Temple B'nai Or

CONNECTING TRADITION to LIFE

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Guidebook

Mazel Tov! on reaching this exciting time in your family's life! You are about to embark on a special journey, one that will connect you with your own ancestry and the Jewish people over generations.

We are grateful to journey on this sacred path with your family and guide you at each step along the way. This guidebook is designed to give you the information, timelines, practical guidance, and planning tools you will need along the way.

Your family is joining many of Temple B'nai Or families who have walked this path and a thousand generations of Jews who have engaged in this rite of passage. On your journey, we encourage you to engage with Jewish wisdom. May you find the right path to deepen your own understanding of Judaism and fulfill your personal and family life with purpose and meaning. We hope that by studying together, you will find greater meaning in the Jewish story that you are passing to the next generation of your family. We are commanded to remember daily:

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־לְבָבֶךָ׃
וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ׃

"Set these words which I command you today upon your heart. Teach them faithfully to your children; speak of them in your home and on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up."
– Deuteronomy 6:6–7

We hope our children engage with a life full of Jewish learning, embracing the words, blessings, traditions, and values of כלל ישראל K'lal Israel—the people Israel. We pray they continue to grow in heart and mind, learning from their ancestors and adding their innovations to our ancient story.

May the story of our people inspire us. May the truths of Torah guide us. And may the prophetic word of truth and righteousness enter our spirit and be a lasting blessing.
When Jewish people experience a new moment of blessing, our tradition prescribes reciting:

Shehecheyanu

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'Olam,
Shehecheyanu, v'Kiyemanu, v'Higianu lazman hazeh.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe who has given us life,
who has sustained us and enabled us to reach this moment.

We look forward to being on this journey with you all!
Bivracha (with blessing),
Rabbi Michael Satz, Cantor Galit Dadoun-Cohen, Esther Benari-Altmann

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The History of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Origins

The first mention of an important transitional moment in our scriptures appears in Pirkei Avot (the ethics of our ancestors, 2nd century text). It teaches: "At age thirteen, one becomes subject to the commandments." Jewish tradition came to understand thirteen as an age of maturity for accepting and following the commandments to become knowledgeable enough to lead the community or count towards a minyan.

Medieval Practice

In the Middle Ages in Germany, boys at thirteen began to wear tefillin and be called to an aliyah to the Torah. This became a central feature of the early Bar Mitzvah ceremony; by the 16th century, calling the Bar Mitzvah boy to Torah on the Shabbat coinciding with his thirteenth birthday had become established.

D'var Torah

In the 16th and 17th centuries in Poland, B'nai Mitzvah were called upon to deliver a D'var Torah–words of interpretation and teaching about Torah. The aliyah laTorah - the blessing of the Torah became a focal feature of becoming Bar Mitzvah and remained the tradition until modern times in certain parts of the world.

Bat Mitzvah

The first Bat Mitzvah took place in 1922. Judith Kaplan, the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, took the lead and is credited as being the first female to have a formal Bat Mitzvah.

Today

Today, Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations are not uniform. They are crafted to the individual commitment and spiritual needs of each family. The milestone is intended to awaken spiritual maturity and moral responsibility and to connect each generation with Jewish ancestors and descendants.

Looking Beyond the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

We encourage you to see this moment as a first step in your family's lifelong journey of Jewish learning. Students can continue their education through Confirmation in 10th grade and Orim in 11th-12th grade. In high school, students explore and grapple with questions of Jewish identity, relationships, citizenship, social issues, and Jewish peoplehood through a Jewish lens with peers, TBO clergy, and teachers.

Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Timeline

Use this timelines as your big-picture guide. Your exact dates and sequence may vary slightly depending on your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. More detailed information is provided throughout this guide.

