

BAR & BAT  
MITZVAH  
Family  
Handbook

CONGREGATION  
Beth Shalom

14200 Lamar Avenue | Overland Park, Kansas 66223 | (913) 647-7279 | [www.bethshalomkc.org](http://www.bethshalomkc.org)  
*An Affiliate of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism*





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Senior Rabbi

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Director of Congregational Learning

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## A Letter from the Rabbi

Dear Parents:

We are all so excited to celebrate the B'nei Mitzvah for your child's year.

This can be a daunting year, but it can also be one that is joyful, exciting, and full of discovery. We hope it will be all of this.

We work hard to try to make this process one that is a year of spiritual, educational, and personal growth for the child – and the family.

With that in mind, this handbook has been prepared to assist you with the logistics necessary so that you can sit back on that Shabbat and truly enjoy this simcha. When you receive and read this, there will still be many months until that simcha and much work to be done. Beth Shalom with its staff and volunteers will be working with you towards this celebration. Please do not hesitate to call upon me with any questions or for any assistance.

Mazal tov and good luck as we share together.

Sincerely,

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Senior Rabbi

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A Letter from the Director of the Polsky Religious School and  
Director of Congregational Learning

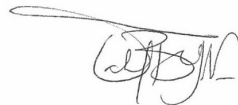
Dear Parents,

For years you have tended to your child's Jewish education. In so doing, you have fulfilled the mitzvah found in the second paragraph of the Shema to "teach these words to your children;" not only the words of the Shema, not only the words of the Torah, but the words, the stories of our people over the millennia. By teaching your children, you have enabled them to participate meaningfully in Jewish life – at home and in our community.

Now that you are planning your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah, you are taking their Jewish education to the next level. You are continuing to partner with us to give them the tools they will need to continue their own Jewish education and Jewish lives as they begin to enter their Jewish adulthood. Through individualized work with our tutors and periodic meetings with me and the Rabbi, your children will embark this year on dedicated and thoughtful study of their parshi'ot and mastery of leading some of the Shabbat liturgy. They will work with Patti Kroll and Rabbi Glickman to consider ethical issues that arise in the weekly Torah readings and to flesh out and craft their divrei Torah.

It is with great excitement that we begin this process together. As your simcha approaches, please remember that we are here to be resources for you and for your child. We are thrilled to be part of your simcha, and we look forward to working more closely with you and your child over the next months. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any point in the process if you have a question, a concern or just want to share with me how preparations are going.

Mazal Tov!



Hazzan Tahl Ben-Yehuda

Director of Congregational Learning



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Senior Rabbi

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## A Letter from our President

Dear Fellow Congregants,

In the coming year, we look forward to your child reaching the age of Mitzvot, and we relish the opportunity to celebrate this special time together. We are honored that your family will be celebrating this important life-cycle event with the community of Congregation Beth Shalom. The process of preparation should be a happy, uplifting one, and a time of learning for your child and for your entire family. It involves many members of our clergy, staff and volunteers - all of whom truly enjoy supporting our community's children achieve this milestone.

This manual serves as a reference guide and will hopefully assist you and your family between now and the day of the service itself. That said, please do not hesitate to call on our staff, or me, if you have any questions.

Please enjoy this exciting next step in your child's Jewish journey as we work together to form a tighter bond with them to our sacred community.

Mazel Tov!

Sincerely,

Jason Krakow

President, Congregation Beth Shalom

PHILOSOPHY OF A BAR/BAT MITZVAH  
AT CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM

As a child becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, he or she is welcomed into the congregation as an adult member of the Congregation Beth Shalom family. It is the philosophy of Congregation Beth Shalom to celebrate this rite of passage with the entire community within the traditions of our regular Shabbat or weekday prayer service, with an aliyah and the customary honors available to an adult member of the Jewish community. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a sacred passage toward an increased level of Jewish learning and responsibility. We hope it will be viewed as yet another step in a lifetime of Jewish study. Our goal is to help our children continue to grow in their awareness of the obligations and privileges of membership in the adult Jewish community. This milestone presents a wonderful opportunity for the entire family to gain an understanding of Judaism and how it can enhance our lives. We hope this experience will strengthen your connection with your Jewish heritage as well as with Congregation Beth Shalom.

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# Requirements

## **AGE 13**

Jewish children are considered full members of the Jewish community when they reach the age of thirteen on the Hebrew calendar. Children may celebrate their Bar/Bat Mitzvah during our congregation's Shabbat morning or Minchah service if they meet the requirements of our synagogue as follows:

## **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS**

A Jewish education prepares children not only for their role in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony but also for their role in the Jewish community. Preparation is necessary for several years, not just during the year before the ceremony. The synagogue requires that a student fulfills the congregation's religious school requirement or has attended a Jewish day school, or has participated in an equivalent Jewish learning experience, approved by the Rabbi, beginning in third grade and continuing through seventh grade.

Absenteeism from religious school prevents the education which a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is meant to celebrate. The Rabbi and Hazzan will determine if a potential Bar/Bat Mitzvah has met the educational standards of the synagogue to participate in our Shabbat morning services.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT**

In order to enroll in the Bar or Bat Mitzvah program at Congregation Beth Shalom, your family must be members in good standing. (See page 28 for a definition of "good standing"). In addition, your Bar/Bat Mitzvah student must currently be enrolled at either the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy or the Polsky Religious School, maintaining continual enrollment since at least 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

## **SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE**

Our synagogue encourages student participation in Shabbat services. Synagogue attendance will provide your child with a feeling of familiarity with what takes place during our service, the melodies used, and the prayers recited, leading to an increased level of comfort both on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day and in attendance at Jewish services throughout the child's adult life.

The more you and your child come to services in the year leading up to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the more confident and comfortable you and your child will be on the day of his/her simcha. We STRONGLY encourage you to attend services at least monthly the year before and weekly for the last several weeks before your child's big day. While we do not enforce this suggestion, we cannot advise you strongly enough to take advantage of this very easy way to help your child (and you) to understand what your family's special day will look like and how the service flows.

