



# **B'NEI MITZVAH HANDBOOK**

Havurah Shalom

May 2020

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## ***Section I. Background and Philosophy for the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah***

### **A. Introduction**

The Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah marks the time when a Jewish child attains adult religious status within the congregation. As such, it is an occasion for community pride and celebration. A Jewish 13-year-old is considered a Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah; tradition implies that by that age, a child has obtained sufficient knowledge and skills to participate in congregational life.

Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah preparation involves a lot of time and energy devoted to study. Although the ritual usually takes place at age 13, many families choose to postpone the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah until their child is emotionally ready. Many members of the Havurah community who did not have a Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah as a youth have chosen to celebrate this ritual as adults.

Havurah is growing richer in our variety of Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah experiences; still, families are encouraged to choose a Saturday morning service. Please remember as you prepare, that the B'nei/B'not Mitzvah ritual is a part of the regular weekly Shabbat services in our community. The ceremony should be a comfortable, familiar experience for the congregation, the family, and guests.

In keeping with Havurah Shalom's mission, the B'nei Mitzvah at Havurah is about spirituality, learning, and acts of social responsibility. One expectation is that each child will do a "Mitzvah Project" that expresses their interests and ideals. Mitzvah Projects take many forms and range from very simple to much more elaborate. They may include volunteering, educating others, fundraising, or gathering of materials to support a community in need. The important thing is that the child feels engaged with the project, and empowered to make a difference in the community or the world.

Havurah Shalom wants families to participate in their Judaism in positive ways, following the spirit of tradition while keeping Judaism accessible. Thus, we recognize the validity of a wide range of practices. People celebrate B'nei/B'not Mitzvah at Havurah within this context.

### **B. Membership Requirement and Cohort Participation by Grade**

Having a Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah is an experience in community. It is a statement that one is now ready to participate in the Jewish community as an adult. Havurah Shalom is built upon the active participation of all its members. We believe in passing on Jewish tradition to our children while continuing to learn ourselves.

In order to be true to these beliefs, the congregation requires timely, active membership prior to this important family life cycle passage of B'nei Mitzvah. A period of membership provides the opportunity for new member families to become part of the Havurah community so their child comes of age in an ongoing community and the family is held in this life passage.

One specific way that Havurah helps build community during the B'nei Mitzvah journey is through a multi-year cohort program which begins in 5th grade.

The following participation requirements for families going through B'nei Mitzvah preparation at Havurah Shalom intend to make the process more Jewishly meaningful, help families and children develop deeper connections within the Havurah community, provide some consistency across family experience, and help maintain Havurah culture and values of participation and community investment.

Requirements by grade level:

Grade 5 family:

- Participation in Shabbat School (or equivalent if Shabbat School is not appropriate for family for specific reasons; determined by Education Director and Rabbi)
- Participation in two "Discovering Shabbat" morning services or equivalent

Grade 6 family:

- Participation in Shabbat School (or equivalent if Shabbat School is not appropriate for family for specific reasons; determined by Education Director and Rabbi)
- Participation in monthly Shabbat Morning Services
- Participation in parent or family workshops (eg. "Whose B'nei Mitzvah is it Anyways?")

Grade 7 family:

- Participation in all of Middle School or, at least, B'nei Mitzvah Cohort classes (4-5 in autumn)
- Participation in B'nei Mitzvah related parent or family workshops
- Attendance at cohort B'nei Mitzvah whenever possible
- Participation in or lead a Torah service prior to their own B'nei Mitzvah

Families who are members of Havurah and enroll their child in 5th grade Shabbat School on or before May 1st of their child's 4th grade year are eligible to join the cohort and to participate in the B'nei Mitzvah date selection process the following February.

In rare circumstances, special consideration may be given to families who request to join the cohort after the deadline described above. Families making a request must first establish membership in Havurah. Membership is a requirement for consideration and no family will be assigned a B'nei Mitzvah date that is less than 18 months after their Havurah join date.

Once their membership in Havurah has been established, a family may request special consideration by submitting a letter to the B'nei Mitzvah committee. The letter should be emailed to the committee chairs and address the following questions:

1. Have you belonged to a different synagogue in this community or in another community, and if so for how long?
2. What has led you to make a change?
3. Why Havurah Shalom?

4. What is your child's interest in becoming B'nei Mitzvah?
5. If we are not able to offer you a date with this cohort, how will your family adapt and what will likely be your course of action?

### C. Perspective

The fabric of your family's Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah day is woven from many strands. The core of the ceremony is when the youngster is first given the adult honor of being called to the Torah (the aliyah), to which they respond by saying the blessings before and after the portion. It has become traditional for the honoree to also chant some of the Torah portions (in Hebrew), give a personal reflection on the Torah portion (drash), and to lead some of the prayers during the service.

Havurah families may celebrate the young person and his or her heritage with specially chosen songs, prayers, poems, readings, or other ritual elements. Many families turn the after-service Kiddush into a luncheon, and/or have a party on Saturday evening. Some families include out of town relatives in Havurah's Friday night services.

Beyond the core of the aliyah, the other elements are optional—please include only those that make sense for your family. Remember: this is something done *with* your child, not *to* your child. For information, perspective, and inspiration, we recommend the following books and resources:

*Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah* by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin (Jewish Lights Publishing)

*Whose Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is This Anyway?* by Judith Davis (St. Martin's Griffen)

The Havurah library has several other good books about Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvahs plus a notebook of service outline and a few videos of past B'nei Mitzvot. You can also check out Neveh Shalom's extensive library (for a joining fee), or the Portland Jewish Academy library.

Consider the years leading up to the Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah to be a Jewish learning time for the whole family. Each person can learn at least one new Jewish skill, and parents especially can expand their Jewish reading.

### D. B'nei Mitzvah Diversity

Our congregation is a community of individuals with many levels of Jewish observance and learning, and a wealth of unique gifts and experiences. Our families vary in the amount of energy they choose to devote to the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah experience, and in their comfort and motivation to lead services. No single model adequately represents the variety of experiences our families create during this important life passage.

*As you read the examples below, don't worry if you don't find a description of your "ideal" service or B'nei Mitzvah experience.* These examples are intended to broaden your horizons, not

limit your options. While we are inspired by thousands of years of Jewish tradition, and we deeply respect the forms of worship and Torah study practiced by our congregation, we are all enriched by the variety of approaches families have taken over the years to mark the arrival of our youth at the gates of adulthood.

These examples show some of the choices different families make:

1. This style appeals to those who recall that in previous centuries, the Bar Mitzvah consisted of a young man having his first aliyah on the Shabbat after he turned thirteen. Of course, the community would congratulate the family, but any party would be more on the scale of a child's birthday celebration than a royal wedding. This style might feature:

- The youngster leading the Torah service and giving the drash, but he/she has little or no role in the preceding portions of the Shabbat Morning service.
- Invitations to only 20 or 30 people who are truly important in the honoree's life.
- Most of those attending this Shabbat service are "regulars" so the youngster is truly being welcomed into an ongoing community.

2. Some families may prefer a very low-key approach, with the young person coming up during a regular Minyan service on a Saturday morning, reading the Aliyah blessing, and then sitting down again. The family could work with the Minyan organizers on the extent of a child's participation in a particular Saturday morning service. The Torah may also be read on Rosh Hodesh (the start of a new month on the Hebrew calendar), and on Mondays and Thursdays, for those who wish to have a quieter, more intimate service.

3. Some families wish to share the event with a substantial circle of loved ones. This style might feature:

- The youngster leading much (or most) of the Shabbat morning service/Torah Service, as well as chanting several Torah portions and delivering the drash.
- Invitations to several dozen friends and relatives (though remember that our sanctuary/social hall only holds about 350).
- A few carefully chosen acknowledgments during the service that the youngster's special gifts and experiences are blessings to the family and the community—without unduly disrupting the usual order of the Shabbat service.

While no one wants to go overboard and create an unhealthy "adoration of the child", this style lets some youngsters find their voice as accepted and admired members of our community. Some members think of this as the "Classic Havurah" style of Bar/Bat/B'eni Bat Mitzvah, since it has been the most frequent style over the years.

