

Dear Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family,

Mazal Tov! Your child will soon become a B'nai Mitzvah at Congregation Shaarei Kodesh. Let me first say that we are honored that you have chosen us to be a part of your family's *simcha* (happy occasion). As you probably know, our synagogue prides itself on being a *Kehillah Kedoshah* (holy community) built on the concept of *brit* (covenant). As Jews, we are partners in a holy covenant between us and God (*Bein Adam L'Makom*), and between each other (*Bein Adam L'Chavero*). We also look at our congregation as its own covenant where our destinies are connected. We share *smachot* (happy occasions) as well as sad occasions together; in short, we are a family.

Your family is about to begin an amazing journey, and as Jews, we know quite a bit about journeys. As we read our Torah, we see that the journey is actually just as important as the final destination. The end of our Torah, in the Book of Deuteronomy, leaves the children of Israel at the borders of the land of Israel; the end of the journey. The B'nai Mitzvah, like many *smachot* in our tradition including a *brit milah*, *simchat bat*, or wedding, is just the beginning of a journey.

The age of 12 for girls and 13 for boys has special significance in our tradition because it is the beginning of an era of responsibility and adulthood. There is a misconception that at 13 you are a "man" or at 12 "a woman". A better way to look at it is that you are at the beginning of your journey into adulthood which gives you great power to do God's work.

Our B'nai Mitzvah program will not lead you to the end of the journey, rather, to the beginning of a life long Jewish journey. This period of training and preparation will be a time of growth and enrichment, not only for your children, but also your whole family. During this journey, you will struggle with ideas and identities, both Jewish and secular. It is a time that can have deep significance, and be of vital importance to your child's development as an individual and a Jew.

As your Rabbi, I am honored that you have chosen me as your *madrich*, the person to guide you on your family's own Jewish journey.

B'Hatzlachah and Mazal Tov!

Rabbi David Baum

This document will give you a detailed look at our B'nai Mitzvah program including requirements, education, fees, and much more. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact our B'nai Mitzvah coordinator at office@shaareikodesh.org or by calling our office at 561-852-6555.

What Is a Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah?

Part of the covenant into which every Jew enters, during their *brit milah* or baby naming shortly after their birth, is the responsibility for fulfilling all of the commandments or *mitzvot* that are described in the Torah. Since infants and young children are neither physically nor intellectually equipped to do so, the parents of the child take on these responsibilities on their child's behalf until the child reaches the age that they are capable of doing so for themselves.

The terms 'Bar Mitzvah' ("son of the commandment") and 'Bat Mitzvah' ("daughter of the commandment") refer specifically to the rite of passage where Jewish children reach the age when they take over from their parents the responsibility of fulfilling the commandments, the *mitzvot*. With or without a ceremony, one automatically becomes responsible for fulfilling the *mitzvot* when they come of age. As such, a child is therefore not "Bar/Bat Mitzvah **ed**," and one does not "**have** a Bar/Bat Mitzvah." Rather, the child **becomes** a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The plural term is 'B'nai Mitzvah', which refers to more than one Bar/Bat Mitzvah child of either gender.

While no formal ceremony is necessary for a person to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, it is customary to mark this turning point in the life of a Jewish child with a religious ceremony. This provides the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with an opportunity to exercise their new rights as full members of the Jewish community by receiving their very first *aliyah*, and often as well by reading from the Torah and Haftarah, and leading the congregation in several prayers.

The Date Selection Process

The process that is used at Shaarei Kodesh to schedule the date for your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah service is as follows:

1. The child's secular birth date is used to identify the Hebrew date on which he/she was born.
2. The secular date, during the year the boy turns 13 or the girl turns 12, is found and then correlated to his/her Hebrew date which is the earliest possible date that your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah service may be scheduled. Your child must have reached his/her 13th (12th for a girl) birthday according to the Hebrew calendar in order to have their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.
3. Once all of the Hebrew birth dates for a given calendar year are established, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates for that year are allocated to *Saturday mornings in consecutive order from January 1st through December 31st. Certain dates are not used for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service and are therefore skipped. These

include **Jewish Holidays that coincide with Shabbat**, and certain weeks blocked off for various synagogue programs, as well as vacation times for the Rabbi and Cantor.

*Shaarei Kodesh prefers that our bar/bat mitzvahs will occur on Shabbat mornings, however, there are various options for our families. Please contact Rabbi Baum directly to discuss this issue if Shabbat morning is not a good time to hold this simcha (for example, if you have relatives or your family does not drive on Shabbat and you do not live in walking distance or other reasons),

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Requirements

Family Membership and Financial Standing

Your family must be members in good standing of Shaarei Kodesh, and all prior financial obligations to the synagogue must be paid in full at least 60 days prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date (i.e. membership dues, religious school tuition, etc.). It is important to keep all of your Shaarei Kodesh financial obligations (and in particular, your membership) up-to-date during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah training period. Tutoring will be suspended if a membership is allowed to lapse, and will not resume until the membership is fully reinstated. This can cause unnecessary pressure on the student, because they will need to bunch up their lessons to “catch up” on the tutoring time lost during the lapsed period. **Please remember that all tutoring fees are non-refundable.**

Religious School Attendance

Attendance at Shaarei Kodesh Religious School (or a local Jewish Day School) is required for a minimum of five years. Attendance through the conclusion of the end of the 7th grade school year is expected, regardless of the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. For those children who enroll in our Religious School after the third grade, an appropriate program of study will be established by the Religious School Director. In certain cases, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony may have to be delayed beyond the child's thirteenth birthday if these requirements are not fulfilled.