## **TZEDAKAH AND TIKKUN OLAM REQUIREMENTS**

These commitments by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are explored in forthcoming sections of this handbook. Please familiarize yourself with this important material.

## **THE SERVICE**

Each student will participate in the Shabbat morning or afternoon (Mincha) service held on his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. With the help of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor, students prepare Torah and Haftarah portions, the blessings before and after these portions, and---depending upon their ability--- some parts of the Shabbat morning or afternoon service. With the assistance of the clergy and staff, B'nei Mitzvah students prepare a short teaching known as a D'var Torah.

The student is required to participate in a morning minyan during the week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This requirement can be satisfied by attending either the Beth Shalom Monday or Thursday morning minyan at Village Shalom or the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy minyan on a Monday or Thursday.

## **TALLIT AND TEFILLIN**

All B'nei Mitzvah boys and girls are required to wear a tallit during minyan/prayer and to recite the appropriate blessing. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students will be instructed in the use of tefillin. We encourage every boy to own his own set of tefillin. As a traditional egalitarian synagogue, we strongly encourage women of all ages to consider wearing tefillin. The synagogue office or Sisterhood can provide assistance on the purchase of a tallit and tefillin.

## **A WORD ON BAR/BAT MITZVAH READINESS**

At Congregation Beth Shalom we take preparedness for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah very seriously. The Rabbi and Hazzan will continually assess the preparedness of each student. If it is determined that a student is not ready, postponement/rescheduling of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be required.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

At the discretion of the Rabbi, any of the requirements may be modified or waived when there are extenuating circumstances.

## **PARENTAL ROLE MODELING AND PARENT ASSISTANCE AT SHABBAT SERVICES**

Parents are expected to attend services on Shabbat morning and festivals with their children, and to accompany them to synagogue activities. A parent's active involvement increases a child's participation in Jewish activities and gives the child positive feelings about Judaism. Parents who willingly volunteer on synagogue committees, in religious school classrooms, or for Jewish organizations set a wonderful example for their children to follow.

## **FAMILY EDUCATION**

Periodically during the years before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah there will be opportunities for family education. Parent attendance at these gatherings will be **mandatory**, both for PRS and HBHA students.

# Bar/Bat Mitzvah Instruction

The ultimate responsibility for fulfilling the requirements of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah rests with the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child. We can aid in their process of learning their blessings, Haftarah and Torah portions, Divrei Torah, and service leadership in the following ways:

## **TUTORING**

Each student is assigned a tutor by the Hazzan around 12 months prior to his/her date. If you have a special request for a tutor, that request must be made at least 13 months prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Tutoring should consist of approximately 28-30, 1/2-hour sessions. If additional lessons are required, it is the responsibility of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to arrange and pay for these lessons. The Hazzan should be consulted regarding an appropriate tutor for extra sessions if these sessions are necessary. B'nei Mitzvah instruction begins with the basics of chanting Torah and Haftarah, navigating the siddur and Chumash, and leading services. These sessions include specific practice with each Bar/Bat Mitzvah's parashah.

## **INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS WITH THE SENIOR STAFF**

The Hazzan will meet periodically with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor to check on progress. As students complete sections of their learning with their tutor, they will meet with the Hazzan to demonstrate what they have learned.

## **PREPARATION OF THE D'VAR TORAH**

Patti Kroll will work with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child on preparing a D'var Torah, or teaching, to be delivered during the service. The D'var Torah is drawn from the day's Torah or Haftarah readings and may explore the meaning of Judaism in the student's life. Patti will meet with the child to help define relevant themes for the D'var Torah. Following their work with Patti, students will meet several times (in the final three months of their studies) to discuss their D'var Torah with Rabbi Glickman.

## **REHEARSALS**

In the weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each student will have practice time on the bimah to become comfortable in the setting in which the actual event will take place. Your tutor will contact Hazzan Ben-Yehuda when it is time to schedule these sessions, and she will contact you to coordinate a time and date.

## **TORAH READERS**

Refer to pages 30 & 31.

# Tikkun Olam Volunteer Project

All Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates at Congregation Beth Shalom are required to complete a volunteer activity in fulfillment of the mitzvah of Tikkun Olam (the mending of the world), a fundamental Jewish principle. A student's completion of this task encourages a feeling of commitment in his or her new role as a thoughtful, responsible adult member of the Jewish community. This commitment can be spread out over time or performed during school vacation time.

Students must complete at least 18 hours of volunteer work. Ideally, this time is spent in human contact. Many organizations, both Jewish and secular, are thrilled to have young volunteers. A sampling of approved volunteer activities can be found in coming pages of this handbook. Additional activities will be suggested at the family program on Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tikkun Olam projects. **A child who wishes to propose another project must present this request to the Rabbi for his approval at least 8 months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.** At least one month before their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students must show they have completed the chosen activity by submitting the form below to the Rabbi, along with a short letter from the project supervisor on the organization's letterhead.

## Tikkun Olam Volunteer Project Contract

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have a commitment to

\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ hours of service.

Description of organization:

Why did you choose this particular organization?

Name and phone # of contact person at organization:

Type of work I will be doing:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



# Tzedakah

In Biblical and Rabbinic times every Jew would give 10% of his or her income or produce to the Temple to support the communal needs of our people. We encourage your child to consider approaching this model as you decide how to fulfill the commandment of Tzedakah, in light of the generosity which may be shown to your child during this time. Please feel free to speak to the Rabbi for ideas.

Please discuss the Tzedakah Contract (see below) with the Rabbi when you meet with him in your D'var Torah lessons.

----- (Cut here and submit form below to the Rabbi.) -----

## Tzedakah Contract

"We are obligated to be more scrupulous in fulfilling the commandment of Tzedakah than any other positive commandment because Tzedakah is the sign of a righteous person."

– Mishnah Torah

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have made/pledge a donation of \_\_\_\_\_ % of my Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts.

to \_\_\_\_\_.

Description of organization(s):

Why did you chose to donate to this particular organization(s)?

