

**Temple B'nai Or
Bar/Bat Mitzvah
Manual
2019-2020**



INTRODUCTION

Your child is about to prepare for a very special occasion unique to the Jewish people. As parents, you play an important role in this process. In the course of our Temple's history, hundreds of boys and girls have made their way to our pulpit on the occasion of becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Each child is unique, bringing to the worship service strengths he or she never knew existed until discovered upon recitation of the first tremulous *brachah*, or the last paragraph of their speech. Each Bar or Bat Mitzvah experience has been an opportunity for personal growth, family enrichment, and communal joy.

As a congregation, we have certainly learned something from the sum total of all these occasions. We have learned especially that, just as a child experiences nervous anticipation and a great sense of accomplishment, so too each family has questions concerning preparation and reception: "what to do," "how to go about it," and "when."

With this in mind, this manual was compiled to serve as a helpful guide and checklist. It may not completely mitigate the moments of panic that befall us all, but if it should calm a single jangled nerve, it has been worth the effort.

Your suggestions and additions for the next edition are most welcome.

Should you have any questions at all, feel free to call upon any member of the Temple Clergy or staff for assistance.

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WHAT IS BAR or BAT MITZVAH?

As far back as the 6th century, the age of maturity was established as 13 for a male and 12-½ for a female. Until the late Middle Ages, it was permissible, even desirable, for boys and girls to be married at these early ages. (Fortunately, time and values do change.) Thirteen was also the accepted age at which a boy was fully ready and knowledgeable enough to conduct a worship service and to be counted in a *minyan*.

As a Jewish tradition, Bar Mitzvah is some 800 years old. It came into being about the time that religious upheaval and persecution forced Jews to move from community to community. As a ceremony, its function was to establish (in each community) those youngsters who were sufficiently trained to participate in worship. Over the course of the centuries, Bar Mitzvah has come to be viewed as the occasion of spiritual awakening and moral responsibility. Until that age, it was the parent (specifically the father) who assumed all accountability for a child's actions. It is interesting to note that in a traditional Bar Mitzvah ceremony, the father (with a sense of relief), intones this most unusual blessing: "*Baruch Shep'tarani May OnshoShelZeh* – Blessed be the ONE who has relieved me from the (spiritual/moral) burden of this child."

While Bar Mitzvah has a centuries-long history, Bat Mitzvah is a more recent Jewish observance. The first Bat Mitzvah is said to have taken place in the early years of the 20th century and is credited to have been Judith Kaplan, the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, and founder of the Reconstructionist Movement.

Today in liberal Jewish synagogues, Bat Mitzvah and Bar Mitzvah are equivalent in meaning and observance.

Spiritual adulthood means that from Bar or Bat Mitzvah forward, a Jew is responsible for keeping his or her promises, fasting on Yom Kippur, being counted for Jewish worship, and living by the values and principles of Judaism.

At Temple B'nai Or, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is not a requirement of the religious school. It is hoped that parents will be ready to put their ceremony in a proper and positive perspective for the child, and that the child, in undertaking the preparation for this ceremony, will be intrinsically motivated and will look forward to the experience. Once the decision to prepare for becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is made by the child and parents, the Clergy, the Temple, and the staff can be counted on to do everything possible to help make this a positive and meaningful process.

Bar or Bat Mitzvah is available to every Jewish child who has attended at least four years of religious school, or its equivalent. However, this ceremony is only one stage of a child's ongoing Jewish education at Temple B'nai Or; it is by no means a conclusion. With this in mind, it is expected that prospective Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidates intend to continue attending religious school through Confirmation, which occurs with the completion of the tenth grade, and then graduation in the twelfth grade.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REGISTRATION

In order to celebrate a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Temple B'nai Or, students must attend and fulfill the requirements for grades 3 through 7 of the Religious School. For students with special needs, or for students who have enrolled in the Religious School after coming to TBO from another school or from out of the area, the Religious School Director, in consultation with the Clergy, will determine the appropriate educational requirements for celebrating a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at TBO.

