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***B’nei Mitzvah***

**Guide**

**for Parents**

**and their**

**Children**

**Dear TJ Students and Parents,**

# One of the most meaningful aspects of Judaism is its ability to mark sacred moments. As your child begins this sacred journey, so too are you beginning your own journey—that of seeing your child grow into a responsible young *Jewish* adult. This passage is not only theirs, but yours as well. We invite you and your entire family to take an active role in this process, seeing this period of time as an opportunity to take to heart your own sense of Jewish practice, growth, self-realization, and fulfillment.

# **What Does it Mean to Become an Adult in the Jewish Community at Temple Judea?**

Students do not “have” a *Bar or Bat Mitzvah*; they become a *Bar or Bat Mitzvah*. The Talmud teaches that a young person is ready at the age of 13 to understand and accept adult responsibility for *mitzvot* (commandments/sacred responsibilities). We believe our students have much to learn and much to teach.

Central to the experience of becoming *B’nei Mitzvah* at Temple Judea is the study of Torah, prayers, and a love of being Jewish. Additionally, the rabbis, cantor, tutors, and staff treat the *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah* student as a young adult—giving them the support and guidance they need to succeed and asking them to be accountable for their own progress.

Our prayer for your child is that through the process of becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, they will fall in love with Judaism and Jewish tradition.

B’Shalom,

Rabbi Yaron, and Cantor Alicia

Rabbi Yaron Kapitulnik, and Cantor Alicia Stillman

# **Who’s Who on your Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* Journey**

Jewish Wisdom teaches: **"Find for yourself a teacher, and you've found yourself a friend"** At Temple Judea, we understand it takes a congregation to make a *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah* journey possible! The student and parent(s) are joined by the rabbi, the cantor, teachers, tutors, administrative and maintenance staff to help create this sacred experience. Below is a “who’s who” on your *B’nei Mitzvah* journey.

**Rabbi YARON kAPITULNIK**, Rabbi Kapitulnik will meet regularly with the student in the weeks leading up to *B’nei Mitzvah* and will guide the student in preparing the D’var *Torah*, helping the student study the text, and answering challenging questions. Rabbi Kapitulnik will also conduct a group class on Pirkei Avot for all 6th grade students which meets weekly for six - eight sessions.

**cANTOR aLICIA sTILLMAN**, Cantor Alicia Stillman facilitates the Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* educational plan, ensuring that all students have mastered their required prayers, and *Torah* and *Haftarah* chanting. Cantor Stillman conducts a required group class to teach Trope which will facilitate student’s studies of their individual portions. This class is typically offered twice a year and meets for six to eight sessions. Cantor Stillman supervises the students' private tutoring efforts and answers questions about the flow of the ceremony and specific roles at the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

**Morli Josza**, Executive Director: Morli handles all financial arrangements.She will notify the clergy if there any issues with dues and / or *B’nei Mitzvah* fees.morli@gotj.org

**Randi Herman**, *B’nei Mitzvah* Coordinator: Randi will help you with all of the (physical) details of the event, including coordinating the catering, building set-up, DJ, florists, *“Voice”* articles, the service program, and more. Randi will also coordinate your appointments with Cantor Stillman and Rabbi Kapitulnik. randi@gotj.org

**TUTORS:** Tutors work one-on-one with students to prepare them for their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service.

**HEBREW SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TEACHERS:** During Wednesday, “Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* Boot Camp”, Temple Judea’s teachers help children prepare and learn the prayers. On Sundays, they address the “big ideas” of prayer and community, social justice, and more.

**Preparing for *B’nei Mitzvah***

**TIMING**

Generally, a *Bar Mitzvah* is celebrated at thirteen years of age. A *Bat Mitzvah* can be celebrated as early as twelve. However, in some situations, more preparation time leading up to the actual ceremony is merited and in these cases the clergy will adjust the timing as appropriate.

# **Receiving & Confirming a Date**

At the beginning of 4th grade, you will be asked to select a Saturday for your child’s Bar/*Bat Mitzvah*. Saturday services begin at 10:00 a.m. and last until approximately 12:15 p.m. Occasionally *B’nei Mitzvah* are conducted during a Monday or Thursday morning minyan at 9:30am or on a Saturday evening at 4:30 p.m. ending with *Havdallah*.

The following are black-out dates and not available for a *B’nei Mitzvah*:

The week-end before and the weekend between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Thanksgiving weekend

Christmas / New Year’s weekend

From June 14-August 14

If a major Jewish holiday falls on a Saturday, that day is not available

\*PLEASE NOTE: While we will make every effort for both the rabbi and cantor to be at every Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we recognize that there are some circumstances when this might not be feasible. In the event one of our clergy has another commitment, they will contact the family well in advance and give you the opportunity to reschedule if you so choose or to keep the scheduled date with only one clergy present.