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_

(Bar/Bat Mitzvah)

We \_\_\_\_\_, the parents of

\_\_\_\_\_, certify that our child has provided accurate information to the Synagogue regarding the obligation of Tzedakah.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_





# Here to Help

## **THE RABBI**

The Rabbi provides spiritual leadership for the Congregation. The Rabbi oversees the child's preparation and discusses the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the entire family. The Rabbi will educate them regarding the synagogue's expectations, and how each child must fulfill his or her obligations according to Halakha (Jewish Law).

The Rabbi has designed a questionnaire to help him get to know your child better. It is included later in this handbook and is to be filled out by your child and brought to the Rabbi for their first meeting.

## **THE HAZZAN**

The Hazzan will coordinate and oversee the work done by your child's tutor. In this capacity, she aims for each child to chant to the best of his/her ability the Torah and/or Haftarah B'rakhot (blessings), along with the applicable Torah and/or Haftarah texts using appropriate cantillation. She will monitor each student's progress with their tutors and be available to families to discuss concerns over their child's progress.

## **THE TUTOR**

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate will receive lessons and support from a Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor who is experienced at teaching and coaching Bar/Bat Mitzvah students in preparation for Torah and Haftarah reading on the bimah.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Families engaged in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process often have many questions and don't know whom to ask.

## **THE BUILDING STAFF**

Our building staff works very hard to set up for your event (and to clean up after it). You will find them knowledgeable, cooperative and efficient.

# Contact Us

Questions about all B'nei Mitzvah facility usage or physical set ups contact Executive Director, Stef Williams at [swilliams@bethshalomkc.org](mailto:swilliams@bethshalomkc.org)

Questions about ritual aspects, calendaring, or any Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirement or meeting, contact Trinity Lawson at [Tlawson@bethshalomkc.org](mailto:Tlawson@bethshalomkc.org)

Questions about tutoring, lessons, and progress, contact Hazzan Tahl Ben-Yehuda at 913-647-7296 or [hazzantby@bethshalomkc.org](mailto:hazzantby@bethshalomkc.org)

# The Week Of

## **WEEKDAY MORNING**

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah is expected to attend and receive an aliyah during morning services on the week of his/her simcha. Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy students should attend the HBHA Thursday morning service. Polsky Religious School students (and HBHA students who desire to do so) will attend 7 a.m. Thursday morning services in the Appleman Synagogue at Village Shalom. At that time, your child will participate in services and be presented with a gift bag and certificate from the synagogue. Families who are unable to attend should contact Trinity Lawson, (913-636-9725) prior to the week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## **FRIDAY EVENING/ KABBALAT SHABBAT**

All families are expected to attend the Friday evening service before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please contact Hazzan Ben-Yehuda two months before if you would like to participate in the Friday evening service. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are encouraged to learn the Kiddush for Friday evening. Your family may also arrange to have a private Shabbat dinner catered for your family at Beth Shalom's facility, following Kabbalat Shabbat services. See the Facilities Guide for further information on making these arrangements.

## **SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah participates in the weekly Shabbat morning service which begins promptly at 9:30 a.m. **At 9:15 a.m.** Bar/Bat Mitzvah and parents meet with the Rabbi and Hazzan at their seats for the tallit blessing which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah recites. The first part of the service is Shacharit. The Torah service follows, in which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reads from the weekly Parsha and chants the appropriate blessings. During this service, the parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and other family members are honored with opportunities to participate (see honors information later in this handbook). Before the Torah reading, the child teaches his/her D'var Torah. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah then chants the Haftarah and accompanying blessings, and then the Rabbi gives each child a personal and formal charge. Then the Rabbi says a traditional prayer for the child, and parents give a Parents' Prayer. The Torah service concludes with the return of the Torah to the Ark, after which the Rabbi addresses the congregation with a teaching or sermon. The Musaf (or additional) and concluding services follow.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah children may lead the congregation in prayer during the service, with the approval of the Hazzan. Either the tutor or the Hazzan may teach the child these prayers.

At the end of the service, the Kiddush & Motzi are recited on the bimah. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah or one or more family members may recite these blessings if pre-arranged with the Hazzan.

At least two weeks prior to your simcha, you are required to inform the synagogue office of the accurate number of guests you are expecting, including the friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. An accurate guest count is the only way to ensure adequate seating. If you expect to have many guests with children from walkers to pre-K, that require babysitting during the Shabbat morning service, please contact Jill Goldstein at 913-636-9725, so that we can arrange for additional sitters.

## **KIDDUSH FOLLOWING SERVICES**

The Kiddush following the service is an integral part of the observance and tradition of Shabbat. The Kiddush meal is the concluding moment of Shabbat morning services for the community. This is an important opportunity for your congregation to share in your nachas (pride) and to congratulate you and your child on his or her accomplishment. It celebrates the commitment to community that each synagogue family has. Each family includes the congregation in this important event.

**In the event any member wishes to hold a Bar or Bat Mitzvah out of the synagogue building,** at which Beth Shalom clergy will be asked to participate, the following guidelines shall apply:

1. The member should notify the Senior Rabbi at least four months prior to the date of the simcha and
2. The Senior Rabbi must approve both the arrangements for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah itself and the kashrut for any Kiddush held; and
3. All members of Beth Shalom shall be welcome to attend such Bar/Bat Mitzvah and any Kiddush to follow; and
4. On the day that a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is held elsewhere, Beth Shalom shall make the building at 14200 Lamar available for members who wish to organize a regular Shabbat service, subject to the approval of the Senior Rabbi; and
5. If a service is held at the Lamar facility, the member holding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah elsewhere shall be responsible for providing a Kiddush luncheon for those attending the Lamar service. In addition, if the Senior Rabbi determines that it is necessary to hire service leaders or Torah readers for the Lamar service, such member shall be responsible for that expense as well.

## **PARENTS' PARTICIPATION**

**Kipot --** Kipot must be worn throughout the building at all times by all males. As a traditional egalitarian synagogue, we strongly encourage women of all ages to consider doing the same. The synagogue will provide baskets for the kipot each family supplies for the service. When ordering kipot, families should order enough for guests, as well as our approximately 100 weekly worshippers.

As with all items needed for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration, kipot (along with Bar/Bat Mitzvah brochures, special napkins, etc.) should be brought to the rehearsal prior to the event, or at the latest, must be delivered to the synagogue before 2:00 p.m. sharp on Friday prior to services.

