

# **The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guide**

## **Welcome to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Experience.**

We could not be more thrilled to share in your Jewish growth during this special time in your life. We look forward to guiding you along the path of Jewish learning in anticipation of celebrating your Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

We're here to help you in every way we can and to make your entire experience meaningful.

Mazel Tov,

Rabbi Ari Sunshine  
Rabbi Adam E. Roffman  
Rabbi Shira E. Wallach  
Hazzan Itzhak Zhrebker  
Avi Mitzner, Ritual Director  
Kim West, Chief Operating Officer  
Sandi Burt, B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>The Core Values of Our Program</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Preparing for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service Opportunities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Religious Policies and Proper Etiquette in Safeguarding the Dignity of the Service</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The “Mitzvah” of Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>22</b>

## **THE CORE VALUES OF OUR PROGRAM**

### **1. NURTURING ENVIRONMENT:**

We want our B'nei Mitzvah program to be nurturing and caring. We strive to always be gentle, kind, considerate, patient and sensitive to our students and parents. We want to create an environment that enhances the spiritual and religious experience of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

### **7. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:**

Parental involvement is **key** to the success of our program and the entire Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. We always want to encourage and nurture the involvement of parents with the students.

### **8. RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT:**

The regular and continuous involvement of our professional staff with students and parents affords the opportunity for relationship development. Long lasting bonds are created between student, parent, rabbis, cantor and instructor(s) during the course of each student's progress through our program.

### **9. EXCELLENCE IN PREPAREDNESS:**

We want our children to achieve a very high level of excellence. We want them to do the very best they are capable of doing and encourage each child to participate as much as possible and to the full extent of their ability. The better prepared our B'nei Mitzvah, the more positive the experience.

### **10. PUTTING GOD ON THE GUEST LIST**

We want to emphasize the religious and spiritual significance of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We want to connect the child to Judaism, Family, Israel and the Jewish people.

# **PREPARING FOR THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

## **1. Qualifications for Bar/Bat Mitzvah:**

- A. Full family membership at Congregation Shearith Israel at the time the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date is assigned.
- B. Family membership account must be in good standing at the time of Date Assignment and continuing through the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.
- C. Continuous and regular studies in our Weitzman Family religious school or an approved Jewish day school beginning with Kindergarten are required for Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony at Congregation Shearith Israel. Religious school programs must be no less than a two-day per week, five-hour program, as recognized by the Conservative Movement. Enrollment and good attendance through the grade of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is mandatory. Locally, our congregation recognizes The Ann and Nate Levine Academy and Akiba Day School as bona fide day schools.
- D. Students who leave a Jewish day school just before or during the B'nei Mitzvah process sometimes find it difficult to acclimate to our religious school. The below guidelines will serve as policy for these students and their families on the pathway to B'nei Mitzvah. If these guidelines are not met the students must enroll in our religious school and maintain good attendance.
  - a. attend 10 Shabbat services at Shearith before B'nei Mitzvah tutoring begins in addition to the 20 services required during the last 18 months leading up to B'nei Mitzvah
  - b. attend special family and Shabbat programming with their age cohorts (such as: )
  - c. engage in ongoing Jewish studies at least 2 hours per week
  - d. submit their ongoing Jewish studies curriculum to one of the Shearith rabbis for approval
  - e. meet with one of the Shearith rabbis once per month beginning 8 months before the bar/bat mitzvah to learn about Conservative Judaism in addition to studying the parasha and writing a dvar torah
  - f. attend youth group programming (if applicable)
  - g. Sandi Burt will liaison with parents to help ensure that the student meets these requirements
  - h. Sarah Lipinsky will meet with students at the beginning of this process to evaluate their Hebrew reading proficiency and set Hebrew goals

## **2. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date Policy**

It is the policy of Congregation Shearith Israel that a girl may have her Bat Mitzvah after she has reached the age of twelve (12). A boy must have reached the age of thirteen (13). **The Hebrew birthday of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate is used as the guideline for assigning dates.** Generally, B'nei Mitzvot are held on Shabbat morning. The date process is managed by our B'nei Mitzvah coordinator.

## **3. Attendance**

Religious Education and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process are intrinsically linked. Day School students are expected to be students in good standing at Levine Academy or Akiba Academy in order to have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Religious School students are expected to be students in good standing at the Weitzman Family Religious School, including (but not limited to) complying with the attendance policy of the Religious School. If a student's attendance does not comply with the Religious School's policy, this can be grounds for not having a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Shearith Israel.

## **4. Shabbat Attendance Requirements**

It is the congregation's goal that each student who becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Shearith Israel feels comfortable with religious services held at Shearith Israel. In order to qualify for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child is required to attend services in the Aaron Family Main Sanctuary, the Beck Family Sanctuary, the Fonberg Chapel, or Beit Aryeh, depending on where the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will take place. As such, the following attendance requirement has been adopted for all B'nei Mitzvah candidates:

In the eighteen (18) months prior to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each student is required to attend a total of twenty (20) religious services at Shearith Israel. This requirement must be completed two months prior to the assigned date and is broken down into two categories as follows:

- A. Ten (10) of these twenty (20) must be fulfilled at Shabbat morning services and five (5) Friday night services at either the Douglas Main Campus or Beit Aryeh.
  - To maximize the learning experience, the student is expected to arrive between 9:30 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. (when Shacharit is chanted), to participate in and follow the service and to remain in the sanctuary until the conclusion of the service.

- B. Attending any Shabbat or Festival service (not including High Holy Days) at Shearith Israel or at Beit Aryeh may fulfill the additional five (5).

