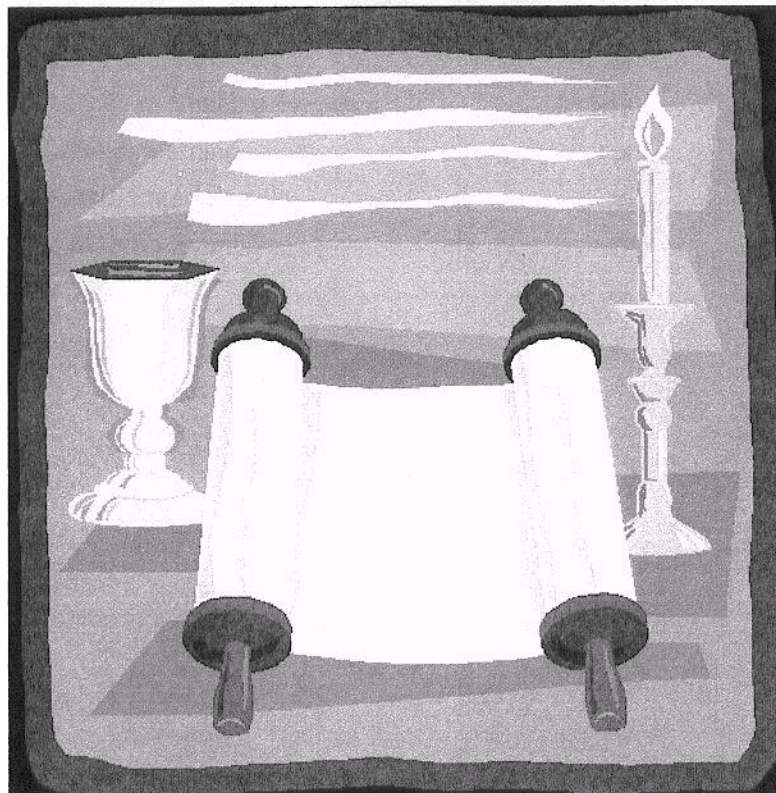


# The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guide 2010 - 5770



## **Congregation Beth El**

**Preserving Tradition...Embracing Change**

222 Irvington Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 973-763-0111  
[www.bethelnj.org](http://www.bethelnj.org)

Francine Roston, Rabbi - Perry Fine, Cantor  
Jehiel Orenstein, Rabbi Emeritus  
Stuart P. Skolnick, Executive Director

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Francine Roston June 7, 2009

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Nancy Isaacson

Ellen Tamaroff

*Sisterhood*

*Co-Presidents*

Dear Parents,

The celebration of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an important time in the life of your child, your family and our community. So that we can make this experience as anxiety-free as possible, we have compiled this informational packet to assist you with the details of planning for your *simcha*/joyous event. Please do not hesitate to call upon me if I can assist you in any way with the preparation for this important life cycle event.

Planning and preparing for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not limited to making sure that the event planning is completed. It is my hope that we will embark on a path of discovery about the true meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. As a family, I invite you to consider and discuss the following questions:

- What will truly change in your family's life as a result of your child's new status?
- What steps will your child and your family take to prepare your hearts and minds for the experience of Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
- How will your celebration reflect the values of your child, your family and our congregation?

As we begin our process of studying together and preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, I look forward to accompanying your family on this journey and offering my guidance and support.

As soon as possible please contact me so that we can discuss the study process and your child's mitzvah project. This is a significant part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. It is important that your son/daughter gain a personal experience of the power they have to impact the world with their personal performance of *mitzvot* and *tikkun olam*, the performance of commandments and deeds of social action to "repair the world."

Three months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date please make an appointment with me. Over 4 - 6 sessions your child and I will study the *haftarah* and *torah* portion and explore the personal significance of this special day. As we study together we will be able to get to know each other and together we will grow in our understanding of Judaism and Torah.

*Mazel tov* on reaching this important stage in your child's life. I look forward to learning and celebrating with you and your family.

With Blessings,

Rabbi Francine Roston

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June 7, 2009

Dear Parents,

We at Congregation Beth El wish you *Mazel Tov* on your upcoming *Simcha*.

It says in the *Mishnah* that at five years of age a child is ready to study the Bible, at ten, the *Mishnah*, and at thirteen, the Commandments (*Mitzvot*). This is the year of the *Mitzvot*, when your child accepts publicly the responsibilities and joys of Jewish adulthood.

With these responsibilities comes a great deal of preparation including private instruction with me. You should contact me at least seven months prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah (excluding summer months) to arrange for private instruction. Lessons will be held on a weekly basis in thirty-minute intervals. If your child cannot make a lesson for any reason, you should contact me at my office at (973) 763-6447, if possible, at least 24 hours in advance of the lesson.

All of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are also required to attend *Shabbat* morning sanctuary services at least ten times, and three times on Friday nights, during the course of the year and a half before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, accompanied by a parent. I have found that this familiarization with *Shabbat* services supports the students' learning and comfort.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience is not only about demonstrating skills from the *bima*. It is also about understanding the meaning of mitzvah and our responsibilities as a Jew. To that end, we are asking all of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students to take on a *Mitzvah* project during the year. We are asking your child to volunteer time, at least once per month, in some community activity, subject to the Rabbi's approval. The project can come from either the list provided or one of your own choosing. We encourage families to get involved in all aspects of your child's preparation in this **year** of growth and transition.