4. Many youngsters have best friends, twin siblings, or compatible acquaintances with whom they want to share their special day. While the style may resemble any of the examples above, it generally will include:

- Fewer aliyot for each family, fewer Torah portions chanted by each youth, and two shorter drashes taking the place of the usual single drash.
- Decisions about guests lists. Please pay close attention to the guest lists, since the total number of seats for both families plus the general congregation may not exceed 350 in our building.

5. In rare circumstances a family can request a Havdalah Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah that can take place on a Saturday afternoon in winter. Due to our many scheduling requirements, Havurah rarely holds Havdallah B'nei/B'not Mitzvah. However, if you would like to take this conversation forward please discuss this option with a member of the B'nei Mitzvah committee as part of your date selection process.

Remember, Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah is another chance for parents and their children to discover the rewards of resisting peer pressure—please choose the style that is spiritually and emotionally best for you, which may not be the same as other families choose. Some form of Torah mastery will always be involved. Non-family adult members of the congregation are also key to welcoming the young person at this milestone.

#### E. A Note about this Handbook

Many of the pages that follow are most applicable to the “Classic Havurah” ceremonies described in #3 above. This is because the handbook and its authors are largely products of our congregation’s recent history. Please accept these sincere invitations:

- If you know certain passages don’t apply to the type of event you are planning, disregard them.
- If you are not sure, please ask. We have a helpful rabbi, responsive adult education and liturgy enthusiasts, and an involved B'nei Mitzvah committee.
- If you feel that sections of the handbook are obsolete or that important information is missing, please let us know. The Committee members are listed on the title page, and we always welcome constructive criticism.

This Handbook can be downloaded from the Havurah website:

<https://www.havurahshalom.org/bar--bat-mitzvah.html>

#### F. Preparation

The next section presents a timeline to help you prepare your student for their Bat/Bar/B'eni Mitzvah and for a lifetime of participation in Judaism. Preparation and support for B'nei Mitzvah begins when families enter the Cohort in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and many people (teachers, parents, tutors, and the rabbi) contribute to the student’s preparation.

The specific skills needed are:

- **Hebrew:** begin with the alphabet as early as possible; Havurah offers Hebrew classes for students, typically beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

- **Trope** (cantillation): this is the system of chanting used to read from the Bible during services. There are distinct trope systems for Torah and Haftarah. Most students in Havurah do not read the Haftarah. Ideally, Trope tutoring should begin about a year before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah.
- **Services:** many students help lead part of the Shabbat morning service on the day of their Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah. While the trope tutor can often help with specific prayers, and the musician may assist in preparing certain songs, *the best preparation is frequent attendance at others' B'nei Mitzvahs, and at other Shabbat morning services.*

Expectations by Grade:

- Grade 5 family: participation in two “Discovering Shabbat” morning services or equivalent
- Grade 6 family: participation in monthly Shabbat Morning Services
- Grade 7 family: attendance at cohort B'nei Mitzvah and participation in or lead a Torah service prior to their own B'nei Mitzvah
- **Drash:** students present a “teaching” (a short speech) based on the Torah reading. Typically, the Bar/Bat/B'nei mitzvah meets three times with the Rabbi or another elder of the congregation to help, but the student (and family) will need to spend additional hours studying and writing. Rabbi Benjamin schedules drash meetings with families himself, but you can always contact the B'nei Mitzvah committee for more information about preparing the drash.

**TUTORS:** In general, a tutor works with the student over many months to learn trope, the *aliyah* blessings, a Torah portion (if applicable), and the other parts of the service. Finding a compatible tutor is important, so begin exploring options early! Havurah has a list of tutors familiar with Havurah's service. ***Because the list changes often, it is not included in this handbook. Instead, please contact the Havurah office for the current list.***

Most tutors have a limited number of openings. Please be respectful of their schedules and specialties. Fees are negotiated between the families and the tutors. Some tutors are open to teaching several students at a time, which can reduce the cost per student, if this is compatible with your child's learning style.

If you are planning to work with a tutor not on the list he/she should speak with Rabbi Benjamin before lessons begin to familiarize him/her with Havurah customs. Most tutors are present during the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah and will assist during the Torah service. If your tutor cannot be present, be sure to work with Rabbi Benjamin or the service leader to make additional arrangements as necessary.

## G. Workshops

Havurah holds the following workshops over the year to help families prepare for Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah. Please check the Havurah website and calendar for specific dates and to RSVP.

- **B'nei Mitzvah: Beginning the Journey** (a workshop known as Date Selection Meeting) . This workshop intends to launch families on the B'nei Mitzvah journey. Rabbi Benjamin and Deborah begin with a focus on the rite of passage itself, then families learn about the date selection process.
- **Whose B'nei Mitzvah is it Anyway?** Like any life-cycle ceremony, B'nei Mitzvah comes to be about much more than the stated purpose – marking a passage of a child coming of age. What are some of the important explicit – and sometimes hidden – factors and messages? Given their backgrounds, how do parents navigate the planning of a Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah with varying degrees of familiarity/attachment to Jewish tradition, a variety of goals around inclusion and celebration, and the desire to create a meaningful and relevant experience for their teen – and themselves? This workshop is about the big questions and how they impact the concrete decisions that parents are called upon to make.
- **Discovering Shabbat Morning Learners' Minyan.** Join this upbeat workshop/minyan where we will walk through the Shabbat morning service, learn about the general structure of the service, the key themes and prayers, and some of the choreography. We will practice some prayers together and answer questions. This service is especially for families with youth in grades 5 and up who are in the B'nei Mitzvah process, all adults who are curious or perplexed, and anybody else.
- **Writing your Drash.** Writing a drash is one of the most important parts of B'nei Mitzvah preparation. During this workshop, students with dates set for their B'nei Mitzvah will study a passage of Torah, discover commentary, pose an interesting question, and relate it to contemporary context.
- **Getting Down to Tachlis (The Nitty Gritty: Logistics and Event Planning).** The logistics of B'nei Mitzvah planning and set up at Havurah is the focus of this workshop. Parents will learn about reserving and using Havurah's spaces and the items in them (like tables, plates, etc) from Havurah's Office & Facilities Manager

## H. Attending Services

All Saturday morning services, including B'nei Mitzvah, are open to the entire community. Occasionally, families worry that they would be intruding on someone else's special day if they went to a Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah to which they were not specifically invited. **This is not the case; you are welcome.** Please attend, share the joy of Shabbat and of your neighbor's *simcha* (blessed event), and learn from the rich traditions of our community. Sometimes other Mitzvahs, such as an aufruf or baby naming, will take place during the same service as a B'nei Mitzvah. Families should be prepared for this and welcome the opportunity to share their special event with another family. Sharing of community is a core value of the Havurah congregation.

## ***Section II. When to do What - a B'nei Mitzvah Timeline***

### **A. Early Years**

1st – 4th graders

- Participate in Shabbat School. While Shabbat School attendance is not required, it is highly recommended because it is otherwise difficult for both kids and parents to build such deep friendships and community at Havurah.
- Begin attending Shabbat services and Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvahs as a family and discuss the events and the process.
- Begin Hebrew classes or Hebrew tutoring. Havurah offers Hebrew classes as an adjunct to Shabbat School. Students typically begin studying Hebrew in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- Participate in service projects and volunteer activities through Shabbah School, Havurah Shalom, and other community organizations.

### **B. Fifth Grade**

One specific way that Havurah helps build community during the B'nei Mitzvah journey is through a multi-year cohort program which begins in 5th grade. Families who are members of Havurah and enroll their child in 5th grade Shabbat School on or before May 1st of their child's 4th grade year are eligible to join the cohort and to participate in the B'nei Mitzvah date selection process the following February.

Cohort Requirements for Grade 5 Families

- Participation in Shabbat School (or equivalent if Shabbat School is not appropriate for family for specific reasons; determined by Education Director and Rabbi)
- Participation in two "Discovering Shabbat" morning services or equivalent

### ***Date Selection***

Parents of 5<sup>th</sup> graders wanting a date will attend a workshop called B'nei Mitzvah: Beginning the Journey. The workshop begins with a focus on the rite of passage itself, and then participants learn about the cohort expectations and the date selection process.