ELIGIBILITY FOR B'NAI MITZVAH

To become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, you must be a student in good standing in our Religious School with the following requirements met:

1. Children and parents must be Temple members with all B'nai Mitzvah fees and Temple obligations met.
2. ***Because the benefit of class attendance cannot be recreated, students must be enrolled in Religious School for at least four years prior to becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Exception requests must be discussed with the Religious School Director.***
3. Students must be enrolled in 7th grade Religious School regardless of when the Bar or Bat Mitzvah takes place.
4. Students must satisfy the Bar or Bat Mitzvot "mitzvah project" requirement as part of the curriculum.

SHABBAT PARTICIPATION

We encourage students to attend services as often as possible. They should sign in for us to keep tract. All services need to be at TBO - 4 Friday Shabbat services in each grade and 1 Saturday AM service.

PREPARATION FOR BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

Our philosophy is to ensure that your child has all the necessary tools to learn and master their assigned material. While we cannot learn the material for them, our goal is to be your child's (and your) partner in this process.

Your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah training will consist of the following components:

Religious School and Mid Week Hebrew:

In our religious school, students study Hebrew from the 3rd through the 6th grades. While they do learn the Hebrew alphabet and prayers associated with the Shabbat worship service, they are not ready to read from the *Torah* without additional tutoring for this specific task.

1. Bar and Bat Mitzvah Classes in Mid-Week Hebrew School

Bar and Bat Mitzvah preparation begins in the 6th grade. This class is designed to motivate students toward their Bar or Bat Mitzvah studies and to facilitate the students' development of fluency in the specific prayers and blessings needed for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service.

Each student will receive a binder containing the complete Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. In addition, students will be assigned their individual *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions.

2. Torah and Haftarah Preparation with Bar and Bat Mitzvah Coaches:

In addition to the above-mentioned classes, each Bar or Bat Mitzvah student will meet with a special Bar or Bat Mitzvah coach, who will serve in guiding each Bar or Bat Mitzvah student through the learning process. Each child will have **fifteen ½ hour sessions** with his or her instructor. **(Since the tutoring schedule is extremely tight, it is important that scheduled lessons be attended consistently and promptly. Except in the case of illness, make-up lessons are not available).**

Note: If your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah is in September or October, please be sure that their summer plans include Bar or Bat Mitzvah tutoring, either at camp or at home.

Expectations:

Students are expected to have mastered all the prayers and blessings studied in their 6th grade classes PRIOR to their first meeting with the Bar or Bat Mitzvah Coach.

In order to successfully master this material, it is expected that a Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate will study this material for a half hour every day at the commencement of these classes. In order to ensure each child's success, we reserve the right to limit the amount of a child's participation in the service, if he or she is not spending sufficient time preparing.

An Important Note:

Our congregation takes great pride in making every Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebration special. There are occasions, when special educational circumstances necessitate an adjustment in the student's materials. Our expectation is that each student will work hard enough and this will be different for each student. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you might have with the Rabbi, the Cantor, or the Religious School Director.

7TH GRADE HEBREW TIME

We are committed to the success of each of our students. Students will be required to attend a special **Monday night class** from 6:00 pm to 6:30 pm for Hebrew prayer review up until the time of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Clergy Appointments:

- A. The Cantor will see all Bar and Bat Mitzvah students twice to review prayers and blessings.
- B. The Rabbi will see all Bar and Bat Mitzvah students twice to practice prayers and review Torah and Haftarah portions.
- C. The Rabbi will meet with each student to review the speech about the section of Torah or Haftarah they will read. Please come with a working draft to this appointment. The speech is meant to be worked on as a family, to have a good understanding of the meaning of the Torah portion.
- D. The Cantor will conduct the first full family rehearsal. **Parents must be present.**
- E. The Rabbi will conduct the second full family rehearsal. **Parents must be present.**

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE ALL MATERIAL COMPLETED, MASTERED AND READY. Please be sure to complete your *Aliyah* sheet, including Hebrew names, prior to this meeting. If you have any questions or concerns, please set up a meeting with a member of the Clergy prior to this time.

The final rehearsal will take place the week of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. During these rehearsals, we will review:

- A. *Tallit* ceremony
- B. Bar or Bat Mitzvah participation in the service, including reading from the *Torah* and presentation of the speech
- C. Passing the *Torah* through the generations
- D. Parent speech
- E. *Aliyot*

These family rehearsals are the time to bring any final questions you have concerning the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We will do our very best to make you and your family comfortable. **It is NOT necessary for siblings to attend these rehearsals.**

WHAT DOES A BAR/BAT MITZVAH DO?

