

B'nai Mitzvah Information

Mazel Tov on embarking on this milestone! All of us at Congregation B'nai Israel are here to help make this special life cycle event a positive and meaningful experience for you and your family. Below you will find information that will help guide you along this process. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or for a copy of the complete version of our B'nai Mitzvah Handbook.

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL B'NAI MITZVAH TIMETABLE AND CHECKLIST

Our B'nai Mitzvah is scheduled for _____

Parasha: _____

Prior to Event Date	What To Do	Who to Contact	DONE
18+ months	Set a Date/Torah Portion	Rabbi Appel	
	B'nai Mitzvah Deposit Due	Cathy Duplechin	
12+ months	Reserve Social Hall	Cathy Duplechin	
	Room Deposit Due*		
12 months	Arrange for Oneg	Cathy Duplechin	
9-12 months	Begin B'nai Mitzvah Class	Rabbi Appel	
	B'nai Mitzvah Balance Due	Cathy Duplechin	
6-9 months	Submit Mitzvah Project Proposal	Julie Tepper	
3-6 months	Choose Cantorial Soloist/ Musicians for Services	Rabbi Appel	
3 months	Meet with Rabbi to Discuss the Service	Rabbi Appel	
2 months	All Outstanding Dues and Fees Must Be Paid In Full	Cathy Duplechin	
2 months	Submit Article for Bulletin	Cathy Duplechin	
1-2 months	D'var Torah Preparation	Rabbi Appel	
1 month	Submit Program	Rabbi Appel	
	(If done on your own)		
2 weeks	Submit Room Set Up	Cathy Duplechin	
	Room Balance Due*		
2 weeks	Submit List of Aliyot and Honors	Rabbi Appel	
Thursday Prior	Family Rehearsal	Rabbi Appel	

**If applicable.*

When does a Jewish boy or girl have their B'nai Mitzvah?

Jewish tradition states that a B'nai Mitzvah is held on the first Shabbat after the child's 13th birthday. Depending on the preference of the family and the availability of the synagogue, it can also be held any time after the 13th birthday. Should additional preparation be required, as deemed necessary by the Rabbi or the family, the ceremony can be delayed. Requests by the family for a B'nai Mitzvah prior to the child's 13th birthday will be the responsibility of the family and will be considered on an individual basis.

How do we set a date for the celebration?

Approximately 2 years before your child's 13th birthday, you will receive a B'nai Mitzvah Registration Form as well as a B'nai Mitzvah Handbook. You must submit the Registration Form to the Temple Office by the deadline on the form. Dates are approved by the Rabbi and confirmed in writing.

When will we/our child meet with the Rabbi?

At least 1 year prior to the B'nai Mitzvah, you will be invited to an Orientation Session at which the rabbi will explain the process of preparing for B'nai Mitzvah at Congregation B'nai Israel.

Approximately 3 months prior to the B'nai Mitzvah, you should arrange with the rabbi to meet with you and your child to evaluate their progress and preparation. The evaluation includes a recitation of the Torah portion and prayers, and a review of the student's compliance with other requirements such as Religious School attendance, and participation in Shabbat Services. This is also an opportunity for parents to learn about the final phase of B'nai Mitzvah preparation and the service itself. In rare cases, if the student shows insufficient progress at the 3 month evaluation, their B'nai Mitzvah may be delayed, or private tutoring at the parent's expense may be necessary.

1-2 months before the B'nai Mitzvah, your child will stop meeting with the B'nai Mitzvah class and will begin meeting with the rabbi in order to write the D'var Torah (short speech) and fine tune the preparations for your special day.

Rehearsal. You and your child will meet with the rabbi in the sanctuary a few days prior to the B'nai Mitzvah to "walk through" the service and discuss any last-minute logistical matters. The rehearsals are generally scheduled at 4 pm on the Thursday prior to the B'nai Mitzvah. If you are not able to arrange to be at the rehearsal at this time for some reason, please speak with the rabbi to see if it is possible to reschedule another time for rehearsal. The rehearsal generally lasts about an hour.

