



BETH
CHAIM
CONGREGATION

Celebrating
Spiritual
Community
Since 1978

B'NEI MITZVAH MANUAL

B'nei Mitzvah Families:

Welcome to the B'nei Mitzvah journey at Beth Chaim. For generations, this has been a deeply moving and joyous rite of passage for families, communities like Beth Chaim, and the entire Jewish people. We are delighted to have the opportunity to celebrate this *simcha* with you. At Beth Chaim, we view the attainment of Bar or Bat Mitzvah as one milestone among many on the path to becoming an effective adult member in the Jewish community and our greater society. To this end, we have defined an engaging process towards preparation for the ceremony and taking on adult responsibilities. Please read this packet carefully. We encourage families to discuss the program and to make sure that all members are willing participants, especially the honoree.

Our desire is to support our young people and their families in attaining these goals with grace, ease, and a feeling of pride and accomplishment. The process is not complicated, but requires effort, which is best done in a slow and sustained manner. After a brief orientation, the requirements for becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Beth Chaim (at any age!) are set forth below, followed by some specific helpful timelines. Our overall aim is that the attainment of the status of Bar or Bat Mitzvah be truly meaningful and include the entire family and community to foster connection, accomplishment and joy. We pray that this B'nei Mitzvah Manual provides guidance and wisdom in preparing for this milestone.

On behalf of the entire community, please accept our hearty and heartfelt *Mazal Tov!* We look forward to helping make this beautiful ritual an experience your entire family will always cherish.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Dan

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THE BETH CHAIM B'NEI MITZVAH JOURNEY

One Page Guide: Here Is What You Need To Do To Prepare For The Big Day

- Start your Hebrew reading now. Students are expected to be able to read their own 15 sentence portion by the end of 6th grade. Tutoring suggestions offered if needed.
- Attend Sunday Jew Crew. The Jew Crew is our Sunday morning experience just for the B'nei Mitzvah class. It combines *Tikkun Olam* (social justice) experiences and environmental education (such as hiking), along with volunteer opportunities at Beth Chaim. Attendance through May is expected, regardless of B'nei Mitzvah date.
- Join us for mid-week Jew Crew. The Jew Crew meet for one hour during Hebrew Power Hour. Class will meet on either Tuesday or Wednesday, to be determined.
- Learn trope. Weekly trope training is for 30 minutes and starts approx. 6 months prior to the B'nei Mitzvah date. Once trope study begins, spend 20 minutes a day on your Torah chanting.
- Prepare D'var with Rabbi Dan. Approximately 3 months prior to the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony students begin weekly 45-minute sessions with Rabbi Dan to develop their D'var Torah. A parent joins each weekly session for the last 5 minutes.
- Come to the monthly B'nei Mitzvah Family Workshop. Students and at least one adult spend time preparing for the changes that come with the passage into responsibility. Bonds with other families deepen as you learn and share together. Typically, the Workshops are on Sundays beginning in September and ending in March.
- Tune in and tune up at Shabbat services — We look forward to sharing holy time with you for at least 10 Shabbat morning services and 4 Friday night services **BEFORE** the bar or bat mitzvah. At least one of the Friday night services should be a regular Friday night service (not *Ruach*.)
- Plan to spend at least 8 hours volunteering at Beth Chaim as a family (separate from volunteering as a greeter/closer at another family's Bar/Bat Mitzvah .
- Participate in the B'nei Mitzvah Tzedakah Fund.
- Extend the Simcha: Decide on a "Rite of Passage" ceremony, a personal tzedakah fund and/ or a Simcha of your choosing.

Expectations for the B'nei Mitzvah Year

A. Introduction

B'nei Mitzvah requires preparation, deep thought, and a supportive community. Here is a little more information to get you started. As you get ready for the year:

- Review Hebrew pronunciation and chanting. Discuss tutoring if necessary.
- Honestly prioritize extracurricular activities in the 6th and 7th grade years.
- Look at your *parashah* together (in English!) Watch the BimBam (formerly Godcast) video of your Torah portion, which can be found at www.bimbam.com.
- Listen to the Beth Chaim prayers as a family . . . in the car, at home, at bedtime.
- Don't wait to be invited to services . . . Shabbat is for everyone! We love to see your beautiful faces as you have the chance to absorb the service in a natural way. The more familiar the service is to you, the more pleasure and pride you will all have at the ceremony.

B. Attendance at Sunday "Jew Crew"

Maintain at least an 80% class attendance record for all scheduled classes in the B'nei Mitzvah year, through May, even if the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony precedes the conclusion of the year.