# **Goals and Expectations of the *B’nei Mitzvah* Child**

*B’nei Mitzvah* education begins long before 7th grade! Our students focus on three main themes: Torah, Prayer and a Love of being Jewish.

1. Torah:
   1. Engaging in a critical and meaningful study of your *Torah* and the prophets.
   2. Writing and delivering a D’Var Torah which allows the student to teach the congregation
   3. Attending Pirke Avot classes with Rabbi Yaron
   4. Attending Trope classes with Cantor Alicia
2. Prayer:
   1. Attending Wednesday Hebrew School, “Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* Boot Camp” beginning in 5th grade
      1. Hebrew Language Acquisition
      2. Prayer Mastery – Students will be required to master prayers outlined on page 13
   2. Attending 10 Shabbat services during the year prior to your Bar/ *Bat Mitzvah*
   3. Meyer Academy students will be required to meet with Cantor Alicia Stillman who will review and sign off on required prayers
3. Love of Being Jewish:
   1. Enrollment in Temple Judea’s Religious School or an approved equivalent.
   2. Experiencing “Tikkun Olam” – helping make our world a better place by participating in the 6th grade Social Action programs.
   3. A commitment to continue with Religious School through Confirmation. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is not the end of the journey; rather it is an awesome moment along the way!

**Expectations of the *B’nei Mitzvah* Family**

**Celebrating Jewish Life at Home**

We encourage families to practice and engage in Jewish life at home. This includes celebrating Shabbat (and we are more than happy to help guide and support you if you need); attending services including High Holy Days; and celebrating Jewish holidays at home like Passover, Chanukah etc.

**GRADE SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS**

**Fourth Grade Orientation: The Starting Line**

You will select a date for your child’s Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* and they will be recognized during Temple Judea’s Simchat Torah service.

**Sixth Grade**

Each family will meet one-on-one with Cantor Alicia or Rabbi Yaron to kick off thisyear-long preparation for your *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah* ceremony. In celebration of the beginning of this phase of study, they will receive a *chumash*, the complete Torah in ‘book’ form, as well as their *B’nei Mitzvah* workbook. Requirements this year:

* + Complete prayer requirements with Cantor Alicia
  + Study Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Yaron.
  + 8-week Trope Class begins with the Cantor
  + One-on-one learning sessions will begin shortly after Trope class is completed.
  + Meet with Rabbi Yaron 6-8 times to prepare your *D’Var Torah*

# **Role of the Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* during the Shabbat Morning Service**

1. Along with Rabbi and Cantor, the Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* will lead the following prayers: *Tallit* Blessing, Morning Blessings, *Birkat* *Ha-Torah*, *Sh’ma*, *V’ahavta*, and *Kiddush*.
2. Chant the *Torah* Blessings and selected verses of *Torah*.
3. Chant the *Haftarah* Blessings and selected verses of *Haftarah*.
4. Prepare a *D’var Torah* and *D’var Haftarah*.

# **Roles for Parent(s) and Families During the Service**

There are many ways parents and families are invited to participate in the service. Please return your Honors Form at least 2 weeks prior to your child’s *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah*.

* Friday Night Candle Lighting
* Presentation of the *Tallit* (prayer shawl) by someone significant to the *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah*
* Chain of Tradition: Passing the *Torah* through the generations: grandparents, parent(s), and the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*
* *Aliyot* (blessing before *Torah* reading): up to five, including the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, for adults over 13 years old.
* You are your child's most powerful role model! Parents and grandparents are encouraged to chant from the Torah. Please speak with the rabbi and cantor about participation in reading from the Torah.
* Blessing Your Child: See the guidelines at the end of this handbook.
* Selecting readers for 2-3 English readings on *Shabbat* morning
* *Hagbah* & *G’lilah* (lifting and dressing the *Torah*): One of the greatest honors within the Torah service, one of the people will lift the *Torah* and therefore needs to have the ability to lift approximately 15-20 lbs.
* Leading *Kiddush and Hamotzi*: An honor for a Jewish person of any age, often recited with younger siblings.

**Rehearsal:** The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student, together with the parent(s), will meet with the cantor just prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service to walk through the Torah service, practice reading from the *Torah*, and go over final preparations.

**Thursday Morning Minyan:** You and your family are invited to participate in our regular Thursday morning service at 9:00am the week of your Bar/*Bat Mitzvah*. The morning will begin with the Rabbi in the clergy study for an opportunity to wrap *t’fillin*, followed by minyan in the sanctuary. This is a meaningful opportunity to chant one of your *aliyot* directly from the Torah and experience the k’dusha (holiness) of a small community. Families are welcome to invite close family and friends to participate as well.

# **Friday night of your Bar/ *Bat Mitzvah\**:**

Families are expected to attend Friday night services prior to their Bar/*Bat Mitzvah*.  Families will be invited on the *bima*h to light Shabbat candles and lead *Kiddush* (blessing over the wine/grape juice).  It is customary to invite your guests to attend Friday evening services.