When	What Happens
4th Grade	• Class meeting; introduction and learning; • Bar/Bat Mitzvah date assigned • Invitation to parent learning class: (Melton Curriculum–ask clergy) • Begin required Shabbat service participation.
6th Grade	• Fall family learning session and information meeting. • Mitzvah Project begins
10 months before	• Family meeting with Rabbi; first family meeting with Cantor • Tutor assigned; establish consistent lesson schedule.
8 months before	• Regular tutor lessons; Torah, prayers and blessings; aim for one aliyah per month; 15–20 minutes of daily practice.
6 months before	• Student should schedule three 30-minute meetings with Rabbi to write the D'var Torah.
3 months before	• Aim to complete Torah, blessings, and prayers; begin Haftarah; continue review. • Start work on Aliyah Form.

Eligibility for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

To become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple B'nai Or, your child must be a student in good standing in the Joel and Helen Jacobs Religious School or in a Jewish Day School. The family must be Temple members with all B'nai Mitzvah fees and Temple obligations fulfilled.

Religious School Attendance

Students must attend and fulfill the requirements of the TBO Religious School. For students with special learning needs, or students who enroll at TBO after attending another school or moving from another area, the Director of Youth and Family Education, in consultation with the clergy, will determine the appropriate educational requirements.

Shabbat Participation

Participation in Shabbat services is required. We have index cards to record your child's attendance. After services, your child should hand their card to the clergy (Rabbi or Cantor). Your child may be asked what they have learned or experienced.

Grade	Shabbat Participation
4th Grade	4 Shabbat services
5th Grade	5 Shabbat services
6th Grade	6 Shabbat services
Through 7th Grade	3 Shabbat morning services

PARTICIPATION IS PART OF THE PREPARATION

Regular Shabbat participation helps students become comfortable with our community's prayer practice, and offers a contextual understanding of this importance rite of passage.

Final 8-Week Countdown

6-8 weeks

- 30 minute Bimah rehearsal 1 of 2 with Cantor (parent must attend)
- Provide Aliyah blessings to family members coming up for an Aliyah to give them ample time to practice
- Email Aliyah Form (2 pages) to the BM Coordinator AND Cantor in the Temple office.
- Prepare parent blessing/speech

2-4 weeks

- 30 minute Bimah rehearsal 2 of 2 with Cantor (parent must attend)
- Practice Torah blessings with family

Ten Days Before

- Family choreography rehearsal with Cantor (plan 70-90 minutes)
- This rehearsal includes practicing passing the Torah from generation to generation
- Both parents must attend

The Day Before

- Pack Siddur, printed Dvar Torah, Haftorah booklet, Parent Blessing, tallit, kippot, and anything needed for the service

Erev Shabbat

- Family lights Shabbat candles with the community
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads Kiddush and Motzi

Shabbat morning

- Arrive for 10:10 am Rabbi's study for Tallit blessing

Mazel Tov!

The Learning Journey

Meetings with the Clergy

The Rabbi will meet once with your whole family to discuss the meaning of this important Jewish journey. You must then schedule three (3) additional sessions for your child to meet with the Rabbi. They will collaboratively write a D'var Torah–a teaching based on a lesson learned from the Torah portion. Contact the TBO office to schedule these sessions, or use the calendar link.

In your meeting with the Cantor, you will be asked to share your family's Jewish and/or spiritual journey, what is especially important for your family, and your hopes for this experience. Together, you will discuss the timeline.

LEARNING NEEDS MATTER

We take great pride in making Bar/Bat Mitzvah possible for every student. If your child has special learning needs or would benefit from an individualized learning plan, please discuss this with the Cantor as early as possible.

Meeting with Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tutor

Tutoring is currently offered in-person and virtually. Families may choose the format that works best for them. Students will have fifteen (15) 30-minute individual sessions with a tutor to study their Torah and Haftarah. The tutor will also check progress on t'filot (prayers) that have been learned in Religious School over the years.