For example, a student who attends any Festival service on Pesach, Shavuot or Sukkot would receive credit towards this second category. Certainly, additional Saturday morning services attended in the sanctuary would count as well. (*High Holiday services will not be counted towards this number*). For each of these services, students are, once again, expected to arrive as the service begins, to participate, and to remain until the conclusion of the service.

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend Shabbat and Festival services with their children. Children learn and develop commitment through example. These requirements are minimal enough to allow students to attend services at other synagogues as well, a practice we wholeheartedly endorse.

## **5. Parents' Requirements for Shabbat Attendance**

Parents are expected to attend at least ten (10) of these services with their child. This will ensure parental familiarity with the service and set a good example for your child.

Parents are expected to participate as Shabbat Greeters on the day their child sits on the Bimah. This allows for both the student and the parents to learn about the Shabbat service and become more comfortable with their roles on the day of their own *simcha*.

## **6. Sitting on the Bimah**

Approximately three (3) months prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, he/she will receive an invitation to sit on the *Bimah* for a Shabbat service prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We expect parents to participate as greeters at this service.

Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately (boys – suit and tie; girls – appropriate dress of a modest length or a pantsuit).

## **7. Individual Bar/Bat Mitzvah Instruction**

Students and Parents will meet with the Cantor approximately 13 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Families will choose between two plans.

**Plan A** will include **28 tutoring sessions**, beginning **8 months prior** and will not include Haftarah studies.

**Plan B** will include **48 tutoring sessions**, beginning **12 months prior** and will include Haftarah studies.

Your child will be assigned, by the synagogue, an approved tutor and time, which will be set on a weekly basis. Using other unapproved tutors as a primary tutor will not be permitted. The tutor will meet with each student for 30 minutes per week. The first month of tutoring, students will work on Trope, then will begin work on preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, which will include the chanting of the Torah and/or Haftarah portions as well as the chanting of the prayers. The B'nei Mitzvah office oversees the administration of the tutoring process. If there are scheduling conflicts or other concerns regarding the tutoring, please contact Sandi Burt in the B'nei Mitzvah office at 214-939-7315. The Hazzan meets with each tutor monthly in order to receive updates on the progress of every student. If you have any concern at all regarding the progress of your child, first address this with your individual tutor. However, at any time, feel free to contact the Hazzan to discuss the progress of your child.

### **8. Day School Students**

The tutoring process will be the same for Day School students as described above for Religious School students.

### **9. Meetings with the Ritual Director**

Six (6) months prior to the ceremony your child will meet with our Ritual Director for approximately 30 minutes. This meeting is to assess the progress of the student and highlight areas on which the student must focus in preparation for the ceremony. Your child will meet again at one month prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah for one hour.

### **10. Meetings with Hazzan Zhrebker**

Approximately Thirteen (13) months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the family will meet with the Hazzan for 45 minutes to review the process and receive their B'nei Mitzvah binder. Four months and two months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the student will meet with the Hazzan for 30 minutes to assess progress of the student. The student will meet again two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah for a 45 minute rehearsal and then again the week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah for 1 hour for the final rehearsal.

### **11. Meetings with the Officiating Rabbi**

Four (4) months before your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, he/she will be invited to meet with the officiating Rabbi. There will be several meetings throughout this period. The purpose of the meetings is for the Rabbi and your child to get better acquainted, explore your child's Torah and/or Haftarah portions and guide your child in writing their speech, which will be given during the service. In addition to meetings, email is used to facilitate this process.



There will be a final family meeting at which time all the members of the immediate family are invited to discuss the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and to talk about your child and answer questions. Of course, all of the rabbis are available at any time to assist you or your family in this process.

## **12. Final Rehearsal**

The final rehearsal will be scheduled for the Friday Morning immediately preceding your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At this time, your child will meet with the Hazzan to do a complete run through of the service. Parents of the child are encouraged to attend. This is a dress rehearsal; please wear the shoes and clothing you have chosen for this special day to be sure everything is comfortable.

## **13. Photos**

Photography for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is scheduled in the hour immediately preceding or immediately following the final rehearsal. It is up to the family to contact the Rabbi, Hazzan and/or Ritual Director to invite them to be present at the time photos are taken.

## **14. Tallit and Tefillin**

Wearing tefillin during weekday morning prayers is a pillar of traditional Jewish practice, and an expectation for Congregation Shearith Israel. At religious school and prayer services for the year leading up to Bar and Bat Mitzvah, boys will be required to wear tefillin and girls will be encouraged to do so. Each Bar or Bat Mitzvah family will be expected to purchase their child their own tallit and a set of tefillin. If there are financial concerns, we will furnish the child with a pair of tefillin.

# **BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

## **1. Minyan Services**

B'nei Mitzvah are strongly encouraged to attend the morning minyan at Congregation Shearith Israel either the Monday or Thursday morning before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah when the Torah is read, at which time they will be called to the Torah for an *aliyah* and recite the *birchot hatorah* (Blessings of the Torah). Boys are required to wear *tallit* and *tefillin*. Girls are strongly encouraged to do so. If your child is willing and able, he/she may also read from the Torah that morning. Students of The Ann and Nate Levine Academy generally do this at the school, at which time their officiating rabbi will be present to share in the simcha. If you would like your child to participate in the Monday and Thursday morning minyan which begins at 7:00 a.m., please notify our Ritual Director so that we can properly plan for this aspect of your *simcha*.

