

*Congregation
Achduth Vesholom
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook*

תורה נביא וכתובים
אשר נתן לנו
אלהינו

SUBJECT TO THE COMMANDMENTS



THIRTEEN ONE BECOMES

Created by Rabbi Jonathan R. Katz
Reviewed by Rabbi Javier E. Cattapan 1-6-13

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BAR/BAT MITZVAH - AN IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS LANDMARK

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an important landmark in the religious life of our young people. This handbook should serve as a useful resource in guiding you through the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process at the Temple.

Although we make significant demands on our B'nei Mitzvah students, it is important to recognize that the requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be a springboard for abiding spiritual growth if pursued in a concerted, consistent manner. These requirements are intended to stimulate a thirst for Jewish learning and experience.

We recognize that each student is different. However, our goal for each student is that he or she is challenged but not frustrated; we hope that each student will derive from his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah an empowering sense of achievement, confidence, and pride as a Jew.

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not easy. Sacrifices of time and some extra-curricular activities often need to be made. I think that what is temporarily displaced is more than offset by what is enduringly gained. May you and your child be blessed with a rewarding and fruitful journey towards the most important goal!

B'shalom,
Javier E. Cattapan
Rabbi



B'NEI MITZVAH PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

To be thirteen is to stand between two worlds: The past of childhood and the promise of adulthood. The teen years are the bridge between them. Crossing that bridge can be, at times, precarious. An important aspect of becoming a B'nei Mitzvah at Congregation Achduth Vesholom is that the experience helps provide our young people with the kinds of strengths (e.g., discipline, self-reliance, spiritual discovery, capacity for abstract thinking), they will need to navigate the journey toward a meaningful adult religious life.

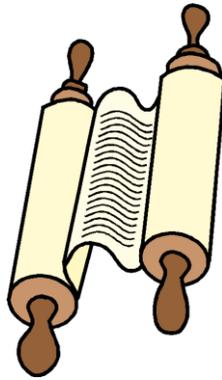
The Congregation's B'nei Mitzvah program maintains high standards. Our students are expected to acquire a significant amount of Jewish competency. In working with a tutor over an extended period of time, studying with the Rabbi, and leading a service, our students are asked to meet adult demands. Through focused engagement of Jewish texts (Torah, Midrash, prayers) and the completion of a range of assignments that include a community service/tzedakah component, the program seeks to cultivate both personal and spiritual growth.

A student typically begins working with a tutor 9-12 months prior to the service. Students should possess Hebrew competency before they begin their Bar/Bat Mitzvah studies. If it is determined that a student's Hebrew proficiency is not at a level required for Bar/Bat Mitzvah training, the student may be asked to postpone the event or seek remedial tutoring. Ideally, students should already be fairly familiar with the Shabbat service from having attended services and studied the prayers in religious school.

The tutor will work primarily with the student on mastering the prayers of the service and the Torah and Haftarah portions. If sufficient Hebrew progress is being made, the tutor and Rabbi will seek greater engagement of the student in terms of Jewish history, culture, and tradition. The Hebrew requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah are straightforward. The tutor should not be so much teaching his or her student Hebrew but reviewing material the student has been practicing at home. A student can obtain a copy of the Shabbat morning service CD from the office well before formal training begins. It is never too early to begin.

The Rabbi helps place B'nei Mitzvah in the context of the student's life, works with the student to understand the meaning of the prayers and Torah portion, monitors the student's Hebrew progress with the tutor, reviews completed B'nei Mitzvah projects with the student, and helps the student develop a D'var Torah (sermonette).

If a child's goal is only to get his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah "over with," the Congregation has failed in its mission. It is our sincere hope that this concentrated period of Jewish engagement can foster an appreciation of Jewish identity that will be a source of religious strength, value and pride.



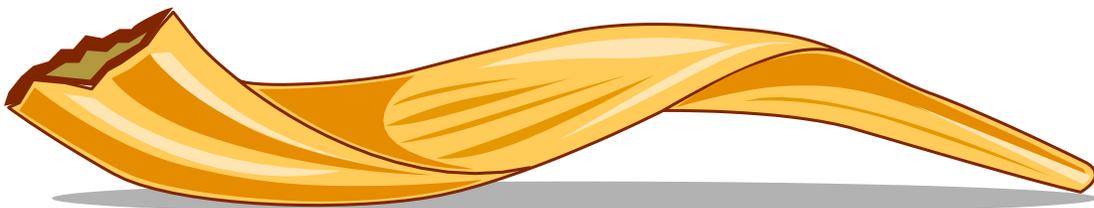
WHAT IS A BAR/BAT MITZVAH?