## **RITUAL COMMITTEE AND GABBAYIM**

The Ritual Committee provides Shabbat officers for all Shabbat morning services to assist the clergy, congregants and families on their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah day. Whenever the Torah is read there are two Gabbayim, one standing on each side of the reader, to assist honorees and those reading. The Ritual Committee assigns Gabbayim for all Shabbat morning services. One Gabbai is usually your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor and the other is usually the Hazzan.

## **HONORS DURING THE TORAH SERVICE**

Approximately 2-3 months before your simcha you will meet with the Hazzan to discuss the service and the opportunities for honors. People receiving Hebrew honors must be Jewish adults (thirteen years old or older).

You will need to obtain the full Hebrew names (including mother's and father's Hebrew name) of each person you are honoring with an aliyah to the Torah. Please have your honorees' Hebrew names ready to present to Hazzan Ben-Yehuda at least one month prior to the date of your simcha.

Also, please inform those people whom you are honoring that they need to arrive at services on time and wear appropriate attire (Tallit for men) and head covering.

## **ALIYAH**

A person is "called up" to stand by the Torah when it is read and recites the blessings before and after the reading. We recommend that you suggest to those who are being given aliyot the importance of reviewing the Torah blessings to avoid any embarrassment. (A copy of the blessings with English transliteration is provided later in this handbook). Please contact the Hazzan if any family member requires assistance with the Torah blessings. People receiving an aliyah must be Jewish adults; other honors are available for non-Jewish friends and family.

## **ALIYOT RESERVED FOR THE CONGREGATION**

On practically every Shabbat morning there are others in the synagogue that require aliyot. Parents naming a new child, persons observing yahrtzeit, a couple about to be married, individuals celebrating special birthdays and anniversaries, persons who have just recovered from a serious illness or returned from a dangerous experience, and those going to Israel are all entitled to aliyot. We reserve three aliyot for the congregation.

## **YOUNGER SIBLINGS, FRIENDS/CLASSMATES OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

A younger sibling or friends and classmates of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah have the opportunity to lead the congregation in a prayer during the service (e.g., Ashrei, Ein Keloheinu). The child will be able to rehearse it at the family rehearsal.

## **ADDITIONAL HONORS: INSUFFICIENT READINGS AND PETICHA**

There is also the possibility, should the above honors be insufficient, for one or two additional persons to lead the congregation in English prayers for the United States, for Israel, or for Peace. In addition, two more honors--the honor of opening and closing the Ark (Aron Hakodesh)--both at the beginning and at the end of the Torah service--are also available.

## **PARENTS' ALIYOT**

In general, each family of a single Bar/Bat Mitzvah receives four aliyot, with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah parents counting in the four. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah receives an additional aliyah called the Maftir. The parents of each Bar/Bat Mitzvah have the aliyah immediately preceding their son or daughter so that they can stand next to their child on the bimah and recite the appropriate parent's prayer at that time. In the case of divorce, each parent may have his and her own aliyah if need be. Contact the Hazzan to make these arrangements.

A non-Jewish parent of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah accompanies their spouse for the 7<sup>th</sup> Aliyah but does not wear a tallit or say the Torah blessings. We are grateful and awed by their gift and commitment, and we honor their choice to identify religiously according to their conscience. They remain on the bimah together as their child is called as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and both parents fully participate in the parents' prayer on the next page.

# The Parents' Participation

Parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are given the honor of participating in the Torah service. Jewish parents will be given an aliyah immediately before their child's aliyah. The child is then called to the Torah and chants his/her aliyah. A blessing for the child is then chanted. Parents may say a prepared "Parents' Prayer" (suggested formats appear below).

Immediately following the blessing of your child, you as parents have the opportunity to say a prayer of thanksgiving to God. Please feel free to choose one of the following examples or write your own prayer (based on the guidelines which follow) to be approved by the Rabbi, prior to the rehearsal.

## **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A PARENTS' PRAYER**

1. Writing an original prayer is an opportunity to thank God in your own words for the gifts your child and family have received. You can invoke God's continuing blessing and guidance in the years to come in this short prayer.
2. If you choose to write your own prayer, we ask that you show the written text of the prayer to the rabbi for approval at the rehearsal prior to the actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A parent's prayer should always be written out ahead of time.
3. The prayer is addressed to God – not the congregation or your child.
4. The length of the prayer should be 30 seconds to 1 minute.
5. The prayer is not an opportunity for you to elaborate on all of your child's wonderful characteristics and personality traits. It is not a toast.
6. You may touch on the significance of the day and what becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah means to you in the life of your family and in your child's life.
7. Ideas or concepts you may wish to include in the prayer:
  - a. Gifts your child has received from God.
  - b. Thanksgiving on your behalf for family, friends, community, teachers, and synagogue.
  - c. Significance of this rite of passage, vis-à-vis your child and yourselves.

# Parent Prayer Examples

**I.** We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son/daughter grow day-by-day, week-by-week, year-by-year. For the health and strength, You have given him/her, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him/her, for his/her ability to elicit and return love – for all these precious gifts, we thank You.

Watch over him/her, O God, on this special day and every day. Grant him a growing understanding of the true significance of this occasion and a deepening loyalty to everything that it represents. May the teachings of our heritage guide him/her throughout his/her life; and may he/she lead a life worthy of Your blessings. Amen.

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**II.** On this Shabbat when our son/daughter becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we have come with him/her and our loved ones to join in worship and to offer our prayer of thanksgiving. We are grateful, O God, for the privilege of passing along the gift of life that You gave us, thereby sharing with You in the miracle of creation.

We are grateful for the thirteen years of nurturing this life, for the unnumbered joys and challenges that these years have brought us.

Bless our son/daughter, O God; watch over him/her, protect him/her, guide him/her. Help him/her to continue to grow in body and mind, in soul and character. Keep him/her loyal to our people and to the teachings of our Torah. May his/her life be rich and rewarding. May all his/her deeds bring pride to us, honor to the house of Israel, and glory to Your name. Amen.