## **2. Friday Night, Erev Shabbat**

All B'nei Mitzvah students are strongly encouraged to attend, with their family and guests, the Friday Night Service preceding their Bar/Bat Mitzvah either at our Main Campus or Beit Aryeh. In the months prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah you will receive an invitation to participate in the Friday night service. Students will have the opportunity to lead the *Kiddush*, recite the *Sh'ma*, lead the *V'Shamru* and other prayers as noted in the B'nei Mitzvah packet. We strongly encourage families to join us for Friday Night Services to enhance the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

## **3. The Synagogue Service**

Congregation Shearith Israel has one (1) Shabbat morning service on weeks with no Bar/Bat Mitzvah scheduled which starts at 9:30 a.m. On weeks that have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah scheduled there are two (2) Shabbat morning services. The service in the Beck Family Sanctuary or Aaron Family Main Sanctuary begins promptly at 9:30 a.m. and the Topletz Minyan (which meets in the Fonberg Chapel) starts at 9:45 a.m. Families have the opportunity to schedule a Bar/Bat Mitzvah on Shabbat morning in Beck Family Sanctuary or Aaron Family Main Sanctuary.

## **4. Presentation of Tallit**

**Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will be presented with a *tallit* by his/her parents. This takes place immediately before that portion of the service that your child will chant. If your child is chanting Shacharit, it will take place immediately before Shacharit at 9:40 a.m. If your child is not**

**chanting Shacharit, it will take place right before the Torah service.** Both the natural father and mother of the B'nei Mitzvah student participate in this presentation by reciting a special blessing and prayer for their child. Hazzan Zhrebker will review this blessing with you at the final rehearsal.

## **5. Assignment of Synagogue Honors**

An *aliyah* is the honor of being called to the Torah and reciting the blessings before and after a section is read. There are other honors associated with the Torah reading and other parts of the service that are available to you and your family on this special occasion. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family may distribute four *aliyot* (honors of being called up to the Torah) as a way to honor friends and/or family. It is customary to give this honor to the parents and grandparents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and then to other members of the family or friends.

Additional honors available to you are:

***Hagbah*** – Raising the Torah. Please select one person. This should be someone capable of lifting a 50 pound Torah above his/her head.

***Gelilah*** – Tying the Torah. Please select one person.

***Ein Keloheinu*** – One or more individuals may lead the singing. These are usually youth who know the Hebrew and how to chant the words.

***Aleinu*** – Ark Opening. Please select up to four people.

***Anim Z'mirot*** – Ark Opening. Please select up to four people.

Anyone receiving an ark opening honor or *aliyah* to the Torah must be at least the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

**Please note: According to the policy of the synagogue, all honors on the Bimah can only be given to persons of the Jewish faith (i.e., one born of a Jewish mother or converted according to Jewish law). We respectfully request families to strictly adhere to this rule.**

Included in the appendix of this booklet are instructions regarding procedure and dress codes for those given honors during your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## **6. Torah Blessings**

Included in the appendix of this booklet are the appropriate Torah blessings to be recited before and after the reading of the Torah. Those who will receive Torah honors are encouraged to review them. They will also be reviewed with Hazzan Zhrebker during the final rehearsal.

## **7. Parents' Speech**

Congregation Shearith Israel affords parents the opportunity to offer up to 150 words to their child during the service. Parents may address their child in a personal way on Shabbat morning after the Haftorah. During the Mincha service parents' remarks are usually given immediately following the child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah speech. In both cases the officiating Rabbi will invite the parents forward to address their child. The purpose of the speech is to briefly communicate with your child your Jewish hopes and dreams and the significance of this day in their life. It is not meant to review their academics or sports achievements or relate "inside family anecdotes."

**We respectfully request that parents limit their remarks to no more than 150 words per parent.** We encourage parents to offer words of Torah or even a D'var Torah to their child within these words. The officiating Rabbi would be happy to meet with you to help you with these remarks and to guide you in preparing for them.

## **8. Rabbi's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Talk and Presentation of Gifts.**

The officiating Rabbi will speak to your child and present, on behalf of the congregation, a certificate and a gift in recognition of this milestone in his/her life.

# **RELIGIOUS POLICIES AND PROPER ETIQUETTE IN SAFEGUARDING THE DIGNITY OF THE SERVICE**

## **1. Gifts**

Please advise your friends and family not to bring gifts to the synagogue.

## **2. Cell Phones and Pagers**

In observance of Shabbat and Festivals, all cell phones and pagers must be turned off and/or silenced so as not to disrupt the service. Cell phone usage is prohibited on Shabbat throughout the building.

## **3. Smoking**

On Shabbat smoking is prohibited everywhere on the synagogue property including the building, bathrooms, hallways or anywhere outside on the synagogue premises including the parking lots.

## **4. Photography and Videography**

No photography or videography is permitted by family or by your guests at any time while on synagogue property during Shabbat services. Please note that the synagogue automatically videotapes and tape records each service for you to have as a memento. This is done within the religious guidelines of the Conservative Movement. Public videography or photography of any kind is prohibited at all times on synagogue property during Shabbat.

## **5. Shabbat Attire**

Please advise all men and boys to wear *kippot* (skull caps), which are provided at the entrances to the sanctuary. Men and boys should wear these at all times in the Synagogue, even after the service concludes. It is our custom for all Jewish males above the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah to wear a *tallit*. Jewish women are encouraged to do so as well.