Tutor Lesson Expectations

- Schedule a regular weekly lesson time.
- If a lesson must be cancelled, give the tutor at least 24 hours' notice.
- The family is responsible for rescheduling a cancelled lesson based on the tutor's availability.
- A missed lesson without notice, unless it is an emergency, counts toward the 15 allotted lessons.
- If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is in the early fall, plan for tutoring during the summer or to complete the 15 sessions before the summer begins.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring begins after financial arrangements have been made.

What Your Child Will Learn

- Four aliyot of Torah.
- Three to five verses of Haftarah.
- Morning t'filot (prayers and blessings)

PRACTICE MAKES THE MOMENT

Students are expected to practice approximately 20 minutes every day. Consistent daily practice is crucial to building confidence and feeling comfortable leading from the bimah.

Understanding the Shabbat Service

Kabbalat Shabbat- Friday Night

Your family will be invited to light Shabbat candles with the community in the beginning of the service. At the conclusion of the evening, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be invited to lead the congregation in Kiddush and Motzi, the blessing over the wine and challah.

Shabbat Morning

On the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the family will meet in the Rabbi's study at 10:10 am for preliminary rituals of blessing and the bestowing of the tallit. From there, the family will enter the sanctuary and begin the service.

Moment	What to Expect
Opening & T'filah	We will make our way into the sanctuary and begin. Everyone who attends is encouraged to participate. The clergy will strive to encourage the congregation to join in song and elevate our experience. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads a large portion of the morning prayers.
L'dor Vador	The Torah is passed through the living generations of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's family before being placed in the hands of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This meaningful TBO tradition symbolizes the passing of Jewish tradition from one generation to the next.
Hakafah	The Bar/Bat Mitzvah carries the Torah and parades it around the sanctuary. Guests may participate by touching the Torah dressings with a tallit or siddur and kissing the object as a sign of love and reverence.
D'var Torah	The Bar/Bat Mitzvah shares words of teaching and interpretation about the Torah portion.
Torah Reading	The Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants four sections of Torah, called Aliyot, framed by blessings chanted by family and friends.
Parent Blessing	The parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah share words of blessings.
Haftarah	The Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants several verses from the books of the prophets connected thematically to the Torah portion.
Closing	The Torah is returned to the ark; additional blessings are offered. The service concludes with Kiddush and Motzi (blessings over wine and challah.)

Family Preparations

Parent Blessing

During the service, the parent(s) will address their child with words of blessing marking the sanctity of this moment. Begin preparing your blessing well in advance.

- What is your personal "Torah"–the Jewish values–you wish to pass to your child?
- What are your hopes for your child's continued Jewish journey?
- Can you connect your blessing to the week's Torah portion or to a piece of Jewish wisdom?
- What have you learned from your child that you want them to know?

Aliyot

During the service, you and family members have the honor of an aliyah - being called to chant the blessings before and after your child reads from Torah. Typically, there are four (4) total: Two (2) aliyot for family members (each can be a group of people), one (1) for the parents and older siblings, and the final aliyah for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

You will need to complete the Aliyah Form (see page 11 of this Guidebook) with the names of family members and friends you wish to honor with an aliyah, and provide their full Hebrew names. Give yourself ample time to complete the form, as it can take time to track down Hebrew names. Make sure to confirm participation with those whom you are honoring. To provide assurance to those who will be called for an aliyah, provide a copy of the blessings (see page 13 of this guidebook) so they have time to practice. A copy will be on the bimah during the service as well.

All living ancestry and parents will pass the Torah to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and you can choose to honor others by having them dress or hold the Torah on the bimah.

Non Jewish parents and grandparents are invited to participate.
If you wish to involve non Jewish family members, please discuss this with the Cantor.

Contributions in Honor of Your Simcha

There is a Jewish tradition of giving tzedakah in honor of a life-cycle event or simcha. Families often make a donation in honor of the B'nai Mitzvah to the clergy's discretionary funds. You may wish to purchase a leaf on the Tree of Life tribute wall in the Art Gallery in honor of this milestone. Our tradition teaches that any gift from the heart matters. For current information, please visit the Temple B'nai Or website or office.