Students in the B'nei Mitzvah year will rotate through a series of three experiences throughout the class year. Each Sunday, the Jew Crew, led by an Experiential Educator, will engage in one of the following aspects of Jewish life and learning:

- ***Beth Chaim Beiteinu*** ("Beth Chaim, Our Home") – Students will serve the Beth Chaim community in some way, such as leading *tefilah*, organizing a school-wide *tikkun olam* project, delivering *mishloach manot*, or helping to run the Purim Carnival.
- ***Tefilah b'Teva*** ("Prayer in Nature") – Students will spend the morning in an outdoor activity, such as hiking or canoeing, and use the opportunity to have a prayer experience outside the walls of the synagogue.
- ***Tikkun Olam*** – In the first half of the year, students will travel to various Bay Area social justice or social service organizations, to do hands-on *tikkun olam* work. Each site visit will be preceded by a 20-minute investigation of a relevant Jewish text; to maximize the personal impact of the work, students will keep journals. In the second half of the year, students will commit to one organization for the remainder of their *Tikkun Olam* days.

We anticipate this will bond the B'nei Mitzvah class into a community of active Jewish life, allowing them to become role models for all of our students.

C. Family Attendance at Monthly B'nei Mitzvah Family Class Workshop

Students are expected to attend a monthly family class workshop, with at least one adult family member.

Why? Because our experience has shown that students learn best when their study is supported by families engaged with, and excited by, what the children are learning. We are committed to the education of the whole family. Shared meals, interactive programs, and intergenerational learning created close-knit and *haimish* Jewish community.

D. Attendance at Other Students' B'nei Mitzvah Services

As has been the case throughout Jewish history, the entire congregation is included in every Shabbat morning service, and the kiddush that follows. Families are expected to be part of our Shabbat morning community.

- Unless there is unavoidable conflict, students should attend services with an adult.
- Students are expected to dress in a way that shows honor to the community, their family, and themselves.
- Students are expected to have a siddur at their seats (why not bring your own?) and follow along during the service.

We recognize that all students aren't close friends with everyone in their class. The community that the B'nei Mitzvah class develops continues to grow stronger throughout the B'nei Mitzvah year. The students support one another through this important life cycle event, not only on the *bimah*, but also in class and at each other's celebrations.

E. Weekly Attendance at D'var Torah Preparation Sessions

Attend weekly 45-minute sessions with Rabbi Dan. These one-on-one sessions with Rabbi Dan begin approx. 3 months prior.

Why? Because this is a special time for our B'nei Mitzvah families. Students are guided on a personal journey into their Torah portions, and how their own life experiences relate to the text they're learning. At the end of this path, students will have crafted a D'var Torah this is meaningful both to their own journey, and the community as well. Parents are asked to attend the last 5-10 minutes of each meeting.

F. B'nei Mitzvah Tzedakah Fund/Class Gift

All families are asked to contribute an optional \$100 to a B'nei Mitzvah Tzedakah Fund. This contribution is in lieu of families giving individual B'nei Mitzvah gifts to one another. At the end of the year, the fund will be donated to a class-chosen cause.

Tzedakah (righteous giving to the poor) is a foundational principle of the Jewish people. We emphasize the value of Tzedakah as an integral part of being Jewish. We know that giving students the power to effect positive change in the world connects them to a deep sense of responsibility for the well-being of others and letting them know that every effort is meaningful.

G. Extending the Simcha: Rite of Passage Ceremony

A Rite of Passage ceremony is offered to those families interested in such an inter-generational honoring of and sharing with the B'nei Mitzvah student. This Rite of Passage is facilitated by Rabbi Dan, or other trained ritual facilitator from the community, and is held in gendered groups. For example, a girl may gather the women adults in her life like her mother, aunts, grandmothers, teachers, etc. in order to receive their wisdom through the telling of stories. Usually between 5 and 8 people attend. It can be extraordinary, and many B'nei Mitzvah have told us that it was the highlight of their weekend.

This event is optional and needs to be scheduled with the Rabbi or other facilitator at least two months in advance of the date. It often takes place the Thursday night before the weekend and is held in the home. For further information about the details of this event please confer with Rabbi Dan.

H. Personal Tzedakah Fund

Through the Federation of the East Bay, students can set up a private fund, to which donations can be made from gifts, and whose interest can be donated yearly to the charity or charities of the young person's choosing. This lifetime opportunity fosters continuing responsibility towards the well-being of others and begins the philanthropic journey for our young adults.

Saturday Morning Service Overview

A Rabbi was once asked by her students, "What do you do before praying?"

