



TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM B-MITZVAH PROGRAM

THE COMPLETE TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM B-MITZVAH GUIDEBOOK

2026-2027



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 guidebook 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 guidebook 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, cantor, tutors, staff, and lay leaders are 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 opportunities, 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.

Thank you for partnering with us,

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 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 Sholom 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?

When a student turns ten years old, they become eligible to receive a B-Mitzvah date. Families will be notified of their eligibility via email from Barb Shimansky. To secure your date, please contact Ariane Davis, B-Mitzvah Program Coordinator at ariane@tbsmb.org on your child’s tenth birthday.

Participation in our religious school, jLAB, is required, beginning no later than third grade and continuing through the school year of the B-Mitzvah service.

For families seeking a B-Mitzvah date for a child who is already nearing age 13, a minimum of one year of jLAB religious school education is required before the assigned date. Additional Hebrew tutoring beyond what jLAB offers may also be necessary.

Please note that a member’s account must be current, including annual support, Religious School tuition, B-Mitzvah fees, and any other applicable charges.

BAR/BAT/B-MITZVAH AT TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM

By default, Bar Mitzvah services take place on Saturday mornings at 10:30 am and are open to the community. If all morning services are already scheduled, an afternoon service at 4:30 pm will be provided. Both services are approximately 90 minutes.

While the liturgy is slightly different for each service, the role of the B-Mitzvah student remains the same. 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.

For more information, please reach out to Ariane Davis (ariane@tbsmb.org).

WHAT EXPENSES ARE INVOLVED?

The B-Mitzvah fee covers the cost of tutoring, 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?

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. After the B-Mitzvah, you will receive an email from Lois regarding printing details.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TUTORING?

Approximately 10 months before the B-Mitzvah, each child is assigned a tutor by Ariane Davis. The tutor will contact families to introduce themselves and coordinate a lesson schedule. Students receive 20 one-hour sessions, during which they learn Torah chanting, prayer recitation, their Torah portion, and Haftarah. Once tutors are assigned, they will reach out to families individually to initiate the process. Lessons can be either virtual or in-person.

On some occasions, based on the tutor's evaluation, more lessons are necessary. 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.

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.

With the guidance of a mentor, the B-Mitzvah student will explore the spiritual significance of becoming a B-Mitzvah. Through studying and discussing their Torah portion in English, they will prepare a meaningful *d'var Torah* (speech) and gain a deeper understanding of its message. The mentor will also support the student in completing at least 13 *mitzvot* (honorable deeds) while fostering an appreciation for *tzedakah* (righteous and just giving).

For a variety of mitzvah opportunities curated by our Social Justice network, visit: tbsmb.org/social-justice/direct-service/

The project's co-chairs would love to hear from you about participating in any of the Direct Service projects.

Scan here to see the list of projects



YOUR B-MITZVAH WEEK

REHEARSALS

During the week leading up to your B-Mitzvah, you will have two rehearsals. The first is for the student only, and the second includes the student and immediate family. Rehearsals are typically scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, and dates will be shared several weeks in advance. We ask that you honor these dates, as we cannot guarantee rescheduling.

To help your child feel comfortable and confident, we strongly encourage them to wear any new or unfamiliar items they plan to use during the service - such as dress shoes, heels, or a suit jacket at rehearsal. Getting used to these ahead of time helps avoid distractions and allows them to focus fully on their reading.

If your child or anyone attending the rehearsal is feeling unwell or showing symptoms, please let us know. We are happy to arrange a virtual option. We appreciate your help in keeping everyone healthy. Please arrive on time.

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) on the weekend on your B-Mitzvah ceremony. We strongly suggest that you join us for at least two Friday night shabbat and Saturday morning services prior to your actual date – this will help familiarize you with the service. We encourage you to invite family and friends to join you. Services begin at 6:00 pm followed by an Oneg (dessert reception). If you would like to sponsor the Oneg, contact Ariane Davis at ariane@tbsmb.org.

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 the week leading up to your big day. It is highly suggested that you attend at least two Friday night and Saturday morning services prior to yours, so you familiarize yourself with the ceremony. We would love to have you, and your family join us for Shabbat

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SATURDAY B-MITZVAH 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 available for sale at Temple Beth Sholom. 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

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 book, Judaica, Israel bonds, etc.).

