



The Complete B-Mitzvah Companion

2023-2024
EDITION

Dear Families,

On behalf of the entire B-Mitzvah Team, we would like to extend a warm welcome, and heartfelt congratulations to all of you. This is a momentous occasion in your lives and for the entire community. All of us at Temple Beth Sholom are so honored to be part of this significant milestone.

To help you in navigating this exciting, and often overwhelming journey smoothly, we have compiled a comprehensive handbook that encompasses all the essential information you will need to guide you through the process of becoming Bar/Bat/B-Mitzvah.

To provide you with a sense of support and guidance through this process, this handbook serves as your go-to resource, covering everything from religious traditions and ceremony details to logistical aspects and helpful tips.

We want to assure you that our dedicated team of rabbis, cantors, tutors, staff, and lay leaders is here for you every step of the way. Whether you have a question regarding the Torah reading, need assistance with scheduling, or require advice on selecting, meaningful mitzvah projects, we are readily available to help.

We recognize that each family's journey towards this ritual is unique, and we encourage you to reach out to us with any specific needs or concerns you may have.

We are all looking forward to collaborating with you, to support you and learn from you on this sacred journey of becoming Bar/Bat/B-Mitzvah.

Warmest Regards,

The Temple Beth Sholom Clergy and B-Mitzvah Team

WHAT IS A BAR/BAT/B-MITZVAH?

Bar/Bat/B-Mitzvah means "Son/Daughter/Person of the Commandment." In Jewish tradition, celebrating a B-Mitzvah marks the beginning of a young person's transition from childhood to adulthood (traditionally at the age of 12 and/or 13).

During a Bar/Bat/B-Mitzvah ceremony, the young member of our community is called to the Torah for the first time, chants and teaches Torah, prayer, and haftarah (a reading from the prophets). As part of the journey, a Bar/Bat/B-Mitzvah student engages in mitzvah projects highlighting their favorite causes and takes on new responsibilities and leadership roles in their communities. For many young people, this celebration represents months or years of work, planning, and study. The ceremony provides the community, parents and/or caregivers the opportunity to tell the young person that they are recognized, honored, and celebrated, as they embark on a life informed by Jewish values and study.

B-MITZVAH: A MORE INCLUSIVE TERM FOR A JEWISH RITE OF PASSAGE

At Temple Beth Shalom we value each of our students as part of our holy community. To live out our values of inclusivity and welcoming, we have chosen to add the term "B-Mitzvah" as a gender-neutral way to refer to the ritual of Bar and Bat Mitzvah. By adding this term, we hope that reaching the age of Mitzvot (commandments) is an exciting, affirming, and connecting experience for all.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A B-MITZVAH AT TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM?

B-Mitzvah at Temple Beth Shalom is only open to members. Students must take part in our religious school (jLAB), beginning by the third grade, and continuing through the school year of their B-Mitzvah Mitzvah service.

Families seeking a B-Mitzvah date whose child is already close to age 13 will be asked to complete a minimum of one year of jLAB religious school education prior to the date assigned. They may require additional tutoring in Hebrew beyond that offered by jLAB.

A member's account must be current, including annual support, Religious School, B-Mitzvah fees, and all other miscellaneous charges.

THE B-MITZVAH TIMELINE

B-Mitzvah preparation begins in jLAB – the religious education program at Temple Beth Sholom. With our commitment to lifelong Jewish learning and recognizing that a B-Mitzvah is but one of many exciting Jewish experiences along the Jewish journey, our learners immerse themselves in Hebrew studies and prayer throughout jLAB (Kindergarten – 12th grade).