She answered, "I pray that I may be able to pray properly." For most of us, praying with devotion is a challenge. We often begin by putting on clothing to help us mark the sacredness of our prayer. The *kippah* is sometimes referred to by its Yiddish name, *yarmulke*. The *tallit* is a four cornered garment which is draped around the shoulders. At each corner are knotted fringes called *tzitzit*. It is worn only in the daytime, although those leading prayers may wear one in the afternoon or evening. The wearing of a *tallit* is a privilege and mark of adulthood, serving as a constant reminder of the commandments. A young person officially wears a *tallit* for the first time on the occasion of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

To help us to approach the Divine, our prayer service begins with meditations, songs and blessings designed to create the proper mood in the mind of the worshipper. This 'warm up' has blessings for the body and spirit. The main portion of the service begins with a two sentence call to prayer, the *Barchu*. The section that follows includes the *Shema*, the watchword of our faith, proclaiming monotheism, flanked by blessings for light and love before it and for redemption after it. The next section is the *Amidah*, the Standing Prayer, where we thank God for the gift of *Shabbat* and ask for blessings of peace.

Our Ark (*Aron Kodesh*) holds the Torah scroll (*Sefer Torah*), which has the five Books of Moses written on parchment made from animal skin. The parchment is attached to two wooden rollers, each of which is called a Tree of Life (*Etz Hayyim*) and clothed in a mantle of fabric. In recognition of its holiness, we rise as we carry the Torah around the room but sit when it is placed on a table for reading. It is an honor to be called up to recite the blessings before and after the Torah scroll is read. This act is known as an *aliyah* (literally, ascending). This physical act of going up is symbolic of a greater spiritual one.

After the Torah is read, the Bat or Bar Mitzvah will give a *D'var Torah*, a talk about the Torah portion for the week, or a topic that comes from reading and understanding of the issues raised by the portion. Blessings are given to the young person by family, friends, and members of the synagogue staff, and the service concludes with several prayers and a closing hymn, including the Mourners Kaddish, where a list of people special to the family will be read.

Looking at the construction of the service, we perceive it moving in an intentional direction: We prepare to pray, we hear the call to formal prayer, we reflect on our loving relationship with God and standing within the relationship we petition for our communal and personal needs. We are drawn closer to God through our sacred texts, and then join in a last round of blessing and joy before returning to our outer worlds.

Everything But the Service: Logistics of the Big Day

A. Facility Use Event Form

A Facility Use Event Form is due to the office **one month prior** to the event and finalized two weeks prior. This form can be picked up at the Temple office or by contacting the Temple Administrative Assistant at admin@bethchaim.com.

B. Volunteer Coordination

B'nei Mitzvah families support one another on Shabbat morning with (1) greeter/set-up duty and (2), clean-up associated with the service and kiddush. Sign-ups are managed via a Sign-up Genius that is sent out by the Temple Administrative Assistant. You will receive individual instruction regarding volunteers, in advance. It is a strong Beth Chaim value that we are a community that supports one another. Look for an email asking your family to sign up for three of these assignments. If you or a family member cannot fulfill these three volunteer assignments, it is your responsibility to find a replacement.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family and volunteers should be in contact with each other two weeks prior to the service. At that time, cell phone numbers should be exchanged in case any last minute changes need to be handled. (Note that volunteers should not to be asked to move furniture, cook food, or stay past 1:30pm.)

C. Friday Night Oneg

The B'nei Mitzvah fee includes Friday night oneg set-up and clean-up. B'nei Mitzvah families do not need to worry about this. However, if you are bringing more than 20 family members, please let us know so we can prepare accordingly.

D. Shabbat Morning Setup

The set-up volunteer should plan to **arrive approximately one-half hour before the service**. Open the doors to the sanctuary all the way against the wall. The doors will stay open when pushed open all the way (same as the front door).

Please make sure there is a challah and kiddush cup with wine on the *bimah* for the rabbi to use at the end of the service. The bar/bat mitzvah family is responsible for bringing the wine and challah. (The kiddush cup can be found in a kitchen cupboard labeled "Shabbat." A tray for challah can also be found in the kitchen.) After the service, please take the challah to the Oneg area.

E. Photography and Videotaping

Photographing and videotaping of the service will be **permitted only if the ceremony is filmed from a fixed position at the back of the sanctuary in a manner that makes no sound or flash**. Pictures on the *bimah* with the Torah may be taken prior to the service once your service leader arrives. Arrangements should be made for this in advance.