Please ask the office what time Friday night services begin for your child’s date.

“Summer” services start at 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Regular services start at 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

# **Planning for the Friday & Saturday Receptions (Onegs) and more**

**Randi Herman** is your point person for all logistics. She will:

* Meet with you to discuss and arrange floor plans, building access, delivery schedules, etc. –
* She will provide the contact information for the temple’s in-house caterer
* She will secure valet if needed (note we only have 80 parking spots available for a Saturday morning)
* She will ensure we have the proper number of security guards needed for children attending
* ***Please be sure to schedule a meeting time (or phone call) with Randi***
* Submit your child’s Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* announcement to the Voice
* Provide examples of programs if you choose to create one for your child.

**FRIDAY EVENING ONEG**

Friday evening oneg is included in your *B’nei Mitzvah* fee. It is Temple Judea’s policy to maintain uniformity with the Friday evening oneg and as such we respectfully ask that no additional food and /or drinks be provided.

**SATURDAY LUNCHEON**

Many *B’nei Mitzvah* families elect to have a luncheon at Temple Judea following their service. For a luncheon, families must utilize an approved caterer and pay related rental fees. Please note we ask that you follow “kosher style” rules: Pork or shellfish products are **not** permitted; ‘Dairy’ (milk, cheese, butter, etc.) and ‘meat’ (red meat or poultry) **may** **not** be mixed in any single dish; and Dairy’ (milk, cheese, butter, etc.) and ‘meat’ (red meat or poultry) **may not** be set up on the same buffet table.

**DISHES/GLASSES/FLATWARE**

Please arrange directly with the caterer if you want disposables or for them to rent these items for you at an additional cost.

**LINENS**

* Tablecloths for the buffets and round tables can be rented from Temple Judea.
  + Royal Blue cloths are $6 / table; Royal Blue Napkins are $1 / napkin
  + Prussian Blue cloths are $10 / table; Prussian Blue cloths are $1.50 / napkin

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# **Minhag HaMakom – Customs of our Synagogue**

# **Students AND GUESTS with Disabilities**

# Temple Judea is dedicated to inclusion and the ritual participation of all congregants. If you have concerns about your child’s ability to participate in any parts of the service, please discuss unique circumstances with Rabbi Kapitulnik. Temple Judea will support your child and any family with disabilities. Temple Judea, including the *bima*, is completely handicap accessible.

# **Participation of Non-Jewish family members**

We welcome non-Jewish family members on the *bima* and encourage them to participate in most aspects of the service including an *Aliyah*, prayers for peace and our country. If a non-Jewish family member is doing an *Aliyah*, we request that a Jewish family member is also on the *bima*.

# ***Kippot* and *Tallitot***

The wearing of *kippot* (head coverings) and *tallitot* (prayer shawls) is optional at Temple Judea for both men and women. We do have a supply of *kippot* and *tallitot* that are available at every service. *Tallitot* are worn at morning services only. Some families choose to order personalized *kippot* to honor the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

***Sanctuary Dress and Conduct***

It is a priority of the clergy and staff to create and maintain an atmosphere of both sacredness as well as celebration for this special day. To make all of our members and guests feel comfortable during worship, we respectfully ask for your help by adhering to a few minimal points for appropriate dress in our sanctuary: the covering of shoulders and midriffs, as well as skirts and pants of a reasonable length. For guests who may need, we have a basket of pashmina scarves in the lobby so they can feel more comfortable.

# **Photography/Video**

**Taking photographs during *Shabbat* services is permitted, provided the photographer remain at the *back of the sanctuary and does not use a flash*.** Many families take photos prior to the service at Temple Judea beginning 1 hour prior to the start of services. If you would like photos with the clergy, please make arrangements with them directly.

In the excitement of sharing this *simcha*, many people use their cell phones to take photographs and videos during your service, for the reasons above, we will respectfully remind them to keep their phones set to ‘vibrate’ or ‘off’.

# ***Candy***

Temple Judea does not allow candy to be thrown during a *B’nei Mitzvah*.

# **Invitations**

Most families do send out invitations to friends, family, and those congregants to whom they wish to extend a personal welcome. A general rule of thumb is to send invitations to out-of-towners eight weeks in advance and to people in town six weeks in advance.

\*Because Temple Judea is committed to inclusivity, it is the custom of all of our families to extend invitations to all of your child’s Hebrew school and Religious School classmates.  This special tradition goes a long way in fostering the special spirit that is such a part of our congregation.  Consider too those adults at Temple Judea that have played a special role in your child’s Jewish life.  You are encouraged to include on your guest list:  your child’s Religious School and Hebrew School teachers, *B’nei Mitzvah* tutor, Rabbi Kapitulnik and Cantor Stillman and their families. All would be touched to be included. Please note that Bar/ *Bat Mitzvah* services are open to the community.