| TENTH BIRTHDAY | ONE YEAR BEFORE | 6 MONTHS BEFORE | 3 MONTHS BEFORE | THE WEEK OF |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| RESERVE B-MITZVAH DATE | J-LAB PRAYER CLASS BEGIN | TUTORING BEGINS | SUBMIT PICTURE AND SMALL BIO FOR THE HAKOL | BIMA REHEARSAL WITH CANTOR |
| RESERVE THE ROOM | ORIENTATION FOR FAMILIES | MENTOR ASSIGNED | | |
| COMPLETE BRIT AGREEMENT | B-MITZVAH FEE PAID IN FULL | FAMILY MEETS WITH OFFICIATING RABBI | MEETING WITH OFFICIATING RABBI | FAMILY BIMA REHEARSAL WITH CANTOR |

BAR/BAT/B-MITZVAH AT TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM

During Shabbat we offer two services to celebrate becoming Bar/Bat/B-Mitzvah: Shabbat Morning at 10:30 AM followed by a luncheon or Shabbat Afternoon at 4:30 PM. Both services are approximately 90 minutes. Our Shabbat morning service is communal, and all members of our congregation are welcome to celebrate with the B-Mitzvah family.

While the liturgy is slightly different for each service, the role of the B-Mitzvah student remains the same – chanting, teaching, celebrating, and offering blessings take place in the morning and in the afternoon service as well. B-Mitzvah families take part in the Shabbat Evening Service on the Friday evening prior to the B-Mitzvah ceremony.

BAR/BAT/B-MITZVAH IN ISRAEL

The Family B-Mitzvah Israel experience is an exciting alternative to consider when planning a date for your child's B-Mitzvah. This experience will allow your child to immerse themselves in the rich Jewish history and culture, while also marking this important milestone in their life in a truly meaningful way. Accompanied by TBS clergy and a professional tour guide and educator, participants will visit essential sites like the Western Wall, in Jerusalem, take part in an archaeological dig, feel the rhythm of modern life in Tel Aviv, and affirm their faith on Masada. The culmination of the trip is a B-Mitzvah service in Jerusalem, officiated by the TBS clergy and your children.

The Family B-Mitzvah service takes place mid-June each year. For more information, please reach out to [Ariane Davis](#).

WHAT EXPENSES ARE INVOLVED?

The B-Mitzvah fee covers the cost of the materials and preparation for your child, as well as expenses generated on the day of the celebration (dessert-reception, facility maintenance, security, etc.). While families are charged an additional B-Mitzvah fee, no member will be denied this important life cycle event due to financial difficulties.

WHAT IS A MITZVAH BRICK?

When you first enter Temple Beth Shalom, our courtyard is paved with inscribed bricks of our B-Mitzvah students. The name of each B-Mitzvah is inscribed on a brick in the courtyard and added at the end of each fiscal year, memorializing their day of becoming a B-Mitzvah. The costs are included in your B-Mitzvah fee.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TUTORING?

One year before, students will be assigned a tutor six months before their B-Mitzvah. All students have 20 one-hour lessons with their tutor. During the six months, they are taught chanting, reciting prayers, their torah portion and haftarah.

On some occasions, based on the tutor's evaluation, more lessons are necessary. Before adding more lessons, a team member will contact you to offer insights and answer questions. We ask that it is your financial responsibility to pay for additional lessons. If you cannot pay for additional lessons, please let us know.

Cancellation of a session within 24 hours will count as one of the 20 lessons provided.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WORKING WITH A MENTOR?

A mentor will be assigned to your child by their officiating rabbi at their first meeting. Students meet with their mentor three to four times before their B-Mitzvah.

Here they learn the spiritual meaning of becoming a B-Mitzvah by studying and discussing the Torah portion in English, working with the B-Mitzvah to prepare a meaningful d'var Torah (speech), and teaching the meaning and message of the Torah portion. The mentor will also guide the student to complete at least 13 mitzvot (honorable deeds) with an understanding of the concept of tzedakah (righteous and just giving).

YOUR B-MITZVAH WEEKEND

SERVICES

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES?

B-Mitzvah families take part in the Friday night services (Kabbalat Shabbat) prior to the B-Mitzvah ceremony. We encourage you to invite family and friends to join you. Services begin at 6:00 pm followed by an Oneg (dessert reception).