F. Saturday Kiddush Following the Ceremony

Everyone who attends the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony is invited to enjoy the Kiddush that immediately follows the service. **The B'nei Mitzvah families are responsible for providing the food and beverages for a standard Kiddush and all of the paper serving products, except for the kiddush cups.** This includes the kosher wine and challah. The standard Kiddush requires challah, wine, juice, cookies and fruit. **The food selection must comply with Beth Chaim's Dietary Policy on page 22.**

The Kiddush is traditionally held in the sanctuary. Courtyard seating can be arranged for a discounted rate. The Temple Administrative Assistant will review available courtyard options with you. B'nei Mitzvah families are responsible for lockup and facility use and for the set up and break down of tables and chairs. Training on lock up and facility use is given by our Administrative Assistant prior to the event. Many families hire a caterer to assist.

Note: those who work in the kitchen to prepare the food and beverages for the Kiddush or for the family's private gathering need to be mindful that sounds carry easily from the kitchen into the sanctuary.

G. Shabbat Morning Cleanup — Sanctuary and Patio

After the Kiddush, pick up any trash left in the sanctuary, and return bins to the kitchen. Return all siddurim to the bookshelves by the sanctuary doors. Turn off sanctuary lights, with the switch at the sanctuary entrance on the left. Close the sanctuary doors.

If there is no caterer, you should plan to:

Clean any utensils & trays and place back in drawers or kitchen cabinets, wipe the kitchen countertops and serving tables, and help pack up any leftovers (no leftover food is to be left in the kitchen/fridge.)

Remember. . .

- Short, regular practice is more effective than long, desperate hours at the end.
- Pictures on the *bimah* with the Torah may be taken prior to the service once your service leader arrives, or at a rehearsal prior to the big day, if you prefer. Videotaping of the service will be permitted if the camera is set up prior to the ceremony, and **the ceremony is taped from a fixed position at the back of the sanctuary in a manner that makes no sound or flash.**
- Families are expected to arrive at least 45 minutes prior to the ceremony.

Timeline & Checklist: When to Get Things on Your Calendar

Summer between 6th and 7th Grade

Check

- Check with your 6th grade Hebrew School teacher to see if tutoring over the summer would be advisable.
- Sit down as a family and discuss lessening any optional extra activities during their 7th grade year, especially starting seven months prior to their date.
- Remember to keep tracking Service Attendance as well as Volunteer Hours for Beth Chaim. Take advantage of your summer schedule to get some of these done!

Seven Months Prior

- Check your membership status. All Religious School fees and B'nei Mitzvah fees must be kept current. No family will be denied the blessing of B'nei Mitzvah due to financial hardship, provided they make arrangements with the synagogue office. If you are not sure of your status, call the Bookkeeper at Beth Chaim.
- If applicable, carefully read and sign the Brit Limud (Covenant of Learning) so that you understand the responsibilities: see page 14.

Six Months Prior

- Trope mentoring begins. Weekly trope sessions are 30 minutes. Once trope study begins, spend 20 minutes a day on your Torah chanting.
- Discuss with Rabbi Dan whether you are going to have a Rite of Passage on the Thursday night prior to the service. See page 5 for a description of the optional Rite of Passage. Make sure the friends and family to attend schedule their travel plans accordingly to arrive on Thursday early in the day.
- Calendar your family Shabbat dinner for 5:00 p.m. so that your family can get to Friday night services, which begin at 7:30 p.m. Your family will be invited to light the Shabbat candles and your child will lead several prayers in the evening.

Three Months Prior

- The Temple Administrative Assistant will contact you to schedule your *D'var Torah* orientation meeting with Rabbi Dan. At that meeting you will schedule weekly study sessions. The study will focus on obtaining a clear understanding of the Torah portion and empowering the student to engage in an encounter with the Torah. A parent will join for the last 5 minutes of each meeting.

Check

Six Weeks Prior

- Review the form, Opportunities for Family Participation on page 16 and have it filled out as best as you can. Please do not invite anyone to participate, sing, or lead anything at your child's service before first checking with Rabbi Dan.
- Schedule your Service Planning Meeting with Rabbi Dan to begin to plan the service, answer any questions, and help facilitate maximum participation in the service by family and friends.
- Prepare a one paragraph article with photo about your son/daughter for publication in The Star. The Temple Administrative Asst. will contact you.

One Month Prior

- Meet with the Temple Administrative Assistant to fill out and submit your Facility Use Form. She will walk you through how to open and close the building, give you your alarm code, and show you where everything is.

Two Weeks Prior

- Contact the three people who volunteered to support your family during the service. The volunteers will receive an email in advance from the Temple Administrative Assistant with written instructions. (Set-up for your ceremony are ultimately your family's responsibility. The class volunteers are there to help you with this.)