Fifth Grade Hebrew Reading Proficiency Evaluation

All fifth grade Religious School and Day School students will be evaluated on their readiness to embark on the final stages of preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At that time, if it is felt that a student may encounter difficulties because of their level of reading proficiency, we will inform the parents that more focus is necessary in this area. In some cases, additional personal tutoring may be recommended. Please contact our Religious School Director to set an appointment.

Synagogue Services

Attendance Requirements

Regular attendance at services at Shaarei Kodesh is a vital requirement of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. Regular attendance dramatically increases each student's level of confidence and lessens the level of anxiety as their own Bar/Bat Mitzvah date approaches, by familiarizing the child with the synagogue, the service, and with the congregants who attend on a regular basis. It also allows them to become more comfortable with the structure and content of the service, as they observe the variety of Bar and Bat Mitzvah services and participants. Of course, it is hoped that attendance at *T'fillah* (services) will be a part of your family's regular life style. Please understand that familiarity with the prayers comes through exposure; it is only fair to students that they be given quality time to listen and learn. We also hope that coming to our service on a consistent basis will help bring Shabbat into your life even after you leave our shul at the end of the service. We encourage families to invite other families over for Shabbat lunch in order to strengthen our community and make Shabbat even more meaningful. If you would like guidance on how to conduct a Shabbat meal, please contact Rabbi Baum who can help you learn about the order and meaning of the Shabbat meals.

**Very important - - Please arrive before 10 am so that you and your child will be there for the entire Torah service.*

During the 1-year period prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, each child is required to attend at least three (3) synagogue services per month. This must consist of at least one Friday evening service, one Saturday morning service per month, plus one additional services of their choice each month. During the month immediately before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, the child should attend ***every** Saturday morning service.

Regular attendance at Shabbat morning services during the year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date is also encouraged for the entire family. This will ensure parental familiarity with the service, and will also set a good example for your child. Please make it a point to attend Shabbat Services at least once a month during the one year period prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

At this time, Shaarei Kodesh does not have a consistent weekday morning minyan, however, we have weekday morning minyan at least twice a month. Our B'nai Mitzvah children are required to come to one morning minyan before their bar/bat mitzvah in order to experience weekday prayer and put on tefillin and talit (required for boys, but optional for girls). We are aware that students who attend Jewish Day School have a regular morning minyan as part of their daily activity and we ask that you get special permission from your school for your child to be excused from their minyan to attend ours. This is a great opportunity

to celebrate in a more intimate setting and we look forward to celebrating with you!

*We are aware that there are other Bar/Bat Mitzvah services at other synagogues in town. Going to another synagogue for a simcha counts for your attendance requirement.

חינוך – Education

Tutoring, Lessons, Meetings

Individual Tutorial Instruction

Children will begin their individualized tutorial instruction approximately ten months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. Our Cantor personally coaches the Bar/Bat Mitzvah students during the final month before the ceremony.

Please note that, in order to participate in a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service at Shaarei Kodesh, only our own staff tutors may be used as the primary teachers of your child during the tutoring process. This is necessary in order to allow us to efficiently coordinate and oversee the tutoring sessions, as well as to ensure that our minimum standards of training and service participation are met and that there is a uniform level of skill and proficiency achieved.

As part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee, each child will be entitled to up to 20 individual half-hour tutoring lessons during the ten month period prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Should your child require more preparation or additional tutoring in order to meet our minimum standards, you will be notified. Tutoring sessions beyond the initial 20 are not covered by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee, and are paid directly by the family to the tutor. Please remember that all tutoring fees are non-refundable. The times allocated and booked for tutoring sessions are very valuable to both the tutor and the students. We do understand that from time to time a session needs to be postponed. If you need a schedule change or your child becomes ill, please contact the tutor to reschedule the session at least 24 hours in advance. Missed sessions with insufficient (or no) notice will count against the 20 lessons included in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee.

Family Education: Agent 613: Mission Mitzvah

Our family classes will take place on four Sunday mornings or afternoons for approximately three hours each. Our classes will reinforce our connection to God and each other through tefillah (Jewish prayer), Ivrit (Hebrew), Keshar (connection), and general issues and values that will bring us together as a community. Each lesson has a Hebrew root as its theme.

- Session 1: צוה (command)–This is our Introduction lesson where we will get to know each other and build our own smaller community. During this session, we will:
 - Review expectations and set goals.

- Learn about the meaning of Mitzvah and becoming a Bar/Bat mitzvah.
- Session 2: קדוש (holy) - What is Kedushah (holiness)?
 - Where is God in my simcha?
 - Seudat Mitzvah – bringing holiness into your party!
- Session 3: קשר (connection/relationship)
 - Judaism and relationships – *Bein Adam L'Makom, Bein Adam L'Chavero* (Between human and God, between human and human)
 - *Tikun Olam* and *Gemilut Hesed* – the Jewish approach. Speakers will join us for this session.
 - Each child chooses organizes their Mitzvah Program as described in the Handbook.
- Session 4: – שלם (wholeness) Israel education
- Finale: Shabbat dinner
 - Celebrate together the completion of our curriculum together! (presentation of mitzvah program)

The "Mitzvah Program"

There is a general misconception that the definition of the word mitzvah is "good deed". It is true that many mitzvot are good deeds, but the actual translation of the word is commandment. As Jews, our way of life is built around obligation and covenant to God, our Jewish community, and the world around us. When one becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, he/she assumes the obligation of observing and performing the Mitzvot of Judaism; these laws that act as glue to hold us together. Since becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a "family affair," we ask each family to participate in the Mitzvah Program together. This program consists of completing 13 mitzvot. The mitzvot all fall into 3 categories of at least 4 mitzvot each and the students will choose which they want to commit to. The three areas of mitzvot are related to the three topics: Bein Adam L'Makom (Between God and Humanity - Personal Jewish Identity), Bein Adam L'Chavero (Between Jews - Jewish Community), and Bein Adam L'Olam (the World at Large). The following is a brief description of each category:

1) Bein Adam L'Makom: The personal relationship between the individual Jew and God indicates that some mitzvot are personal. These might include ritual spiritual mitzvot like wearing a tallit or tefillin, developing a habit of daily prayer, or they might include gathering family stories.