Aliyah Form

Please email these pages to HillaryHans@templebnaior.org in the Temple office before your first rehearsal with the Cantor, approximately 8 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Keep a copy for your records. Please submit it in editable Doc or Word format.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah name: _____ Event date: _____

Torah portion: _____

Parent/guardian names: _____

Siblings' names & ages: _____

Will your child be wearing a tallit? □ Yes □ No

Passing the Torah from Generation to Generation

It is our TBO tradition in the beginning of the Torah Service to pass the Torah to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah through all the living generations. Please name all the living Grandparents (and parents) who will come up to the bima in this moment to pass the Torah to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Kaddish

In times of joy, Judaism encourages us to remember ancestors and loved ones who are no longer with us. List anyone you would like to mention during the service.

_____

_____

How to note the Hebrew name:

The customary format for the Jewish or Hebrew name of a Jewish male is [First name] ben [Jewish parent's name] v'[other Jewish parent's name], for example David ben Yosef v'Chanah.

For Jewish females, the format is the same: [First name] bat [Jewish parent's name] v'[other Jewish parent's name], for example Leah bat Moshe v'Rachel.

Individuals who become Jewish through conversion choose or are given a Hebrew name at the time of their conversion and are known as the child of Abraham and Sarah, the biblical figures regarded as the spiritual ancestors of every Jewish person.

People who wish to identify in non-gendered language can substitute: mibeit (from the house of) or mimishpachat (from the family of). For example, Rivka mibeit Leah v'Rachel.

Aliyah Form, continued...

Aliyot (Torah Blessers)

The Hebrew Torah blessings are traditionally done by Jewish family members or friends. Parents who are not Jewish are welcome to share this moment on the bima. Non-Jewish family members can also be involved by dressing the Torah, or leading "The Prayer for our Community, our Country."

Name in English	Hebrew Name	Relationship to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Aliyah #1

_____

_____

_____

_____

Aliyah #2

_____

_____

_____

_____

Aliyah #3 (Customarily parents of Bar/Bat Mitzvah and older siblings)

_____

_____

Aliyah #4 (The Bar/Bat Mitzvah)

_____

Other Honors:

Torah Dresser (1 or 2 people; can be non-Jewish):

_____

Torah Holder (1 Jewish person able to hold the Torah):

_____

Parent Blessing (this may be a mom or dad, including a non-Jewish parent):

_____

Special Ideas:

Each family has a unique Jewish story that we would love to explore and elevate.
If there are additional practices that are not familiar to us, we would love to learn from you and hope to be able to customize and accommodate to the best of our ability.

Torah Aliyah Blessings

As part of the service, individuals are called up for an aliyah to the Torah.
Each aliyah includes blessings before and after the reading.

BEFORE EACH ALIYAH

READER:	Barchu et Adonai ham'vorach.	בָּרְכוּ אֶת ה׳ הַמְבֹרָךְ.
ALL:	Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va'ed	בָּרוּךְ ה׳ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד
READER:	Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va'ed	בָּרוּךְ ה׳ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד
	Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
	Asher bachar banu mikol ha'amim	אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים,
	v'natan lanu et Torato.	וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.
	Baruch Atah Adonai, notein haTorah.	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has chosen us from among all peoples and given us the Torah.

AFTER EACH ALIYAH

READER:	Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
	Asher natan lanu Torat emet	אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת,
	v'chayei olam nata b'tocheinu.	וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.
	Baruch Atah Adonai, notein haTorah.	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has given us a Torah of truth and planted eternal life within us.

Mitzvah Project

The Mitzvah Project is a meaningful journey that invites each student to explore the deeper meaning of becoming a Bar / Bat Mitzvah. The first steps of this process will begin in 5th grade and continue throughout 6th grade, allowing students time to discover what inspires them and thoughtfully develop a project that reflects their values and connection to Jewish life. There are no standard requirements; each student will develop a project that is a good fit for their interests and abilities. With guidance from the Director of Youth and Family Education, students will explore ways to give back and make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Throughout the process, a variety of organizations will be available to help students discover opportunities that may speak to their hearts. Our Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest is also a wonderful resource for ideas and connections.