One Week Prior

- Provide Rabbi Dan with a list of participants in the service. The list should include the English and Hebrew names for each *aliyah* (including Hebrew names of the parents, if known), and his/her relationship to the B'nei Mitzvah student.
- A run-through, or rehearsal, will be held to finalize details, review logistics of the service and to resolve any remaining questions. Only the parents and student need to attend. This often takes place on the Tuesday afternoon/evening before the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. At this rehearsal, the student will have an opportunity to practice reading directly from the Torah using the microphone. He or she will also practice delivering their D'var Torah. They should wear the shoes they plan to wear to the service and bring their tallit and D'var Torah.
- The optional Rite of Passage may take place Thursday evening. (Remember to schedule this several months in advance with Rabbi Dan.)
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah should identify the key people to thank privately; for example, trope mentor, teachers, family, etc. (Suggested gifts: personal note or photo, handmade personal gift, donation to a cause of your or their choice or synagogue in their honor.)

After Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Check

- Continue to attend 7th grade religious school.
- Continue to attend services of your classmates to support them as they supported you.
- Consider applying to be a *Madrich* or *Madricha* in the Religious School for the next school year.
- Sign up for Midrasha, and/or attend a Midrasha Open House. You can check their calendar at www.ccmidrasha.com.
- Contact the student leaders of our local BBYO chapters.

Raising the Bar on the Mitzvah: A Few Words About the Party

Rabbi Joseph Caro was a 16th century rabbi who compiled a list of laws a good Jew should follow. It's called the Shulchan Aruch ("A Set Table" — Rabbi Caro has "set the table" so that we can enjoy the "meal" of a Jewish life.) Here's what he says about B'nei Mitzvah parties: *It is the religious obligation of the parent to offer a festive meal in honor of a child becoming a bar mitzvah, just as one might do when the child marries.*

Seeing B'nei Mitzvah parties as religious obligations may change how we feel about the party, and what it says about us as Jews. In addition, for many non-Jewish guests, this may be the only contact they have with the Jewish community. What they experience will have a large impact on how they view Jews and Jewish tradition.

While Beth Chaim does not set any requirements for your celebrations outside of the synagogue, **we invite you to consider Jewish values in planning your family Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations.**

The following examples illustrate how some families have planned elements of their celebration around Jewish values:

- Inclusivity — We encourage you to try to include the entire B'nei Mitzvah class (students only) in your celebrations. Some families have held separate kid-friendly parties, such as a pool party or picnic, to find affordable ways to be inclusive.
- Invitations — Consider including the Hebrew date and Hebrew name of your child on your invitation, as well as the name of the Torah portion. In keeping with the Jewish obligation to protect God's world, some families send our paperless e-invitations.
- *Kippot/Tallitot* — You can support local Jewish businesses by getting ritual objects at Afikomen, a Judaica store in Berkeley (www.afikomen.com). You may also consider including Hebrew dates and names on *kippot*.
- Food — Consider whether your guests may appreciate kosher or organic food.
- Timing of The Event — If your celebration occurs on Shabbat, you may include kiddush and motzi. Saturday evening parties can start with Havdalah. Our rabbis can help you arrange these rituals.
- Cost/Money/Gifts — Some families invite guests to give tzedakah in addition to or instead of gifts. Ask us if you'd like guidance on ways to do this.
- You might consider the donation of an amount of money equal to 3% of the expense of the party to the wonderful organization called Mazon, or some other charity that is dedicated to fighting hunger. In our joy, it's especially good to share the abundance with others.

**CHARTS, FORMS, AND OTHER HANDY DOCUMENTS TO
HELP GUIDE YOUR WAY**

Tutoring: *Brit Limud* - Covenant of Learning

Student Name: _____
Parent(s): _____
Emergency Phone #'s: _____
Parent Email(s): _____

Mentor: _____
Mentor Phone #: _____
Mentor Email: _____

Mission of the Mentor/Student relationship. We see the relationship of Mentor/Student as an important relationship of support. Every child has a different experience learning this system. For some it comes easier than others. Once the student learns the trope system and begins applying it to the *parashah*, the mentor serves as a check for the students work and helps them fine tune their pronunciation and chanting. However, the success depends on the student devoting time to learning and practice.

Schedule. Beth Chaim will provide 26, 30-minute sessions in order to learn how to chant Torah and Haftarah to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. If necessary, we will help connect students to tutors we trust. Families may be responsible for compensating tutors for extra time.

Expectations of students. Students are expected to work at least **20 minutes every day** on their trope and Torah study. Doing small amounts every day guarantees success. They are expected to come to tutoring sessions prepared, with all of their B'nei Mitzvah materials.