The date assignment process is based on seniority (by join date) and is as transparent and impartial as possible. We move from most to least senior family, assigning the most-preferred available date to each. If more than one family requests the date as their first preference, the family with the most seniority (according to date joined) will be assigned the date. When two or more families have the same joining date, both are called to work out a solution. In cases where all choices have been given to more senior families, we call and ask for other preferences.

Once dates are scheduled, families are notified and dates are recorded in the Havurah calendar. If the Rabbi has an unavoidable schedule change, he will notify the family. The B'nei Mitzvah

Committee will assist in either finding a new date or engaging a community member to lead the service.

*\*\*\* If at any time you need to cancel or change a date, be sure to contact the B'nei Mitzvah Committee co-chairs. Please do not contact Rabbi Benjamin as he does not manage the calendar.*

### ***Family Date Sharing***

To enable community building among families, ensure enough Shabbatot for Community Minyanim, and accommodate larger numbers of families, we are highly encouraging families to consider sharing a date. In order to encourage pairing, a pair will get the top position on the date selection list. If there are multiple pairs whose first choice of date is the same, membership seniority will be the tie-breaker.

When you talk with another family please consider:

- **A good match for students:** be sure that there is a similar match between students' participation levels and abilities
- **A good match for parents:** be sure that parents' expectations and planning styles are complimentary if not similar.
- **Kiddush lunch and other celebrations:** be sure to sort out before sharing a date whether to share lunch after services and how to time other celebrations during the weekend (if there are any and if separate) so as not to overlap time-frames and guests.
- **Number of anticipated guests:** 250 is comfortable in the space; more gets tricky.
- **Coordinating of tutors:** Is it necessary? How will it work?

**Partnership dissolution:** if there is a desire to dissolve partnership, both families would choose new dates from available dates

### **C. Sixth Grade**

Cohort Requirements for Grade 6 families

- Participation in Shabbat School (or equivalent if Shabbat School is not appropriate for family for specific reasons; determined by Education Director and Rabbi)
- Participation in monthly Shabbat Morning Services
- Participation in parent or family workshops (eg. "Whose B'nei Mitzvah is it Anyways?")

### ***Students***

Start one-to-one tutoring in Torah trope and prayer at least 12 months before the Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah. See page 5 for information about securing a tutor to work with your student.

## ***Families***

Please consider the Havurah community as a giant support system for families on the B'nei Mitzvah journey! Talk with other families, service leaders, and members. Attend workshops and services together to build community in this important year prior to the b'nei mitzvah year.

## **D. Seventh Grade**

Cohort Requirements for Grade 7 families

- Participation in all of Middle School or, at least, B'nei Mitzvah Cohort classes (4-5 in autumn)
- Participation in B'nei Mitzvah related parent or family workshops
- Attendance at cohort B'nei Mitzvah whenever possible
- Participate in or lead a Torah service prior to their own B'nei Mitzvah

## **E. Month-by-month countdown**

### **One year before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- Re-read this Handbook (download the most current version from the website). which can be downloaded from the website. The Handbook is updated by February of each year.
- Double-check with Education Director, B'nei Mitzvah committee, or tutor that their student is working on the correct portion. Confirm Torah portion for the date by checking the website and other Havurah sources
- Again, attend workshops!
- Become more familiar with the Shabbat morning service by attending services once a month or more (see Cohort expectations by grade).
- Begin planning the Mitzvah Project. Help your child to think about their interests and passions, and where they want to put their energy. Past projects have focused on the environment, human/animal rights, hunger, housing, education, etc. Consider volunteering with an organization that is doing inspiring work, or engaging with others (soccer team? school club?) to plan a food drive or fundraiser. Find out about the projects of Havurah's Tikkun Olam committee and consider ways to contribute. Think about ways to personalize and extend the project, and how to tell the community about it. Recognizing that planning the Mitzvah Project is challenging for many kids and families, a member of the B'nei Mitzvah Committee, Laura Orgel is available to help you brainstorm ideas, plan, make connections and troubleshoot

### **6 - 12 months before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- Student begin practicing the Torah portion(s) if applicable and prayers from the service.
- Student should know that they'll be expected to give a *drash* (see page 4 or 5).
- Expect a call from Rabbi Benjamin about scheduling drash meetings.
- Start thinking about the music piece of your service, and contact the office or B'nei Mitzvah committee if you need assistance finding a musician.
- Select and order invitations, thank you notes, and caterers; make explore hotel arrangements accommodation options for out-of-town guests, explore and reserve a

venue for your celebration, if applicable. reserve the Havurah social hall, restaurant or party room (if you plan on having a party later that evening).

### **3 - 6 months before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- Continue to practice Torah portion(s) and other prayers (as applicable).
- Confirm with music leader if part of your service.
- Plan how your family will participate in the service (tutors are helpful with these decisions).
- Confirm your service leader. If you've chosen or been assigned a date when the Rabbi is not available, the Spiritual Life Committee will assist you in selecting a service leader who is knowledgeable about liturgy and Havurah custom. Contact the committee (SpiritualLife@havurahshalom.org) for names of Havurah members who are knowledgeable about liturgy and Havurah's customs. The student's tutor or musician may help with portions of the service, and you can contact the Rabbi to discuss how he can help develop and lead the service.
- Organize the *Aliyot* (Torah blessings). Work with the the student's tutor to determine which he/she is going to chant, and then contact Diane Chaplin, Spiritual Life Committee chair (see Havurah directory) about 3 months ahead of time who will find others to cover those Torah portions not being read by the student, family members and friends. **Send the prayers and/or the portion to each person doing an aliyah and instruct them to practice.**
  - *Note that anyone leading an aliyah must be Jewish and over age 13. At Havurah a non-Jew who is in a committed relationship with a Jew may come up to Torah with their spouse/partner, as they are considered adjunct and "sustaining" the Jewish life of the household. Aliyah blessings are available in the Havurah Office (in mp3 form along with the written transliterations)*
- Review the logistics packet that will be sent from the Havurah office. If you don't receive this packet, call the office.
- Send your B'nei Mitzvah fee payment for \$280 to the office. The office will remind you.
- Make sure your membership dues are up-to-date.
- Make sure you have the dates of your drash meetings with Rabbi into your calendar.
- Continue to engage in Mitzvah Project activities . Begin this if you haven't yet. Get help if you need it. Consider telling the community about the project through a notice or article in Hakol.
- Design invitations, plan flowers, plan and source supplies, make lists, think about personal needs (clothing, shoes, ties, haircuts).
- Delegate, delegate, and delegate! Other families in your child's Shabbat school class are wonderful sources of help and support!

**\*\* Remember, if at any time you need to cancel or change a date, be sure to contact the B'nei Mitzvah Committee co-chairs.**

### **8-10 weeks before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- Finalize and address invitations. Mail them 6-8 weeks in advance.

- Review drash materials provided by the Rabbi and/or committee. Work with the Rabbi or your drash coach as determined. *After the B'nei Mitzvah please send a copy of your child's drash to the office for the Havurah History Project.*
- Find out the Hebrew names of anyone to be honored with an Aliyah.
- Invite family and/or friends to be *Hagbah* and *Glilah* (to lift and dress the Torah).
- Let any family members and guests know that if they have an aliyah or other Mitzvah they must wear a tallit when on the bimah. Havurah has some available for guests to borrow.

#### **6 weeks before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- Mail invitations if you haven't already.
- Confirm/review with the service leader those portions of the service not being conducted by the student. Details for a service leader other than the Rabbi are outlined in 3-6 months before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah.
- Invite someone from the congregation to make the Congregational presentation of the Bible. If you need suggestions, ask Deborah or Rabbi Benjamin or notify the office and they will make arrangements. The wrapped Bible will be in the cupboard underneath the basket of tallitot and kippot as you enter the Bet Knesset. Tell the Havurah office who will be presenting the bible so they can notify that individual of its location.
- Note that Havurah has monthly Kabbalat Shabbat dinners before the Friday night service. These dinners require reservations and advance payment. If you plan to bring guests make sure to reserve and pay as necessary.
- Some families like to lead the Kiddush at the conclusion of services using a kiddush cup of some sentimental value. If this would mean someone from out of town would have to bring the cup, ask them now.
- Identify someone to be your "Cookie Coordinator." You will receive suggestions on how you might organize this in the packet you will receive from Havurah about 3 months before your date. Also, check in with other families in your cohort.