There are basically three areas of participation for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at a Shabbat morning service: to be a *sh'liachtzibur* (leader of worship); to chant from the Torah and the Haftarah; and to offer a *D'var Torah*, or teaching on the week's Torah or Haftarah portion.

Sh'liachTzibur

One of the oldest and most prestigious roles in the synagogue is the *sh'liach tzibur*. Literally, the "representative of the community," the *sh'liach tzibur* leads the congregation in prayer. Each Bar or Bat Mitzvah student joins with the Rabbi and Cantor in this sacred role.

The basic Hebrew prayers expected of all Bar and Bat Mitzvah candidates are:

Tallit blessing
La-asok B'divrei Torah
Eilu Dvarim (The Obligations)
Barchu
Sh'ma/V'ahavta
Avot/Imahot
G'vurot
K'dushah/L'dor Vador
Kiddush for Shabbat Evening
Kiddush for Shabbat Morning (V'shamru)
Hamotzi

The student must also know the Torah and Haftarah blessings.

Students who are assigned the "A" part will be responsible for:

Yotzeir
Ahavah Rabah

Students who are assigned the "B" part will be responsible for:

Modim
Sim Shalom

The *D'var Torah*—(The Sermon)

Prior to the reading of Torah or Haftarah, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah student will deliver a brief (three- to four-minute) sermon on the week's Torah or Haftarah portion. This teaching will be prepared in consultation with the Rabbi. (Please see the attached speech outline.)

The *K'riat HaTorah*—(Torah Reading)

Each Bar or Bat Mitzvah student assumes the role of the *ba-al(at) k'riah*, “Torah reader,” for the day. This entails the learning of four *parshiyot*, or selections from the week’s Torah portion, which amounts to ten to twelve verses. Each student is expected to learn the trope, or traditional cantillation melody. This skill is taught by the Cantor and the coaches in private tutoring sessions. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate will chant the Torah blessings only for the fourth and final *aliyah*, which we call the *maftir*. (The previous *aliyot* are given to family members and friends.)

The Haftarah

Following the reading of Torah, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah student will chant the Haftarah, or secondary biblical reading, along with the accompanying Haftarah blessings. Like the Torah reading, the Haftarah is chanted according to a specific melody to be learned with the Cantor. The number of verses to be read will be determined by the Cantor. In the case of a double, one of the students will deliver a *D’var Torah* on the Haftarah portion and the other will deliver the *D’var Torah* on the Torah portion.

Friday Night

It is customary for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah student to lead the congregation in *Kiddush* at the Friday night service preceding the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service. In the case of multiple B’nai Mitzvah, all students will chant the *Kiddush* together.

WHAT DO THE PARENTS OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH DO?

During the Friday Night Service:

Both parents of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate will participate in the candle lighting and/or Kiddush during the Friday evening service before their child will become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. If there is more than one family involved, the Rabbi and the Cantor will plan a shared participation.

Second, third and fifth Friday night Shabbat services begin at 7:30 pm. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah student must be at Temple by 7:00 pm, in order to practice the *kiddush*. On the **first, fourth, and fifth Friday of the month**, Shabbat services begin at 6:30 pm, so the family must be at Temple by 6:00 pm.

During the Saturday Morning Service:

During the service on Saturday morning, the parents will address their child on the meaning of the occasion and the importance of Judaism in their family and pass the Torah to him or her.

The non-Jewish parent is included in most of the parental roles. The Rabbi will happily discuss with you the involvement of the non-Jewish parent.

CHOOSING PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SERVICE

Passing the Torah

During the Torah Service a Jewish parent and a Jewish grandparent, as representatives of each generation, will hand the Torah to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah student, symbolically handing down our Jewish heritage to the next generation. For families who do not have grandparents present, appropriate substitutes can be made. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate then leads the *Hakafah* (Torah procession) through the congregation. The entire family is then invited to participate in the *Hakafah*. At the conclusion of the *Hakafah*, everyone returns to his or her seat.