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**III.** Gratefully we thank You for the joyous privilege of seeing our son/daughter attain this milestone. On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. On this day new dreams and new hopes are born.

We pray that Your protecting and loving care will accompany him/her wherever he/she goes and in all that he/she does. Help him/her to become all that he/she is capable of being. Give him/her strength to do all the good things that are within his/her reach. Keep him/her loyal to the best that he/she has been shown, and to the noblest Jewish teaching he/she has been taught.

May his/her deeds find favor in the eyes of his/her fellow people and be worthy of Your blessings. Amen.

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**IV.** Humbly do we give thanks for this day, and for the years of growth and learning that have preceded it.

We pray that this day's service may long echo in our child's memory. May it engrave on the table of his/her heart the understanding that this day initiates a life more firmly dedicated to the study of Torah and the fulfillment of mitzvot, to deeds of justice and kindness, to faithful membership in the household of Israel.

O God make each of us a worthy example to our children. Let nothing estrange us from them and from You, the Source of all goodness and compassion. Help us, too, again and again to

review our attachment to the Covenant of Israel, to walk hand in hand with our child in the ways of righteousness and truth. Amen.

We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son/daughter grow day-by-day, week-by-week, year-by-year. For the health and strength, You have given him/her, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him/her, for his/her ability to elicit and return love – for all these precious gifts, we thank You.

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**V.** We thank You, O God, for the joyous fulfillment we feel as our son/daughter reaches the threshold of manhood/womanhood.

How privileged we feel that he/she is our son/daughter, and that he/she is bound to us by bonds of love, of memory, and of hope!

O God accept our thankfulness for the thirteen years that have come and gone; bless our hope for the years that are yet to be. May Your mercy and guidance accompany this Bar/Bat Mitzvah at all times, in a life marked by reverence for Torah, and love of all Your children. Amen.

We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son/daughter grow day-by-day, week-by-week, year-by-year. For the health and strength You have given him/her, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him/her, for his/her ability to elicit and return love – for all these precious gifts, we thank You.





# The Rabbi's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be completed by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah so that the Rabbi can get to know you better. Don't just give answers that you think he wants to hear! Be honest and enjoy thinking about these things a little bit.

**Please bring this completed questionnaire to your first meeting with the Rabbi.**

1. Name
2. Birthday
3. Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah
4. Parsha
5. Parents' Names (English & Hebrew, if known)
6. Siblings' Names
7. School
8. My favorite subject is \_\_\_\_\_, because:
9. My favorite Judaic subject is \_\_\_\_\_, because:
10. My favorite teacher is \_\_\_\_\_, because:

11. Three qualities I most like about myself are
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
12. My favorite book is \_\_\_\_\_, because...
13. If I could go anywhere in the world, I would....
14. If I could be famous for doing something, it would be....
15. If I could change the world, I would...
16. Three qualities I admire in a friend are....
17. What do you enjoy doing with your friends?
18. I don't like it when people...
19. For fun, I enjoy....

20. What do you think you are good at?
  
21. What do you think you would like to be better at?
  
22. Do you have pets? What/who are they?
  
23. On the day of my Bar/Bat Mitzvah, I hope that the rabbi will...
  
24. On the day of my Bar/Bat Mitzvah, I hope that my parents will...
  
25. On the day of my Bar/Bat Mitzvah, I hope that I will...
  
26. I am most afraid of...
  
27. Who was your tutor?\_\_\_\_\_. About how many times did you meet?
  
28. I (Do/Do not) know how to put on Tallit and Tefillin. (Please bring to our next meeting).
  
29. What does becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah mean to you?

30. What do you think you would like to do for a living, after High School and College?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why?

31. My Tikkun Olam Volunteer Project was \_\_\_\_\_

32. What are your plans for Tzedakah after your Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

33. What are your plans for Jewish education after your Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

# Standards of Decorum

- Cell phones and pagers must be turned off and remain off throughout the building during Shabbat. Please include this in your correspondence to your guests.
- Clothing and appearance should be modest and dignified. Business attire is recommended. Please, no bare shoulders, exposed midriffs, or short skirts.
- Please be aware that voices in the lobby carry into the sanctuary, even when the doors are closed, disturbing the service and those in prayer. Please keep lobby conversation to a minimum.
- Every male must wear a kippah (head covering) while in the building.
- A tallit (prayer shawl) is to be worn by all Jewish males above the age of Bar Mitzvah at all morning services.
- A tallit may be worn by Jewish females above the age of Bat Mitzvah at all morning services.
- Tallitot are never worn at evening services, except during Kol Nidre services (and except for the prayer leader)—nor are they worn in the restroom.
- For all women above the age of Bat Mitzvah, head coverings are recommended in the sanctuary and required on the bimah.
- No food or drink of any kind may be brought into or consumed in the sanctuary, including personal water bottles/open drink containers.
- People will not be permitted to enter or exit the sanctuary during several parts of the service, including, whenever the Ark is open, the Torah and Haftarah are read and during the D'var Torah and the Rabbi's Sermon. There are two sets of doors leading into the sanctuary; please encourage your friends and family to use the rear entrance (across from the gift shop).
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the synagogue or on the synagogue grounds.
- No photography or videography is permitted at any time in the building on Shabbat or Yom Tov. No supplementary sound amplification or recording equipment is permitted.
- Torah readers, male, and female must wear a head covering and a tallit. Those receiving aliyot must wear a head covering.

# Sample Letter

## TO CHILDREN ATTENDING THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH

You and your child will be pleased to have friends attend services on this special day. It is your responsibility to make sure, that your friends respect the sanctity of the day as well as the synagogue building. We encourage you to send this letter or a similar one to your young guests:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We are delighted that you will be coming to our Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The service on Saturday is our regular worship service for Sabbath morning. This service may be longer than the ones with which you may be familiar; the service begins at 9:30 a.m., and we recommend that you arrive no later than 10:00 a.m., when the Bar/Bat Mitzvah begins his or her participation in the service.