#### **4 weeks before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- Go over order of service with the trope tutor and Service Leader.
- Many families like to print a service program, but *it is not a requirement*. Community members, cohort families, and the B'nei Mitzvah committee can help you with templates. You might also choose to print one page for the Torah service, with the aliyot, readers, and portions listed. The most important thing is to leave enough time to format, *proofread*, and print the program prior to the service.
- Again, ensure that anyone being honored with an Aliyah is aware they need a tallit when on the *bimah* and that they are comfortable saying the blessings. **Encourage everyone to practice.** Tallit and Kippot are available at Havurah. If you anticipate needing a larger than usual supply, contact the Havurah office.
- Make sure the Sanctuary space is available for any rehearsals with tutors and family members and friends who would like to practice. Contact the office to reserve the time. Read from the actual Torah while wearing a tallit. Practice carrying the Torah and as much of the service as the student will participate in. Ask your tutor or service leader to help with this.

- Decide where to get challah, wine, and juice for kiddush. One challah serves about 30 people; 1 liter of wine/juiced serves 40 x 10z cups. **The wine must be kosher. Remember to ensure you have enough challah and wine for the 20-30 members of Havurah who routinely attend Saturday morning services.**
- Havurah Shalom provides one childcare worker on Saturday morning who can care for up to 6 children. If more children will be attending the service contact the Office to make arrangements for additional childcare worker(s). You will be responsible for the additional cost. See Section V: Logistics for details. Havurah Shalom does not provide childcare at Friday night services (unless otherwise noted) so if you will have young children attending services on Friday and need childcare, please contact the Havurah office.
- Arrange to have juice and crackers (or finger food) for the children who will be in childcare. Check with the Havurah office as these supplies may be stocked and available.
- Arrange for 2 ushers who should be responsible for directing visitors to the sanctuary and for ensuring security during the service. You will receive a letter with more details about security about 1 month before the event.
- Check in with your Cookie Coordinator to confirm bakers.
- Arrange for a friend or member of the community to be responsible to begin Kiddish after the service as you will likely be busy.
- Establish transportation for flowers, people, food, baskets, paper goods, etc.
- Buy everything you can ahead of time to avoid the last-minute crunch.
- Organize a notebook to keep track of gifts

### **2 weeks before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- Confirm the Hebrew names of anyone being honored with an Aliyah.
- Many parents make a few short remarks after the student's drash. If you are going to do this, write them now. And please keep them brief and appropriate to the occasion and audience (ie. 5 minutes or less). Rabbi Benjamin and Deborah can provide guidance for writing your remarks.
- Prepare a list of people for aliyot, lifting and wrapping the Torah. The list should include English names, Hebrew names, and the relationship to the youngster.
- Finalize your clean-up crew.

### **1 week before the Bar/Bat/ B'nei Mitzvah**

Make sure someone is assigned to do each of the following:

- Pick up and bring to Havurah: challah, kiddish wine/juice and all other refreshments not being catered
- Pour wine for kiddish
- Supervise set up and clean up
- Supervise room change-over between service and luncheon
- Uncover and/or serve food
- Bring containers (and labels) for leftover food. Shlep gifts back home: (a) baskets, bags, or other containers can help (b) the volunteer in charge of this should bring extra tape to securely fasten cards to presents before transporting them. Please note that extra food

can be donated to a group of your choice. See kitchen for directions of donate to a nearby organization.

- Kippot if you're supplying any special ones to augment the congregation's supply. You may also request extra kippot by contacting the Havurah office.
- Please note that custodian will be setting up for the B'nei Mitzvah by the Thursday before unless there is a Friday night service; then set up will take place after the service on Friday night. You will be notified by the Havurah office on the procedure.

*\*\* The families in your child's cohort can be a huge source of help in all of these tasks. Havurah has a long history of families helping families fill the roles of ushering, providing security during the service, setting up the tables for the luncheon, and baking sweets for the "cookie table."*

### **The day before the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- The sanctuary is available throughout the day on Friday (although please check availability with the Havurah Office). Families have been setting up in the morning to allow for a more restful afternoon and evening.
- Do not be concerned if there is a Kabbalat Shabbat Dinner or other event and service the night before your child's B'nei Mitzvah - the custodian will arrange the sanctuary in time for Saturday morning. Please be in contact with the Havurah office to insure that your set-up arrangements are understood.
- Make sure the copies of the *Aliyah* prayers are on the *bimah*.
- Consider bringing a comfortable change of clothes/shoes for clean up.

### **The day of the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah**

- On the morning of the service (no sooner) give Rabbi the list of people for aliyot, lifting and wrapping the Torah. The list should include English names, Hebrew names, and the relationship to the youngster (see page 20).
- DON'T FORGET DRASH, PARENTS' COMMENTS, TORAH PORTION, TALLIT (and extras for aliyot).
- Copies of order of service with each person's parts marked for child, rabbi, parents and musicians.
- Any photo sessions you wish to have before the service should be concluded by 9:45 a.m.

And please, take time to enjoy the experience!!

*\*\*\* Please send a copy of your child's drash to the office for the Havurah History Project after the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah.*

### **Section III. Shabbat Morning Services**

The following service outline is based on one prepared by Michele Goldschmidt of the Spiritual Life Committee. It spells out the essential elements of the service. Items in parentheses are

optional. In consultation with the rabbi or service leader, tutor, and/or musician(s), use this outline as you plan the service. Be sure to review it with your music person ahead of time.

Add welcome, explanations, transitions, music, and a few special readings as you wish—but keep it simple! One or two special songs and two or three special readings are plenty—but NOTHING special is necessary. Part of the beauty of the service is its familiarity. Your family's participation is all that's needed to make the service warm, moving, and expressive of yourselves. **\*\* See various pages above and the website for important suggestions about aliyot and other honors during the service.**

Please remember that Shabbat morning services belong to the entire community. Other congregational activities such as a baby-naming or Tot Shabbat may coincide with your event. In most cases you will have advance notice. Please welcome these additional events..

*SOURCES FOR READINGS: Other prayer books, especially creative ones; back issues of Reconstructionist Magazine (in PSU library); Havurah library; the files and libraries of Havurah members; PJA library, Neveh Shalom library.*

#### A. Saturday Morning Service

A fillable version of this service outline is available on the Havurah website:  
<https://www.havurahshalom.org/bar--bat-mitzvah.html>

\*page numbers refer to where selected prayers begin in *Kol Hanesama*.

<b>Siddur Page #</b>	Preliminary Service
535	(Hinei Ma Tov or other Nigun)
141	(Ma Tovu)
142-3	Tallit Blessing
	(i) Welcome – orientation – childcare announcement.
153-161	(Birchot Hashachar - Morning Blessings)
164-7	(Elohai)

<b>P'seukei d'Zimrah</b>	
176-81	(Baruch Sheamar)
183-207	(You may select 1-3 additional psalms)
209-211	(Psalm 92)
212-3	(Psalm 93)
429-31	Ashrei
230-1	Psalm 150
232-9	(Nishmat)
<b>Shacharit Service – Led by: _____</b>	
240-3	Shochen Ad
243	Yishtabach
245	Hatzi Kaddish
<b>Shema and its Blessings</b>	
246-7	Barchu, Yotzer Or
248-51	(Let all beings)
251	(Ayn k'er'k'cha - None like You exists)
252-5	Eil Adon