Students should have their project completed and ready to share before their Bar / Bat Mitzvah, creating a personal and meaningful expression of their commitment to making the world a better place.

The Process

Choosing the Project & Initial Proposal

The student, together with their family, chooses a project that is meaningful and connected to the student's interests, values, or community. The student reports the project idea, including:

- What the project is
- Why they chose it
- Who will be involved
- The specific steps they plan to take
- A general timeline for completing the project

Midpoint Progress Report

Approximately halfway through the project, the student and family provide a progress update.
The report should explain:

- What has been accomplished
- What the student has learned so far
- Any challenges or unexpected developments
- What remains to be done
- Any changes to the original plan

Final Draft

Upon completion, the student prepares a final draft documenting the project. It should describe the process, the student's role, what was accomplished, what was learned, and how the experience affected or informed the student. The family can support the student throughout the process, while the student's voice and ownership remain central.

Incorporating the Project into the D'var Torah

The final stage is for the student to connect the project to their D'var Torah. Rather than simply describing the project, the student should reflect on what the experience taught them about the Torah portion, Jewish values, responsibility, community, or their own Jewish identity.

Questions? Please contact Esther Benari-Altmann in the TBO Office.

Fees & Space Usage

A flat Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee of $2,400.00 will be billed to your account at the time of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah orientation meeting for 5th grade families. Please contact the office to arrange a payment schedule.

What the $2,400 Fee Includes

- Fifteen (15) thirty minute Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring sessions
- Meetings and rehearsals with the Rabbi and Cantor
- Live streaming via Zoom and YouTube- provides families a recording of the service
- Oneg Shabbat on Friday evening, including food and set-up
- $150 credit for bima flowers
  recommended TBO florist: Samantha Rothman, sam@fairviewmail.com
- Challah and wine for the Motzi blessing
- Printing of a service program, should you wish to create one
- One security guard and one maintenance staff

TBO Event Space Usage

- A $250 security deposit is required to reserve your space
- Balance is due three months prior to the ceremony
- Caterers must also pay a $250 security deposit two weeks prior to the event

TBO Space	Usage Fee (Prices are subject to change)
Linda Grandis Blatt Art Gallery	$250
Social Hall with Kitchen**	$1,000
Social Hall for Kiddush Luncheon – no kitchen	$750
Social Hall and Foyer	$900
Courtyard	$500
Beit Midrash	$250

**Please refer to page 20 for more information

CONTACT US

Temple B'nai Or Main Number

973-539-4539

Name	Email	Ext.
Rabbi Michael Satz	rabbisatz@templebnaior.org	102
Cantor Galit Dadoun-Cohen	cantor@templebnaior.org	103
Executive Director Barbara Kavadias	execdirector@templebnaior.org	101
Director of Youth & Family Education Esther Benari- Altmann	educationdir@templebnaior.org	104
Temple office BM Coordinator Hillary Hans	HillaryHans@templebnaior.org	108

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Aliyah	"Ascension"; an honor in Jewish practice involving participation in the Torah service.
Bar/Bat Mitzvah	A Jewish life-cycle milestone associated with taking on responsibility for the commandments.
D'var Torah	Words of Torah; a teaching or interpretation based on the weekly Torah portion.
Haftarah	A selection from the books of the Prophets connected thematically to the weekly Torah portion.
Hakafah	Circling; the custom of carrying/parading the Torah around the community.
Kabbalat Shabbat	The service welcoming Shabbat on Friday evening.
Kiddush	Blessing over wine that sanctifies Shabbat or a Jewish festival.
Minyan	A quorum of ten people traditionally required for certain communal prayers.
Simcha	A joyful occasion or celebration.
T'filah/T'filot	Prayer / prayers.
Tallit	A Jewish prayer shawl.
Tefillin	Small black leather boxes containing parchment scrolls with Torah verses, traditionally worn during weekday morning prayer.
Torah	The foundational Jewish sacred text, traditionally referring to the Five Books of Moses.
Tzedakah	Giving that expresses justice, righteousness, and charitable responsibility.