When you enter the synagogue building, remember that this is a holy place and proper respect is due. Boys should wear sports jackets and slacks or suits, and girls should wear skirts or dresses of respectful length and have their shoulders covered. It is expected that you participate in the service or observe quietly. Talking is inappropriate during the service. Boys will be asked to wear a "kippah" or "yarmulke" head covering as a sign of respect. For that same reason, everyone should stand when the congregation rises. During the service, the books should be treated respectfully, and never placed on the floor.

As a traditional Conservative Synagogue, we have a number of ordinary activities which are forbidden on our Sabbath. **We ask that no one takes photographs, uses electronics, writes, or draws while visiting our premises on Friday evenings and Saturdays. Care should be taken to turn off cell phones before entering the synagogue or should be left at home.**

\_\_\_\_\_ will be called up to the "bimah" (pulpit) and will recite the blessings and read from the Torah. He/she has studied very hard for this important day in his/her life and as a friend, you can be supportive by paying attention and behaving appropriately during the service. The service will include a sermon by the Rabbi and closing prayers.

If you must leave the sanctuary, please remember that the same expectation for appropriate and considerate behavior exists in the lobbies, restrooms, and grounds. Understanding that voices do carry in these areas, we would appreciate your keeping your voice at a low level so as not to disturb the prayer of those in the service. Please also respect that the rest of the synagogue building is closed and off-limits. Departure for the rest room should not be a group activity. Since you are coming to help your friend celebrate this special milestone, it is most appropriate that you remain in the sanctuary for the service and leave only if absolutely necessary, returning to your seat as quickly as possible.

Services are over approximately at noon. You can congratulate \_\_\_\_\_ after the service when we share a "Kiddush" (refreshments). You can plan to be picked up at the synagogue around 1:00 p.m.

We hope these instructions will help you feel comfortable in the synagogue. We look forward to seeing you at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah services and celebration.

# Policy Regarding Kashrut

All food comes from God, and our choices in eating and drinking reflect important and ancient traditions and beliefs in Judaism. "Kosher" means "fit for use" and is a term used to describe those items that are permitted to Jews.

We are a kosher facility, and our events within the building should always be kosher. We ask for everyone's understanding and sensitivity in respecting and adhering to our religious traditions and standards. No personal water bottles, outside food or snacks are allowed to be brought in and/or distributed.

On this holy day in your family's history, we are thrilled to know that Bar/Bat Mitzvah families will be fulfilling the mitzvah of the Shabbat luncheon here at Congregation Beth Shalom. As part of the religious observance of the day, the meal itself is of a high spiritual and emotional value. Our community views shared meals as an opportunity to experience holiness together, and we are dedicated to our people's kosher dietary traditions. We encourage all of our families to honor their child's acceptance of our traditions with a commitment to a sacred and festive meal that is both kosher and joyous.

All food must be brought into the synagogue by 2 p.m. on the Friday before your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah and must be checked in by one of the clergy or the Ritual Coordinator.

**Candy used during the celebration of your child's simcha will be provided by the congregation.** This includes both Hershey Kisses during the Torah Recessional and Fruit Gems for gently throwing at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Enough Fruit Gems will be provided to distribute to the first two rows of guests only.

If you would like to donate to the Kiddush Fund to help purchase candy for future celebrations, or if you would like a complete copy of our Kashrut Policy, contact Stef.

Please feel free to speak with the Rabbi if you have Kashrut questions or concerns.

## Financial Responsibilities

### FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Congregation Beth Shalom requires that all families participating in life cycle celebrations in our synagogue must be members in good standing. This means **the family must be current in all fees for religious school tuition, Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction, synagogue membership dues, assessments, and all other financial obligations to the synagogue at least three months prior to the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.** If you anticipate any problems, please contact the congregation's Executive Director.

**BAR/BAT MITZVAH FEE:** To partially cover the synagogue's costs of meeting your family's needs during this time there is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee. Among other things, this fee includes: your child's basic individual technical instruction (approximately 28-30 half-hour lessons), educational materials, and the basic bimah rehearsal. **The fee is \$700. One-half of this fee is due when your**



**child is assigned a tutor and the other half is due three months before the date of your simcha** (unless specific arrangements have been made with the Executive Director.) This fee is subject to change in future years.

As stated above, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee does not cover any additional tutoring that your child may require or desire--or the \$700 Use of Facility Fee (see Facility Handbook)

## EXTREMELY IMPORTANT – PLEASE NOTE!

All Bar & Bat Mitzvah fees should be paid in full at least three months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Please contact Stef Williams, our Executive Director (913-647-7293) prior to those three months should you need to make any special arrangements.

# Thank You Notes and Honoraria

In the days following the ceremony the family may want to thank the many people involved in making sure this important event ran smoothly. These people include, but are not limited to, the synagogue and religious school staff, committee members, friends and relatives, and clergy.

## INFORMATION FOR THANK YOU NOTES

Your child will be receiving several gifts from the synagogue. Just as you expect your child to write a thank you for a gift from relatives or friends; it would be proper to urge your child to write notes thanking the following synagogue entities for their gifts. Please send the notes in separate **blank, postage-stamped envelopes**: c/o Beth Shalom—Attn: Trinity, 14200 Lamar Avenue, Overland Park, KS 66223, and they will be addressed and mailed to the correct people.

- Shabbat Kiddush Cup – The Hershman Family Fund
- One-Year Kadima Membership – The Stein Family
- Tzedakah Box – Beth Shalom Sisterhood (no postage required)

# Timeline

## Three years before

The date is set. The ritual office will put an item in the November Scroll listing names of children in our data base from a specific birth year and asking for additions to the list. Beth Shalom begins this process and solicits families by birth year and not by the specific grade children are attending at school. Therefore, while families with children having birthdays early in a school year may be contacted, there may very well be students in the same grade who will not be contacted about date selection until the following school year. We will then send out a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Data Request Application to applicable families, asking for information and preferred dates. Follow up letters will be sent notifying families of the date that has been assigned to each child for their simcha and dates will be put on the Beth Shalom master calendar.

## Fifteen to Eighteen Months before

**A Parents' meeting** will be held with the clergy, Ritual Coordinator and Lay Leaders to review policies and guidelines and to distribute Bar/Bat Mitzvah binders and the Use of Facilities Handbook.