If you are planning to take formal pictures with the Torah, please have your photographer arrive at 4:30 to set up so that photographs can be taken promptly when we finish the rehearsal.

**** The rabbi is available by phone to answer any questions or concerns which may arise as your child prepares. If you wish to meet with the rabbi to review your child's progress at any time during the year, please contact the rabbi to make an appointment.**

What is required of us to have a B'nai Mitzvah at Congregation B'nai Israel?

Your family must be members in good financial standing of Congregation B'nai Israel at the beginning of formal B'nai Mitzvah training (Grade 5). All dues and fees must be paid in full two months prior to the B'nai Mitzvah date. If there are special family circumstances that require individual consideration, please contact the President of Congregation B'nai Israel.

A B'nai Mitzvah Registration Form must be submitted and approved so that a date can be reserved for your *simcha* (joyous occasion).

Your child must be enrolled in Sunday Religious School as well as the B'nai Mitzvah Class. He/she is expected to attend throughout the entire year of his/her B'nai Mitzvah.

Hebrew proficiency is required and will be determined by the Rabbi and the Religious School Director. Your child may need additional Hebrew tutoring in order to be prepared for their B'nai Mitzvah. If this is necessary, the Rabbi or Religious School Director will gladly recommend a tutor. You must arrange and pay for this tutoring on your own.

It is very important that during the year prior to your B'nai Mitzvah you and your child attend Shabbat Services often. Services on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings are open to anyone who wishes to attend and you do not need an invitation to attend a service when a family is celebrating a B'nai Mitzvah. Attending services will help familiarize your family with what is expected from our students and will foster the feeling of being an integral part of our Temple community. It will also help you and your child to gain confidence and comfort in participating in the Shabbat Services. We therefore expect that you and your child will attend a minimum of 10 Shabbat Services during this year. Friday night services begin at 7:00 p.m. and Shabbat morning services begin at 10:00 a.m. Please check our website calendar for the most current schedule of services. We look forward to seeing you there!

Students are required to do a Mitzvah Project in preparation for B'nai Mitzvah at Congregation B'nai Israel. You must submit a Mitzvah Project proposal to the Religious School Director and spend a minimum of 10-15 hours to complete the approved project.

As B'nai Mitzvah is not a graduation, we ask that your child continue their Jewish education by attending Religious School and Confirmation classes through 10th Grade. We also hope that they will participate in our Senior Youth Group program (BaRFTY).

It is strongly encouraged that all members of your child's Religious School class be invited to the B'nai Mitzvah celebration. We are striving to create a strong sense of connection among our Jewish youngsters and this helps us create a sense of belonging within our Jewish community.

What will your child do at his/her B'nai Mitzvah?

Your child will participate in the service according to his or her ability and comfort level. We want this to be a meaningful and enjoyable experience without causing any undue stress on your child. Most B'nai Mitzvah students assist in the leading of the Shabbat services on Friday

night and Saturday morning. They lead prayers that they have learned, chant the Torah and Haftarah blessings, chant a passage from the Torah scroll and read a section of the Haftarah (Chanting from the Torah adds a beautiful element to the service. Your child will be taught the trope for the chanting of the Torah. They will also be provided with a CD which contains the chanting of their Torah portion to assist them in their preparation). Your child will also give a D'var Torah (short speech). This is an opportunity to teach the congregation something about what they have learned from their Torah portion and to thank family members and teachers for helping them reach this milestone.

How can parents be of help to their son or daughter?

As in other aspects of your child's life, the more that you are involved, supportive partners in this experience, the more your child will thrive and the more he/she (and you) will benefit. When your child begins meeting with the Rabbi, read the translation of the Torah portion and the commentary which goes along with it. Sitting down and discussing the material contained in the Torah portion will help provide motivation down the line.

Rabbi will recommend the proper amount of time which should be dedicated each day to study at home. Please make sure that your child is spending an adequate amount of time in order to prepare for their next lesson. The Rabbi will give your child tools and strategies for learning their Torah and Haftarah. The bulk of their preparation must be done by themselves (or with you) at home.