In celebration of your simcha, your family will be invited to co-lead the ritual of welcoming Shabbat by lighting the Shabbat candles, as well as the Kiddush (blessing over the wine). Details on the choreography of those rituals will be provided at the rehearsals with the Cantor in the week leading up to your big day.

The B-Mitzvah themselves leads the congregation in the Sh'ma and V'ahavta on Friday night.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SATURDAY MORNING SERVICES?

THE TALLIT PRESENTATION

The first honor bestowed upon the B-Mitzvah is a Tallit presentation. Parents/caregivers/guardians can present their child with their first Tallit. The tallit presentation marks the beginning of the B-Mitzvah ceremony, in which the B-Mitzvah will lead the congregation through most of the service.

We have an extensive assortment of tallitot at Holy Grounds, TBS' gift shop. For more information reach out to Ariane Davis.

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS/GUARDIANS OFFER WORDS OF BLESSING

Prior to chanting from the torah, the parents/caregivers/guardians offer words of blessing to the B-Mitzvah. This is where you express your pride for all your child's accomplishments on their milestone journey of becoming a Jewish adult and bless them. Please limit your blessings to ten minutes altogether.

THROWING CANDY

A tradition at Temple Beth Sholom! At the end of the service the B-Mitzvah is showered with sweetness, symbolized by soft candy tossed at them by their friends and congregants. We supply the candy.

GIFT PRESENTATION

At the conclusion of the service, a member of our Board of Trustees presents the B-Mitzvah with words of blessing, certificates, and gifts (prayer books, Judaica, Israel bonds, etc.).

WHAT IS THE SERVICE ETIQUETTE?

We ask you to create an atmosphere which is conducive to prayer and celebration. Your participation will help your family, and our congregants to have a meaningful worship experience. To reflect the special religious nature of the ceremony and place we ask that you be mindful of your choice of attire. If you are unsure about what to wear, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Guests are welcome to take part in services through song and prayer. Please be considerate when engaging in conversation during service. Please ensure you leave our building and its facilities in the same condition you have found it. Thank you.

ALIYOT - HONOS

FIRST ARK OPENING

Honorees are invited up to the bimah to open the ark doors at the beginning of the Torah service. Details on this ritual's choreography will be provided during the rehearsals with the Cantor. This honor usually involves no more than six people.

CHAIN OF TRADITION

In recognition of all the generations that made it possible for the B-Mitzvah to reach their special moment, parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents will be called up for the traditional passing of the Torah from one generation to the next. During the Torah passing moment, private blessings may be offered. Details on this ritual's choreography will be provided during the rehearsals with the Cantor.

TORAH CARRIERS

Following the Chain of Tradition ritual, honorees will be invited to take part in walking the Torah around the sanctuary. This honor usually involves no more than 6 people.

UNWRAPPING THE TORAH

Right after the Torah procession the torah cover and silver handles are taken off by the honorees.

BEING CALLED UP TO THE TORAH (ALIYOT)

Honorees who are being called to the Torah, recite two blessings: one before and one after the B-Mitzvah's chanting of the Torah. The blessings are offered in Hebrew and in transliterated format for the honorees to read from. There are potentially seven aliyot. Our experience shows that the average number of Aliyot lies within 2-4. The exact number depends on the ability of the B-Mitzvah and additional Torah chanters. The next to the last Aliyah is given to the parents. We suggest you email the link to the Torah Blessings to your relatives who will be called up to lead the blessings for the aliyot.

SECOND ARK OPENING

The ark doors are opened a second time when the Torah scroll is returned and the Aleinu prayer is chanted. This honor usually involves no more than six people.

CAN SIBLINGS PARTICIPATE IN SOME OF THE SERVICE LEADING?

Of course! We strive to be inclusive and welcome the participation of the entire family. Please let us know if there are specific prayers you would like a family member to be part of. We do have default prayers that are often led by siblings.