Honors and Aliyot

Honors are an important part of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony. A variety of opportunities for family and friends exist within the Shabbat morning worship service, as detailed below. A Bar or Bat Mitzvah Worksheet for the Clergy can be found in this manual. This should be returned to the Cantor when your child begins to work with her. *****Please return completed forms to the Cantor 6 WEEKS PRIOR to your date.***

ALIYOT (plural for *aliyah*): An *aliyah* means "ascension"--we elevate ourselves when reading from the Torah. It includes a blessing before the Torah reading and a blessing after the Torah reading. There are four *aliyot*. You may choose up to 12 individuals for three of the four *aliyot*. Generally, the first two *aliyot* are for friends and family, and the third *aliyah* is for the parent(s). The last *aliyah* is referred to as the *Maftir* and calls the Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate up to chant the blessings.

In order to be called for an *aliyah*, a person must 1) be Jewish, 2) be at least 13 years of age, and 3) be able to recite the blessings in Hebrew. (Transliterations can be found in this manual. Hebrew and transliterated blessings will be available on the Bimah.)

WE CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH THE IMPORTANCE OF THOSE WHO ARE BEING CALLED TO RECITE THE TORAH BLESSINGS TO PRACTICE BEFOREHAND, ESPECIALLY WITH THOSE WITH WHOM THEY WILL BE SAYING THEM TOGETHER!

Important Note for Family Members Who Are Not Jewish

The reciting of the *Torah* blessings is only performed by a Jewish adult; however, a non-Jewish family member may be honored during any *aliyah* with one of four alternate readings (see attached). At the family rehearsal with the Rabbi, please indicate the passages that you and your family members will be reading.

Additional Honors

TORAH DRESSERS: You can select 2 or 3 people to come to the bimah to dress the Torah. These individuals do not have to be Jewish, can be of any age, and do not say anything.

TORAH HOLDER: One Jewish adult will sit holding the Torah after it is read. For a double B'nai Mitzvah ceremony, only one person does this.

CHOOSE PEOPLE TO HELP DURING THE SERVICE

The family is also responsible for supplying some helpers for the service. The names of these people need to be supplied 6 weeks prior to the service. Please use the Bar and Bat Mitzvah Checklist. The helpers that are needed are:

USHERS: To greet guests as they enter the sanctuary and hand each guest a prayer book and a Shabbat morning handout. (Two ushers are needed for a single, one usher per family for a double.) Ushers need to remain at the doors until 10 minutes into the service. If your assigned ushers have not arrived by 10:10 am for the 10:30 am service, please ask others to act in their place until they arrive.

HUSHERS: We are pleased to have the peers of our B'nai Mitzvah candidates as our guests. Please provide one adult "husher" per every 10 to 12 unaccompanied youth who will be attending the service. The hushers sit on either side of the section reserved for youth during the service. It is their responsibility to make sure that there is not excessive whispering, or other behavior inappropriate during a religious service. The hushers, if they feel it necessary, may separate children who are disruptive or ask them to sit with the usher.

We provide a special section reserved for youth. Unaccompanied youth may not sit in the balcony.

PRESENTERS FROM TEMPLE BOARD: A representative from the Temple Board will make presentations to the B'nai Mitzvah students.

Note: For those who are home bound and unable to attend the service in person, we are pleased to be able to provide LIVE streaming of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah worship service.

THE PARENT SPEECH on SATURDAY MORNING

The remarks that you address to your child are meant to put a frame of meaning around this sacred occasion and the entire experience of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

- What is it that you wish to pass on to your child?

- What is your “torah” – the Jewish values you have that you wish to give to him or her?

In your remarks, please follow these guidelines:

1. Say what you would like to say, keeping your remarks brief. Understand that everyone is standing during this entire time. The address should be no longer than two typewritten double-spaced pages, not including the paragraph below. This is 600 words maximum.
2. Say nothing embarrassing about or to your child. (No birth stories please.)
3. Please do not mention your child's grades in school. Jewish self-esteem, for your child or for children listening in the congregation, should be based on the kind of person you are, not what grades you get. Making reference to how well one does in school without saying anything about grades may be appropriate.
4. In addition to saying what you would like about your child, make sure that you make reference to what it means to you and your family to be passing down this torah / the Jewish heritage.
5. Remember, this is not a brag sheet. It is not a time to revisit all the wonderful and impressive moments in your child's thirteen years of life--e.g., “when you were three, we were amazed that you said...” or “I will never forget how you did ___ when you were only nine.” Rather, your speech should focus on the values and character traits your child demonstrates as well as the values and character traits you wish to encourage in him or her. What does it mean to you that you are passing down the Jewish heritage to your child?