The Bible never mentions the age of thirteen as the age of adulthood, nor does it ever refer to the term “Bar/Bat Mitzvah.” However, by the third century CE it became accepted that thirteen-year-old boys and twelve-year-old girls had reached both the age of physical maturity and adult religious responsibility.

The Talmud (Mishnah Niddah 5:6) states that a vow is valid when made by someone age 13 or above. The most explicit recognition of 13 as the age when a young person is considered to be a fully responsible member of the community is found in another section of the Talmud: “Thirteen is the age for the fulfillment of the commandments.” That Judaism chose the age of 13 to signify adulthood is not surprising. In many ancient societies, young people at the age of 13 were already working side by side with their parents.

The exact date the first ceremonies were held to formally acknowledge a young man had reached the age of 13 is not known. However, from records of the time, they seemed to be widespread by the 13th century. There was no corresponding ceremony for young women. According to Jewish law, women were not required to fulfill many commandments because family responsibilities took precedence. The first Bat Mitzvah in North America took place in 1922, when Judith Kaplan, daughter of Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, offered the blessing and then read a selection in Hebrew and English from a book (Chumash) containing the Torah.

For a long time, Reform congregations, including Achduth Vesholom, did not encourage Bar Mitzvah because it was felt that 13 was too young an age for formal initiation into adulthood. As a result, Reform congregations adopted a Confirmation service that recognized the “coming of age” of both young men and young women. However, because of the pull of religious tradition, Bar Mitzvah was revived in Reform and, in accordance with Reform’s emphasis on the equality of women, Bat Mitzvah also was instituted.

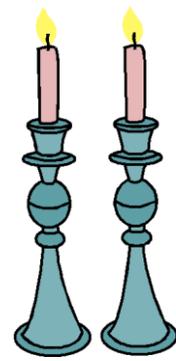


CONGREGATION ACHDUTH VESHOLOM B'NEI MITZVAH REQUIREMENTS

- 1) The B'nei Mitzvah's family must be a full member in good standing of Congregation Achduth Vesholom. Your financial obligations to the Temple need to be current six months before the event. Please contact the treasurer to verify that you are up-to-date with your dues, Religious School tuition, and any fees owed to the Temple. The B'nei Mitzvah fee is due six months in advance of the event.
- 2) The student must have attended religious school at least three years before their B'nei Mitzvah ceremony and a minimum of three years of midweek Hebrew school. The student must have an attendance record of at least 70% and may be asked to complete extra tutoring in order to satisfy the B'nei Mitzvah requirements.
- 3) The B'nei Mitzvah date will be set with the Rabbi and the B'nei Mitzvah coordinator at least one year prior to the ceremony. Student should be 13 years of age at the time of the service.
- 4) The student must demonstrate an appropriate level of commitment, respect, and emotional maturity. Failure to meet this expectation will be addressed by the Rabbi, B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator, parents, and tutor.
- 5) The student must complete his or her remaining B'nei Mitzvah project assignments, including the community service requirement at least two months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. If a student is not completing the project assignments in a timely manner, the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator together with the Rabbi, religious school director, and religious school committee can act to postpone the event.
- 6) Completion of a D'var Torah (sermonette) discussing the Torah portion's relevance to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's life.
- 7) The student and his/her parents are expected to attend services together regularly. In the school year preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year of study, the student must attend at least 7 Shabbat services. During the 12 months directly preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service the student is required to attend 7 Shabbat services with at least 4 Torah Services. The majority of these services must be at Congregation Achduth Vesholom. It is expected that the candidate's family will join the student for most of these services. Service attendance cards are available as you enter the sanctuary. The completed and signed cards should be left at the Temple's office window immediately following the service.
- 8) The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony should be a milestone in the religious education of a Jewish young person, not signal its conclusion. By undertaking to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Achduth Vesholom, the student pledges to continue his or her religious education into the High School program.

Note: These requirements are subject to the legitimate special needs of the student. Each student is an individual of varying abilities and talents. This is taken into consideration when working with our Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates. Students who have a learning disability or other special circumstance should notify the Rabbi before the beginning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process.

THE SERVICE ITSELF



FRIDAY EVENING SERVICE

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah sits on the bima during the service. The family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads the congregation in the lighting of the Shabbat candles and remains on the bima for the blessing over the wine. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah, in consultation with the Rabbi, can help lead the service. However, please be aware that during Friday evening worship there might be other simchas being celebrated, special events, and creative worship experiences that may reduce the student's participation in the service. Friday night 'belongs' to the congregation, therefore, any special requests concerning the service times, participation, service content, etc will be considered by the Rabbi and Ritual Committee.