Beyond the Bima

Preparing for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is an exciting milestone, but we know it can also feel overwhelming. Please know that Temple B'nai Or is here to support and guide your family every step of the way.

We encourage you to keep this guidebook handy and return to it throughout the planning process. You do not need to absorb everything at once! The information inside is designed to answer your questions, help you stay organized, and make the months leading up to the celebration feel more manageable.

Before feeling overwhelmed by a question or detail, take a moment to consult this guidebook. It was created to put helpful information at your fingertips. And, of course, we are always here to listen, answer questions, and work together to make this experience meaningful for your family.

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is an important step in your child's Jewish journey. We are grateful to share this special moment with your family and look forward to celebrating together!

Questions about the Shabbat Service?

What happens on Friday night?
Your family will be invited to light Shabbat candles with the community. Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will also lead the congregation in Kiddush and Motzi.

What can our younger children do at the service?
Younger children are given age-appropriate honors such as undressing the Torah and opening and closing the ark. Often siblings will join the family at the end of the service to recite Kiddush and Motzi. Any child having already reached the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is eligible for an aliyah and may also read from the Torah.

Can a non-Jewish family member participate in an honor?
There are meaningful ways to include family members and friends who are not Jewish. Because particular honors have different requirements, please discuss your ideas with the Cantor as early as possible.

Is there a "Candy Toss" at the end of the service?
If your family wishes to engage in the custom of tossing candy, discuss this with the Cantor during the final choreography rehearsal. They will provide specific instructions for doing so safely and sensitively within the space and service.

How long is the service on Friday night?
Friday evening services begin at 7 pm, usually end before 9 pm.

How long is the service on Saturday morning?
This can vary depending on if it's a single or double, the Torah portion, honors, speeches etc, but services start at 10:30 am and usually conclude around noon or 12:30 pm.

The Oneg & the Kiddush

Who takes care of the Oneg on Friday night?
TBO staff will order food, more info goes here, clean up, etc. Accurate guest estimates are important for the Temple office to coordinate the food. The week prior, please confirm final counts.

Is alcohol allowed to be served at TBO?
Yes!

For the kiddush/luncheon in social hall, do we need to serve the whole congregation?
Any congregant is invited to attend the Saturday Shabbat service. There is typically not significant attendance above invited guests.

What is included in the space usage if organizing a Kiddush?
TBO provides set up for round and rectangle tables and chairs. Linens are available in navy blue, cream, and also white paper. Purple covers are available for our seven high-top tables. The Social Hall comfortably accommodates approximately **150** guests, and we recommend seating **8** guests per table. For additional information or to discuss your specific needs, please contact the TBO office.

How long is the Kiddush (typically)?
At a full catered Kiddush luncheon, people will generally mingle/eat for approximately **1.5** hours.

What time can caterers arrive on Saturday?
As early as **8** am, but please coordinate with the TBO Office.

What about vendor insurance and building access?
Before hiring a vendor, please ask the Temple office about insurance, documentation, timing, access, setup, and cleanup.

What about Tallit and Yarmulkes?

Does my child need a Tallis? Where do I get one?

A tallit (prayer shawl) is a traditional Jewish garment worn during morning prayer services. It serves as a reminder of the mitzvot and the values of our Jewish tradition.

At TBO, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an opportunity for each student and family to explore the traditions and rituals that make this milestone meaningful.

If your family chooses for your child to wear a tallit, you may use a family tallit, purchase a new one, or consider a tallit that has been passed down through generations. Some families choose to make the tallit a special gift to commemorate this milestone.