260-1, 265-71	Yotzer, Or Chadash (continues)
272-5	Ahavah Rabah, V'ha-er ay-nay-nu (Love & Torah)
276-277	Shema, V'ahavta
282-5	Biblical Selection II: 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Paragraphs of Shema
286-91	Emet Vayetziv
	Introduce Amidah
290-1	Mi Chamocha
292-321	Amidah – followed by nigun/song/poem or special reading
381	Kaddish Titkabal
<b>Torah Service – Led by:</b> _____	
383	Eyn Kamocha, Av harachamim
385	Vayhi binso'a, Ki mitziyon
<b>Ark Opening</b>	
393	Shema, Echad, Gadelu
393	Lecha Adonai (Sung during Torah procession)

841	Eleh Chamedah Libi, and other selections
399	Birchot Hatorah* *Reconstructionist Torah blessings are slightly different.
1st aliyah	
2nd aliyah	
3rd aliyah	
4th aliyah	
5th aliyah	Reserved for Congregant (honoring a special day)
6th aliyah	
7th aliyah	Student's Parents
405	Hatzi Kaddish
Maftir	Student
400-3, 416, 684-693	Mi Shebeyrach (Blessings for deliverance, Healing, Thanksgiving)
	Release Blessing for Parents and Mazel Tov!
Hagbah	
G'lilah	

407	V'zot Hatorah
	Student's drash, Parents brief words, presentation, Rabbi's blessing, Shehecheyanu, (special song)
Return Torah	
433	Y'hallelu
434-5	Psalm 29 - Hodo al eretz
<b>Ark closing</b>	
441	Etz chayim hi
<b>Closing Prayers</b>	
445-9	Aleynu
450-1	Mourners' Kaddish
	Thank you's and announcements
	Closing Song (Choose from: Adon Olam – p.458, Kol haneshamah – p.231, or Yigdal – p.460)
464-5	Kiddush for Shabbat Mornings

## B. The Torah Portion

The Torah portion each week has a name. The entire portion is read aloud in the congregation over the course of three years, on a triennial cycle. When checking your child's Torah portion, make sure you know which third we are reading that year. A chart of the triennial divisions is available on the Havurah website here: <https://www.havurahshalom.org/torah-reading-schedule.html>

The weekly "third" that we read is further divided into seven sections, with one section being read after each of the seven *aliyot* (Torah Blessings); these appear on the same link provided above. Most B'nei Mitzvah students will have one aliyah and will chant one or more of those biblical sections, some may just do an aliyah (Torah Blessing) before a section is chanted in Hebrew.

## ***Section IV. Havdalah Services***

Havdalah services begin in the afternoon on Saturday. They are only scheduled in months that are not on daylight savings time. Due to our many scheduling requirements, Havurah rarely holds Havdalah B'nei/B'not Mitzvah. However, if you would like to take this conversation forward please discuss this option with a member of the B'nei Mitzvah committee as part of your date selection process. We do not schedule a Havdalah service and a morning Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah on the same Saturday.

**Torah portion:** The Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah for Havdalah includes only 3 aliyot. The readings are from the portion of the following week.

### **Planning for a Havdalah Service:**

- Please provide wine , havdalah candle, and spice box, a kiddush cup, and a tray.
- If you want to turn off the lights at the end of the service, appoint someone to do so.
- There is a special Havdalah prayer book. Locate copies before the service. Please contact the office for more information.
- The only people that wear tallitot during the Havdalah service are those who are doing an aliyah blessing, reading from the Torah, or lifting or wrapping the Torah.
- Note that kiddush and blessing over the challah are not a part of the Havdalah service.

A suggested framework for your service follows: (be sure to check with your music person, your Torah tutor, and with the Rabbi or service leader to make sure you have everything in the service you need.)

### **Saturday Afternoon Service**

<b>Siddur Page #</b>	Mincha – Afternoon Service
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	(Nigun, opening meoldy)
2	(Ma Tovv)
	Welcome – orientation – childcare anncmt.
3	Ashrei
5	Chatzi Kaddish
<b>Torah Service</b>	
6	Shema / Echad / Gadlu
	Torah procession while singing: Eileh Chamda Libi, and others
<b>Reading Of The Torah</b>	
1st aliyah	
2nd aliyah	(usually the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah child parents)
3rd aliyah	usually Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah child
10	Torah Blessings
	Release Blessing for parents -- Mazel Tov !
	Torah lifter, Hagba: _____

	Torah dresser, G'lila: _____
16	Chatzi Kaddish
17-36	Amidah for Mincha
38	Aleinu
	Student's Drash/commentary
	(ii) Pparent's BRIEF words
	(iii) Ccongregational Gift
	(iv) RRabbi's Blessing
	Shehechyanu
<b>Ma'ariv – Evening Service</b>	
41	Barchu
43	Ahavat Olam
44	Shema/V'Ahavta
49	Mi Chamocha
51	Hashkiveynu
	Ufros Aleynu
56	Silent Amidah

73	Chatzi Kaddish
78	Aleinu
81	Mourners' Kaddish Rabbi
	Thank you's & acknowledgements Student
<b>Havdallah - Saying Goodbye to Shabbat</b>	
	Nigun
85	Havdalah blessings
	Eliahu Hanavi
	Shavua Tov

### ***Section V. Logistics***

Every family can feel a bit overwhelmed by the logistical details involved in planning and organizing the service, a kiddush luncheon, and any number of other events to celebrate this rite of passage. While logistics are a cold reality, we encourage families not to let them overshadow the focus on this event as an experience in community. Your B'nei Mitzvah cohort families can be a huge support system all year long, and like most things at Havurah, so can members and other families who have recently been through this journey.

Some years ago, the B'nei Mitzvah Committee created a new Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah Resource Box containing gathered information from previous Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvahs to help families in creating the service and associated events, specifically with some of the logistics covered in this section.

The black and white box is located in the library on the far left corner wall. We invite you to look through the folders for ideas. You may make copies of materials that are appealing to you. Some sections have copies of lists that you're welcome to take. As time goes on, information changes. Please attach a note to the front of the box if you have updates so others can see.

The committee does not maintain the resources. Feel free to contribute to the folders! This is a work in progress!

### **A. Location**

Shabbat morning services are held at our building, which currently has a seating capacity for up to 350 in the sanctuary and social hall (combined).

There is table seating for approximately 150 in the sanctuary/social hall for lunch. If you are having a large kiddush luncheon it is best to provide a mixture of table seating, chairs along the walls, and standing/mingling near the serving tables.

**Note: when estimating guests remember to include those 20 to 30 people who regularly attend Saturday morning services.**

### **B. Invitations**

Invitations can be composed on a home computer and copied at a local shop. Many families use online and local services for design and printing (a few suggestions are in the Appendix).

Send out invitations 8-10 weeks ahead for out-of-towners, 6 weeks locally. You might include information about the Tzedakah project, about local accommodations and childcare availability during the service.

Hakol includes announcements of Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah services, and in that way, the congregation is invited. If you have made non-standard arrangements (change of time or place), please send the information to the office at least 6 weeks before the date.

### **C. Planning and Organizing the Service**

An outline of the service is included in this Handbook and is available on the website. Based on attending regular services and other B'nei Mitzvah services, determine what prayers to include in your child's service. The more familiar you are with the service and the ways Havurah members make these choices, the easier and more joyful this experience will be. Havurah also offers workshops, services, and other events specifically around the Saturday morning service and prayers. Your tutor, the Rabbi, and other community members can and should help with this selection and planning.

#### *Music*

Music has always played an important role at Havurah. Consider if and how to incorporate music into the service. You can choose to sing and chant without any accompaniment; you can have musical accompaniment for prayers and songs; or you can have a music leader for parts of the service and various songs. Prayers are often led by the many wonderful and talented musicians who are members of our congregation. Each of these musicians brings their own unique sensitivity and spirit to the service. As their gift to the community, a number of these musicians have agreed to be available during Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvahs.

Havurah has a list of musical leaders who know the service well and enjoy being part of Havurah's B'nei Mitzvah community. Musical leaders have various requests and lead times, so be sure to acquire the list and contact your musical leader well in advance to secure the date and to plan and/or practice. ***Because this list is regularly updated, it is not included in this handbook. Please call the Havurah office for the current list.***

As your family attends services in preparation, pay special attention to the music. This will help you make a decision about the music at your child's Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah.

#### *Personal touches*

Some families have found great value in personalizing the service by involving relatives and special friends. Parts can be assigned, special poems, songs, etc. can be included.