CAN MY NON-JEWISH FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS BE HONORED?

Absolutely! We welcome the participation of family and friends not of the Jewish faith. Honors such as the chain of tradition, first and second ark openings, Torah carrying and unwrapping are open to all. While being called up for an Aliyah is open to all, we ask that the blessings before and after the chanting of the Torah (the aliyot blessings) are chanted by attendees who have already celebrated their B-Mitzvah.

B-MITZVAH LOGISTICS

WHAT FORMS DO I NEED TO FILL OUT?

All forms (honoree form, information for the program booklet, Hebrew names, etc., information for our Hakol publication, etc.) can be found here. Our B-Mitzvah coordinator Ariane Davis will remind you to fill out the forms in the weeks leading up to your B-Mitzvah celebration. Ariane is also available to help with all the information we will need from you for your simcha.

CAN I HAVE MY B-MITZVAH PARTY AT TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM?

You certainly can. Temple Beth Sholom has an exquisite facility with luxury amenities. Imagine the convenience of having your B-Mitzvah AND party in the same place. We can offer you indoor and outdoor options that will easily accommodate your needs. We strongly suggest that once you secure your date, contact Michael Svayg to discuss our rental options. Please visit our website to see how our Social Hall transforms into the greatest party experience ever!

DO YOU PROVIDE CATERING?

We have several party planners and caterers that we work with who are familiar with our policies and facilities. Ariane Davis or Michael Svayg can give you names of preferred caterers. If you use another caterer, they must have a Certificate of Insurance naming TBS as an added insured with a non-refundable fee paid to our office for the use of the kitchen. Please provide Michel Svayg with all your catering and party plans three weeks before the event.

CAN I HOST A SHABBAT DINNER AFTER FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES?

If you would like to host a private Shabbat Dinner, contact Michael Svayg for all the details. If Temple Beth Sholom happens to be hosting a Shabbat Dinner the week of your child's B-Mitzvah, you are welcome to make reservations and bring your guests to the congregational dinner at the price of the dinner for that date.

WHAT ABOUT SATURDAY KIDDUSH

Temple Beth Sholom offers a kiddush by default every Saturday after services. You are more than welcome to sponsor a regular or more elaborate Kiddush in honor of your joyous occasion. Please communicate with our Director of Facilities Michael Svayg about your Kiddush needs and preferences.

WHAT IS YOUR KOSHER POLICY?

Shellfish, pork, or pork products are not allowed. Dairy and meat products may not be served on the same plate during the same course in a meal. During Passover, only unleavened foods are allowed.

Although TBS is not a kosher facility, a kosher caterer may convert the kitchen for use. TBS retains the right to disallow any part of a menu that does not comply with the Temple's Kashrut Policy.

WHAT ABOUT TAKING PICTURES AND/OR FILMING THE B-MITZVAH SERVICE?

Photographers and videographers should do their best not to interrupt the service. We are live streaming the service and recording it, please take that into consideration. No flash photography during the service. We ask that the photographers and their equipment remain in the back of the sanctuary during services. We welcome you to use our entire facility for your family pictures. We ask that you are done with sanctuary pictures 20 minutes before the service begins.

CAN I ADD OTHER MULTIMEDIA TO BE PROJECTED DURING THE SERVICE?

Yes, if it is communicated with us two weeks prior to event.

CAN MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS WATCH THE SERVICE IF THEY CANNOT ATTEND?

Yes! Live streaming is available on our website, Facebook Live, and on our YouTube channel.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE RECORDINGS NEEDED FOR MY CHILD'S B-MITZVAH?

All recordings can be found here: <https://tbsmb.org/bnei-mitzvah>

MY B-MITZVAH CEREMONY WAS AMAZING. HOW CAN I SHOW MY APPRECIATION?

Thank you for your generosity and support. All giving opportunities can be found on our website.

THE B-MITZVAH TEAM

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