2) Bein Adam L'Chavero: The communal component will be expressed through voluntary work in the Jewish community. That community may be our synagogue or it may be in the larger Jewish world.

3) Bein Adam L'Olam: Our faith also extends to our work in the world at large. God is, after all, the Sovereign of the World. Work in this segment of the mitzvah

program might be to encourage recycling, work to promote peace, or to volunteer in our local area to improve the quality of life.

*Please see the appendix for ideas for your "Mitzvah Program".

Final Lessons and Meetings

A family meeting with the Rabbi will be held approximately two months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, during which (among other things) the various honors to be distributed will be reviewed, as well as which family members or friends will be receiving such honors. At that time, the parents will also meet with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator to discuss Bar/Bat Mitzvah logistics.

Each B'nai Mitzvah will have approximately three lessons with Rabbi Baum. During these lessons, Rabbi Baum and the B'nai Mitzvah will prepare their Dvar Torah and learn about the process of preparing a Dvar Torah, one on one learning, and a time to get to know each other. The family must schedule these meetings with the office beginning four months before the date of the B'nai Mitzvah.

Parental Responsibilities

As parents, you are tremendous role models for your children. As you have seen throughout your life, your children have looked to you for guidance, support, and example. Therefore, we ask that you make a concerted effort to support your child by making sure that they keep up with their preparation for their B'nai Mitzvah.

We also ask that you write a prayer to give at your child's B'nai Mitzvah. This prayer is not a speech, rather, it is a moment where you will speak to God and thank God for the gifts in your life. This blessing is not only a tremendous gift to God, your child, and your family, but to the rest of our community.

Here is an example of a blessing that was given by the parents of one of our bar mitzvahs:

O God, as we stand before you today witnessed by our family and friends, we pray and we thank you for the blessing of life that you bestowed upon us. We are so grateful for our son, Sam, and we are thankful for the years of joy that he has brought to us.

Bless our son dear God, watch over him, protect him and guide him. Help him to continue to grow in body and mind, in soul and character. Bless him with the gifts of love, health and happiness. Let him be deserving of all of life's rewards. Let his life be rich and full. May his deeds be a source of pride for us all.

Amen.

There are a number of resources for examples of personal blessings. A recent book we recommend you add to your Jewish library is called [Talking to God by Rabbi Naomi Levy](#).

Rabbi Baum will help your family write this blessing when you meet with him as a family. We ask that you submit your typed blessing for review by Rabbi Baum at least one week before your child's B'nai Mitzvah.

תודה - Giving Thanks!

Being thankful is a core value in Judaism and one way we can say thank you is by giving *tzedakah*.

It is customary to say, "thank you" by giving *tzedakah* in honor of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is very fitting and proper to make a contribution to the Synagogue in honor of your son's/daughter's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Speak to the Rabbi for suggestions regarding which synagogue funds might need your support. We urge that you permanently inscribe your child's simcha on Shaarei Kodesh's Simcha Tree. Students should discuss their own choice of *tzedakah* recipients with their parents. The *ma'aser*, generally 10% of cash gifts received at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, is an additional way to participate in the community by giving to a charity of your choice.

In appreciation of the clergy - Many families develop a personal relationship with Rabbi Baum and Cantor Demsky during the course of Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. You may wish to include them and their families on your guest list.¹

A gift to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, which is a tax deductible donation, or to another cause that you know is meaningful to them is a thoughtful and generous way to thank our clergy.

Chai Lights (Synagogue newsletter) - If you would like your contributions to be published in the bulletin the month of your event, they must be received by the office two months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

¹Except in the case of unforeseen events, our clergy will certainly attend events to which they are invited that are held in the synagogue. They will also make every effort to attend parties held outside the synagogue after Shabbat. Rabbi Baum will attend provided the food served for **all guests** meets kosher dietary requirements.

Planning the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service

The Student's Role during Services, and Skills Achieved

We recognize that there are various levels of ability among our students and we wish to treat each student as an individual. Our general approach is to encourage each student to do as much of the service as he/she is capable of leading. Our expectation is that students will be able to:

1. Be called to the Torah for an *aliyah* and recite the proper blessings.
2. Chant the blessing before and after the Haftarah.
3. Chant the Haftarah.
4. Prepare a Dvar Torah (words of Torah) to introduce the Torah portion for the community as well as a separate thank you speech to be given at the end of the service.
5. Lead various prayers of the Friday night and Saturday morning services.
6. Read at least one passage from the Torah.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Week Schedule

Below is the schedule for the services held during the week leading up to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, during each of which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student plays an important role. Please see the chapter entitled **The Week of the Bar/Bar Mitzvah Ceremony** for full details.

Rehearsal

During the week preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a rehearsal is held with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student, the parents, and the Rabbi and Cantor in the Synagogue. The rehearsal takes about one and one-half hours (1 1/2 hours) and is important to ensure a smooth flowing Bar/Bat Mitzvah day. The rehearsal will give you a behind the scenes understanding of what you have been experiencing during your attendance of services over the past months.