Help your child to see their B'nai Mitzvah as part of a life-long Jewish exploration. This is really the beginning of their learning as young Jewish adults and it is important that this experience be seen in this context, and not as the completion of a primary school exercise. At Congregation B'nai Israel, we have designed a program for teens that will help them to develop a strong sense of identity and pride in being Jewish. It is important that you encourage your child to continue their Jewish education in the 7th grade and Confirmation class. During these years, they will learn about the history of the Holocaust and anti-semitism, about the establishment and development of the State of Israel, and about Jewish perspectives on other "adult" issues that we face every day. You will receive more information about this in the mail. In addition, they will have an opportunity to go on a class trip to Washington D.C. to visit the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

****Demonstrating your interest in these areas will make the B'nai Mitzvah more meaningful for you and your child and will help you to see through the inevitable preoccupation with caterers, invitations and other logistical arrangements. Remember to try to "put the Mitzvah before the Bar."**

What is the appropriate pace of study in preparation for B'nai Mitzvah?

We are sensitive to the fact that each student works in their own way and progresses at their own pace. The following are guidelines that will help you and your child budget his/her time so that they can strive to achieve these 'milestones'.

All prayers on the prayer CD should be mastered at least 3 months before the B'nai Mitzvah.

The Torah portion with vowels should be mastered at least 3 months before the B'nai Mitzvah.

The Torah portion in Torah script without vowels should be mastered at least 2 months before the B'nai Mitzvah.

The Haftarah portion should be mastered at least 1 month before the B'nai Mitzvah.

The B'nai Mitzvah speech should be completed 2 weeks before the B'nai Mitzvah.

What do we do at the Friday Evening Shabbat Service?

The family is asked to arrive at the synagogue 30 minutes before services begin (by 6:30 p.m. for a 7:00 p.m. service). It is appropriate for the family to sit in the seats closest to the bimah. Appropriate dress for girls on this night includes skirts/dresses at or below the knees and shirts/blouses with sleeves. Boys should wear a button-down, collared shirt, tie, and slacks. No flip-flops or tennis shoes please.

At the beginning of the service, the female family members of the B'nai Mitzvah are called to the bimah for the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles. Male family members of the B'nai Mitzvah will be called to the bimah to open the doors of the ark for the Torah Service. These honors may be shared with other family members. Please have the names of these participants ready to give to the Rabbi at the Rehearsal.

Friday night is a congregation worship service. It is possible that there will be other life cycle, community, or Temple events being celebrated on this night.

****If you would like to have Shabbat dinner at the Temple for your family prior to Services, we have an appropriately sized room available. Please contact the Office Administrator for more details and fees. We will gladly assist you in making this occasion a joyous and memorable one for you and your guests.**

How do we Host the Oneg Shabbat?

Your family is given the honor of hosting the Friday night Oneg. Extended family may also wish to participate in this honor with you or for you. The following information is a guideline to help you with quantities and suggestions of food items. These are suggested amounts for a regular Friday Night Service. If you are expecting a larger than average amount of attendees, please increase the quantities and selection of food and beverage items as is deemed necessary. If you have any questions, please contact the current Oneg Chairperson (this information can be obtained by contacting the Office Administrator). Here is what is expected of the host family:

Arrive 20 minutes prior to the start of the service. Greet congregants, guests and visitors at the Synagogue entrance. Two Greeters are generally sufficient. Wish people "Shabbat Shalom" and hand out prayer books, kippot and programs.

Provide 12-15 dozen cookies or comparable quantity of other food items such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, crackers, etc.

Bring a minimum of three (3) two-liter soft drinks (one diet, one caffeine-free and one regular).

Provide a challah. A challah can be purchased from Whole Foods or homemade.

Provide a bag of ice.

Flowers are suggested, but not required.

Submit a room diagram for the Social Hall to the Office Administrator two weeks prior (see pages 13&14 for room diagrams). Anything beyond the standard setup is the responsibility of the family. No permanent fixtures are allowed to be placed in the Social Hall without permission of Congregation B'nai Israel.

If more than 75 people are expected to attend, additional custodial help will be the responsibility of the family.

Who else participates in the service on Saturday?