## **6. Dress Code**

**Boys are required to wear a dark suit with a tie and white shirt. Any male honored on the Bimah during the service is required to wear appropriate clothing, a kippah and tallit. Girls/Women are required to wear either an appropriate dress (shoulders must be covered) or an appropriate pantsuit or pants outfit. It is the custom at Congregation Shearith Israel for the Bat Mitzvah, Bar/Bat Mitzvah mother, and any other females who will be**

**called to the Bimah during the services to wear a head covering (hat, bow, etc., or a lace circle available at sanctuary door).**

**The Bat Mitzvah (female) is also expected to wear a Tallit on the morning of her Simcha.**

**It is the responsibility of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to inform female family and friends who will have Torah honors to have their heads properly covered while on the Bimah at any time and be dressed modestly.**

## **7. Conduct and Etiquette**

To ensure the dignity of the service and your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, discuss the following guidelines with any guests to whom they might apply:

- ◆ Newborns or infants should be with their parents toward the back of the sanctuary or close to a sanctuary door so that they can be taken out if they begin to cry or make excessive noise.
- ◆ Older children are welcome under proper parental supervision. Children must remain seated quietly while in the sanctuary and escorted out if they become anxious or boisterous.

Our congregation offers babysitting (ages 0 months-5 years) on Shabbat morning beginning at 9:30 am, in Barnett.

We are happy to accommodate children of your guests during services while they are visiting with us at Congregation Shearith Israel. We only ask their participation and cooperation if they are going to do so.

People are going to be overjoyed at seeing family and friends at this festive occasion. We ask that you withhold greetings while in the sanctuary during the service. Congratulations are certainly appropriate before or at the end of the service. Please ask your guests to turn off cell phones while in the building during Shabbat. Doctors and others expecting or having to make emergency phone calls, please step outside the building.

Gratuitous conversation during the service itself is inappropriate. In addition, no talking is permitted while the ark is open, when the Rabbis are delivering the sermon or when the Hazzan is chanting the *Amidah* and *Keddusha*.

## **8. Flowers and Kippot**

Please return the Flower Order Form to the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator at the appropriate time to specify your choice of flowers.

Personalized *kippot* are available by special order in our Sisterhood Gift Shop. Orders need to be placed at least 60 days in advance.

## **9. Social Amenities and Derech Eretz – *Invitations to Classmates and Friends***

We ask you to be sensitive to the feelings of 12 and 13 year olds. We urge you to invite all of the students of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. The Education Office will be happy to provide you with a list of all the children in your child's grade. Parents are urged to have appropriate activities for children at their receptions, to be sure that alcoholic beverages are not obtainable, and provide proper supervision.

## **10. The Kiddush**

The first word of the name of our shul is "Congregation." We welcome guests with "Shalom! Welcome to the Congregation Shearith Israel family. At Shearith Israel you will find passion, warmth, comfort and celebration."

We can do many things to foster a sense of congregation and community. The most basic mitzvah we can do in this regard is to break bread with our friends, visitors to our shul, and fellow congregants. Our Torah teaches that Abraham invited three strangers into his tent, and he and Sarah fed them bread and meat. The men turned out to be angels carrying G-d's message that Abraham and Sarah would be blessed with a son in their old age (Genesis 18, Verses 1-8). Rebecca ran to feed a stranger and his camels, and ended up being blessed with a husband, Isaac, and becoming one of the matriarchs (Genesis 24, Verses 17-20). G-d commands us to leave a sheaf in our fields, olives in our trees, and grapes in our vineyards for the stranger, the fatherless and the widow (Deuteronomy 24, Verses 19-22).

It is with the words of our Torah in mind, and the desire to forge a congregation filled with warmth, comfort and celebration, that the Board of Directors has adopted the following policy with respect to a Congregational Kiddush:

A weekly Congregational Kiddush will be held in Kaplan Auditorium.

Only caterers, florists and party planners whose personnel are **not Jewish** are permitted to set up the designated room in the synagogue on Shabbat for a reception or Kiddush or luncheon. Set-up is defined in the following way: the placement of tables, chairs, linens in the room, the placement of *pre-arranged* floral arrangements or centerpieces, the placement of pre-blown up balloons or clusters of balloons or other types of centerpieces. The blowing up of balloons, the arrangement of flowers, cutting, tying, or any other kind of assembly of centerpieces, floral arrangements or balloons is strictly prohibited on Shabbat.

**All of these preparations must be made prior to 3:00 P.M. on Friday.**

Please note that most firms use a product called super high float, which allows balloons to stay buoyant for days on end. Storage of centerpieces, floral arrangements, and the like needs to be cleared with the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator seven (7) days prior to the party or reception so that they can be properly stored when delivered by 3:00 P.M. on the Friday before.

**11. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Celebration Meal – *S'udat Mitzvah***

*A friend told me that when a caterer inevitably asked, "What's the theme of your daughter's Bat Mitzvah going to be?" he responded, "How about Judaism?"*

*Excerpt from the book "Putting God on the Guest List."*

The meal of celebration following a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called an *S'udat Mitzvah* (a meal in honor of the commandment). It is a continuation of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and a joyous and significant part of your Simcha. Remember the theme of the day is a commitment to Judaism.

Consider the importance of the message you give your child and your guests. What Jewish values do we hope this Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration will embody? You may want to discuss this with your entire family and make a list of them. Your list might include compassion, dignity, justice, learning, social action, generosity, humility, holiness, ruach, moderation, a love for the Jewish people and the Jewish homeland.

We strongly encourage you to consider celebrating the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with a kosher meal/celebration following the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Even if you don't keep kosher or have a kosher home, this observance of *kashrut* at the celebration/reception will be a powerful positive Jewish message to your child, his/her friends and to your family and guests.