- Photography-- You may wish to have a professional photographer take pictures

to commemorate the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please remember that no photography, professional or amateur, is permitted at the Synagogue or on its grounds on Shabbat. The facilities of the synagogue are available before or after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day for taking “simulated” poses. In practice, most families use the time of the rehearsal for taking pictures.

- Video-- Professional video recording is not permitted in the Synagogue on Shabbat, but is more than welcome at the rehearsal.

Thursday Morning Minyan (If desired)

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration begins with the **Thursday Morning *minyan***, which is held from 7:45 A.M. to 8:20 A.M. on the Thursday before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. During this service, the B'nai Mitzvah are called to the Torah for an *aliyah* for the very first time.

Friday Evening Service

The celebration continues with the **Friday Evening service** which begins at 6:00 P.M. and concludes by 7:15 P.M. on the Friday evening before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. During this informal participatory service, the B'nai Mitzvah will be leading the congregation in prayer.

Shabbat Morning Service

The **Shabbat Morning service** begins Saturday *promptly* at 9:30 A.M., and generally ends around 12:15 pm. You should plan on arriving at the synagogue by 9:15 A.M. at the latest.

Owning a Kipah, Tallit and Tefillin

Every student should own a *kipah for boys* and an appropriate head covering (or kippah) for girls in preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and parents should make arrangements to purchase or otherwise obtain these vital ritual items for their child well in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

Traditionally, boys have always been required to own a set of *tefillin* and a *tallit*. However, as a synagogue of the Conservative Movement, Shaarei Kodesh is

transitioning towards complete egalitarianism by eliminating the ritual distinctions between boys and girls. Girls and women are now increasingly taking on the mitzvah of *talit* and *tefillin*, and we highly encourage all Bat Mitzvah students to do so as well. Therefore, we require boys to purchase a *talit* and set of *tefillin* and highly encourage girls take on this obligation as well.

If you would like to talk more about the issue of *talit* and *tefillin* and your child, please feel free to contact Rabbi Baum who will gladly walk you through this process.

Talit and *tefillin* can be bought at our many Judaica stores in town. *Tefillin* can be pricey, but the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs sells affordable and quality *tefillin* which we recommend. Please visit their website at www.fjmc.org.

If you do obtain a used *talit* and/or *tefillin* from a family member or friend, please make sure that they are in the proper condition. Please contact Rabbi Baum who will help you determine the condition of your *talit* and *tefillin*.

Invitations to the Religious School Class

One of the important aspects of your child's sojourn through our Religious School is the socialization and friendships made, many of which last a lifetime. For this reason, we recommend that you give serious consideration to including your child's entire Religious School class when sending out your invitations. The good will that is established in this manner will go a long way towards making each of our children feel that they belong to the Shaarei Kodesh family. Of course, we do understand that it may not be possible to invite everyone to your party. But whether one is invited to the party or not, all of our students should feel completely welcome to attend the service of their classmates.

Providing Kippot

Families are welcome to provide special *kippot* for their guests and the rest of the congregation. You may provide your own basket to hold the *kippot*, or you may contact the synagogue office and request that a basket be provided for you.

We will arrange to have the basket of *kippot* placed at the entrance to the Sanctuary before services, but in observance of Shabbat the *kippot* and basket must be delivered to the synagogue office by noon on Friday at the latest.

Assigning Honors

Overview

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah service is not a private ceremony like a wedding. Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations occur during regular services, and these services must meet the needs of both your invited guests **and** the rest of the congregation. Other members of the congregation may wish to say *Kaddish*, or a *Misheberach* prayer for the sick, or simply wish to pray. During the course of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, we may also make recognition of other families who are celebrating a *simcha* (like an *aufruf* or a baby naming), or are experiencing some other sort of lifecycle event. Additionally, we want to instill in our children a feeling of community; that they are part of the whole Jewish people, and that even on their special day, there are others that may be celebrating as well.

Assignment of Honors

During the course of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, a number of honors are available to be distributed to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah families. They are:

- a. *Pticha*: opening the ark
- b. *Four Aliyot*: reciting the Hebrew blessings before and after a Torah reading
- c. *Torah Reading*: friends and/or family reading the appropriate portion from the Torah
- d. *Hagbah*: lifting the Torah (please make sure that the person you choose has experience with Hagbah before).
- e. *Gelilah*: dressing the Torah
- f. *Torah holder*: holding the Torah in the lap during the Haftarah and *Ashray*.
- g. A Prayer for Our Country
- h. A Prayer for Israel (recited in Hebrew)
- i. Singing of *Ayn Kelohaynu* and *Aleynu*

Keep in mind that in our synagogue, men and women have equal rights, privileges and obligations. Therefore all of the above honors can be distributed equally to men or women. Please remember to inform any female honorees that

they must have a head covering when they come onto the *bimah*. The synagogue has head coverings available at the sanctuary entrance.

Interfaith/Non-Jewish Participation in the Service

We recognize that non-Jewish family members or friends may have played a positive role in your family's life. We welcome the participation of interfaith parents in the service as follows:

- Presentation of *tallit* to Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- The Parents' Prayer

We also welcome the participation of other non-Jewish invited guests in the following ways:

- *Pticha*: opening/closing the ark
- A Prayer for Our Country
- A Prayer for Israel

Assigning Torah Readings to Friends and Family

At Shaarei Kodesh, we encourage all of our congregants to learn the skill of chanting from the Torah, and to do so at services throughout the year. We actively encourage any family members or friends who are able to chant Torah, to participate in your *simcha* by doing so. We especially encourage parents to take on the challenge of preparing at least one portion of Torah to chant at their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

Submitting Your Honors List

During your family meeting with the Rabbi, the Rabbi will review with you the various honors distributed and help you decide which family members or friends to consider for these honors. He will also provide a form for recording the names of the honorees. If you have already made your final honoree decisions, you can complete the form with the Rabbi at that time. Otherwise, **you must complete and return the honors form to the Rabbi no later than three days prior to the date of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah**. In the case of a Shabbat service, this means **you must return the honors form to the Rabbi no later than the Wednesday prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date**.