Students are expected to learn their *tefillot* for the service by the end of the 6th grade. They are also expected to attend 12 Saturday morning services and 6 Friday night services **prior** to their B'nei Mitzvah, and to support their classmates at services.

Missed appointments. You are expected to come to all scheduled appointments with your mentors whether or not Beit Midrash is in session. If you must miss a session because of illness, please call your mentor as soon as you know that you are not attending. Many mentors come in especially just to see you.

Responsibility of Mentors. Please give your mentor the best way to reach you in case of an emergency. The mentor will contact you if they are unable to make a session. The mentor will keep you up to date if your child needs extra assistance or if your child has fallen behind.

Dated: _____ Student Signature: _____
Dated: _____ Parent Signature: _____
Dated: _____ Parent Signature: _____
Dated: _____ Mentor Signature: _____

Keep one copy and return signed original to Rabbi Dan

Shabbat Morning Service Outline

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	465	*Kiddush & Motsi
	459	*Adon Olam / Od Yavo Shalom

Note: Unless otherwise noted, the pages referenced are from the *Kol Haneshamah Siddur*.

*These are prayers that the B'nei Mitzvah student is expected to lead or participate in.

**These numbers refer to Other Opportunities for Participation (see next page).

Opportunities for Family Participation

(Fill this out and bring it with you to your Service Planning Meeting with your service leader, 6 weeks prior to the ceremony, before actually inviting anyone to participate.)

- 1. Tallit Presentation.** _____. This can be done by parents, grandparents, or whoever has purchased the tallit for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah or anyone you wish to honor with this presentation.
- 2. Sibling Blessing of B'nei Mitzvah.** (Optional. Blessings should be printed in advance and reviewed by the parent.)
- 3. Sh'ma and V'ahavta.** Traditionally we invite all the members of the B'nei Mitzvah class to come up and participate with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the *Sh'ma* and *V'ahavta*.
- 4. Opening the Ark.** _____. Anyone can do this. This is good option for siblings, younger cousins or friends.
- 5. Passing the Torah from Generation to Generation.** This usually includes grandparents, parents, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

6. Aliyot.

1. Community _____
(Past students or congregants read this Torah section)
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. Parent(s) _____
6. B'nei Mitzvah _____

On Shabbat there are five or six *aliyot* (the honor of being called to “go up” to the Torah). The first aliyah is reserved for members of the community, and will be chanted either by post B'nei Mitzvah, congregants, or your family member of choice. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants the remaining five *aliyot*. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is given the honor of saying the blessing for the sixth aliyah, and the parent(s) is/are honored with the blessing for the fifth aliyah. Please gather the Jewish names of those being honored with *aliyot*. A Jewish name is the first name of the person being honored as well as the Jewish name of one or both of this person's parents. If any group larger than two is being called to the Torah for an aliyah, we don't need all of the Hebrew names – we will call them as a family or group.

7. **Parent Blessing.** Each parent has the opportunity to offer a blessing to their child. A blessing has two parts; the part that is given and the part that is received. The blessings should be written directly to the child in order to be received. **We also find that if it is any longer than one page, one sided, students are less likely to receive it.** A blessing involves your hopes for them giving their individual strengths and challenges. It is not a time to list their achievements. Please ask for sample blessings from Rabbi Dan.

8. **Raising the Torah (*Hagbah*).** _____
Although this honor does not offer a blessing, we ask that you provide his/her Hebrew name. This should be someone who has raised the Torah before, preferably with a full size Torah. There are several individuals in the congregation who have done this, and Rabbis are always available for this as well.

9. **Dressing the Torah (*G'lilah*):** _____
A person need not have done this before. Our Rabbis can teach them how to do this on the spot. Again, this too, is an aliyah without offering a blessing and we ask that you provide his/her Hebrew name.

10. Be Creative:

Make a list of everyone you want to actively include in the celebration, and we will find an appropriate involvement for them. The challenge is to find something that will be meaningful to the individual. If they have a wonderful voice you may invite them to sing something (we can discuss options) or you might consider other gifts individuals may have that would be a blessing to weave into the service.

If a person would like to choose his/her own reading, this is fine. Please ask them to send a copy to you ahead of time to make sure it is not something we are already doing.

Note: As per Beth Chaim policy, **non-Jews are *always celebrated as essential members of B'nei Mitzvah families.*** Any family member who feels that they have supported the bat or bar mitzvah on his/her journey can be offered an *aliyah*. The language of Torah blessings includes language that celebrates the sacred obligation to receive and live Torah. **Anyone who finds meaning in this language is encouraged to chant or say the Torah blessings.**

Everyone who is called to the Torah for an *aliyah* or to raise or dress the Torah is asked to wear a *tallit*.