We recommend that your celebration meal/reception begin with *ha-Motzi* and end with *Birkat ha-Mazon* and, where possible (celebrations after the conclusion of Shabbat), include Havdallah. In the summer months, please consider having your celebration take place on Sunday.

**12. Getting the Most out of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Following are seven (7) ways to enhance the religious significance of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

- 1) Have a kosher meal or party to celebrate the occasion.
- 2) Include *ha-Motzi*, *Birkat ha-Mazon*, and a *D'var Torah* as part of your celebration.



- 3) Have more than one set of Jewish/Israeli music and dancing.

Create centerpieces that can be used as part of the family tzedakah project, such as baskets of food or fruit to be delivered to those in need. Some families have created centerpieces out of toys or books to be given to underprivileged children. After the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the family delivers the centerpieces.

- 4) Contribute a portion of the amount of money you spend to MAZON, the Jewish Response to Hunger, (See page 19).
- 5) Attend Friday night services with your family prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah either at our main campus or at Beit Aryeh.
- 6) If your celebration takes place after Shabbat, include Havdallah at the beginning.

### **13. Shabbat Policies**

**On Saturday nights, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah party can begin no earlier than one hour after the conclusion of Shabbat if it is held at Congregation Shearith Israel.**

All items such as floral arrangements, centerpieces, balloons, decorations, etc. to be used in the set-up of Kaplan Auditorium for a party that will take place after Shabbat must be delivered to the synagogue on Friday no later than 3:00 P.M. While it is our practice that no creation, building or construction of floral arrangements, balloons or balloon clusters or decorations will be permitted on Shabbat, there are situations where time constraints are an issue.

In order to maintain the spirit of Shabbat on those occasions, after 3:00 PM on Saturday, and with the approval of the Ritual Director, we will allow **non-Jewish** individuals to prepare for the post Shabbat event. However, those activities, such as the blowing up of balloons, creating of centerpieces and the creation of certain décor that can be done prior to Shabbat will not be permitted.

# THE “MITZVAH” OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH

## A. Mitzvah Projects

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Shearith Israel is required to complete a Mitzvah project. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrates your child’s entrance into Jewish religious responsibility. One tangible way of expressing your child’s commitment to mitzvot is for him/her to participate in a personal Mitzvah project.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will be required to perform a minimum of one Mitzvah activity per month for six months, or the equivalent to 12 hours. The B’nei Mitzvah Coordinator must approve the project before you begin.

The Mitzvah project needs to be completed at least two (2) months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

## B. MAZON

MAZON is the Jewish response to hunger. It is a national organization which secures funds from individuals, organizations, churches and synagogues and then, in turn, distributes those funds throughout the country to organizations which help feed the needy.

We encourage your family to participate in MAZON even though participation is voluntary. A guideline for such contributions is generally up to 3% of the food costs for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. You will be receiving more information on MAZON and how you can participate in this important Mitzvah.

## C. Jewish Education

We, at Congregation Shearith Israel, consider your child’s continuous Jewish education to be a matter of the greatest importance. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a meaningful event only in the context of continuing Jewish education.

Congregation Shearith Israel has a wonderfully rich tradition of students continuing their Judaic studies after their completion of the Religious School Program. To reach our goal of helping our students become knowledgeable,

committed and caring members of the Conservative Jewish community we offer a program that includes a core curriculum, electives, special speakers and programs, *mitzvah* days, a Shabbaton experience and trips to other US cities. Course objectives are attained in many ways other than discussion. Teaching techniques include use of film, video, instructional gaming, role-playing, simulation and guest lecturers. Dinners, Shabbat experiences and special programs further enhance curriculum.

The Youth Community is committed to providing you with the highest quality education. Accordingly, its faculty consists of our rabbis, as well as teachers and other specialists from a variety of disciplines who have both talent and experience relating to adolescents.

Your child's continued education should be the subject of serious discussion between you and your child during this period of Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. We are available at any time for counsel and guidance on this crucial matter.

#### **D. Youth Programs**

Congregation Shearith Israel offers an extensive and active Youth Program. As part of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, we are part of an international youth organization. Programs are local, regional and national. We strongly believe that involvement in Kadima and USY strengthens Jewish identity and Jewish growth.

##### KADIMA – 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Graders

Meetings for 'Kadimaniks' are on Sunday afternoons, Saturday nights, or weeknights throughout the school year. Activities include various social and sports events, holiday programs and discussions. This is a great chance to strengthen school friendships and to start new ones. Join with *Kadimaniks* from other parts of our region at Kadima convention.

##### ZOHAR USY – 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Graders

USY provides opportunities for teens to develop leadership skills, learn more about being Jewish, form lifelong social bonds with other Jewish teens and connect with the synagogue.

***The Bar/Bat Mitzvah, which you are preparing to celebrate, is a joyous event for you and your family. We also delight in your simcha for it marks a continuation of the Jewish people and our Traditions. On this occasion, the entire staff of Congregation Shearith Israel extends to you a hearty and sincere Mazel Tov!***

## **APPENDIX**

- I. Parent Prayers**
- II. *Aliyot* Form**
- III. Ark Opening Information**
- IV. *Hagbah* and *Gelilah* Information**
- V. Fees**
- VI. Checklist**
- VII. Shofar Form**
- VIII. Flower Form**
- IX. Covenant of Remembrance**

## **I. Parent Prayers**

### **FOR A SON:**

#### **Mother**

Blessed be the Almighty who has given us the power of fulfilling our duty toward our son. We have prepared him morally and religiously for this day when the responsibility falls upon his own shoulders.