SATURDAY MORNING SERVICE

The parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah sit on the bimah facing the congregation. After welcoming everyone to the service the Rabbi will usually ask that the individual(s) designated to present the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the tallit, to come to the bima. Following this, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will take over the leading of the service. The required prayers (see below) begin on page 312. However, the service usually begins with some introductory prayers and meditations taken from the section of the prayer book between pages 290-311. The readings (Hebrew and/or English) will be chosen by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the Rabbi during the last two months prior to the service. Additional readings and prayers can be offered in the service by members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's family. These readings do not necessarily have to be from the prayer book but do require Rabbinic approval.

The Torah service begins on page 362. When the Ark is opened, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's parents join him or her in taking out the Torah. The Torah, symbolizing the transmission of Jewish learning and heritage *l'dor vador*, from generation to generation, is usually passed from father to mother (provided that both are Jewish) and then to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. After the Torah is passed, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah; leads a procession around the sanctuary before reaching the bimah. The student is expected to read approximately 15 verses of the Torah. Three aliyot, including the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's, will be given during the Torah reading.

Following the Torah reading, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will lead the Haftarah portion. The Hebrew Bible includes the Torah (Five books of Moses), the books of the *N'vei-iem* (Prophets), and the books of the *Ke-tuvim* (Writings, including the books of Daniel, Esther, Song of Songs, Lamentations and Ruth). The selection taken from the Haftarah is chosen because it complements what is found in the Torah portion that day. After the Haftarah reading, which is read in Hebrew a prayer for healing (the Mishebeirach) is offered followed by the return of the Torah to the Ark.

After this, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah offers a *D'var Torah* (or sermonette). When this is completed, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is joined by his or her parents at the lectern for their reflections. Then representatives from the Congregation's board of directors and from the Fort Wayne Jewish Federation will present gifts to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and offer congratulations. The Rabbi will then give a charge to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah before taking him or her before the Ark to bestow the Priestly Benediction.

Announcements are then made followed by the Aleinu, Kaddish and closing songs. If desired, names of members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's family who have passed away may be offered even though it is not their Yahrzeit.

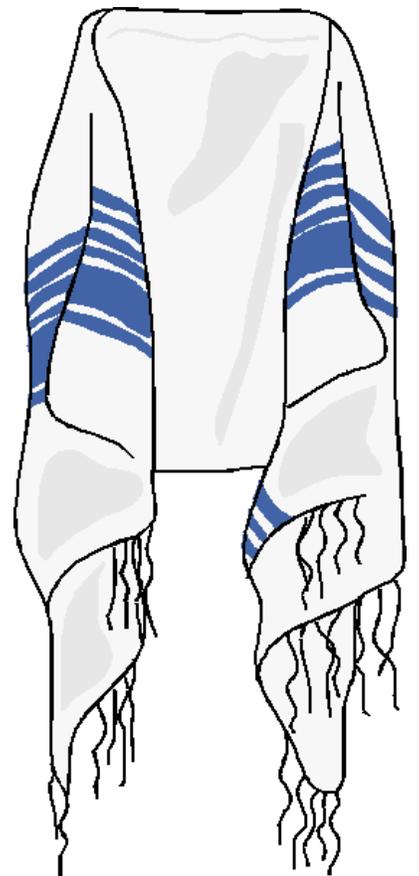
Students may choose to chant their Torah and Haftarah portions. However, a tutor who can instruct the student in chanting is not always available. If this is the case, a student can use a CD of the chanted portions as a study tool. The student would be able to chant the portions but would not know to identify and use the trope, the melodic notes from which the chanting is derived.

With approval of the Rabbi, students may use poems, readings and music found outside the prayer book.

REQUIRED HEBREW PRAYERS

Page & Prayer

Friday Evening Kiddush p. 123	
Prayer for putting on Tallit p. 190 or 289	
290 Ma tovu (First Two Lines)	
297 Chatima*	
312 Reader's Kaddish	
313 Barchu – Call to Worship	
313 Yotzeir – Creation	
316 Ahavah Raba – Revelation (first section)	
316 V'ha-eir ay-neinu – (song only)	
317 Chatima*	
318 Shema	
319 V'ahavtah (chanted)	
322 Mi Chamocha	367 Rom'mu
323-337 T'filah:	368 Torah blessing (before)
324 Avot v'Imahot	368 Torah blessing (after)
325 G'vurot	372 Haftarah blessing (before)
326-328 Kedusha	372 Haftarah blessing (after)
328 V'shamru	374 Y'hallelu
329 Chatima*	374 Hodo
330 Avodah (optional)	374 Etz chaim hi
331 Hodaah (Modim Anachnu...)	
333 Chatima*	
334 Sim Shalom (first line)	
337 Oseh Shalom or Yih'yu L'ratzon	
362 Ein kamocho, Av Harachamim	
364 Ki mitzion	
366 Baruch Shenatan, Shema, Gadlu, L'cha Adonai	