Tallitot are available for purchase through TBO, and many options can also be found online. The clergy would be happy to assist your family in choosing a tallit and answering any questions you may have.

Do I need to order Yarmulkes?

A yarmulke (also called a kippah) is a traditional Jewish head covering worn by many Jews as a sign of respect and reverence during prayer and other religious occasions.

At TBO, families may follow their own traditions and customs regarding wearing a yarmulke. If it is your family's custom for your child to wear one during the service, they can be ordered through TBO or purchased online. There are many styles, colors, and designs to choose from, and some families select one that reflects their child's personality or serves as a keepsake from this special milestone.

If you have questions, the clergy would be happy to help.

What About Seating, Ushers and Security?

How does reserved seating work?

Temple B'nai Or will post signs reserving the first two rows of seating for your family. If you anticipate needing additional reserved seating, please notify the temple office in advance.

Who does the TBO Board Presentation?

A member of the Temple B'nai Or Board of Trustees will be assigned to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. At the conclusion of the service, this board member will say a few words and present your child with a gift on behalf of the temple. If there is a particular board member you would like to request, please let the temple office know in advance.

Will there be ushers?

A member of the Temple B'nai Or Board of Trustees will be assigned to serve as an usher for your child's service and help welcome guests and direct them to their seats.

Will there be security?

The safety and security of our congregants and guests are a priority. Please follow all Temple B'nai Or security procedures and any instructions provided by temple staff or security personnel. Families should communicate any special security considerations or guest access needs to the temple office in advance. Please do not make independent arrangements that conflict with the temple's established procedures.

What time should we put on the invitation?

Shabbat morning services begin promptly at **10:30** a.m. Please indicate **10:30** a.m. as the service time on your invitation and ask your guests to arrive a few minutes early so everyone can be seated and the service can begin on time.

What About Flowers, Program and Photos?

How do I handle the flowers for the Bimah?

Every family receives a $150 credit to use for bima flowers. TBO has a preferred vendor that is familiar with our sanctuary: Samantha Rothman, sam@fairviewmail.com

You should contact Ms. Rothman, or your preferred florist at least 6 weeks prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

How do I do a printed program? Do I need to have one?

Families are welcome to create a printed program for their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. A program can include the order of the service, the names of family members, honors, readings, or other details you would like to share with your guests.

If your family would like to have a program, you may design one that reflects your child's personality and your family's preferences. Temple B'nai Or is happy to print the programs for you.

When and how should I do photos at the Temple?

Plan your Temple photos in advance with your photographer and the Temple. Many families arrange formal family portraits before the service around 8 am, after the service, or at another mutually convenient time. Ask the clergy or Temple office about timing and which spaces may be used so photos do not interfere with worship or other Temple activities. The Torah and Kiddush cup will be ready and available to you for photos.

Questions About Clergy?

Do I need to invite the clergy and staff to the party?
There is no requirement or expectation that clergy or Temple B'nai Or staff be invited to your celebration. If you would like to include a member of the clergy or staff, you are welcome to do so. Your celebration is a personal family choice, and there is no obligation either way.

Should we give the Clergy a gift?
There is a Jewish tradition of giving tzedakah in honor of a life-cycle event or simcha. Families often make a donation in honor of the B'nai Mitzvah to the clergy's discretionary funds. You may wish to purchase a leaf on the Tree of Life tribute wall in the Art Gallery in honor of this milestone. Our tradition teaches that any gift from the heart matters. For current information, please visit the Temple B'nai Or website or office.