#### **Father**

Ba-rooch She-pe-ta-ra-nee  
May-on-show shel zeh

בְּרוּךְ שְׁפִטְרָנִי  
מֵעוֹנְשׁוֹ שֶׁל זֶה

### **FOR A DAUGHTER:**

#### **Mother:**

Blessed be the Almighty who has given us the power of fulfilling our duty toward our daughter. We have prepared her morally and religiously for this day when the responsibility falls upon her own shoulders.

#### **Father:**

Ba-rooch She-pe-ta-ra-nee  
May-on-sha Shel Bee-tee

בְּרוּךְ שְׁפִטְרָנִי  
מֵעוֹנֶשֶׁה שֶׁל בִּתִּי

## II. ALIYOT INFORMATION FORM

NAME and DATE OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S FULL HEBREW NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S HEBREW NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S HEBREW NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### ALIYOT:

- All families are guaranteed a minimum and a maximum of four (4) Aliyot. Each aliyah can be given to up to four (4) individuals at a time.
- Please indicate Kohen/Bar/Bat Kohen, Levi/ (Bar/Bat) Levi or Israelite for all persons (both male and female) called for an aliyah. There is only one (1) Kohen aliyah and one (1) Levi aliyah available.
- An individual may only have one (1) Torah honor.
- A Kohen/Bar/Bat Kohen can only be honored with the one Kohen aliyah. Likewise, a Levi/Bar/Bat Levi can only be honored with the Levi aliyah.
- **The order of the aliyot is decided by the Ritual Director. Please have your program approved by the Ritual Director prior to printing.**
- **Any deviations from this form should be approved by Avi Mitzner at [amitzner@shearith.org](mailto:amitzner@shearith.org).**
- All honorees must be Jewish (i.e., born of a Jewish mother or converted according to Jewish law) and be of Bar/Bat Mitzvah age.

### TORAH HONORS:

Name(s)	Kohen	Levi	Israelite	Relationship
				<b>PARENTS</b>

### HAGBAH: (Raising the Torah)

Name(s)	Kohen	Levi	Israelite	Relationship

### GELILAH: (Tying the Torah)

Name(s)	Kohen	Levi	Israelite	Relationship

**NON-TORAH HONORS:**

**EIN KELOHEINU: (One or more individuals to lead)**

Name(s)	Kohen	Levi	Israelite	Relationship

**ALEINU: Ark Opening (Two, three or four individuals for this honor.)**

Name(s)	Kohen	Levi	Israelite	Relationship

**ANIM ZMIROT: Ark Opening (Two, three or four individuals for this honor.)**

Name(s)	Kohen	Levi	Israelite	Relationship

**ADON OLAM: Leader (This is given to current B'nei Mitzvah Students, it is not assigned by the parents)**

I affirm these Aliyot comply with the guidelines listed on page one.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### **III.**

## **ARK OPENING INFORMATION FOR HONOREES WHO WILL OPEN THE ARK**

As you **face** the Ark:

### **in Aaron Family Main Sanctuary**

- The Ark opens on your right at curtain. Pull the Blue Cord to OPEN, White Cord to CLOSE.
- If two people are honorees, ONE OPENS the Ark and the OTHER CLOSES the Ark.
- After the Ark is opened, please take one step down from the Ark's platform. WHEN THE SINGING STOPS, please close the Ark and be seated.

### **in Beck Family Sanctuary**

- Pull the Ark doors OPEN and push the doors to CLOSE.
- If two people are honorees, BOTH OPEN and CLOSE the Ark.
- WHEN THE SINGING STOPS, please close the Ark and be seated.



## IV.

### **HAGBAH and GELILAH INFORMATION**

#### **FOR THE HONOREES WHO WILL LIFT AND DRESS THE TORAH.**

Those honored with an *aliyah* or other honor ascends to the *Bimah* on the right staircase (as you face the Ark). You will descend on the left staircase of the *Bimah*.

*Hagbah* (lifter) and *Gelilah* (roller & dresser) ascend the right staircase together and the *gabbai* will instruct you when it is appropriate to move to the Torah.

The **HAGBAH** has the honor of lifting the Torah at the central reading table at the end of the Torah reading. The *Hagbah* will grab the Torah by the handles and pull the Torah towards his/her body. Then the *Hagbah* will push down on the handles to angle the Torah and lift the Torah straight up. The *Hagbah* then turns around to face the Ark and moves to sit in the chair as instructed by the *gabbai*. The *Hagbah* will support the Torah as the *Gelilah* dresses it.

The **GELILAH** has the honor of rolling and dressing the Torah scroll as it is being held by the *Hagbah*. The *Gelilah* rolls the Torah closed as it is supported by the *Hagbah*, wraps the tie around the Torah and dresses the Torah in this order:

Cover  
Yad  
Crowns

Before leaving the *Bimah* shake hands with the *gabbaim* at the lectern, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Hazzan, Rabbis and officers and descend the left staircase.

*Mazel Tov to your family!*

## **V.**

### **FEES**

A Member's total fee amount for Bar/Bat Mitzvah covers:

- ◆ Study materials, USB drive and other related costs
- ◆ individual tutoring lessons for each student – weekly 30 minute sessions for 28 sessions over 8 months or 48 sessions over 12 months
- ◆ flowers for the pulpit
- ◆ Security
- ◆ DVD of the actual ceremony

The fee **must be paid 3 months prior** to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. (See payment schedule and time line on checklist.) If you are unable to meet this payment schedule, please contact Kim West, Chief Operating Officer, at 214.361.6606, immediately.