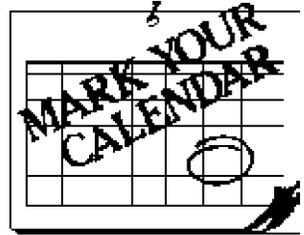


* The Chatima is the one line in Hebrew at the end of prayer also at the end of an English prayer.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH TIME LINE

Fifteen Months to One Year

- _____ Make (or confirm) date of the service with the Temple office and the Rabbi
- _____ Hebrew proficiency evaluation (student must pass to confirm date of the service)
- _____ Can begin use of Saturday morning service CD as study tool
- _____ Obtain B'nei Mitzvah Handbook



One Year to 10 Months

- _____ The Rabbi initially meets with Bar/Bat Mitzvah individually
- _____ Student receives booklet containing Torah and Haftarah portions
- _____ B'nei Mitzvah family meets with the Rabbi
- _____ Confirm tutor and (perhaps) begin study schedule
- _____ Can begin work on Bar/Bat Mitzvah Projects Requirement
- _____ Reserve rooms needed at the Temple, meet with Temple Administrator to review event.

10 Months to 5 Months

- _____ Continue study schedule with tutor (Rabbi monitors)
- _____ Complete at least 50% of Bar/Bat Mitzvah Projects and share them with Rabbi
- _____ Nudge your child to read prayers to you.
- _____ Select and confirm musical choice for the service

5 Months to 3 Months

- _____ Continue study schedule with tutor
- _____ Meet with Rabbi to discuss additional projects including Community Service
- _____ Meet with Rabbi to work on D'var Torah

3 Months to 2 Months

- _____ Continue to meet with tutor
- _____ Continue to work with Rabbi on D'var Torah
- _____ Complete most projects
- _____ Listen to your child read prayers and Torah portion weekly
- _____ Provide copy of the invitation and picture (if desired) of Bar/Bat Mitzvah to Temple office to be used in the Bulletin

2 Months to One Month

- _____ Continue to meet with tutor and practice reading from actual Torah scroll
- _____ Continue to work with Rabbi on D'var Torah
- _____ Meet with musical choice and Rabbi regarding the music for the service
- _____ Pick ushers (must be Temple members)
- _____ Meet with Administrator to coordinate events taking place at the Temple

One Month Countdown

- _____ Continue to study with the tutor in Sanctuary (Rabbi monitors)
- _____ Confirm who will be in the service
- _____ Continue to refine D'var Torah

Two-Week Countdown

- _____ Complete D'var Torah
- _____ Full rehearsal in Sanctuary
- _____ Confirm service brochure information with the Temple office
- _____ Confirm Oneg, floral, catering arrangements with Temple administrator

One Week Countdown

- _____ Go over final details
- _____ Breathe deeply. Everything will work out well.

Last-Minute Reminders

Remember to Bring to the Temple

- _____ Tallitot, Kippot
- _____ Challah, wine, other food
- _____ List of Hebrew names for Aliyot
- _____ Container of tissues



PARTICIPATION & HONORS DURING THE SERVICE

While the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student is the focus, his or her family can play an important role in the event. Families need to make an effort to attend Shabbat services together rather than only seek to ensure the Bar/Bat Mitzvah personally fulfills the service requirement. Family members should, together, discuss what the Bar/Mitzvah is learning. Talking about the post Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration is certainly understandable and necessary but it should not be to the point that the Bar or Bat Mitzvah itself is diminished. Non-family members and friends can participate in the service.

There are several options for family participation in the service.

*Family members can offer a prayer or meditation during the service. Prayers can be found on pages 376 and 377. Other reading need to be approved by the Rabbi.

*Parents and Grandparents, if Jewish, may join the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the bima to pass the Torah after it is removed from the Ark.