## Twelve to Thirteen Months in Advance

The Hazzan (with parental input) will match the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with a specially trained tutor who will prepare the student for the simcha. The tutor will meet with the Hazzan and family in the first session to (1) go through the child's binder, (2) discuss the logistics of the meetings and progression of the year of study, (3) review tutor expectations, and (4) discuss parent and child expectations about content of study.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will then begin Trope/Torah sessions with their tutor, including the fundamentals of reading Torah and Haftarah, as well as the nusah for leading Shabbat services. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will begin studying their parashah within the course of these lessons.

There will be periodic required family study sessions with the clergy to familiarize families with the values and ritual process of the B'nei Mitzvah and to study Torah together.

### **TIKKUN OLAM VOLUNTEER PROJECT & TZEDAKAH PROJECT**

At this time students are required to declare their Tikkun Olam Volunteer Project and Tzedakah Project by completing and turning in the forms in this handbook to the Rabbi's office.

### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SIMCHA WEEKEND**

Families must advise the synagogue office if they plan on having a Shabbat dinner or Saturday night party at our facility. As well, the name of their synagogue-approved caterer, or, if the family is self-catering for the Kiddush lunch needs to be determined and the office notified. If the caterer or family needs to book kitchen time, it is advised that it be planned and scheduled with the synagogue at the earliest point possible.

### **BAR/BAT MITZVAH FEE IS BILLED**

One-half of the \$700 is due upon receipt of the bill, and the balance must be paid at least three months before the event. If you anticipate any financial issues in conjunction with payment of this bill, please contact the Executive Director.

## Five to Six Months Prior

Bar/Bat Mitzvah family purchases tefillin. There will be a required parent/child seminar on tallit & tefillin during the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Here at Congregation Beth Shalom, we are blessed with dozens and dozens of volunteer Torah readers. Their reading assignments are distributed quarterly. So, to ensure that we do not need to cancel on any of our longtime congregants, we ask all Bar or Bat Mitzvah families who have family/friends that want to read Torah contact us with their names and email/phone info.

A month before your celebration, guest Torah readers will be asked to chant their sections for Hazzan Ben-Yehuda. If they have not read for the Hazzan, we reserve the right to replace them.

## Three to Four Months Prior

### **FULFILLMENT OF FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

At this time, all Bar/Bat Mitzvah families are required to have paid their financial obligations to the synagogue in full. Inquiries about status can be made in advance to the synagogue bookkeeping office or Executive Director.

### **RABBI AND PARENTS MEETING**

The ritual office will arrange a meeting for discussion of honors. An Honors Form will be provided to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family, to be approved by the Rabbi at the meeting. Please bring completed your child's completed Bar/Bat Mitzvah Questionnaire and your Parents' Prayer.

### **PATTI KROLL & BAR/BAT MITZVAH MEETINGS**

The Ritual Office will contact you to arrange a series of at meetings between Patti and the student to begin working on his/her D'var Torah. The first meeting will be one hour in length and should be attended by both the student and at least one parent. Students should read the English translation in their notebook before the first meeting.

### **TORAH READERS FROM FAMILY**

Family contacts the Hazzan with names of Torah readers from the family.

## Two to Three Months Prior

### **KIPOT**

Families wishing to provide kipot on the morning of their simchah should place their order at this time.

## **SCROLL ARTICLE**

Parents should submit a high-resolution photograph and a brief biography written by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student for publication in the Synagogue's monthly newsletter. Forms can be submitted here: <https://www.bethshalomkc.org/place-a-simcha-announcement-in-the-scroll-newsletter/>.

## Six Weeks Prior

### **PREPARATION OF D'VAR TORAH**

Students have been working on a teaching, or D'var Torah, and will continue to meet with the Patti Kroll to review it.

## One Month Prior

Your tutor may add additional sessions to your child's schedule, if needed, and with permission of the Hazzan. ALL TORAH READERS MUST CHANT FOR THE HAZZAN – EITHER IN PERSON, OVER THE PHONE OR BY FACE TIME—ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE SIMCHA.

### **FINALIZING LIST OF HONOREES**

At this time, the family should give a final list of those people who should be given an honor in the service. Guidelines are listed in the Honors Sheet provided in this handbook. **Please** make sure that your honorees are prepared for the service. The synagogue has copies of all the prayers honorees recite, including English transliteration of Hebrew prayers and stage directions, which you must send to your guests who will be receiving honors. They need to familiarize themselves with their role in the Shabbat morning service. See page 32

If you wish to prepare a personalized Bar/Bat Mitzvah brochure for your family's simcha, please contact Trinity Lawson (913-636-9725) to obtain a template. Your family will be responsible for the creation of that brochure, and it is the family's responsibility to take the brochure to a printer and provide adequate copies for their child's simcha. If you are not preparing a family brochure, contact the Trinity Lawson and she will include a list of your honors in the weekly congregational brochure.

### **FULFILLMENT OF TIKKUN OLAM VOLUNTEER OBLIGATIONS**

Candidates will provide documentation to the Rabbi of their 18 hours of community service.

### **CATERING THE KIDDUSH LUNCH**

Contact Trinity Lawson (913-636-9725) with the name of your caterer, your estimated guest count and whether or not you need the ovens turned on before Shabbat for warming up a dish.

## The Week of the Simcha

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah is required to attend either the Monday or Thursday morning service at the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy (HBHA students) or the Thursday morning service in the Appleman Synagogue at Village Shalom (PRS students). The student is expected to wear tallit (boys & girls) and tefillin (boys & some girls) at this service and at every weekday service from this moment on. They will receive their first aliyah at this service.

## **BIMAH REHEARSAL**

The Hazzan will conduct a complete rehearsal in Goldsmith Hall including all Torah readings. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah may also participate in the Friday evening service, leading the congregation in selected prayers.

## **DELIVERIES**

You must let the synagogue office know at least one week in advance if you are expecting party/service-related deliveries. You or someone you appoint must be at the synagogue to receive any deliveries you schedule. Please note that all deliveries of flowers, food, Kipot, etc., for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Kiddush must be completed by 2:00 p.m. on Friday; no deliveries will be accepted after 2:00 p.m. under any circumstances. Please be clear with your party planner, caterer and family regarding deliveries of all items for your celebration.

