natural light.

#### Enforcement

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in being excluded from worship services at Temple Sinai and/or the loss of privileges to engage in any photography or videography at Temple Sinai events.

Appendix F

BAR/BAT MITZVAH HONORS LIST\*

BAR/BAT MITZVAH HONORS

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FRIDAY NIGHT**

Candle Lighting: \_\_\_\_\_

Kiddush and Motzi: \_\_\_\_\_

**SHABBAT MORNING**

**Ark Openers:** 1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Torah Undressers:** 1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Torah Passing:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Torah Blessings: Aliyot (Jewish and over the age of 13)**

*1<sup>st</sup> Aliyah*

English: \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

English: \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*2<sup>nd</sup> Aliyah*

English: \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

English: \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*3<sup>rd</sup> Aliyah – Bar/Bat Mitzvah*

English: \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Torah Dressers:** 1: \_\_\_\_\_

2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Names of deceased loved ones, grandparents, relatives and friends:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Note: if additional honors are needed/desired, please discuss options with the Rabbi.

## Appendix G

### Biographical Sketch (for Temple Bulletin)

Your *Simcha* is our *Simcha*! It is our wish to share some of your child's accomplishments and talents with the members of our congregation. When you complete the following form, we will include a short biographical sketch of your child in the Temple Sinai Bulletin.

**Please fill this out with your child and return it to the Temple office at least two months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.**

Parent Names (as you wish them to appear in the Bulletin) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ School & Grade \_\_\_\_\_

What are your special thoughts as you are about to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the name of your Torah portion? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the main idea that you learned from your Torah portion? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your favorite subject in school? \_\_\_\_\_

What activities do you participate in? (sports, instruments, hobbies, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List your brothers, sisters and their ages. \_\_\_\_\_

Write a few lines of information about yourself that you would like to include in your article.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H

### Guidelines for Ushers

The job of the usher is to welcome guests of our Temple and make them feel comfortable, to help make the service run smoothly, and to minimize distractions from worship for the professional staff, our congregants, and all guests. Please read these instructions and familiarize yourself with your job *before* you get to the Temple for the service.

#### Before the Service

- Be sure to arrive early – at least 30 minutes before the service is to begin.
- You should return to the Atrium at least 20 minutes before the service begins to greet and seat congregants and guests. Show guests where to find the coatrooms and the basket of kippot.
- When you arrive, check with the Rabbi and Bar/Bat Mitzvah host family to confirm what book(s) or supplemental materials will be used.
- We will be using the Mishkan T'fillah prayer books. Please give everyone in attendance a copy.
- Please advise everyone to turn off their cell phones. Absolutely no texting or photos are allowed during the service.

If guests are carrying cameras or video recorders, advise them of our policies regarding still photography (none permitted during the service) and videotaping.

#### During the Service

- Stand inside the door from the Atrium, and help people find seats and books.
- Tell latecomers the page in the prayer book, so they can join the service as soon as they are seated.
- If latecomers arrive while the congregation is standing, ask them to wait in the rear of the Sanctuary until the congregation sits. Also, no one should leave the Sanctuary while the congregation is standing.

#### Troubleshooting

- If we run out of books, get more from the Bridal Room and distribute them quietly.
- If children in the Atrium become disruptive, please ask them to be quiet. If this fails, then escort them quietly to their parents in the service.
- If there are behavioral issues with children/teens in the Sanctuary, and it cannot be resolved, please ask them to quietly leave the sanctuary.
- Familiarize yourself with the rules for photography and videotaping and help to enforce them if necessary.
- If a parent asks you for a place to quietly feed a young child, please direct him/her to the library. (Across the atrium and up the stairs - behind the kitchenette).