*Aliyot: Being called to the Torah to pronounce the blessing is known as an *aliyah*. Parents, grandparents, older siblings, aunts, uncles, etc. may be honored with an *aliyah*. Families may have up to three *aliyot*. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah always offers the final *Aliyah*. You will need to provide the Rabbi with the Hebrew name of each person (if they have one) to be honored. Please make sure that the person being called to bless the Torah knows the blessings well. The blessings in Hebrew and transliteration can be found at the back of this handbook. While the prayer can be offered in English, Hebrew is much preferred.

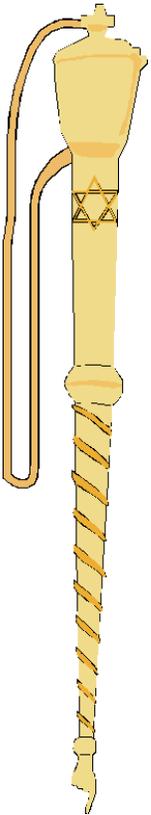
*Family members may be called upon to help dress the Torah when it is being returned to the Ark.

*Parent's Prayer/Reflections: The parent's prayer for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah follows the D'var Torah. It can be found on page 380 of the prayer book. Most parents offer a short reflection on the meaning of this moment in their life and the life of the B'nei Mitzvah instead of or in addition to the Parent's Prayer.

TEMPLE POLICIES AND OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

The Temple staff is pleased to help you plan for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Understanding the policies in advance and adhering to them will make everything run smoothly. Close communication with the Temple's administrator is essential.

1. To confirm a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, the family must be a member of Congregation Achduth Vesholom in good standing. All membership dues and fees must be paid six months before the service. We ask you to contact the treasurer well in advance to ensure your financial obligations to the Temple are current.
2. Bat/Bar Mitzvah can honor (with a "twinning") a Jew their age who did not survive the Holocaust. B'nei Mitzvah receives information about this Jewish young person and call him or her to mind during the service. Please see the B'nei Mitzvah coordinator about this program.
3. Application for use of the Temple's facilities for your celebration must be made with the Temple Administrator at least six months before the event. All room rentals, setups, deliveries as well as use of caterers are to be cleared through the administrator's office. (See Temple Administrator for forms.)
4. Temple custodial staff must be present at all functions. Custodial staff will be the first to arrive and the last to leave the Temple. No member of the custodial staff should be expected to assist in the serving of food or drink, or to bus tables. Their function is to assure that the Temple's facilities are arranged properly prior to the event and take care of any maintenance or cleaning necessary that may be required during it. They will assist with hiring dishwashers if requested.
5. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sponsors the Oneg Shabbat following Friday evening services. The family should be in contact with the Oneg coordinator regarding this reception. If another congregation event is held the same evening, such as Consecration, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is expected to participate in the oneg and coordinate with the chairs of the event. Bima flowers remain the responsibility of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family. Other food and flower arrangements should be coordinated with the event chairs. Bar/Bat Mitzvah families are expected to attend the Friday night Services and customarily bless the candles at the beginning of the service.
6. On Shabbat morning, following the service, the family provides wine and challah for the kiddush for the entire congregation. Anytime wine is served, grape juice must be provided as well. If desired, families may choose to provide a more extensive reception or full luncheon buffet for all those attending the service.
7. No pork products or shellfish may be served at the Temple. Milk and meat may be served at the same time but not together in the same dish. Although it is a family's prerogative, we discourage serving pork or shellfish at B'nei Mitzvah events outside the Temple.



8. Pulpit flower arrangements are optional. Two silk flower arrangements are available at no charge. Fresh flowers or another appropriate arrangement may be placed on the pulpit instead of the silk arrangements.
9. The family should ask two Temple members to serve as ushers for the Friday evening and Sabbath morning services. Directions for the ushers can be obtained from the Temple office. Names should be given to the Temple office by the deadline for the Bulletin.
10. If there are non- Jewish parents and/or relatives, who wish to have a part in the service, please check with the Rabbi regarding the appropriate level of participation.
11. If parents are divorced or the child's name is different from the parents, please clarify how he/she is to be addressed. Human sensitivity concerning the welfare of the child is vital. Parents should remember that this is their child's day and that personal differences should not interfere with the beauty of the ceremony, regardless of other family complications.
12. All members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's religious school and Hebrew class should be invited to the service and celebration.
13. The Temple's gift shop is available to supply gifts and special orders for the occasion. Tallitot and yarmulkes can be ordered through the gift shop. At least one month notice is requested for all special orders.
14. If flowers are used for the service and/or party, it is the families responsibility to make arrangements ahead of time as to the disposal of the flowers after the event.

SANCTUARY INFORMATION

The sanctuary contains 255 seats. Additional seating is available if needed.