Planning the Celebration

Location of the service

As many of you know, Shaarei Kodesh is a young, vibrant, and intimate community. We also pride ourselves on being extra-ordinary! Most of us joined this synagogue because of these reasons, but this leaves us with some unique issues that we must face. At this time, our sanctuary can only hold a maximum of 225 people which may be a problem for some of our bnai mitzvah families who intend to have many guests. Please know that we have alternative prayer spaces available where we will hold services for our whole community. Temple Beth Shalom is available with a sanctuary that will hold 600. We also recommend the Boca Raton Marriott® at Boca Center as well if you are interested in a hotel location. It is important to keep in mind that having your bnai mitzvah ceremony at an alternative location will add to the cost of your B'nai Mitzvah, and we prefer that you hold your B'nai Mitzvah ceremony in our current sanctuary.

Please know that we strive to work with each individual family to make this experience as joyful as possible.

For more information on alternative prayer spaces, please contact our bnai mitzvah coordinator, Melissa McGhie.

The Nature of Your Celebration - סעודת מצוה (The Festive Meal)

There is no “right” way to approach the manner of celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We know there are tremendous pressures regarding this piece of the B'nai Mitzvah and we offer our support to help guide you through this process. The meal of celebration following a Jewish ritual event, such as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or wedding is considered a *Seudat Mitzvah*, a sacred meal which, in our tradition, is an extension of the service. As such, we strongly urge you to plan that such a meal should be in keeping with the practices of Kashrut and Shabbat, even if the affair is held at a location other than the synagogue. By doing so, you would be affirming the true significance of the occasion as a Jewish religious ceremony. There is also something very special about being a member of Shaarei Kodesh, and being able to share your *simcha* with your synagogue family.

Celebrating the Simcha (Reception)

The kind/amount of activities and food which are provided to guests is the choice of each family. We would only hope that your celebration will reflect the occasion—that the luncheon/dinner/party honors your 13 year old son/daughter who has just participated in a sacred religious ceremony.

Saturday Kiddush— Your family will host the Kiddush following Saturday morning services in honor of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please remember your child is celebrating his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a part of the community. If you are planning a luncheon outside the Synagogue, you must still provide the Kiddush at Shaarei Kodesh. If you are hosting the Kiddush luncheon at Shaarei Kodesh, please include 50 additional congregants, even if your invited guests include members of our Synagogue. Please speak to the office for more information.

The Reception

Your reception can be held Motzei Shabbat (Saturday night), Sunday afternoon or evening, or several other times. Remember, a successful party begins by incorporating Judaism. If your simcha is on Motzei Shabbat (Saturday evening) plan on beginning it with Havdalah and please remember that parties should begin after Shabbat concludes. As education is an essential part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience, parties should not be planned during religious school hours. Entertainment should be in keeping with the values of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please remind DJ's that certain songs are inappropriate for B'nai Mitzvah receptions.

Inviting the Clergy

We are sometimes asked by congregants if it is customary to invite the Rabbi and Cantor to their celebration, and, although it is not required, most people do invite them to their celebrations. Except in the case of unforeseen events, they will certainly attend events to which they are invited that are held in the synagogue. They will also make every effort to attend parties held outside the synagogue after Shabbat. Rabbi Baum will attend provided the food served for **all guests** meets kosher dietary requirements.

Setup and Removal Arrangements

All items that are to be brought into the synagogue for a Shabbat function (*kipot*, service programs, flowers, decorations, etc.) must be delivered to the building by **Friday at noon**. Because the synagogue office closes early on Fridays, please contact the office in advance to arrange the time of delivery on the Friday of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony weekend. No items may be removed from the synagogue until after the conclusion of Shabbat, after sundown on Saturday. Please ensure that you inform your decorators and service providers accordingly. We recommend donating your flowers to a local institution, such as a hospital or

nursing home, following your Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. If you are doing so, please bear in mind that they may not be removed from the synagogue until after the conclusion of Shabbat, as noted above.

Food baskets-- In lieu of flowers, you may want to donate two baskets of KOSHER food for the needy to be displayed on the bimah which will be donated to Jewish Family Services or a local food pantry of your choice. You may also choose to display flowers with the baskets. Please call the office for more information.

The Day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony

Overview

The Shabbat Morning service begins Saturday *promptly* at 9:30 A.M., and generally ends around noon. You should plan on arriving at the synagogue by 9:15 A.M. at the latest. The Torah Service begins at approximately 10:00 A.M.. Just before beginning the Torah service, the parents will escort their child to the *bimah* (pulpit) for the presentation of the *talit*. As the Torah service begins, there will be a ceremonial passing of the Torah from the grandparents, to the parents, and then to the child, in order to symbolize the passing of our tradition from one generation to the next. The parents and grandparents will then return to their seats, and the child will remain on the *bimah* for the remainder of the service.