Please note: if one of the parents is not Jewish, it is the Jewish parent who holds the torah. The non-Jewish parent may present the speech.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who takes care of the Oneg Shabbat and Motzi?

The family of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child will host an Oneg Shabbat on Friday evening. The Temple will arrange for food and setup. If you have special needs or requests, please inform the Executive Director. **The contribution for the Oneg Shabbat is included in the Bar or Bat Mitzvah flat fee.**

On Saturday morning a *Motzi* (blessing over the challah) in the Sanctuary or the Social Hall concludes the service. A large challah is provided.

Should my child wear a Tallit?

Your child may wear either a family Tallit, or one purchased or made for the occasion. It is hoped that the Tallit is not a Bar or Bat Mitzvah costume but

something to be worn on a continuing basis. Tallitot are available through our Judaica shop.

Do I need to supply yarmulkes, and if so, what kind?

Many families order kippot to be offered to their guests during the service in which their child becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Kippot are available for purchase through our Judaica Shop. These kippot are put in the sanctuary lobby on the morning of your child's service for worshippers who choose to wear them. If you choose not to purchase kippot, Temple provides them for your guests.

If you have any questions concerning what is and is not within the guidelines, please contact the Rabbi, the Cantor, or the Executive Director.

What about photography and videotaping?

Photography or videotaping is not permitted during the service. Often photographs are taken on the morning of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service, or you may choose to take photographs on a different day. **Please be sure to call the Temple Office to schedule photo times in order to avoid scheduling conflicts with ongoing Temple programs or events. The Clergy will be available for photos on an appointment basis to be scheduled through the Office staff.**

What time should I list on the invitation?

10:15 AM, for 10:30 AM service.

Can I have a dinner at Temple prior to Shabbat services?

The Beit Midrash may be rented for this dinner.

Can I have my celebration at Temple after the Saturday morning service?

The Aresty Social Hall may be rented for your celebratory luncheon. Please see the form in this manual for fees. Please contact the Executive Director if you are interested in Social Hall rental. If outside caterers are to be used; check with the Executive Director for guidelines.

My spouse and I are divorced. How is that handled?

Each situation is unique and has its own sensitivities. Please discuss this with the Rabbi, who has had years of experience with these matters.

SCHEDULE OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH FEES (and what that fee includes)

All fees are due when you child begins the Bar or Bat Mitzvah coaching program.

A flat rate fee of \$2,000.00* will be billed to you ONE YEAR prior to your child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah date. This fee includes Bar or Bat Mitzvah training, coaching, Oneg Shabbat on Friday (food, set-up, etc.), Saturday morning family coffee station, challah and wine for the *motzi* on Saturday.

Social Hall usage if available:

A \$250.00 deposit is required to reserve the Social Hall or courtyard, with the balance due 3 months prior to your ceremony.

In addition, caterers are required to pay a \$250 security deposit 2 weeks prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah date.

Linda Grandis Blatt Art Gallery.....	\$250.00*
Usage Fee for Social Hall includes Kitchen use.....	\$1,000.00*
Usage Fee for Social Hall for Simple Kiddush (no Kitchen use).....	\$750.00*
Usage Fee for Social Hall and Foyer.....	\$900.00*
Usage Fee for Courtyard.....	\$500.00*
Usage Fee for Beit Midrash	\$250.00*

**Prices are subject to change*

In honor of your child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah, or to recognize or show appreciation for the Clergy or professional staff involved, contributions may be made at your discretion to:

- Rabbi Satz Discretionary Fund
- Cantor Dadoun-Cohen’s Discretionary Fund
- Rabbi Z. David levy Endowment Fund
- Rabbi Donald B. Rossoff Scholarship Fund
- Joel & Helen Jacobs Religious School Endowment Fund
- Building Fund
- General Giving Fund
- Frances and Herbert Brody Pre-School Fund
- Lisa K. Goldberg Pre-School Fund
- Shabbat Shira
- Security Fund

Please refer to Tempo, our Temple Directory, for detailed information regarding each fund.