**VI.**  
**BAR/BAT MITZVAH CHECKLIST**

<b><u>STUDENT</u></b>	<b><u>Approximate Time Before Bar/Bat Mitzvah</u></b>	<b><u>PARENTS</u></b>
	3 – 4 years	Orientation-Date Assignment
	12 – 20 months	Parent Information/Educational Meeting
Start attending services	18 months	20 Shabbat attendance requirements begin
	14 months	Receive B'nei Mitzvah contract and Tutoring notice
	13 months	Family meeting with Cantor to review process and receive Bar/Bat Mitzvah Binder
	13 months	Submit Mitzvah projects proposal
	13 months	Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee charged to account
<b>Begin Tutoring sessions – Plan B</b>	12 months	<b>Plan B – with Haftarah</b>
	12 months	Approval of Mitzvah Project
	12 months	Make building reservations for Shabbat dinner or for Saturday night party
<b>Begin tutoring sessions – Plan A</b>	8 months	<b>Plan A – without Haftarah</b>
Meet with Avi Mitzner	6 months	
Meet with Hazzan	4 months	Contact Catering Liaison with name of proposed caterer
Speech appointments with Rabbi begin	4 months	
Complete Mitzvah Project	3 months	Fee payment complete
	3 months	Send in Shofar form& picture
	3 months	Receive date to sit on Bimah
	3 months	Follow-up on Mitzvah Project
	2 months	Order Flowers
	2 months	Send in Aliyot Form
Meet with Hazzan	2 months	
Rehearsal with Avi Mitzner	1 month	
Meet with Hazzan	2 weeks	
Student sits on Bimah	1 or more weeks	
Final Rehearsal with Hazzan	Week of	Final Rehearsal with Hazzan

## VII.

### B'NEI MITZVAH SHOFAR INFORMATION

BAR/BAT MITZVAH NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BAR/BAT MITZVAH DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** To insure publication of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah announcement in the *Shofar*, this form and a picture must be delivered to the B'nei Mitzvah office by the deadline. If the following information is not received by the above date, the synagogue will not be responsible for its omission from the *Shofar*.

- **Picture Requirement:** A glossy black and white **or** color print of your child. This picture may be mailed or a jpeg may be emailed to [sandib@shearith.org](mailto:sandib@shearith.org). Please DO NOT place paper clip or write on the back of the actual photo. This may leave marks on the photo.

Please fill in the following names as you want them printed in *the Shofar*.

➤ **School Attending:** \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **Parent's Names:**

Father: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **Paternal Grandparents:** \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **Maternal Grandparents:** \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **Living Great Grandparents:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **Names of Siblings:** \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to sponsor the *Shofar* \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ NO

COST OF THE *Shofar*: \$150.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Check Enclosed or

☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD

The issuer of the card identified on this item is authorized to pay the amount shown as total upon proper presentation. I promise to pay such total (together with any other charges due thereon) subject to and in accordance with the agreement governing the use of such card.

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

We will NOT process this form without the

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ V-code \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**VIII.**  
**FLOWER SELECTION FORM**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ **All White**
- ☐ **White and Green:** Elegant and Simple
- ☐ **Jewel Tones:** Gem Stone Colors may include Deep Pinks, Reds, Oranges, Greens
- ☐ **Bright Colors:** May include Hot Pink, Oranges, Yellows, Reds
- ☐ **Moroccan Colors:** May include Hot Pink, Oranges, Yellows, Reds
- ☐ **Feminine Colors:** Pinks and White, Green may be included
- Seasonal Colors:**
- ☐ **Spring Mix:** (Available all year around) Yellow and White, Green may be included
- ☐ **Fall Mix:** (Sept - Nov) Oranges, Gold, Yellows and Burgundy tones, with seasonal foliage

We are offering a selection of flower arrangements that will look best on the Bimah of our sanctuary. Please check the box for the color choice that you wish to have at your child's simcha.

Flowers are included in your Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee. If you wish to discuss a different color scheme, specify specific flower varieties, or enhance any of the selections (for an additional fee) please email or call our florist at Central Market.

Jeff Starr ([starr.jeffrey@heb.com](mailto:starr.jeffrey@heb.com))

214.234.7000 or 214.728.5442

**Parent Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **IX.**

# **COVENANT OF REMEMBRANCE**

A Project of

**The Dallas Holocaust Museum/  
Center for Education and Tolerance**

211N. Record St., Ste. 100 Dallas, TX 75202  
(214) 741-7500, ext. 104

## **WHAT IS A “COVENANT OF REMEMBRANCE”?**

A “Covenant of Remembrance” is a special addition to a bar- or bat-mitzvah that honors a child who died during the Holocaust.

## **WHY SHOULD I DO A “COVENANT OF REMEMBRANCE”?**

To express your sympathy to the 1½ million Jewish children who were murdered during the Holocaust, to empathize with a single individual of approximately the same age and to remind your congregation of the importance of remembering the victims of the Holocaust.

## **WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO DO A “COVENANT OF REMEMBRANCE”?**

You can meet with a Survivor of the Holocaust and have him or her tell you about their sister or brother or another relative who was a child when they died during the Holocaust. Another alternative is that you read the diary or a portion of the diary of a child who perished. Then you will tell that child’s story at some point during your bar- or bat-mitzvah service. You may also include special readings or prayers in the course of the service.