**Please make sure invitations note the 10:00am start time for Saturday morning and 4:30 p.m. for Saturday Havdallah**, and the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*’s participation in the preceding Friday evening service at 7:30 p.m.

**Seating Capacity**

For services - the sanctuary can comfortably accommodate up to 200.

For the luncheon – our Pavilion can comfortably accommodate up to 170 without a dance floor, and 140 with a dance floor.

**TUTORING**

Tutoring is available at an additional cost for students who are unable to attend Temple Judea’s Wednesday school program.

# **TZEDAKAH**

It is customary for Jews to mark important events in life with the giving of *tzedakah* (charity)*.* *Tzedakah* is one of the *mitzvot* (commandments) incumbent upon becoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. This is an exquisite opportunity for families to discuss your values and select worthy causes or organizations to learn about and be recipients of *tzedakah* in honor of your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. This information can be included in an invitation and in the service program.

Jewish tradition teaches that we deepen our happiness when we share our joyous celebrations with people in need.

Temple Judea will gratefully acknowledge donations to any of its funds in honor of *B’nei Mitzvah* or in recognition of the rabbis, cantor, teachers, and/or others.

# **Announcements in Temple Judea’s Publication – the Voice**

Approximately 2 months prior to the Bar/*Bat Mitzvah*, you will be asked to provide a photograph (head shot is best) and short article to be included in the Voice, Temple Judea's monthly bulletin.

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# ***Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah* Program**

Temple Judea will provide a sample of a Shabbat program that details the order and page numbers of the service. You may feel free using this sample to include the names of your family and friends who are participating in the service. However, the duplication and distribution of the program is your responsibility. The clergy are happy to help proofread the information and content of your program. In order to do this, please submit your draft at least 3 weeks in advance.

**Mitzvah Projects**

We encourage *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students to “give back” and are happy to discuss various Social Action opportunities offered through the temple as well as programs in the broader community.

**MAKING A DONATION IN HONOR OF THE *B’NEI MITZVAH***

It is customary to make a donation to the Temple’s *B’nei Mitzvah* Fund or the Rabbi’s and /or Cantor’s Discretionary Funds in honor of a *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah*. This donation will help us ensure each and every family’s right to celebrate a *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah* for their child. Additionally, some families choose to purchase a brick paver ($360) or a leaf ($250) to commemorate this special event. We thank you in advance for your generosity.

# **Fees**

**Please note: Membership must be in good standing and all *B’nei Mitzvah* fees must be paid no later than 60 days prior to the *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah*.**

**The *B’nei Mitzvah* fee of $1,800 includes the following:**

* Flowers for the *Bima* for Friday night and Saturday morning
* Friday night Oneg sponsorship
* Security Guard for Friday night and Saturday morning from 9:00 – 1:00. Additional hours are an additional hourly fee
* Custodian set up and clean up
* Cleaning on *Shabbat* morning and right after your *simcha*
* All costs associated with *B’nei Mitzvah* day activities including musical accompaniment and any materials created
* Challah and wine for Saturday services

**Additional fees (subject to change) include:**

* Tutoring: Prayer skills are taught in Hebrew school classes and individual skills such as *Torah* reading are taught at Temple Judea in one-to-one tutoring sessions during Hebrew school. Tutoring can be done at Temple Judea or in your home. The fee is $60/hour.
* Social Hall Rental Fee for Saturday luncheon (2 hours) : $400
* Social Hall Rental Fee for Saturday night: $750; dance floor $250
* Required Security Guard for any lunch / dinner / or event with over 150 people: $160 / 4 hours
* Required chaperone for rentals: $100/ 4 hour minimum
* Valet Parking available for an additional charge (highly recommended for more than 70 cars)

In the event a *B’nai Mitzvah* date needs to be rescheduled due to financial reasons, student readiness as determined by the clergy, or extenuating circumstances, the Temple is not responsible for any financial commitments that were made by the family.

All prices are subject to change. Please call the office to verify information.

**Whew!** You made it almost entirely through this whole guide. Well done! Just a few appendices ahead to help with specific tasks. Many of the suggestions in this handbook are here to give you all the information you might need…but you don’t need to use it all! Simple is good. We hope you enjoy your child’s *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

Mazel Tov!

# ***B’nei Mitzvah* Checklist**

Parents of prior *B’nei Mitzvah* developed this checklist. We pass it along to you as a helpful guide.