The Sanctity of Shabbat

In order to maintain and preserve the sanctity of the Shabbat, we ask your cooperation in informing your guests in advance that they must refrain from smoking, picture taking, and the use of **any** electronic device (such as cellular phones, gaming devices, .mp3 players, etc.) while on synagogue premises. By “synagogue premises,” we mean not only the sanctuary, but also any areas within the building, as well as on our immediate outdoor property. Other prohibited activities include writing, giving/receiving gifts, and carrying items into or out of the synagogue building. No taping of any kind, audio or visual, will be permitted on the Sabbath. Finally, please note that there should be no applause during the services. Although there can be clapping as a form of religious adulation during certain songs or prayers, applause for individuals is inappropriate during services on Shabbat.

We realize that cellular phones are with many of us on a daily, if not minute to minute, basis. However, we ask that you leave your cellular phones at home or in your car so that those who attend our service be completely present for the three hours of this beautiful simcha (happy occasion). Being completely present means that we focus all our attention on the B’nai Mitzvah child and his or her family during this momentous occasion.

Appropriate Attire

One of the purposes of Jewish law regarding dress is to teach us to dress and behave in a modest manner. Over and above the Jewish concept of modesty, we

promote another value – that of presentability. In order to approach *tefillah* (prayer) in our Sanctuary, and/or stand in front of our ark and Torah within an atmosphere of seriousness, we ask that all those in attendance at services on Shabbat dress appropriately. B'nai Mitzvah families and their guests are therefore expected to dress in a manner appropriate for synagogue services and to maintain decorum throughout the service.

Women must wear a head covering when at the Torah reading table. Women should also refrain from wearing low cut, sleeveless, strapless or backless dresses or blouses, bare midriffs and short skirts.

Administrative Issues

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee

Each family will be charged an all-inclusive Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee of \$1,100. This fee includes all of the following:

- Class sessions by the Cantor covering trope, Torah and Haftarah blessings
- Class sessions by the Rabbi covering Haftarah and "Mitzvah program"
- Four Family Classes led by the Rabbi
- Up to 20 individual half-hour tutoring lessons
- Educational materials, supplies and CDs
- Family Meeting with the Rabbi to discuss service participation
- B'nai Mitzvah meeting with the Rabbi to learn one on one (up to three meetings)
- Family Meeting with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator to discuss logistics and final details
- Ritual items presented to the B'nai Mitzvah during the service
- All setup, synagogue maintenance and administration costs associated with the ceremony

Payment Options

A non-refundable \$200 deposit was paid to secure your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date when your date was finalized. We offer two different payment methods for the remaining \$900 of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee:

Payment Option One

A payment of \$450 is payable one year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, and the final \$450 is due two months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Payment may be made by check or credit card.

Payment Option Two

Payment may be made in 9 equal monthly installments of \$100 each, beginning 10 months prior to the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These monthly payments will automatically be applied to the credit card number that you must supply for this purpose (we regret that we will be unable to bill you monthly for this option, due to the amount of administration and accounts receivable tracking involved).

Regardless of the option chosen, all charges incurred up to that date must be paid in full prior to the first private tutoring session, or the start of tutoring will be delayed. In addition, all prior financial obligations to the synagogue must be paid in full at least 60 days prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date (i.e. membership dues, religious school, etc.).

Adding a Leaf to the Simcha Tree

Being thankful is a core value in Judaism and one way we can say thank you is by giving *tzedakah*. There are many options for giving, and one way we offer is to give back to our community by purchasing a leaf on our Simcha Tree. Being happy or "in *simcha*" is also a core value in Judaism. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, a 19th century Chassidic Rabbi, used to famously say: "*Mitzvah Gedolah Le'hiyot Besimcha Tamid*," it is a great *mitzvah* (commandment) to always be in a state of happiness. Our hope is that you can be filled with *simcha* (happiness) every time you see your leaf as you enter our synagogue.

You may elect to add the cost of one or more leaves at \$250 each to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee, in order to incorporate payment of the leaves in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee payment option you've selected, as well as to guarantee the cost of the leaves.

Honors and Service Participation

Participatory Sections of the Service

The information below refers to the Saturday morning service. Bar/Bat Mitzvah services on other days of the week will consist of some but not all of the items listed below: for more details, please contact Rabbi Baum.

Pesukay D'Zimra (Preliminary prayers) led by clergy or lay person

- Presentation of *talit* to B'nai Mitzvah by their parents

Shacharit (Morning prayers) led by B'nai Mitzvah, layperson, or clergy

Torah Service

- First Ark Opening, by relatives/friends of the B'nai Mitzvah
- Procession of the Torah through the congregation, by the B'nai Mitzvah
- Dvar Torah by the B'nai Mitzvah focusing on introducing the Torah portion and teaching how the Torah portion is relevant to the B'nai Mitzvah.
- The weekly Torah reading
- Parent's recite special blessings after their aliyah
- *Hagbah* (lifting the Torah), by a relative or friend of the B'nai Mitzvah
- *Gellilah* (dressing the Torah), by a relative or friend of the B'nai Mitzvah
- Holding the Torah, by a relative or friend of the B'nai Mitzvah
- The weekly Haftarah reading, by the B'nai Mitzvah
- A Prayer for Our Country, by a relative or friend of the B'nai Mitzvah
- A Prayer for the State of Israel, by a relative or friend of the B'nai Mitzvah
- *Ashray*, led by the B'nai Mitzvah

- Second Ark Opening, by relatives/friends of the B'nai Mitzvah
- Procession of the Torah through the congregation, with the B'nai Mitzvah (family member can hold Torah)
- The Rabbi's Sermon, followed by his blessing of the B'nai Mitzvah