## **STEPS TOWARD A COVENANT OF REMEMBRANCE**

1. Call the Dallas Holocaust Museum at 214-741-7500, ext. 104 to set up an appointment for the child and at least one parent to meet Kathy Chapman, Director of Education.
2. After making the commitment to do a Covenant of Remembrance, get approval from your synagogue.
3. Meeting a Holocaust Survivor whom you know or the museum can arrange that.
4. Listen to the Survivor and learn about the relative who died in the Holocaust.
5. If you prefer another alternative, we can direct you to appropriate readings and diaries.
6. Plan the service in cooperation with the appropriate synagogue personnel. Include a speech about the Covenant of Remembrance and consider incorporating special prayers or musical selections. Suggested readings and other materials are available at the Dallas Holocaust Museum as is material from other youngsters’ Covenants of Remembrance.
7. If you are printing program for your guests, include an explanation of the Covenant of Remembrance and biographical data on the child including a photograph, if possible.
8. Invite the Survivor to the service. Make sure they have transportation. It would be nice to seat them in a special place and/or give them an aliyah.

9. After the bar or bat-mitzvah, supply the DHM with copies of any printed materials and, if possible, photographs of the bar or bat-mitzvah child with the Survivor. If the service was videotaped, provide a copy of that, too.
10. While the Dallas Holocaust Museum offers its services free of charge, it's a mitzvah to make a donation to the museum in appreciation for its help. B'nai mitzvah often contribute part of their monetary gifts or request that guests make contributions.

**BACKGROUND** (prepared by Carol Wigder, mother of the first child to participate in Dallas)

In September of 1993 I read an article in the Washington Post describing a bar-mitzvah ceremony in which the bar-mitzvah boy “twinned” with a child who died during the Holocaust. This project was sponsored by the Washington, D.C. area Holocaust Survivors Organization and it got me thinking. Then in May 1993, a local Holocaust Survivor, Rosalie Schiff, became a bat-mitzvah at Congregation Shearith Israel and she made a short speech in which she mentioned her brother and other children who perished during the Holocaust. I was inspired with the idea that this project could be offered through the Dallas Holocaust Museum as another mitzvah for a child to perform on this special day.

The term “Covenant of Remembrance” was adopted at the suggestion of Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman of Temple Emanu El because *remembrance* is such a central tenet of Judaism. Pairing a bar- or bat-mitzvah youngster with a specific Jewish child-victim personalizes the Holocaust and puts a human face on the tragedy, pain, and loss. It is the reason that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gives its visitors “Identity Cards” of individual victims when they enter, and that names of child victims are recited continuously in Yad Vashem’s children’s memorial.

My daughter Dena approached a Survivor in Dallas, Mrs. Helen Micmacher Neuberg, who told us about her younger brother Chaskel and her younger sister Sarah as she described her life before the war and recalled memories of Jewish rituals in Poland. She described the day when the Nazis came into her town and rounded up almost all the Jews. She was the only member of her family to escape, which she did by pretending to be a Christian and volunteering to work as a maid in Germany. Helen hid her true identity and managed to elude the Nazis.

We looked at her photographs and we cried. My daughter became a bat-mitzvah on February 12, 1994 and there was not a dry eye in the Temple when she read her speech and remembered Chaskel and Sarah. The special prayer selections and music that we included in the service were carefully chosen and added tremendously to the impact.

Unbeknownst to us, a church group was touring the Temple that day and, as a part of their visit, attended the bat-mitzvah. As a result of their presence, we realized that not only had we fulfilled the commandment to remember but also the one to educate. Both Jews and Gentiles in the congregation that day learned a great deal about the Holocaust because of our Covenant of Remembrance.

The inclusion of the Covenant of Remembrance in Dena’s bat-mitzvah was a most gratifying experience for our entire family. When we look back, we still feel very proud that we chose to make this meaningful link with a most tragic part of our people’s recent history. While we were not able to change history, we feel that through the Covenant of Remembrance, we made a positive statement that the Jewish people continue to live and thrive. We encourage other Jewish families to consider including the Covenant of Remembrance in your child’s special day.

Participating in a Covenant of Remembrance is a very meaningful way for a Jewish family to express their commitment to the Jewish people. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity for their child to form a personal relationship with a Holocaust Survivor. This relationship often lasts long after the bar or bat-mitzvah and will have a profound effect on the youngster. This experience makes a very deep impression on the child. It will establish for them an intense link to their people, that hopefully will never be broken.

For the Survivors, a Covenant of Remembrance provides an unexpected opportunity to honor the memory of their lost sisters or brothers or other relatives. It shows them that other Jews care about their losses and suffering. You will truly be doing a mitzvah for the Survivor and, indeed, for the Jewish people, by participating in a Covenant of Remembrance.

### Child Victims of the Holocaust

#### Speaking to Us Through Their Diaries

Books containing diary entries of children 13 and under:

*Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, ed. by Alexandra Zapruder, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven and London, 2002, ISBN 0-300-09243-1.

*We Are Witnesses: Five Diaries of Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust*, by Jacob Boas, Scholastic, Inc., New York et al, 1995, ISBN 0-590-84475-X.

*Children in the Holocaust and World War II: Their Secret Diaries*, by Laurel Holliday, Washington Square Press, New York, et al, 1995, ISBN 0-671-52055-5.



**Congregation Shearith Israel  
B'nei Mitzvah Policy Agreement**

We, \_\_\_\_\_, having read all of the Congregation Shearith Israel B'nei Mitzvah Policies herewith, confirm that we understand the information stated herein and acknowledge our willingness to abide by these policies by affixing our signatures below.

Acknowledged and agreed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**