Other families find it is much more meaningful for the service to be the same as any other Shabbat morning service, to focus on the joy of our tradition and the spark the child brings to the *drash* and the Torah reading. Handing the Torah down through the generations is a lovely custom, especially if any grandparents or great-grandparents are able to join the student on the bimah.

The early pages of this handbook provide important details on Havurah's philosophy. Please keep these in mind as you plan your service.

#### *Aliyot/Hagbah, G'lilah, and Ark Openers*

**Please review the resources specific to these roles on the website:**

**<http://www.havurahshalom.org/bar--bat-mitzvah.html>**

- An *aliyah* is the honor of reciting the Hebrew blessings before and after each Torah portion is read. On a regular Saturday morning service there are seven of these honors. Six of these aliyot may be assigned to family or friends you wish to honor. **Historically, one aliyah is traditionally left unassigned to be given to a congregant during the service. Check in with Rabbi Benjamin if you plan to do this.**
- Get the Hebrew names of people doing aliyot, hagbah, gilah, and their relationship to the Bar/Bat/B'nei mitzvah. **Have a sheet with that information ready for Rabbi Benjamin (or the service leader) on the day of the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah.**

*NOTE: If you are asking someone to do an aliyah who is not familiar with the honor, please send them following: a copy of the Torah blessings in Hebrew, transliteration and English, an audio file of the blessings and directions for "how to have an aliyah". All of this is available from the office. You honor the Torah, the congregation, and the honoree by helping them prepare.*

- The *Hagbah* is the honor of lifting the Torah after it is read. Pick someone strong, and if possible with experience. The *G'ilah* is the honor of dressing the Torah as the *Hagbah* holds it.

- Jewish tradition reserves Torah honors of *Aliyot*, *Hagbah*, and *Glilah* for Jews of age 13 or over. In Havurah, a non-Jew who is in a committed relationship (married or same-sex/married) with a Jew may come up to Torah with their spouse/partner, as they are considered adjunct and "sustaining" the Jewish life of the household. Non-Jewish and non-adult relatives are welcome to do readings and lead songs.
- For each aliyah the rabbi will "call up" individuals by their Hebrew name (which includes the Hebrew names of the person's parents), so ask each honoree to provide these. All honorees must wear *tallit* (prayer shawls) so you should make sure to have extra *tallitot* available (*Aliyot*, *Hagbah*, and *Glilah*). Havurah does own a few tallitot.
- Jewish children are frequently honored by being asked to open and/or close the doors to the ark. This is a less formal honor, and Hebrew names are not announced.
- Everyone should practice his or her honors, preferably while wearing *tallit* at a rehearsal.

### *Prayer books*

For Saturday mornings we have approximately 200 copies of *Kol Haneshamah*. For Saturday afternoon Havdalah, we use the special blue Havdalah prayer books. Havurah owns 80 Tanakhim (Hebrew/English Bibles). As a sign of respect, prayer books and Bibles should not be placed on the floor. See more about this in the very next section.

### *Handouts or Service Booklet*

Though not required, most families prepare a 'program' for the service, which includes a section explaining the significance of the day (see example in the Appendix), an order of the service, along with songs, extra readings, etc. As you attend other Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah services at Havurah you might want to save examples of what other families have compiled to gather different ideas. It is up to you to decide what to include in the booklet, but a very important detail to include in a service handout is the information about not placing prayer books on the floor. There are many ways to express this, for example:

- As a sign of respect, prayer books and Bibles should not be placed on the floor.
- These are our sacred texts and contain the word of God and our history.
- If a lap or adjacent chair is not available, prayer books should be put on top of something like a tallit bag or purse, something other than directly on the floor.

Any or all of these could be combined to make the point clear and firm.

These handouts can be inserted in the prayer books, stacked alongside them, or handed out by ushers. (Please be mindful of how much paper you are generating.) Before you leave please be sure that the handouts are collected and either take them home with you, or please them in one of the recycling bins.

### *Information for the Rabbi and Others*

As expressed in the timeline section of this handbook, have a copy of the outline of the service with the parts you want Rabbi Benjamin or other service leader to do clearly marked.

## D. Using our building

Havurah is a busy place, and our building is rarely free of activity! Please be respectful of the other activities and uses of the building, including meetings and Friday Night Services. As explained earlier in this handbook, the simplest B'nei Mitzvahs might be indistinguishable from any other Shabbat morning service. Most families invite friends and family to share the joy of their child's coming of age. This results in some special considerations.

### **\*\* Please note and follow these special guidelines for B'nei Mitzvah on Shabbat School days:**

- Guest count: below 100
- Set up: no access to Moadon classroom (the classroom in the Social Hall created by the folding wall)
- Clean up: Everything needs to be cleaned up and out of the building by 2:15. Caterers can be in the kitchen. The family is responsible for folding up the tables in the sanctuary and putting them back in the storage closets and for stacking chairs, which should be pushed against the wall or put back in the storage closets.
- Evening set up: no access to any area of Havurah until 5:30

You will receive a packet from the Havurah office 3 months before the event providing information regarding building access and set-up information, security, janitorial/building fees, childcare and how you want the chairs and tables set up etc. The Operations Manager will email you a month in advance of the date to start finalizing details. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the office or a member of the B'nei Mitzvah committee.

### *Set Up*

The Custodian cleans and sets for the Shabbat morning service on Thursday or Friday (schedule varies) using the diagram given to the office. The sanctuary is available throughout the day on Friday, and many families tray cookies and do other set up on Friday morning to allow for a more restful afternoon and evening. When there is a Kabbalat Shabbat Dinner or other service/event on Friday night, the custodian will set up the sanctuary in time for the Saturday morning service based upon the detailed pre-arranged diagram that you provided to the Havurah office. They will set up the tablecloths and flowers arrangements you've left for them to use.

Some families decorate the Bima with flowers. Two large arrangements can be accommodated. Havurah has a supply of vases in all sizes that can be used for flower arrangements.

Please be considerate of other events in the building when you decide how to stage flowers, food preparation, personal items, and other items for the morning service. For example, trays of cookies can be stacked in the food warmer but they should be labeled and out of the way of the Friday evening service setup.

Havurah's building includes a permanent sound system, which the family will need to know how to turn on Saturday morning (usually your music person will do this). We have listening assistance devices for those who need them.

### *Ushers and Security*

Usually, the Shabbat School parents or other members volunteer in shifts as greeters and ushers. Greeters stand at the front door and direct visitors to the sanctuary and provide security during the service. Ushers hand out prayer books and service programs, and help guests feel comfortable and welcome.

### *Childcare*

Havurah Shalom provides one adult child care provider on Saturday morning to care for up to 6 children. If you think more children will need supervision during a Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah, additional people can be hired. Typically these are teenage or young adult members of the congregation. The family is asked to cover this cost by paying the additional assistant directly.

Childcare takes place in the Pardes room. Juice & crackers (or other finger food) is provided by the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah family (please check with the Havurah office first as these supplies may be fully stocked).

Because of limited childcare space, we request that children over 8 (including teenagers) remain in services with their parents. Please make this announcement at the beginning of the service. The suggested text of this announcement will be mailed to you.

### *Fees*

Havurah Shalom requires a one-time fee of \$280 for Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah that is payable to the office prior to the event. Membership dues should be in good standing.

*\*\*\* Please note that Havurah has set aside a small amount of money for families who need financial assistance with building usage fees or the Kiddush following the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah. Contact the B'nei Mitzvah committee Chairperson for information on this.*

## **E. Friends**

Let friends help, and don't feel shy about approaching others for help. Some examples of help you could request are:

- Bake cookies for the kiddush luncheon; this is a treasured Havurah tradition!
- pour wine for the kiddish (if the caterer is not going to do this)
- pass out wine/juice, and the challah during kiddish; kids like to do this!
- set up
- move furniture between services and luncheon; Shabbat School parents generally provide this support!
- help with clean up
- transport leftovers to service organization
- package gifts (tape cards to corresponding gifts)

- transport items as needed
- provide out-of-town guests with rides

Keep a list of chores handy for offers of help and **accept all offers of help.** Some families ask a close family friend to organize all the tasks and volunteers.