Torah Blessings

A. Blessing Before Torah Reading

Reader:

Barchu et Adonai ha-m'vorach u

Congregation:

Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorach u l'olam va'ed

Reader:

Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorach u l'olam va'ed

Reader:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher bachar bah-nu mikol ha-amim, v'natan lanu et Torah-toe. Baruch ata Adonai no-tain ha-Torah.

B. Blessing After Torah Reading

Reader:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher nah-tan lanu Torat emet, v'cha-yay olam nah-tah beh-toe-chey-nu. Baruch ata Adonai no-tain ha-Torah.

C. Translations of the Torah Blessings

Bless the Infinite, the Source of all blessing.

Blessed is the Infinite, the Source of all blessing, now and forever.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has given us the singular responsibility and sacred gift of the Torah. Blessed are You, God, giver of Torah.

Blessed are You, Eternal One, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has given us the Torah of truth, and planted within us the seed of eternal life. Blessed are You, God, giver of Torah.



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Greeter Instructions for Volunteers – Shabbat Morning

A. Two Weeks Before the Service

- The B'nei Mitzvah family and greeter should be in contact with each other two weeks prior to the service. At that time, cell phone numbers should be exchanged in case any last-minute changes need to be handled. The greeter also needs to know if special *kippot* and programs are to be handed out.

B. Set-up

- The set-up volunteer should plan to **arrive approximately one-half hour before the service**. Open the right-hand side door to the sanctuary all the way against the wall. The doors will stay open when pushed open all the way (same as the front door).
- Please make sure there is a challah and kiddush cup with wine on the *bimah* for the rabbi to use at the end of the service. The B'nei Mitzvah family is responsible for bringing the wine and challah. (The kiddush cup can be found in the kitchen cupboard labeled "Oneg." A tray for challah can also be found in the kitchen.) After the service, please take the challah to the Oneg area. Here are photos of the set-up:



C. Greeting

- Stand in the foyer 30 minutes prior to the start of the service to welcome our members and guests. The responsibility of the greeter is to welcome family and guests as they arrive, and to offer them a kippah, siddur, chumash and a tefillah page. As greeters, it is also important to be on the lookout for late arrivals, welcoming them as well.

- The kippot and programs (if the family chooses to do one) are kept on the table in the foyer. The books and song sheet are on the bookcases just inside the Sanctuary.
- There is typically a rush of arrivals shortly before the service starts, so it is helpful to set-up a supply of books & songsheets ready to hand out. These can be stacked on the tables just inside the sanctuary. Here is an example:



IMPORTANT: Please ask our students before entering the sanctuary to turn off their cell phones until the end of the service. Just our students, not guests.

Presenting Synagogue Gifts

We are honoring our greeters by asking them to present the synagogue gifts – the Kiddush Cup and Kiddush Candlesticks – to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah during the ceremony. Toward the end of the service, the Rabbi will call you to the *bimah* by name and hand the gifts to you. Then you will present the gifts to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on behalf of the Sisterhood and Brotherhood. Below are some suggested words to say. Please don't add your own personal stories. You may print this page and bring it with you onto the *bimah* – no need to memorize the words.

(You may bring this sheet up with you onto the bima.)

On behalf of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood of Beth Chaim, we wish you a mazal tov and offer you this Kiddush Cup. We hope that you will drink from this cup to sweeten your Shabbat and that it be a part of celebrating many sweet moments to come.

We hope that whenever you use these candlesticks to welcome Shabbat that you will be warmed by the light that you have claimed as yours today. Mazal Tov!

OR

On behalf of the Beth Chaim Sisterhood and Brotherhood, I am honored to present you with your very own Shabbat candle sticks and Kiddush cup.

May you always taste the sweetness of the wine,
Feel the warmth in your heart from the flames,
and clarity of spirit from the blessings.

I wish you a world filled with beauty and a life filled with limitless possibilities.

Mazal Tov



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B'nei Mitzvah "Acharonim" End of Service Duties

A. After the Service

Make sure all siddurim (prayer books), chumashim, and song sheets are returned to the bookshelves. Books should be placed upright and all in the same direction.

Pick-up any kippot and programs left behind. Offer the personalized kippot and programs to the family. Kippot may also be donated to the temple and placed in the cabinet in the entryway.

B. After the Kiddush

Walk through sanctuary and check to make sure that nothing is left on the seats or the floor. Fold tallitot that are on the *bimah* and return to the cabinet. Straighten the *bimah* cover on the Torah table.