CONGREGATION ACHDUTH VESHOLOM PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

Congregation Achduth Vesholom recognizes the desire of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's family to capture the event on film and/or video. However, it needs to be underscored that video or photography during the service must not violate the sanctity of the service.

1. Pictures are usually taken beginning an hour before the service. The Rabbi is available to take the Torah scroll from the Ark for the photographer to take pictures of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reading from it. Picture taking should be concluded twenty minutes before the start of the service.
2. During the service, no flash photography or additional lighting may be used.
3. Photographers may not move around in the sanctuary during a service. A tripod or hand-held camera may be located at the back of the sanctuary. The equipment and photographers are to remain in place until the completion of the service. The video camera should not pan the congregation during the service.
4. People are not to stand up at their seat, take a picture, and then sit down. Videotaping from one's seat is prohibited.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A great deal of time and energy is required for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. While the child studies diligently, his or her parents are busy making all the arrangements for the weekend. Though these tasks are very important, parents can be consumed by them and lose perspective of the over-arching significance of the occasion. The B'nei Mitzvah process is a profound time in the life of a son or daughter. Parents need to make all the necessary arrangements but they also need to engage their child intellectually and spiritually during his or her course of study.

Too often the parental role is reduced only to reminding: "Have you studied today?" "Did you work on your speech?" "When are you going to get the Haftarah prayers done?" While such prodding can be a spur to study, it can also be a source of ambivalence and anger if it is all the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ever associates between the event and his or her parents. A child will be more curious and take more seriously the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process to the extent his or her parents also are curious and take it seriously. This engagement does not require a parent to be steeped in Jewish learning. Rather, it requires parents who are willing to allow for their own religious development to take place at the same time as their child's. Parents need to encourage their child by sharing positive views of Judaism

and Jewish identity, attending services as a family and actively discuss projects with him or her.

- 1) Go through this handbook with your child to make sure everything is understood.
- 2) Upon receiving your approval of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, please consult the Hebrew director to determine if your child is at the level required to begin the B'nei Mitzvah process. Contact the Rabbi and the Hebrew Director at least ten months before the B'nei Mitzvah to make arrangements for an authorized tutor. If you wish to use a tutor not on the list, please contact the Hebrew director for approval. The payment is your responsibility.
- 3) Establish set times for study and make a schedule for the completion of B'nei Mitzvah projects.
- 4) Notify the Jewish Federation (422-8566) as soon as your date is reserved at the Temple to help avoid the scheduling of other Jewish events during the same time.
- 5) Select the music for the service. (Consult the Rabbi about available options.) Fees/donations, will be provided by the Temple Administrator. Music choices need to be approved by the Rabbi. It is important that you make this selection as soon as possible to make sure your choice is available on the service date you want. Near the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah you, your child, the Rabbi and your music choice will meet to go over the music for the service. With the approval of the Rabbi, other musicians may participate in the service.
- 6) Arrange for the Friday evening oneg and Saturday morning kiddush. Contact Temple administrator.
- 7) Contact the Temple office concerning the program to be provided for the Saturday morning service. This should be finalized at least two weeks before the service.
- 8) Work on the reflections you will give to the congregation about your child at the Saturday service.
- 9) Make sure your child is keeping up with his or her service preparation and projects schedule.
- 10) Our Congregation has a partnership with MAZON, a national Jewish organization that makes grants to a wide range of Jewish and non-Jewish organizations working to relieve poverty throughout North America. You are encouraged to consider a commitment to Mazon of 3% of your total Bar/Bat Mitzvah expenses. Contributions can also be made to a variety of Temple Funds.
- 11) Parents are strongly encouraged to read "Putting God on the Guest List" by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin. This book is provided to each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family at no cost. Pick-up your copy at the Temple office.
- 12) Don't just fret. Enjoy watching your child grow and learn before your eyes.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH PROJECTS

As part of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we are eager for students to discover, on many levels, as much about their spiritual identity and community as they can. These projects are designed for students to experience Jewish learning within a number of different contexts. The hope is that students will find these projects interesting, not burdensome. In order that students not be compelled to finish work on the projects too close to the date of the service itself (when tasks directly related to the service predominate), they should be completed two months before the service. Please note that some of these projects are to be done together with parents or the whole family. All of the projects have been included for a reason. With approval of the Rabbi and B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator, students may pursue projects not listed here.



THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE REQUIRED OF ALL B'NEI MITZVAH

- 1) With the help of your parents write at least a four paragraph (minimum of 200 words) essay: "What Does My Bar/Bat Mitzvah Means to Me and My Family." Questions to consider are: Why is having a Bar/Bat Mitzvah important to you? What have friends and family said to you in looking forward to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah? What does being Jewish mean to you at this point in your life? What do you want to include to make sure your Bar/Bat Mitzvah is as significant for you as possible?
- 2) With your parents, read the Torah portion for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Write down all the questions it raises in your mind. Write down all the things that the portion makes you curious about. Do you understand where the portion fits in terms of the larger context of the Torah? Then read over the Haftarah portion. Think about what it concerns. After meeting with the Rabbi to discuss your Torah Portion write a short essay (minimum of 150 words) "How my Torah portion teaches us to live."
- 3) Before your B'nei Mitzvah, select a charitable cause(s) to which you will give tzedakah from the financial gifts you receive at your B'nei Mitzvah. Tzedakah does not mean charity but rather is associated with justice. As Jews, we are commanded to make Tzedakah available to those less fortunate than us. Even the poor are commanded to give Tzedakah. Please write a short essay (minimum of 150 words) telling why you chose the particular cause or organization to which you decided to direct these funds. Tell who began the charitable organization and why. What are the organization's services and who is served by them? If you know of an excellent charitable organization that is doing wonderful work, we would like to learn about it as well.

4) COMMUNITY SERVICE

As part of your becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you are required to volunteer for a minimum of eight hours at a local community service organization. We ask you to perform community service because it is a mitzvah. You are not permitted to accept money or any other credit for doing this project. Someone from the organization must sign a statement relating what your service involved. You are required to write a short essay (a minimum of 200 words) about this experience. Questions to consider are: Why did you choose this particular community service? What did you like and/or dislike about the experience? What do you think you learned about the organization and yourself as a result of your service?



PLEASE SELECT NINE OF THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

- 1) Read a book about a Jewish individual or subject. The book must be approved by the Rabbi or B'nei Mitzvah coordinator. Write a brief summary about what it contains and how you can relate it to your own life. Questions to consider: What did you like or dislike about the book? What, if anything, surprised you about the book? Would you recommend this book to others? What did you learn from the book and about yourself by reading it? This assignment is worth 2 projects.
- 2) Select a DVD or video with Jewish content in consultation with the Rabbi or the B'nei Mitzvah coordinator (for example watch "Schindler's List"), and then write an essay (minimum of 200 words) about it. Questions to consider are: What did you learn from this movie? What surprised you about the movie? How did the movie make you feel? What did you like or dislike about it?" The movie must be seen with parents.
- 3) In consultation with the Rabbi compare Judaism with another religious tradition (minimum of 250 words).
- 4) Write a short essay (minimum of 200 words) about a famous Jewish personality or event. Questions to consider: Why did you pick this particular person or event? Why is this person or event famous? Why is it important for Jews to be aware of this individual or event? Please cite the sources you used for your information.
- 5) Write a short essay on your favorite prayer of the prayer service (minimum of 200 words).

Questions to consider: What makes this a favorite prayer? What does the prayer mean in general and mean to you personally? What does this prayer make you think of?

- 6) Compose your own two prayers (minimum of 50 words each). Questions to consider: What does offering prayers mean to you? What types of things do you pray for? Are prayers more important for God or ourselves? Why do we offer prayers? Student can choose a theme around which to compose the prayers like: love, righteousness, peace, God's Oneness, humankind, family, Torah, Israel etc.
- 7) Fort Wayne is home to two Jewish congregations. Visit Congregation B'nai Jacob, the city's Conservative synagogue, for a Shabbat morning service. While there, think about the differences and similarities in relation to our Temple. Write an essay (200 word minimum) about the prayer book, the style of praying, the Torah service, sermon, length of the service, how you felt about the experience overall. What did you like or not like about the service?
- 8) Learn to play or sing a Jewish song or prayer. You should know what the song means and who composed it. You should also reflect on what it means to you personally. You will perform it for the Rabbi, Religious school or as part of your B'nei Mitzvah service.
- 9) Learn about our Temple's history and the stained glass windows in the Sanctuary from the booklet titled, "Our Story." You can get it from the Temple office. Then compose an essay (minimum of 200 words) about what you found out. Questions to consider: What in particular struck you as you read the pamphlet? Did anything in "Our Story" surprise you? What does it mean to you to belong to our Congregation? What are some good memories do you have in connection with our Congregation? What Sanctuary window do you find most interesting or most inspiring? If you were responsible for creating your own Sanctuary window what would it look like and include.
- 10) You are a newspaper reporter. Your assignment is to interview a member of Congregation Achduth Vesholom, preferably someone you don't know well. Rabbi can give you suggestions for people to interview. Questions to be posed in the interview include: How long have you been a member of Congregation Achduth Vesholom? Where are you from? What made you become a member of Congregation Achduth Vesholom? Why is your membership important to you? What memories do you have of the congregation? Why do you like best about the Congregation? What things do you think the Congregation could improve on? Why is being Jewish important to you? What biblical story or personality is your favorite and why? What Jewish prayer is especially important to you? As an older member of the Congregation, what advice do you have to give me concerning my Jewish identity? Don't be afraid to be imaginative in your questions. Write a newspaper-like article (minimum of 250 words) about the interview.
- 11) You are an Israeli travel agent. You have come to the United States to encourage people to visit Israel. Write a promotional article about how much someone would enjoy going to Israel for a visit. In the article (minimum of 250 words), you will refer to at least three places of interest in Israel and briefly explain each of them. The Internet is a good place to do research for this project. You should find lots of places to visit and things to do in Israel. In your writing, make Israel as fascinating a place as you can.