## **F. The Home Front**

Do as much as you can in advance (e.g. shop for family clothes, bake and freeze, buy non-perishable supplies).

Makes notes along the way about: guests, jobs to be done, menus, supplies and sources, necessary rentals, items to buy, items to borrow, plane and hotel reservations for out-of-town guests, and volunteer drivers and assignments.

Accommodations for out of town guests: Call several hotels and/or motels to get comparative rates. You might be able to get a senior, wedding or B'nei Mitzvah rates. Check into hotels that offer family suites or family deals in which kids stay free. Consider asking your friends to host your guest- and then return the favor when their turn comes.

Make sure the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah child has downtime the day before the event.

## **G. Photographing and Videotaping the Service**

Remembering the B'nei Mitzvah with photographs, or on video, is important to many families. However, the community wants to make sure that these activities do not detract from the service. Therefore, we have the following guidelines to prevent any obtrusiveness:

### Photography

- Finish all family portraits 15 minutes prior to the service (by 9:45am).
- Do not let any photographers disturb the service. Make sure the photographer has a good position where she or he can remain during the service. If using a tripod it should be set up in the back of the sanctuary and not moved during the service.
- Use a quiet camera.
- Do not use flash photography during the service.
- A video camera connected to the sound recording system is mounted overhead in the sanctuary and is pointed towards the bimah.

Video Recording: for a less intrusive way of documenting your special event...

A video camera connected to the sound recording system is mounted overhead in the sanctuary and is pointed towards the bimah. The recording system is connected to a computer that is inside a cabinet next to the sound system on the right hand side of the sanctuary as you are facing the bimah. Using a program on the computer, you can easily record the service - to keep yourself or share with others Please contact the Havurah IT Committee at [havurashalom@gmail.com](mailto:havurashalom@gmail.com) for more information.

*Thank you for your careful attention to these matters. Please share this information with any volunteer or professional photographers. If you have any questions, please contact the B'nei Mitzvah committee.*

#### **H. Electronics Policy for Services**

General Guiding Principle: Shabbat is a “stopping time.” It is peaceful, pensive, and sacred. Shabbat and any prayer services take us out of the ordinary (the profane) into the extraordinary, where we connect with ourselves, with our community, with our liturgy, and with our Torah. During Shabbat and other prayer services, our sanctuary needs to become a powerful place in time and space, separate from the normal and noisy world we live in. Electronics distract us from being fully engaged and can distract congregants around us. For these reasons, during all service times, Havurah Shalom becomes an “electronics-free” zone. This policy includes not only the sanctuary but the whole building to the greatest extent possible. Anyone needing to take an emergency call or to communicate via text message should step outside the building to do so.

#### Guidelines for Electronic Devices:

- **Cell Phones:** Phones are to be shut-off or silenced during the service. Texting and other uses is prohibited during services; picture taking must adhere to guidelines below. Cell phones may not be used on the *bimah* for presentations, parent remarks, or any other purpose. Cell phone cameras may be used after the service and Kiddush blessings.
- **Tablets and Electronic Screen(s):** Tablets or other devices may not be used on the *bimah* for presentations, parent remarks, or any other purpose unless special needs dictate an exception (see below). Use of electronic screen(s) for photo displays, photo albums, *tikun olam* projects, or family montages during the service and kiddush luncheon is prohibited. Tablet cameras may be used after the service and Kiddush blessings.
- **Cameras:** To limit distraction, photo taking during services is discouraged. Photography during services will be allowed under the following guidelines:

Professional and Designated Photographers: during B'nei Mitzvah services and other special events, only professional photographers or designated congregants may take pictures. Whether professional or chosen by family members, all designated photographers will need to be instructed prior to the time of the service by the family about being sensitive and discreet in their photo taking. A preferred alternative is for photographs to be taken during the run-through prior to the service.

- Appropriate Times for Photography: Ark opening and Torah procession, B'nai Mitzvah's drash, parent's speech to B'nai Mitzvah, Torah Aliyot, and Leyning
- Inappropriate Times for Photography: during standing prayers, such as Amidah prayers, Kaddish Prayer, Aleynu, and or during meditative/quiet/ reflective prayers.

Photographers and congregants may take pictures with cameras, phones, or tablets after the service and Kiddush blessings.

**Library Computer:** This computer is not available during services for kids or others to use, and no other electronics may be used in the library during Shabbat or other services.

**Synagogue Video System:** (see above) The video/webcam system can record the event or stream a B'nei Mitzvah service or other event but not both at the same time. Contact the office or Steve Birkel for me information and instructions.

**Exceptions and Accommodations:** Electronics may be used as needed, as appropriate to accommodate/support those with sight, sound, or other special needs. Should there be a situation where using an electronic device during a service is seen as critical/necessary to accomplish a key goal of a special service (e.g.: a video, recorded sound, slide show needed), the Spiritual Life Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to help determine if it is necessary and if so, the best approach for maintaining spirit of ritual practice, Shabbat, etc.

**Environmental Consideration:** Havurah acknowledges that restricting use of electronic media during service times has an environmental trade-off: paper will be used instead of electronic media. We will also encourage minimizing the amount of paper used and recycle to the greatest extent possible.

## I. Kiddush Luncheon

Most families host a luncheon after the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah. Some use a caterer, while others have a potluck or cater it themselves. You will receive a catering agreement in the logistics packet 3-4 months prior to your date, but you can always contact the office earlier for catering information.

**A caterer and renter must agree to strictly abide by the rules of Havurah's vegetarian kitchen:** Havurah Shalom maintains a kosher vegetarian kitchen.

- No MEAT of any kind is permitted in the kitchen or the facility.
- Baked goods must not contain lard, but may be made with 100% Pure Vegetable oil, butter, margarine, or shortening.
- Fish with fins and scales is an accepted food. Shellfish, fish without fins or scales, and amphibians ARE ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN! A list of fish that are allowed or forbidden can be provided by the Office and Facilities Manager.

Families can use the following items in the kitchen, if they are available. Please check in advance to ensure that what you need is there. **Other items, like coffee, milk, cream, juice, wine, and challah must be purchased.**

- tea
- sugar/sweetener
- powdered creamer
- condiments in the refrigerator on the shelf labeled "Leftovers- help yourself"

- spices
- doilies
- plastic wrap/foil/plastic bags
- paper towels
- coffee filters
- garbage bags
- Shabbat and Havdallah candles and holders.

As part of our concern for environmental *tikkun olam*, **families are required to use the congregation's ceramic dishes and metal knives, forks, and spoons.** Note that Havurah has adequate china and glassware on hand to ensure that paper plates or cups are not needed. If caterers are used, they must take everything with them that they brought, and must clean the dishes, wipe-down the kitchen, and empty the garbage.

Acceptable music after the lunch includes Hebrew, Jewish, or Klezmer type music. A DJ or Top 40 music is not appropriate for the luncheon.

More about Hiring Caterers: In exchange for the right to cater events at Havurah Shalom, caterer agrees to abide by all of the following rules: (please see building rental agreement for more information)

- Caterer must have current business license.
- **Liability insurance:** At least one month prior to each function, professional caterers must supply a Certificate of Liability Insurance (CLI) showing current comprehensive liability (including food liability) coverage of at least \$1,000,000 single limit and \$100,000 property damage. The certificate must name Havurah Shalom as an additional insured. If a professional caterer is not used, then single-event liability coverage must be obtained.
- **Workers' compensation insurance:** Professional caterers shall carry workers' compensation insurance on their employees and workers and provide Havurah Shalom with proof of coverage.
- **Indemnity:** Caterer shall indemnify and hold Havurah Shalom harmless from and against all claims and liabilities arising from or in connection with caterer's use of the Havurah Shalom facilities.
- **Damage deposit: A refundable deposit of \$150.00** is required for each event which can be provided by either the caterer or the renter. This is in addition to the cleaning fee otherwise required under the Agreement. **No damage or cleaning fee deposit is required with the \$280.00 building use fee for the service and luncheon.** This only applies to additional rentals such a Friday night Shabbat dinner for your out of town guests or a Saturday night party.