After Shabbat has ended, consider donating flowers to community organizations, such as Menorah Medical Center or Village Shalom, and make appropriate arrangements. Leftover food and centerpieces should not be carried out of the synagogue on Shabbat.

# The Day Of

## **THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH'S RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE SERVICE**

### **ALIYAH**

Each child will be called up to chant his/her portion of the Torah and recite the blessings before and after the Torah reading.

### **HAFTARAH**

Each child will recite a portion of the Prophetic readings that correspond with the Shabbat Torah portion of the ceremony. Each child will also chant the blessings before and after the Haftarah.

### **D'VAR TORAH**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will deliver a short teaching on the topic of the Torah or Haftarah as it pertains to his/her life or experiences.

### **LEADING ADDITIONAL PRAYERS**

Some children may prepare additional prayers of the morning service, with approval of the Rabbi.

### **OPTIONAL TORAH VERSES**

Some Bar/Bat Mitzvah students may wish to learn to chant additional Torah verses. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah should speak with their Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor if he/she wishes to master additional verses.

# Aliyot & Honors

- PLEASE INCLUDE FULL HEBREW NAMES FOR ALL TORAH ALIYOT— i.e. Avraham ben Menachem v'Leah or Sarah bat Shmuel v'Chaya
- Please limit each Torah aliyot to FOUR OR FEWER adults.
- Remember, a child may NOT be called up for a Torah aliyah immediately preceding his/her parents—this does not include the Maffir aliyah.

## Hotza'a (Opening the Ark)

name:

## Torah Carrier (out)

name:

## First Aliyah

*Reserved For Congregant*

## Second Aliyah

*Reserved For Congregant*

## Third Aliyah

*Reserved For Congregant*

## Fourth Aliyah

English & Full Hebrew name:

English & Full Hebrew name:

## Fifth Aliyah

English & Full Hebrew name:

English & Full Hebrew name:

## Sixth Aliyah

English & Full Hebrew name:

English & Full Hebrew name:

## Seventh Aliyah

English & Hebrew name (Bar/Bat Mitzvah's parents):

## Maffir

English & Hebrew name (Bar/Bat Mitzvah's name):

# Torah Readers

Please list names next to the parashah that family, friends, and your child is reading. People who are not Jewish—non-Jewish friends and family—are welcome to receive any of the below honors: Prayer for Country (English), Prayer for Israel (Hebrew), or the Prayer for Peace (English). Men (even if they are not Jewish) are required to wear a kipah (head covering) at all times.

1 -

2 -

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**Maffir -**

**Hagbah (Torah Lifting)**

name:

**Gelilah (Torah Dressing**

name:

**Prayer for Country**

name (read in English):

**Prayer for Israel**

name (preferably read in Hebrew):

**Prayer for Peace**

name (Read in English):

**The Prayer for the Congregation is reserved for the officer on the Bima.**

**Torah Carrier (In)**

name

**Hachnasah (Closing the Ark)**

name

**Ein Keloheinu & Aleinu**

(your child's name) & HBHA and/or PRS School Friends:

**Adon Olam**

(your child's name) & \_\_\_\_\_

# BAR/BAT MITZVAH GLOSSARY

Aliyah: Honor of standing by the Torah when it is read, and reciting the blessings before and after the reading.

Amidah: Literally, the “standing” prayer. The nineteen prayers that constitute the main body of Jewish liturgy. Also known as Tefillah and the shemoneh esrei.

Bar Mitzvah: A boy who at the age of thirteen is considered responsible for the obligations of Jewish life. Also, the ceremony where the child receives an aliyah in recognition of his new status.

Bat Mitzvah: A girl who at the age of twelve and a half or thirteen is considered responsible for the obligations of Jewish life. Also, the ceremony where the child receives an aliyah in recognition of her new status.

Brakha: Blessing. (Plural: b'rakhot).

D'var Torah: Literally, “a word of Torah.” The brief exposition of the Torah portion for the week.

Gelilah: The honor of rolling up the Torah, fastening the belt and replacing the Torah mantle and crown.

Golel: The one who ties the Torah. (Feminine: Golelet)

Haftarah: Literally, “completion.” The reading of a section from the Prophets for a particular Shabbat.

Hagbah: The honor of lifting the Torah and holding it upright for the Congregation to see.



Kiddush: Prayer chanted over wine. Also, a celebration with wine and cookies.

Kol Hakavod: Literally, "all the honor," A Hebrew expression to someone who has done something in which they can take great pride.

Maffir: The final Torah reading on Shabbat.

Magbiah (male), Magbihah (female): One who lifts the Torah.

Minyan: The required ten Jewish adults for a prayer service.

Motzi: Prayer over bread.

Musaf: The "additional" prayer in traditional liturgy. Repeats some themes covered earlier in the liturgy.

Parshah: The Torah portion of the week. Also called the sidrah.

Peticha: The honor of opening and closing the Ark curtain (parohet) before the Torah is read and when it is replaced in the Ark (Aron Hakodesh).  
(Plural: Petihot)

Rosh Chodesh: The new month.

Shacharit: The morning prayer service.

Shul: Synagogue (Yiddish).

Simcha: A joyous occasion (Hebrew).

Tallit: Traditional prayer shawl with fringes (tzitzit) on the four corners to remind us of the mitzvot.

Tefillin: The phylacteries worn by Jews for morning prayer every morning, except on Shabbat and festivals.

Trope: The cantillation used to chant the Torah and Haftarah.

Tzedakah: The mitzvah of sacred giving.

Yashar Koakh(m), Yashar Kokhekh (f): A congratulatory Hebrew expression to one who has performed an honor; literally, "go forward with strength." The appropriate response is "barukh tih'yeh (to a man) or b'rukha tih'yi (to a woman), literally, "may you be a blessing."

**Please be advised that all policies and fees included here are current at the time of publication of this handbook (December 2020).**

**We provide this handbook as a guide for you well in advance of your child's**

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. All policies and prices are subject to change.**