12) Your own project. Perhaps you have an idea of project you think it would be stimulating to do. Ask the Rabbi about it. We are always looking to add new, good projects to our list of choices for our B'nei Mitzvah.

13) Write a short definition or description of eight of the following. You can consult the Rabbi, the Temple library, or even the Internet.

Siddur
Yitzchak Rabin
Theodor Herzl
Aron HaKodesh
mensch
Golda Meir
URJ
HUC-JIR
Entebbe

Masada
Kristalnacht
Isaac Meyer Wise
Alfred Dreyfus
Hatikvah
Teshuvah
Haftarah
Rashi
Rambam
Talmud

B'NEI MITZVAH FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is no such thing as a bar or bat mitzvah without tears. The tears belong to several people. They belong to parents who are swelling with pride and relief. They belong to grandparents who may come up for their *aliyah*. They listen to their grandchild read or chant from the Torah, and by the time they utter the closing blessing, their lips are quivering and their tears are falling. I have seen tears fall right onto the Torah scroll. Of all the places where tears might fall, this is the holiest place of all.

Rabbi Jeffrey L. Salkin

To seek God is to strive for the good; to find God is to do good.

Rabbi Leo Baeck

In effect, when we say Torah, we mean Judaism. We also mean anything that emerges out of our open encounter with those sources. As Pirke Avot (the ethical maxims of the early Rabbis, as recorded in the Mishnah) says, "Every day a voice goes forth from Sinai." Every day, at least, if we can train our ears to hear the truth and the power and the beauty of the Torah.

Rabbi Jeffrey L. Salkin

Bar and bat mitzvah is too often a time for unwrapping presents when it should be a time for unwrapping the gifts of the spirit that created the art and literature, the heroic deeds and moral teachings of our people.

Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

God is hiding in the world. Our task is to let the divine emerge from our deeds.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

Today many are proud to be without religion whose children cannot afford their being without it.

Erik Erikson

The divine test of a person's worth is not his theology but his life.

Morris Joseph

Many people have gone astray and failed to gain wisdom. Some of them do not know which road to take and others take the right road but do not travel far enough on it.

Saadia Gaon

Jews have always constituted a minority and a minority is constantly compelled to think. That is the blessing of their fate.

Rabbi Leo Baeck

Rabbi Baruch's grandson, Yechiel, was playing hide-and-seek with another boy. He hid himself well and waited for his playmate to find him. After waiting a long time, he came from his hiding place, but the other boy was nowhere in sight. Now he realized that the boy had not looked for him. Weeping, he came to his grandfather to complain of his faithless friend. Rabbi Baruch's eyes too brimmed with tears and he said: God says the same thing, I hide but no one wants to seek me.

Hasidic story

BLESSINGS IN HEBREW & TRANSLITERATION

BLESSING BEFORE THE READING OF THE TORAH

BAR'CHU et Adonai ham'vorach.

Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va-ed.

Baruch atah, Adonai

Eloheinu, Melech haolam,

asher bachar banu mikol haamim,

v'natan lanu et Torato.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ.
בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנוֹ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים,
וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

BLESS ADONAI who is blessed.

Blessed is Adonai who is blessed now and forever.

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

BLESSING AFTER THE READING OF THE TORAH

BARUCH atah, Adonai

Eloheinu, Melech haolam,

asher natan lanu Torat emet,

v'chayei olam nata b'tocheinu.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת,
וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has given us a Torah of truth, implanting within us eternal life.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.