Who do we reach out to for what at the temple?
Rabbi – D'var Torah, Jewish/ritual questions

Cantor – service questions, prayers, chanting, music, service participation, Jewish/ritual questions

TBO main office staff – timeline, requirements, meetings, forms, building access, room reservations, general logistics, setup, cleanup, caterer access

Sample Mitzvah Celebration Checklist

12-15 Months Out

- Decide party venue, DJ, Photographer
- Establish the overall vision and style of the celebration
- Discuss entertainment needs for kids and adults
- Decide whether to have a separate kids' area or activity
- Research event insurance, if needed

6-12 Months Out

- Choose a logo, monogram, or party branding
- Decide on a party favor or swag concept
- Plan special activities, games, or interactive entertainment
- Start working on invitation list and invites.
- Select a florist and finalize floral arrangements, if applicable
- Plan accessibility needs and accommodations for guests

4-5 Months Out

- Decide whether to include a welcome sign, bar sign, menu cards, or other signage
- Start writing candle-lighting blessings, dedications, or other personalized readings
- Identify who will give speeches, blessings, or toasts
- Begin gathering photos and music for montage
- Confirm whether the venue provides tables, chairs, linens, and place settings

3-5 Months Out

- Discuss honors, aliyot, readings, and family participation
- Start shopping for dresses, suits, etc.
- Work on service programs or printed materials
- Plan any family traditions with the clergy
- Confirm and order kippot, tallit, and other ritual items

2-4 Months Out

- Send out invitations and track RSVPs
- Confirm vendor contracts, balances, and cancellation policies
- Review rain plans or backup arrangements, if applicable
- Confirm who is responsible for transporting gifts, cards, and personal items home

2-4 Weeks Out

- Create a vendor contact sheet with phone numbers and arrival times
- Prepare a shot list and family photo list for the photographer
- Confirm music introductions, hora, candle lighting, and special dances
- Prepare a list of people giving speeches and the order of remarks
- Confirm the plan for gifts, cards, and the card box
- Make sure all signage, printed materials, and personalized items are accounted for

Week Before / Day Of

- Assign a point person for vendor questions so parents can enjoy the celebration
- Designate someone to collect gifts and cards
- Pack copies of the timeline, vendor contacts, and seating chart
- Confirm who will take home leftover food, favors, flowers, and décor
- Bring backup copies of the montage and any presentation files
- Make sure the Bat Mitzvah child has time to eat, get ready, and take a breath!

Vendor Guide (TBO Family Recommended)

PARTY PLANNING

Lauren Magid
Michael Maguire
Peony Events

DECOR/SWAG/MISC.

Balloons
Jamie Frick @ Event Accents
Jamiefrick21@gmail.com
973-631-0576

Luxe Life Event Design
Balloons and Decor

Custom Cookies
cookies.by.jules15@gmail.com

Julu Beauty Makeup (917) 528-0659

Swag: Sandi @ Swagalicious
Swagaliciousny@gmail.com

Lorraine Kent:Swag & Apparel

Yarmulke/Kippot
yarmulkes.com, also TBO Office

Favor & Flair Swag
Rachel@favorandflair.com

Samantha Rothman, Florist
sam@fairviewmail.com

Nancy Hertz Ellis: calligraphy

Sarah Schwartz Invitations
sarahschwartz.com

Hallie Beyer: program design, logos, banners
646-641-4650

logo design/decor:Meredith Landau
@mrlpartydesigns

Invitations Nina Cardwell
hello@cambridge-street.com

DJ/ENTERTAINMENT

Pure Event Group
Mo Talent Live: DJ
DJ James Myricks

Drummer: Josh Conklin
the_guy_who_drums@yahoo.com
908-210-3258

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO

Dani King
Audrey Eapen Photography
Chad Kraus Photography
Andy Foster Photo and Video

Joy Magid Photography

Mike Hersh montage
973-769-4905
mhersh34@yahoo.com

Montage: Charlie Neely

CATERING

Pomp Caterers
Rising Kitchans
Simply Lisa
Encore Catering susan@encorecateringnj.com

Coney Island Pizza Truck Cipizzanj@gmail.com

If you have a vendor to recommend, please send the name, category, website/contact information, and a brief note about your experience so this guide can continue to grow.

Family Notes & Questions

Use this space for questions, names, deadlines, or anything you want to remember as your family prepares.