**Eight - Twelve months in advance**

* “Get to know you” meeting with Rabbi Yaron and/or Cantor Alicia
* Contact Randi Herman if you want to use Temple Judea for an afternoon or evening event
* Hire a caterer – for Temple event see approved list
* Reserve space for any events that are taking place outside of the synagogue
* Hire DJ or entertainment if desired
* Book hotel rooms
* Send a “save the date” announcement to out-of-towners
* Attend Rabbi Yaron’s Pirkei Avot Class
* Attend Cantor Alicia’s Trope Class
* Check-in with Cantor Alicia re: prayer readiness

**Six months in advance**

* Receive your *Torah / Haftarah* Portion
* Receive MP3 file with Blessings
* Select or design invitations
* Begin working on the guest list
* Make sure you are a member in good standing before beginning lessons with the cantor

**Three to six months in advance**

* Meet with Rabbi Yaron to begin working on your *D’var Torah*
* Meet with Cantor Alicia to begin working on your portion
* Find a photographer
* Find a videographer, if desired
* Ensure your *B’nei Mitzvah* fee is paid

**Eight – Ten weeks in advance**

* Plan for flowers and centerpieces
* Finalize the guest list
* Mail out of town invitations eight weeks in advance, in town invitations six weeks ahead
* Return space request/setup forms to Temple Judea
* Purchase a *Tallit*
* If desired, order *kippot*
* Finalize list of names for *aliyot*
* Schedule time to meet with caterer and office manager to discuss logistics
* Provide office with photo and short statement with your child’s name, school they attend, and interests – Randi will request these from you directly with further details of what is needed.

**One month in advance**

* Write your “parent blessings” for the Saturday service (1-2 double spaced pages).
* If desired, begin to design program to distribute.

**Two - Three weeks in advance**

* Turn in Honors worksheet to Cantor Alicia with contact information so we can send them a description and instructions for their honor.
* Finalize numbers for caterer
* Make sure all people saying blessing of *Torah* have the text & recording as needed. A video link can be found on our website.

# **The Week of Your Bar/*Bat Mitzvah***

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday** | **After school** | *Bima* rehearsal and opportunity to read from *Torah* with clergy.  Final information for program insert due in the office. |
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| **Wednesday** | **During Hebrew School** | Walk through *Torah* service in the sanctuary with clergy and family. |
| **Thursday** | **9:00 am** | Spiritual kick-off: Student is invited to put on *T’filin* with the rabbi at 9:00am, followed by an intimate Thursday morning minyan at 9:30am. They will read one *Aliyah* during services. Family and friends are welcome to attend. |
| **Friday** | **7:30 pm** | Friday night services: Student participates by leading the candle and Kiddush blessings (with family members), as well as the *Shema* and *V’ahavta.* |
| **Saturday** | **10:00 am** | Shabbat morning services, student participates throughout. Please be ready to meet in the clergy study at 9:30am prior to 10:00am services. |

**Bring to Temple Judea for services during your *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah***

* *Tallit* and *Kippah*
* Your *D’var Torah*
* Your *Torah and Haftarah* Study Guide
* Any other notes
* Speeches
* Sign-in book and pens, if desired

**After the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, thank you notes to:**

* Rabbi
* Cantor
* Tutor
* Synagogue teachers and staff

***B’nei Mitzvah* Prayer Checklist**

It is our sincerest belief that experiences of self-reflection (the Hebrew word for prayer *t'filah*) can enrich your life--throughout your entire life. Our Jewish tradition directs us to take notice of the world around us and engage with it through moments of prayer.

The following is a list of prayers that you will hear and sing throughout your Jewish life--by learning them during our Shabbat services, as well as with your rabbi, cantor, and teachers at Temple Judea, our hope is that you will feel confident and secure in your sense of truly belonging to any Jewish community, wherever you go.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Prayer/Blessing | **I can read** | **I can chant** | **I understand the meaning** | **I need to get to work!** |
| Candle p. 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Hamotzi p. 302 |  |  |  |  |
| Kiddush p. 5 |  |  |  |  |
| Tallit p. 72 |  |  |  |  |
| Ma Tovu p. 74 |  |  |  |  |
| Nisim B'chol Yom p. 80 |  |  |  |  |
| Barchu p. 108 |  |  |  |  |
| Shema p. 114 |  |  |  |  |
| V'ahavta p. 116 |  |  |  |  |
| Mi Chamocha p. 122 |  |  |  |  |
| Amidah p. 126 |  |  |  |  |
| Oseh Shalom p. 142 |  |  |  |  |
| Torah Blessings p. 250 |  |  |  |  |
| Haftarah Blessings p. 254 |  |  |  |  |
| Aleinu p. 282 |  |  |  |  |
| Mourner's Kaddish p. 294 |  |  |  |  |

# **Creating Your *D’var Torah:***

**The Art of Asking the Question**

Questioning is a central religious and spiritual act of the Jewish people. As young children, we are privileged to ask The Four Questions during the Passover Seder each year, “Why is this different from all other nights?” Asking questions—thoughtful, probing, searing, insightful questions—is an art form, a spiritual practice we develop over the course of our lives.

To craft the *D’var Torah* for your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service, please do the following.