Resources

A. B'nei Mitzvah Glossary of Hebrew Terms

- **pasuk/pesukim** sentence(s)
- **aliyah/aliyot** the honor of being called up to the Torah (literally "going up"); the section of Torah that is read for each honoring.
- **beracha/berachot** a blessing
- **bima** the raised platform in the synagogue from which the Torah is read
- **B'nei Mitzvah** more than one Bar or Bat Mitzvah or student
- **chumash/chumashim** the five books of Moses
- **d'var torah** a teaching or talk about Torah
- **davening** praying (yiddish)
- **gemilut chasadim** acts of loving-kindness
- **haftarah** the selection from the Prophets that is read after the Torah on Shabbat & holidays
- **havdallah** the ritual marking the end of Shabbat and holidays
- **kiddush** the sanctification of the day recited over wine at the beginning of festivals & Shabbat
- **mitzvah/mitzvot** commandment/s or spiritual directives
- **oneg** celebratory meal
- **parsha** the torah portion
- **shacharit** the morning service
- **Shema** central creed of Judaism- "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one"
- **siddur/siddurim** prayer book
- **simcha** a joyous celebration
- **tallit/tallitot** prayer shawl that has fringes (*tzitzit*) on its four corners
- **tanach** Hebrew Bible, an acronym for Torah (five books of Moses), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings)
- **tefillah/tefillot** prayer
- **trope** cantillation system for chanting the Torah and Haftarah
- **tzedakah** justice

B. Beth Chaim Dietary Policy

Beth Chaim Congregation's (BCC) religious mandate is to provide an open, welcoming environment for those from all walks of Jewish Life. As such, the aim of this policy is to provide the widest range of choices for food consumed at the synagogue and at functions off-site that are solely sponsored by BCC, and not impose the dietary guidelines of one group of members on another group. The policy is designed to be simple to understand and implement. The policy provides options for those who keep some or most of the kosher laws but does not impose those laws on those who do not follow them, with very limited exceptions. This policy does not apply to any off-site function that is co-sponsored by BCC and any other group. The Policy shall be:

1. No pork or pork products may be served at any function, whether a BCC-sponsored event or a private party.
2. No shellfish may be served at any function, whether a BCC-sponsored event or a private party.
3. No leavened products may be served during Pesach. This means that no bread will be served or presented during the Passover holiday for any BCC-sponsored events. If there is a private event during Passover, bread may be served, but must be 100% cleaned up and disposed of, leaving no remnant of any chometz violation.
4. Milk and meat may not be served together in any one course at a BCC-sponsored event. This means no milk or meat items can be prepared or on display at the same time. All meat items or milk items must be fully cleaned up and put away prior to serving the next course. At a BCC function which is a meat meal, a vegetarian option will be offered.
5. Additionally, out of consideration for those who do not mix dairy and meat, a dairy/pareve¹ option will be provided at all functions where the entire congregation is invited. For example, a dairy/pareve option must be provided at any Kiddush following a service and at all synagogue sponsored meals, be they pot-luck or catered. No restrictions on the mixing of milk and meat shall exist for private parties.
6. BCC-sponsored events include any Oneg, Kiddush, Religious School and Religious School Function, Holiday Meal and Celebration, Shabbat Dinner, Meeting of Brotherhood, Sisterhood, Board of Directors, General Membership Meeting and any BCC Event, Youth Program Meeting, Event and Celebration.
7. This policy is in effect anywhere within our buildings or anywhere else on the BCC premises.
8. Guidelines on permissible foods include:
 - Land animals must be mammals which chew their cud and have cloven hooves. Sheep, cattle, goats, deer and bison are kosher; pigs and wild game (e.g., venison) are not.
 - Poultry such as duck, goose, chicken and turkey are acceptable.
 - Fish must have fins and scales (non-fish seafood is prohibited – see list below). Fish like tuna, carp, salmon and herring are all permitted.

¹ Pareve is defined as prepared without meat, milk, or their derivatives and therefore permissible to be eaten with both meat and dairy dishes according to dietary laws. For example, many vegetarian dishes are pareve or dairy pareve.

Examples of unkosher water creatures are shellfish, such as clams, oysters, crab, lobster and shrimp.

Examples of pig products that should not be served are pork, ham, bacon, pork sausages (such as pepperoni), etc.

Beef is not required to be certified kosher beef, nor is poultry required to be certified kosher. Hot dogs/polish sausages should be kosher or all all-beef; ensure that no pig products are contained in them.

As a community, BCC is highly committed to the sensitivity of this issue. This policy was developed *and amended* keeping in mind respect for both those who observe these customs and those who don't. It is important that each of us respect the choices that others make, and not embarrass or denigrate another member based on their choices around this or any other policy.