The B'nai Mitzvah family honors parents, grandparents, extended family and special friends during the Saturday service. The rabbi will explain which honors are available at your initial meeting. The most familiar honor is the "aliyah", reciting the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah. Torah aliyot are offered only to Jewish people (male or female) over the age of 13. They should be able to either chant or read the blessings competently in Hebrew or from a transliterated version. **Advance practice is appropriate and the rabbi can provide a copy of the blessing in Hebrew and English transliteration.** Those who come up to bless the Torah are encouraged to wear a talit. Men are also asked to wear a kippah (head covering) when they come up for the Torah aliyah. These are available as you enter the sanctuary.

In addition to the Torah aliyot, there are other honors which might be given. These include opening and closing the Ark. If you have family or friends who you wish to honor who are not Jewish, you may wish to give them this honor. All those who come up to the Bima should be dressed appropriately/modestly.

Grandparents and parents of the B'nai Mitzvah are called up at the beginning of the Torah service when we take the Torah from the Ark and pass the Torah from generation to generation.

Parents are invited to give a short blessing to their child on the occasion of their B'nai Mitzvah. This is a time to share some of your pride and love for your child with the congregation and to point the way to your child becoming a good Jewish adult. It is not appropriate to tell your life story or that of your child, or to attempt to map out the rest of his or her life. Rather, this is an opportunity to emphasize some of the essential values you want to pass on to the next generation in the form of a blessing.

One beloved custom at Congregation B'nai Israel is known as the "Family Circle." This is an opportunity to invite all those who are related to your child up to the bimah to bless him or her on this special occasion. Clearly, we understand that there are many different family situations and that this is not always fitting or appropriate for every family. The rabbi will discuss this with you at a meeting prior to the B'nai Mitzvah date.

What is a "B'nai Mitzvah" Program?

It is our custom to publish a two-sided program which is personalized for your B'nai Mitzvah. It contains your child's name and the name of his/her parasha. We list the names of those who are being accorded honors. We also provide some brief descriptions of the ritual that people

will witness. The Temple uses a template which does not change from week to week due to time restrictions of the office staff. You will be provided with a sample of what we can produce for you at no cost. If you wish to publish something that is more elaborate, you are welcome to do so. For us to publish the program on time, we will need a finalized list of those who will be participating in the service by the Tuesday prior to the B'nai Mitzvah.

Can we provide Flowers for the Bimah?

The B'nai Mitzvah family has the option of ordering a flower arrangement for the bimah for Friday night and Saturday morning. Flowers may be delivered on Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. After the service on Saturday morning, the family may take the arrangement home.

How can we arrange for a Cantorial Soloist and/or Musician at the services?

On most Friday nights, Rabbi Goldson leads the congregation in the singing. If your family would like to have a Cantorial Soloist and/or Musician, please let Rabbi Goldson know. He will invite the performer to participate in the service. These arrangements should be made at least 3-6 months in advance. The fee is \$125 for each service for each soloist/musician.

What other donations are appropriate?

It is appropriate to make a donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund to show appreciation to the rabbi for working with your child and family, and for making the service so special. To make a contribution, please contact the Temple office.

Can we Photograph and/or Video the ceremony?

Yes. However, out of respect for the holiness of the service, we ask that no flashes or special lighting be used during the service. If you hire a photographer and/or videographer, they will be asked to remain at one stationary location, set prior to the service, for the duration of the service.

What is considered Appropriate Dress?

Outfits should reflect a sense of modesty and should not be "revealing". Boys should wear a jacket and tie and girls should wear a dress, suit or skirt and blouse. Anyone who is given an aliyah or honor should especially be reminded that clothing such as mini-skirts, skin-tight pants, jeans, tank-tops, midriffs, shorts, and strapless dresses are inappropriate dress for coming to the Torah and opening the Ark.

Do we need Kipot/Yarmulkes and Talitot?

While wearing a talit and kippah (prayer shawl and head covering) is optional at Congregation B'nai Israel, it is our custom to offer them to those who attend Shabbat Services. Some families choose to order personalized kipot/yarmulkes with their child's name and B'nai Mitzvah date inscribed on the inside. Otherwise, the temple will provide regular kipot/yarmulkes.