Musaf Service

- *Musaf Amidah*, usually led by the Cantor, but may be led by the B'nai Mitzvah
- *Ayn Kelohaynu* and *Aleynu*, led by B'nai Mitzvah and younger relatives/friends
- Speech to the congregation by the B'nai Mitzvah
- Presentations to the B'nai Mitzvah by the Rabbi, and the President of the synagogue
- *Adon Olam*, led by the B'nai Mitzvah and children in the congregation
- *Kiddush* and *Hamotzi*, led by the B'nai Mitzvah

Parent/Child B'nai Mitzvah Covenant-- Brit L'B'nai Mitzvah

תנך לנער על פי דרכו גם פי זקין לא יסור ממנה

משלי כב:ו

“Train a child in the way s/he should go, and even when s/he is old s/he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

Parents' Names – **Please Print**

Student's Name – **Please Print**

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

We, the undersigned have read the attached B'nai Mitzvah Handbook and agree to abide by all the policies and requirements set forth therein, including:

1. **Synagogue Service Attendance:** We agree to attend three synagogue services per month, during the one year period prior to our Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, as detailed in this Handbook.

2. **Fulfillment of B'nai Mitzvah requirements :** We agree to attend the four parent/child sessions, the culminating Shabbat dinner, attend services, work with the Rabbi and Cantor, and complete our “Mitzvah Program” by Rabbi Baum as outlined in the B'nai Mitzvah Handbook.

3. **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee.** We agree to pay the \$1,100.00 B'nai Mitzvah fee, as detailed in this Handbook (fees are subject to change by the Board of Trustees of Congregation Shaarei Kodesh).

Please initial one of the following two payment options:

Payment Option One Initials: _____

A deposit of \$200 payable within 30 days of date assignment, \$450 payable one year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, and the remaining \$450 due two months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. If the credit card information below is filled out, these payments will be charged to the indicated credit card on the appropriate dates; otherwise the parents will be billed.

Payment Option Two Initials: _____

A deposit of \$200 payable within 30 days of date assignment, then payment in 9 equal monthly installments of \$100 each, beginning 10 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date and automatically charged monthly to the following Credit Card:

Credit Card Number: _____
(Visa, MasterCard, or Discover only)

Expiration Date: _____
(mm/yyyy)

 (Parent Signature) (Date)

 (Parent Signature) (Date)

 (Student Signature) (Date)

4. Dedication of Simcha Tree Leaf (optional)

Being thankful is a core value in Judaism and one way we can say thank you is by giving *tzedakah*. There are many options for giving, and one way we offer is to give back to our community by purchasing a leaf on our Simcha Tree. Being happy or "in *simcha*" is also a core value in Judaism. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, a 19th century Chassidic Rabbi, used to famously say: "*Mitzvah Gedolah Le'hiyot Besimcha Tamid*," it is a great *mitzvah* (commandment) to always be in a state of happiness. Our hope is that you can be filled with *simcha* (happiness) every time you see your leaf as you enter our synagogue.

_____ I would like to purchase a leaf on the Simcha Tree in the synagogue lobby, in honor of this *simcha*. The cost of \$250 will be added to my Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee, and payment will be in conjunction with the Payment Option indicated above. . Please also add _____ additional leaves at \$250 each to my Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee for future *simchas*. These additional leaves will be marked "Reserved" and installed adjacent to or underneath the initial leaf, and will be replaced with inscribed leaves in conjunction with future *simchas*, as you direct us.

_____ Please contact me at a later time regarding a synagogue donation.

Inscription for Simcha Tree:

_____ Please check here if you would like to decide on the wording of your inscription at a later date.

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO THE OFFICE

Appendix

Glossary

Adon Olam: 'Lord of the Universe', a traditional hymn praising and adoring God, sung at the end of the Saturday morning service.

Aitz Hayim: The 'trees of life', the wooden poles of the Torah to which the parchment is attached, and which serve as handles.

Aleynu: The prayer of adoration chanted and read towards the end of the Saturday service.

Aliyah (pl. Aliyot): Literally means 'going up', and refers to the honor of going up to the Torah to recite the blessings before and after the Torah reading.

Amud: The reading table from which worship is led and the Torah read.

Ark: The cabinet that houses the Torah in front of the sanctuary.

Aron Kodesh: The Hebrew name for the Ark (see above) containing the Torah scrolls.

Aufruf: Yiddish for 'called up'. Refers to an *aliyah* (see above) received by a future groom and bride on the Shabbat prior to their wedding

Bar Mitzvah: Literally 'the son of duty or commandment'. A term used to mark the age of Jewish adulthood at age 13, as well as the event when a boy is called to the Torah to symbolize the attainment of adulthood.

Bat: 'Daughter of'.

Bat Mitzvah: Literally 'The daughter of duty or commandment'. A term used to mark the age of Jewish adulthood at age 12, as well as the event when a girl is called to the Torah to symbolize the attainment of adulthood.

Ben: 'Son of'.

Bimah: The elevated platform in front of the sanctuary where the Ark and Torah are located.

B'nai Mitzvah: Literally 'sons and daughters of the commandment'.

Bracha: A blessing.

Cantor (Hebrew *chazzan*): A member of the clergy who is a musician trained in the vocal arts, who helps lead the congregation in songful prayer.

Challah: Braided bread used during the Sabbath.

Chumash: The Torah in bound book form, often also containing the Haftarah.

Dvar Torah: A speech that explains and illuminates the Torah text.

Gelilah: The honor of rolling and tying the Torah scroll.

Haftarah: Supplementary (and related) reading from Prophets, read after the Torah portion on Shabbat and other festivals.

Hagbah: The honor of raising the Torah scroll.