WHAT IS THE SERVICE ETIQUETTE?

Please help create an atmosphere of prayer and celebration. Your participation enhances the worship experience for all. Kindly dress appropriately for this sacred space. If unsure, feel free to ask. Guests are welcome to join in song and prayer. Please be mindful of conversations during services and leave our facilities as you found them. Thank you.

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

Yes! Live streaming is available on our website at: tbsmb.org/spiritual-life/watch/, Facebook Live, <https://www.facebook.com/TBSMB>, and on our YouTube channel at youtube.com/@tbsmbtube

ALIYOT - HONORS

FIRST ARK OPENING / CLOSING

Honorees are invited up to the bimah to open and close 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.

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 six people.

UNWRAPPING THE TORAH

Right after the Torah procession the Torah cover is taken off by the honorees.

BEING CALLED UP TO THE TORAH (ALİYOT)

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. All blessings can be found here: tbsmb.org/bnei-mitzvah/torah-blessings/

SECOND ARK OPENING / CLOSING

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

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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 Jewish attendees who have already celebrated their B-Mitzvah.

WHAT FORMS DO I NEED TO FILL OUT?

All forms (honoree form, information for the B-Mitzvah program, 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*. Please provide all information asked in the forms no later than two weeks prior to the B-Mitzvah celebration. We create the B-Mitzvah program here, so no outsourced programs are allowed.

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

Absolutely! Temple Beth Sholom offers an exquisite facility with luxury amenities, providing the perfect setting for both your B-Mitzvah and celebration, all in one convenient location. With versatile indoor and outdoor options, we can easily accommodate your needs. Once you've secured your date, we highly recommend reaching out to Ariane Davis to explore our rental options. Visit our website to see how our Social Hall transforms into an unforgettable party experience!

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 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.

CAN I HOST A SHABBAT DINNER AFTER FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES?

If you would like to host a private Shabbat Dinner, contact Ariane Davis. 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* every Saturday after services. You are more than welcome to sponsor a regular or more elaborate *Kiddush* in honor of your joyous occasion. Please speak with Laurin Friedland at Laurin@tbsmb.org 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. 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?

CAN I HAVE ACCESS TO THE TORAHS AND ARC FOR PHOTOGRAPHS?

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 is allowed. 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 PLAY A VIDEO MONTAGE AT THE SERVICE?

We can share one montage at the very end of services; however, our policy is that it can be no longer than seven minutes and cannot be included in the live stream due to copyright issues.

CAN I HAVE ACCESS TO THE TORAHS AND ARC FOR PHOTOGRAPHS?

Yes, you can open the arc, use the Torah, but you must use with the most upmost respect. IF you want to scroll to be opened – one of our Clergy needs to be present.

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

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

THE B-MITZVAH TEAM

CLERGY

Rabbi Gayle Pomerantz | rabbipomerantz@tbsmb.org

Rabbi Joanne Loiben | rabbiloiben@tbsmb.org

Rabbi Jessica Jacobs | rabbijacobs@tbsmb.org

Rabbi Michael Mitgang | rabbimitgang@tbsmb.org

ADMINISTRATION AND EDUCATION

Jeff Graff, Executive Director | jeff@tbsmb.org | 305.538.7231 Ext. 231

Barb Shimansky, Director of SLJ/JLAB | barb@tbsmb.org | 305.538.7231 Ext. 232

Ariane Davis, B-Mitzvah Coordinator | ariane@tbsmb.org | 305.538.7231 Ext. 242

Lois Kotzen, Executive Assistant | lois@tbsmb.org | 305.538.7231 Ext. 253

Iris Amador, Billing and Accounts Receivable | iris@tbsmb.org | 305.538.7231 Ext. 224

Noemi Cortes, Clergy Assistant | noemi@tbsmb.org | 305.538.7231 Ext. 225

FACILITIES AND SUPPORT

Mike Diaz, Director of Building and Facilities | Michael@tbsmb.org

B-MITZVAH COMMITTEE

Tiffany Hurwitz | 773.209.6553 Laurie

Torban | 305.606.2288

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 at: tbsmb.org/give/