1. Six months prior to your service, read your entire *parsha* (*Torah* portion) out loud (again) with your parent(s).
2. As you read, write down a minimum of 10 questions that arise from your reading. Questions can
   1. Seek information (Where was Canaan?)
   2. Opinion (What motivated Abraham to listen to God?)
   3. Attempt to clarify history (Why did the Jews sacrifice?)
   4. Seek to understand theology (Why did God harden Pharaoh’s heart?).
3. Please type the questions and email them to Rabbi at least one day prior to our meeting to discuss your *D’var Torah*. We will go over the questions together.
4. You will take your questions home with you, along with a *Torah* commentary and packet of other information. You will have two to three weeks to send Rabbi your questions with full answers. Don’t worry about spelling. Do think through the ideas you have and feel free to draw upon other sources to craft your answers.
5. From your questions and answers, we will then begin to organize your *D’var Torah*. Remember—it all begins with YOUR questions!
6. Rabbi will continue to meet with you and we’ll craft the format of your *D’var Torah*. Randi Herman, the Rabbi’s Assistant, will coordinate these meetings. Most of them will occur on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.
7. You will practice your *D’var Torah* from the *Bimah* prior to your service.
8. *B’hatzlacha*—Good luck! Now, go and question.

# **Parent(s) Blessing of the Bar/*Bat Mitzvah***

One of the most personal and meaningful moments of your child’s *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service is the opportunity for you to bless them before the congregation. It is a moment to treasure, the chance to share with a child your hopes and dreams for them as they stand on the cusp of adulthood. To offer a *b’racha*—a blessing—is an authentic and meaningful Jewish way to acknowledge the power and beauty of this moment.

Following are some guidelines to help you in crafting your blessing:

1. Each parent is invited to speak. Please keep both speeches to under 5 minutes.
2. Blessings should be future oriented: What are your hopes for your child as s/he stands at this moment in time? How can they take what they’ve learned in becoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* into the future? What kind of Jewish soul do you hope they will become?
3. What blessings should not be? They should not be a retrospective of every cute (for a teenager, read: EMBARRASSING!) story of their growing up. These are treasured memories, but the purpose of the blessing is for the future.
4. Clergy is more than happy to help should you have any questions.
5. Remember, less can be more. Sometimes more love, joy, and pride can be expressed through a hug and meaningful anecdote, than many long stories.
6. *Mazel Tov!*

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Who takes care of the set up and clean up on Friday and Saturday? What am I responsible for?**

The custodian sets up the sanctuary and social hall to our specifications for both Friday and Saturday. Egle’s Catering is responsible for setting up and cleaning up the oneg.

On Saturday, your caterer is responsible for setting out the food, making coffee and cleaning up the space afterward. This includes removing the tablecloths in the social hall and sanctuary. Our custodian will close up the building.

**What about staff? How many do I need?**

Your caterer will be able to address this with you, dependent on the number of guests in attendance, what is being served and whether dishes will need to be washed.

**Access to the building?**

The building is open on Friday until 3:00 p.m. Any deliveries should be scheduled for no later than 2:30 p.m. On Saturday morning, the building is usually open by 9:00 am. If any additional time is needed, (for photographs, caterer arrival, floral arrangement, etc), please coordinate this with Randi.

**Does Temple Judea have an ice machine?** Yes. It is in the kitchen.

**I would like to drop off items earlier in the week. Is this possible? Where should I leave everything?**

This is highly recommended as the less you have to think about bringing with you on Saturday morning, the better. You are welcome to bring items by earlier in the week, but please check in with Randi to coordinate so that space can be properly allocated for your specific items.

**What do we do with any leftovers?**

That’s up to you. If you want to take the leftovers home, be sure to let your caterer know in advance. Items may be left at Temple Judea or you may decide to donate leftovers to a food pantry or shelter.

**What about flowers (or plants) and table centerpieces? How many arrangements do I need? Do I have to use a florist? Can I make the arrangements myself? Do you have vases?**

* Flowers for the *bima* are ordered by Temple Judea and the cost is included in your *B’nei Mitzvah* fee. If you have specific requests, or colors, please coordinate with Randi and we will do our best to accommodate you.
* You may also decide to have 1-2 arrangements made for the buffet tables
* Table centerpieces are at your discretion but we ask that you provide enough for every table.

Dependent on the time of year, you may consider donating the plants to Temple Judea after the event to be planted in our garden. Balloons can also be used as table centerpieces. **Please note: votives and candles are not permitted.**

If you select flowers, please be mindful to select those that are not overly fragrant (for example: lillies, roses and carnations should be avoided if possible as they have a very strong fragrance which can be bothersome to those with allergies)

**I am thinking about having a dinner on Friday night before or after services. Can I use a space at Temple Judea? How does this work?**

Some families elect to have a pre-service dinner, and often choose to use the *Beit Midrash* for ease. Please contact the office regarding costs for the use of this space. This room can accommodate 24 people, and the date must be cleared in advance. Unfortunately, on Friday nights when the Temple is providing a congregational dinner, we will not be able to accommodate private events.

**What about the Saturday evening party?** If you choose to have a Saturday evening party and would like to use Temple Judea, please contact Randi to review costs / fees. A security fee will be required for all outside events.