It is a beautiful custom to wear a talit in the sanctuary on Shabbat morning. We have some talitot available at the entrance to the sanctuary for those who wish to wear them. While we do

not require everyone to wear a talit, those who are coming up for a Torah aliyah are asked to wear a talit (and for men to wear a kippah).

Both Bat Mitzvah girls and Bar Mitzvah boys are asked to wear a talit during the Shabbat service. Boys wear a kippah and girls may do so if they wish. The talit may be presented by the parents or grandparents at the start of the service.

What about the Ritual of Throwing Candy?

Some families wish to include the ritual of throwing candy during the service as a symbol of showering their child with sweetness and love. Since some candy is particularly dangerous and can cause damage to the ark and bimah, Congregation B'nai Israel uses only wrapped Sunkist Fruit Gems for this ritual. The temple will provide the candy for this ritual.

What do we need to do if we want to have a Saturday Kiddush Luncheon?

We invite you to host a Kiddush Luncheon in the Auditorium following the Saturday Morning Service. If you choose to do so, there are a few things to consider:

The luncheon must be open to all congregants of Congregation B'nai Israel who choose to attend.

There is a Room Rental Fee which allows us to pay operating expenses and to maintain our building. This fee includes 4 hours of custodial service. If the custodian will need to be on the premises for longer than that, there will be an additional charge of \$25/hour.

Any special setup, decorating and clean up is the responsibility of the family and must be approved by the Office Administrator.

No confetti may be used in decorating the Social Hall due to clean-up difficulty. The Temple will provide its linens for an additional fee. Please contact the Office Administrator for a list of current fees.

Jewish Dietary Restrictions: In an effort to make as many people as possible comfortable eating in our synagogue, we ask that you be sensitive to the Jewish dietary laws when arranging your menu. Pork (bacon, ham, pepperoni, etc.), shellfish (crabs, oysters, crawfish, etc.) and fish such as catfish and shark may not be served inside the Temple. Dairy products and meat (including chicken) may not be mixed at the same meal (ie: chicken parmesan, cheeseburgers, etc.). Prior to finalizing your menu choices with the caterer, you must submit a list of the food and beverages that will be served to the Rabbi for approval.

Can we have a Saturday Evening B'nai Mitzvah Party at the Temple?

It is the custom of families at Congregation B'nai Israel to keep their celebrations simple. While it may seem difficult for some to not celebrate without having an extravagant party, we encourage you to make your celebrations appropriate and meaningful, highlighting the significance of your son or daughter becoming a young Jewish adult member of our community. The Auditorium is available for a more extensive kind of evening reception or party. Contact the Office Administrator for a fee schedule, to reserve rooms, and for other information.

Who is responsible for coordinating Caterers and Vendors?

The family is responsible for coordinating with their caterer and other vendors. If they require use of the building at any time, it is the family's responsibility to contact the Office Administrator (343-0111) ahead of time to reserve the space during business hours.

B'NAI MITZVAH FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

B'nai Mitzvah Class Deposit \$300 Due at time of registration

B'nai Mitzvah Class Balance \$300 Due when student begins classes

B'nai Mitzvah Service Fee \$100 (To cover Kippot, Candy, Gifts, Certificates, etc)

Cantorial Soloist/Musician \$125/service Due 2 months prior to the service

Donation to Rabbi's Discretionary Fund Optional

ROOM RENTAL AND ASSOCIATED FEES

Please contact the Temple Office to reserve rooms for your function.

Fees are subject to change until your deposit is received.

Friday Shabbat Dinner (Youth Room) \$300 - 4 hours (includes security & custodian)

Saturday Kiddush Luncheon (Auditorium) \$400 - 4 hours (includes security & custodian)

Saturday Night Party (Auditorium) \$400 - 4 hours (includes security & custodian)

If you need the Auditorium and Youth Room for your function, the cost will be:
\$500 - 4 hours (includes security & custodian)

Custodial Overtime (beyond 4 hours) \$25/hour

Linen Rentals \$3/linen

****These are the current fees as of June 1, 2011****