Hagorah: The belt that holds the two sides of the scroll together when not in use. Also called a *wimpel* in Yiddish.

Hamotzi: The blessing over bread.

Kaddish: refers to an important and central prayer in the Jewish prayer service which glorifies the Holy name, and which acts as a separator between various sections of the service. A version of this prayer called the 'Mourners' *Kaddish*' is recited after the death of immediate family relatives.

Kiddush: The blessing over wine during Shabbat and festivals. Also used to describe light refreshments served after saying *kiddush* following Shabbat morning services.

Kippah or Yarmulke: The ritual skull cap worn during synagogue services, and by some Jews at all times.

Kosher: Food prepared in accordance with Jewish dietary laws.

Minyan: A quorum of ten Jewish adults traditionally required for public worship.

Misheberach: A prayer traditionally said for someone who is ill.

Mourners' Kaddish: See **Kaddish**.

Parasha: The section of Torah read during a given week. Each week during the year has its own *parasha*.

Pticha: The person who opens and closes the ark, either when the Torah is taken out to be read or when it is put away following the reading.

Rabbi: Spiritual leader of the congregation.

Seudat Mitzvah: A festive meal usually associated with life cycle events

Shacharit: The morning service.

Siddur: The prayerbook.

Shabbat: Hebrew for Sabbath, the special seventh day of the Jewish week when we celebrate our uniqueness as free people and are able to separate ourselves from the work week. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday evening, and ends after sundown on Saturday evening.

Simcha: A joyous life cycle event, such as weddings, Brit, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, etc.

Talit: The prayer shawl, customary for men to wear during Shabbat services, optional for women.

Tikkun: A book used for preparing and practicing Torah readings, which shows the Torah text in a standard font with vowel and trope melody symbols, alongside the same text in 'Torah font' without vowel and trope symbols.

Torah: The Five Books of Moses, which is the first section of the Bible. The Torah scroll contains these five books written by hand in Hebrew on specially prepared parchment by a trained scribe. The Five Books of Moses are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Torah service: The central part of the Shabbat (Saturday) morning service, where the Torah is brought out of the ark, and a specified portion is chanted in Hebrew.

Trope: Also known as 'cantillation'. A system of notation which indicates the specific musical melodies used for chanting the Torah or Haftarah.

Tzedakah: Performance of charitable or philanthropic acts.

Tzitzit: The fringes on a *tallit*, used to kiss the place at the beginning and ending of an *aliyah* passage.

Yad: The pointer used by the reader, usually shaped like a hand. The Torah reader takes care not to touch the scroll directly with his or her own hand, so that *yad* ('hand' in Hebrew) becomes an extension of the reader to assist in an accurate and smooth reading.

| Bein Adam L'Makom: Personal Jewish Identity | Bein Adam L'Chavero - Between Jews: The Jewish Community | Bein Adam L'Olam: Between us and the world at Large |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Hang a Mezuzah Make a Talit Learn how to tie Tzitzit and demonstrate it to the Rabbi Buy a pair of tefillin and put them on daily Buy ritual objects to be used for holidays and Shabbat (challah board, kiddish cup, etc.) Buy a siddur and use it daily Attend services 3 times each month voluntarily Kashrut - Label Dairy ("Milchig") and Meat ("Fleishig") in your home kitchen. Light a Hannukiah (Hanukkah Menorah). Light Shabbat candles every week. Do Havdalah with your family. Purchase booklets (benchers) for Birchat HaMazon (the Blessing after the Meal). Say Barchat HaMazon (the Blessing After the Meal). Say a Bracha (Blessing) over food in school. Say the Shema, morning and evening. Put a Mezuzah on the doorpost of your room. Build a Succah and decorate it. Learn about your namesake (the person</p> | <p>In lieu of flowers, place donation gift baskets for Jewish Family Services on the bimah Volunteer at our Religious School. Help in the office or other part of our synagogue, when needed Contribute D'mai Hanukkah (gelt or money for a cause). Plant a tree for Tu B'Shevat. Give to a charity in Israel Give Mishloach Manot (food gifts on Purim day). Give money on Purim to needy people. Sell your Chametz for Passover and contribute Maot Chetin. Help plan a youth service for the High Holidays. Teach others about Holocaust/Anti-semitism. Teach others about Jewish values Make an Audio or Video History Bank (i.e. our</p> | <p>Recycle. Tutor another student in non-Jewish studies. Help raise funds for non-Jewish charities. Help serve meals in a soup kitchen. Gather canned food or clothing for the needy. Contribute to a general charity. Visit non-Jewish elderly, sick or disabled. Learn something about another culture. Teach others about racism. Organize a letter writing campaign to a political leader. Write a letter of importance to a political leader. Clean up litter in a community. Follow world events, especially where human suffering is happening: (Africa, Iraq, Sudan, China, etc.) Help fix a problem you see in our city, country, or the world!</p> |

you were named after in either Hebrew or English).
 Make a family tree and present it as a gift to your family

Visit a Jewish Museum

Read a Jewish book and talk to your friends and family about it

Count the Omer.

Celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut.

Commemorate (Honor) Yom HaShoah and Yom HaZikaron. Fast on Tisha B'Av. Attend Selichot services.

Purchase a Luluv and Etrog for Sukkot.

Attend Tikun Leil Shavuot (Our all night learning session)

synagogue).

Attend a Brit or Simchat Bat (for a new baby).

Say a Mishabarach (get well prayer) in synagogue for someone who is ill.

Bring food to a family in our synagogue who is going through a life changing event (birth of a child, sickness, death of a family member)

Fix a problem you see in our Jewish community through action!