**Spaces for either or both can be reserved up to six months prior to the event, but please don’t assume that the space will be available. Check in with Randi regarding availability if this is something you are considering.**

**Can I bring in a DJ for Saturday evening?**

Not a problem, but please note that no smoke or fog machines are allowed as they set off the fire alarm, which ensures a visit from the fire department.

**What about parking?** Temple Judea has 80 parking spaces. If you plan on having more cars, please speak to Randi about valet, which can be arranged at an additional charge.

**What about handicap parking?** Temple Judea has a limited number of handicap spots.

**Which address should be used for the invitations?** 4311 Hood Road, Palm Beach Gardens, 33410

**Temple Judea is not responsible for the safety of your guests or for losses or damage to clothing or other personal effects. *Temple Judea is a non-smoking facility.* Please leave the synagogue in the same condition as it was found. You are responsible for any damage to synagogue property. Please, no thumbtacks, nails, or adhesive tape on walls. A security deposit is required for all rentals. It will be refunded after the facilities have been properly inspected. In the event damage is done in excess of the security deposit, the *B’nei Mitzvah* family will be required to pay for all damages.**

# **Glossary**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Aliyah***  ***Aliyot* (plural)** | Literally means “going up.” This is the ascent to the *bima* to say the blessings over the *Torah.* We also refer to each section of *Torah* that is read as one *aliya*. For example, you may be assigned to the “Third *Aliya*” and you say the blessing at the third section that is read. |
| ***Amidah*** | Literally, “The Standing” prayer. Part of this prayer includes communal singing and part is personal silent prayer. Some read the text of the prayer book, some include their own personal prayers and meditations, or a combination of these. It is customary to sit down when you are through with your own private expression. |
| ***Bar Mitzvah*** | Literally, “Son of the Commandments.” ***Bar*** is the Aramaic word for son. It can describe a person or the ceremony/service. A boy becomes a *Bar Mitzvah* or you attend a boy’s *Bar Mitzvah*. |
| ***Bat Mitzvah*** | Literally, “Daughter of the Commandments.” ***Bat*** is the Aramaic word for daughter. It can describe a person or the ceremony/service. A girl becomes a *Bat Mitzvah* or you attend a girl’s *Bat Mitzvah*. |
| ***Bar’chu*** | A central prayer that officially calls people to worship. |
| ***Bima*** | *Bima* is the word for the raised platform in our synagogue where the service is conducted. |
| ***Birkat***  ***Ha-Torah*** | This is the blessing we say over each section of *Torah* that is read. These honors are generally given to family members and close friends. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student says the last blessing over the *Torah.* This is also referred to as having the *Aliya* (see above). |
| ***B’nei Mitzvah*** | This is the plural for *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. If you go to more than one *Bar or Bat Mitzvah* you say you are attending *B’nei Mitzvah.* This can also refer to all of the students who are celebrating the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* this season. |
| ***D’var Torah*** | Literally, “A word of *Torah.”* This is the speech or sermon given about the *Torah* portion or based in Biblical texts. |
| ***G’lilah*** | The person who dresses the *Torah* after it is read. |
| ***Haftarah*** | This is not actually a “half-*Torah*” although it sounds like that. This is an additional reading from the Hebrew Bible. Most *haftorot* come from the books of the Prophets and are connected to the *Torah* portion by either a keyword or theme. The musical notes for the *Haftarah* reading are different from the melody for *Torah* reading. |
| ***Hagbah*** | The person who lifts the *Torah* after it is read for all to see. |
| ***Hamisch*** | Warm and welcoming; down-to-earth. |
| ***Kabbalat Shabbat*** | Literally, “Welcoming theSabbath.” This is the name of the Friday evening service. |
| ***Kiddush*** | This is the prayer said over wine or grape juice to sanctify *Shabbat* or other festive occasions. |
| ***Kippah***  ***Kipppot* (plural)** | Also known in Yiddish as *yarmulke*, this is the head covering worn in order to show respect for God. While Reform Judaism does not require people to wear *kippot* during prayer or everyday life, many wear them during services. |
| ***Mazel Tov!*** | Congratulations! |
| ***Minyan*** | A gathering of (at least) ten Jewish adults for prayer. On Thursday mornings we gather for a prayer *minyan*, say the morning prayers together, and the *B’nei Mitzvah* students are invited to read *Torah* the week of their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. |
| ***Mitzvah***  ***Mitzvot* (plural)** | A *Mitzvah* is often construed as a “good deed.” However, the *Torah* accords it much more weight, referring to a *Mitzvah* as a commandment from God. |
| ***Shabbat*** | The Sabbath, which begins at sundown on Friday and ends after sunset on Saturday. |
| ***Shammas*** | The person who unlocks the synagogue and sets for services. |
| ***Sh’ma U’V’ahavta*** | A central prayer that people say in services, and at home in the morning and evening. |
| ***Siddur*** | Prayer book. |
| ***Simcha*** | Joyous celebration. |
| ***S’udat Mitzvah*** | A festive meal (or nosh) after a special occasion. |
| ***Tallit***  ***Tallitot* (plural)** | This is the ritual prayer shawl that has four *tzitzit* or specially knotted fringes tied on the corners. Jews are commanded to wear the *tallit* in order to remember God’s commandments in the book of Numbers (15:39). |
| ***Torah*** | Literally, “teaching.” This is the Five Books of Moses, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. The books are Genesis *(B’reishit),* Exodus *(Sh’mot)*, Leviticus (*VaYikrah),* Numbers *(BaMidBar)*, and Deuteronomy *(D’varim).* |
| ***Trope*** | This describes the notes above and below the text that indicate what melody to use for each word. There are several systems of trope for various texts, *Torah, Haftarah,* the book of Esther, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, High Holy Day readings, etc. Different regions around the world have their own trope melodies, such as the Tunisian and Dutch communities, and so on. |