Miscellaneous:

- **Kitchen & decorative items:** Havurah has many serving trays, doilies and little kiddush cups available for use. Havurah also owns round and rectangular tablecloths. It is your responsibility to check they are clean before your event, and then to launder and return them within 5 days after your event. Havurah also has large flower baskets, vases, cookie trays, a set of metal "silver" ware, etc. Any questions? Call the office.

- **Table settings & room decorations:** Use your creativity as you add beauty to the space or carry out a theme. If the Havurah table linens are insufficient your caterer may provide them or you may rent them.
- **Challah:** Challah can be purchased at numerous local bakeries and grocery stores.

## J. Clean-up

In advance, organize a clean-up crew to be responsible for picking up papers, reuniting lost items with their owners, and tidying up our building. If there is no caterer, your clean-up crew must also be responsible for thoroughly pre-washing dishes, sanitizing them in our dishwasher, and putting them away

After the service, the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah families are asked to take care of used linens (wash and return them to Havurah within 3 days) and also to take home everything that they have brought to the building, including flowers, photos, linens, dishes, and other items. If you would like to leave flowers for other weekend events, please take responsibility for removing them within a week or contact the office.

The custodians clean the bathrooms, tables, floors, and take down the tables and chairs. They also inspect the kitchen when the caterers leave.

**Note:** Families must remove all food they have prepared or brought at the end of the event. Leftovers can be donated to local organizations (a list is located on the wall by the sink).

## ***Please note and follow these special guidelines for B'nei Mitzvah on Shabbat School days:***

- Guest count: below 100
- Set up: no access to Moadon classroom (the classroom in the Social Hall created by the folding wall)
- Clean up: Everything needs to be cleaned up and out of the building by 2:15. Caterers can be in the kitchen. The family is responsible for folding up the tables in the sanctuary and putting them back in the storage closets and for stacking chairs, which should be pushed against the wall or put back in the storage closets.
- Evening set up: no access to any area of Havurah until 5:30

## K. Afterwards

Many families host a party on Saturday night to continue the celebration. There is more variety here than in any other aspect of Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah—and of course you can do what you like—this is not a Havurah event! Still, fellow congregants who have been through this have used or suggested the following ideas that you may wish to consider:

- Rent Havurah for an evening party. For details about cost and procedures, contact the Havurah Office

- Rent a hall for dancing, or gym/community center for both dancing & basketball or swimming, have an “Out-of-towners-only party”, or have a combined event with another family whose Bat/Bar/B’nei Mitzvah date is near your own
- Open gifts at a calm time with someone to record names and gifts.
- Emphasize gratitude. Closure will come when your student has sent the last of their thank-you notes. (It is up to you to decide whether to send another thank you note if the gift was a donation to a charity, as the charity will generally send a thank-you directly to the donor.)

### *Tributes*

Many families give tributes of "thank yous" after their event to those who were of special help. These tributes are listed in the Hakol. Each tribute requires a donation (amount discretionary) and can be designated to one or more of the following funds:

Adult Education  
 Building  
 Cemetery  
 Educator’s Discretionary  
 Emergency Kehillah  
 General Operations  
 Havurah Endowment  
 High Holidays  
 Joey Wolf Education Fund  
 Kabbalat Shabbat Dinners  
 Library  
 Music  
 Prayer Book  
 Rabbi Discretionary  
 Religious Articles  
 Tikkun Olam  
 Youth Activities Scholarship  
 Youth Education Fund

Please call the office for a current list of funds. You can make a donation by sending a check to the office with a note indicating what fund and your note thanking those who helped you. You may also make an online donation, using a credit card, on the Havurah website under the “donate” tab.

## Section VI: Appendix

### A. Sample Letter to Aliyah Honorees

You can download an electronic copy of this letter @ <https://www.havurahshalom.org/bar--bat-mitzvah.html>

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Havurah Shalom is pleased to honor you with the \_\_\_\_\_ Aliyah.

Please sit near the front of the sanctuary, so you will be ready to come up when the service leader calls your name.

Please bring your tallit. (If you don't have one, there will be an extra one available on the bimah.)

When called, please approach the side of the bimah that is on your left as you walk toward it. Turn and face the congregation with the Torah on your left. \_\_\_\_\_ (Torah reader) will point to the first word of the reading with the yad. It is traditional to touch the Torah scroll with the fringes of your tallit, kiss the fringes of your tallit, and then begin the Torah blessing. (See next page. ). Please touch the scroll in the white space between columns, so as not to rub the ink from the scroll. Enjoy being close to the Torah, and watch while it is being chanted!

When \_\_\_\_\_ is finished chanting the portion, s/he will point to the last word of the reading so you can again touch the scroll with the tallit and kiss it. Then chant the second Torah blessing.

Next, move to the other side of the bimah, so that the Torah is now on your right. Please remain on the bimah for the next aliyah, and then return to your seat after the blessing following that reading is completed.

Thank you for helping \_\_\_\_\_ celebrate his/her Bar/Bat/B'eni Mitzvah!

Please fill out the following information and return it to me as soon as possible:

\_\_\_\_\_ Aliyah  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Father's Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## B. Torah Blessings

*Before a section of the Torah has been read, the following blessing is said*

	Barchu et Adonai ha-m'vorach.
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*The congregation responds*

	Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorach l'olam va-ed.
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*The person called to the Torah **repeats** the response and continues*

	Baruch atah, Adonai, Elo-hay-nu melech ha-olam, Asher ba-char ba-nu mikol ha-a-mim v'na-tan lanu et tora-to. Baruch ata, Adonai no-tayn ha-torah.
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### Translation

Bless the Holy One of Blessing

Blessed is the Holy One who is forever blessed

Holy One of Blessing, Your Presence fills creation.

You called us from all the peoples and gave us Your Torah.

Holy One of Blessing, You give us Torah.

*After a section of the Torah has been read, the following blessing is said*

	Baruch atah, Adonai, Elo-hay-nu melech ha-olam, Asher natan lanu torat emet, v'chai-yay olam na-ta b'to-che-nu Baruch ata, Adonai no-tayn ha-torah.
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### Translation

Holy One of Blessing, Your Presence fills creation.

You gave us the Torah of truth and planted within us eternal life.

Holy One of Blessing, You give us Torah.

### C. Sample Welcome Letter

*This may be included in your service booklet or distributed at the service.*

(Date ,optional)

Dear Family and Friends,

Welcome to Havurah Shalom. This morning, you are participating in a Shabbat morning service. This service is a special one, where (student) will be called up to the Torah for the first time. This signifies her/his being accepted by the congregation as an adult.

Our service has five parts. The first part is the introductory morning prayers and Psalms. Many of these prayers are done as songs. These are followed by the Barchu ("call to prayer") and the Sh'ma. The Sh'ma begins with the most fundamental statement of Judaism: "Listen, all of Israel. Adonai is our God, Adonai is One." The third part of the service is the prayer called the Amidah. This is the "standing prayer", a collection of blessings which praise and thank God for gifts given to us. This is a very individual, personal prayer.

The Torah service follows. The Torah consists of the five Books of Moses, written in Hebrew by hand on a parchment scroll. It is our "tree of life" and the heart of our history, theology, and ethics.. Every week, a portion of the Torah is read, so that by the end of the year the entire Torah is completed. Then we begin again.

The weekly portion of the Torah reading is divided into seven parts. \_\_\_\_\_ and other members of the congregation will be honored by chanting these portions. Family and friends will also be honored by doing an Aliyah ("going up") - reciting the blessings before and after the chanting of each Torah portion.

The fifth and final part of the service is the closing prayers, including the Mourner's Kaddish and the Alenu.

Please stay after the service for the Kiddush - the prayers over wine and bread.

Please refrain from applause and flash photography during the services. As a sign of respect, prayer books and bibles should not be placed on the floor.

Attendees may choose to make a donation to Havurah Shalom or one of its funds. Optional: As part of his/her Mitzvah Project, ..... Is requesting that donations be made to.....

We are honored and blessed that you have joined us on this special day.

Shalom,