# ***B’nei Mitzvah* Book Shelf**

Each student who becomes a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at Temple Judea is given *Your Bar/BatMitzvah: Parashah and Haftarah with Commentary* (URJ Press), *Mishkan T’filah*: *A Reform Siddur,* and *Etz Hayim* Torah and Commentary.

The following resources are found in our library:

*The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (Union for Reform Judaism Press, Revised Edition, 2007)

*A Torah Commentary for Our Times*, by Harvey J. Fields (Union of

American Hebrew Congregations, 1993)

*The Torah: A Women’s Commentary* (Union for Reform Judaism Press, 2007)

For additional commentary and explanation of both *Torah* & the *B’nei Mitzvah* process, we suggest:

*Gym Shoes and Irises: Personalized Tzedakah*, by Danny Siegel (Townhouse Press, 1982, 1987)

*Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know about the Jewish Religion*, by Joseph Telushkin (William Morrow and Co., 1991)

*Living a Jewish Life*, by Anita Diamant (Harper Perennial)

*Make Your Own Bar/Bat Mitzvah: A Personal Approach to Creating a Meaningful Rite of Passage*, by Rabbi Goldie Milgram (Josi Bass 2004)

*Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah*, by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1993)

*Sparks Beneath the Surface: A Spiritual Commentary on the Torah*, by Lawrence Kushner and Kerry Olitzky (Jason Aronson Press, 1995)

*Bar/Bat Mitzvah Basics: A Practical Family Guide to Coming of Age Together*, edited by Cantor Helen Leneman (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1996).

# **Appendix I: *B’nei Mitzvah* Program Insert Information**

This form will be provided to you as we get closer to the *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah* date, but having it in advance will give you the chance to look it over and pencil in names as you think of them**.**

**Full name of Bar/*Bat Mitzvah*** student as you would like it to appear: English AND Hebrew

**Presentation of *Tallit:*** English name/ relationship to Bar/*Bat Mitzvah*

**Shehechiyanu** – The blessing thanking G-d for having arrived at this day.

**Chain of Tradition:**

At Temple Judea, it is our custom to pass the *Torah* through every generation of the family. Generally, this would be the oldest generation, moving to the next, i.e. great grandparents, grandparents, parents, Please provide the names of each of the family members you would like included in the familial order.

English Names / Relationship to *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*

**Prayer of Sweetness of Torah** (English reading): **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Aliyah* to the *Torah*:**

* Each Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* has 3 *Torah* readings called aliyot.
* You may designate a person or a group of people for the first two aliyot.
* Please note: we do have recordings of the blessings available.

Each person honored with an *Aliyah* (singular of *aliyot*) will be called to the *bima* by name and when called, goes up and stands next to the *Torah*. The honoree recites the opening blessing (a printed copy is on the *Torah* reading table). After the next *Aliyah* is called, the honoree(s) moves to the left side of the *Torah* next to the cantor and stands there while the next portion is read.

\*If parent(s) do not have a Hebrew name – write English name.

***Aliyah* #:**

**1)** Name (English and Hebrew) Relationship to *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah*

**2)** Name (English and Hebrew) Relationship to *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah*

**Prayer for the Country** (English reading):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**3)** *B’nei Mitzvah* (Hebrew Name)

**Hagbah** - The person who lifts the *Torah* after it is read for all to see. Should be someone who is fairly strong.

English Name Relationship to *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah*

**G’lilah** – The person who dresses the *Torah* after it is read.

English Name Relationship to *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah*

**Prayer for the state of Israel** (English reading): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Kiddush and HaMotzi* -** Blessing over the wine and bread. A perfect role for younger siblings.

English Names/Relationship to *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah*

**List up to 3 choices for *tzedakah*/donations (including addresses/websites)**



2.

3.

**Program information form should be returned 4 - 6 weeks prior to *Bar*/*Bat Mitzvah* date.**