I look forward to the weeks and months ahead working with your child. Once again, we wish you a sincere and hearty *Mazel Tov* and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

*B'Shalom,*

Hazzan Perry Fine

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Dear Parents,

*Mazel Tov!* You and your child are about to celebrate a momentous occasion at Beth El.

By now you surely have begun making plans for your child's upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but we are certain you still have many questions. This guide contains everything you could possibly need to know (and more!) related to your child's training and preparation as well as some of the "mechanics" of planning your *simcha*. Please refer to this guide as you progress with each stage of your plans.

In the following pages we will answer all your questions about these topics and others...

- Training with the Cantor and Rabbi
- Use of Beth El's facilities
- Hosting *minyán* breakfast, Friday night snack and *Shabbat* morning *Kiddush*
- *Tzedakah* suggestions and/or your child's *Mitzvah* project
- Ordering *Kippot*, a *Tallit*, and Tefillin
- *Shabbat* service attendance requirements
- *Shabbat* entertainment
- Blessings
- Approved caterers
- Ushering responsibilities

Please be sure to make an appointment with me approximately two months prior to the event to confirm all the final details such as ushering responsibilities, food deliveries, pulpit flowers, list of *aliyot* names, etc. Certainly, if you have any questions before this meeting, feel free to call me in the Beth El office. You will find a very helpful timeline for planning your *simcha* on page 17.

Once again, we look forward to assisting you in the planning of this very special day for your family.

Cordially,

Stuart P. Skolnick  
Executive Director

## What is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

At Congregation Beth El we encourage our young people to celebrate their Bar/Bat Mitzvah after their thirteenth birthday according to the Jewish calendar. The actual expression, "Bar/Bat Mitzvah" means "a person subject to mitzvot" - one who bears his or her own responsibility for mitzvot, no longer relying on adult members of his/her family to bear responsibility for him/her.

As a Conservative egalitarian congregation, we strive to give our children equal opportunities in education, performance of *mitzvot* and opportunities for community service. We consider every individual to be sacred, as s/he is created in the Divine image. We understand that every child is unique and has individual needs; therefore, we strive to treat every individual with *kavod*/respect and *rahamim*/compassion. We expect every *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* to develop a basic understanding of the calling to be a Conservative Jew—the obligation to live a life committed to the pursuit of *Torah*, *Avodah* and *Gemilut Hasadim*—Study, Prayer and Acts of Loving-Kindness.

## Family Involvement

At Congregation Beth El we recognize that each family unit is unique, with varied backgrounds, living situations, and religious involvement. Every family celebrating this rite of passage with their child can participate in and enjoy the training process together. Your child will appreciate it when you take an active interest in his/her preparation—Make an effort to listen to your child practice the *Haftarah* and *Torah* portion on a regular basis. Even if you do not know Hebrew, your attention will help build your child's confidence and convey the value you place on Jewish tradition. Every family is a significant part of our synagogue community. We encourage you, as a family, to attend services and participate in synagogue events. The more you are involved in the Beth El community, the more comfortable your child will be going through the rite of passage.

## Family Workshops

Four times throughout the year, you are to attend Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Workshops on Sunday afternoons. Each session begins with lunch and *Birkat haMazon*/Grace after meals, and includes interactive study and discussions:

1. Sunday, November 1, 2009: What does this all mean?  
The Meaning of Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah
2. Sunday, December 6, 2009: Repairing the World: Tikkun Olam and  
Your Mitzvah Project
3. Sunday, January 24, 2010: "How is it all done? The Torah Service,  
taking an *Aliyah*, *Tallit* and *Tefillin*."
4. Sunday, April 25, 2010: Where do we go from here? Continuing the Journey  
Of Life-Long Learning

## Your Child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Beth El

Typically, Congregation Beth El celebrates the achieving of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* (the age of responsibility for *Mitzvot*) at regularly scheduled, congregational *Shabbat* services - both on *Shabbat* morning and on the preceding Friday evening. Your child will have an opportunity to participate in both services, and you, your family, and friends will be recognized and honored there, consistent with our norms and practices. In addition, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and family is expected to attend the weekday morning *minyan* on the Thursday preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah *Shabbat*.

We strongly recommend families attend services regularly, on Friday night and Saturday morning, to increase your familiarity with *Shabbat* and Beth El's traditions.

Congregation Beth El does not provide for Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations on *Yom Tov* or on *Shabbat Chol HaMo'ed* (Holy Days). Our tradition strongly discourages the concurrent celebration of a public festival such as *Yom Tov* together with a private *simcha* such as a wedding or a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## Your Family's Relationship to the Synagogue and to Judaism

1. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah must be Jewish according to the standards of the Conservative movement as interpreted by Beth El's Rabbi.
2. At least one of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's Jewish parents must be a member in good standing of Congregation Beth El. In particular, current financial obligations for the year must be paid in full by December 31 of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. The Rabbi and officers of the congregation will, of course, consider a family's special circumstances.
3. In the case of separated or divorced parents, both parents will be offered the opportunity to participate in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah event and its planning. If only one parent is a member, that parent has precedence in decision-making but not to the total exclusion of the other.
4. We acknowledge that many Beth El families have non-Jewish members in their immediate families. There are opportunities for, as well as limitations to, participation of non-Jews in Beth El services. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family should consult with Beth El's Rabbi as to the types of participation appropriate to a non-Jewish family member.
5. The student's overall accomplishments in the various educational programs will help determine what specific liturgical and religious components of the *Shabbat* service he or she can lead. Congregation Beth El encourages each Bar/Bat Mitzvah to participate to the full extent of his or her skills. We recognize that people have varying interests and strengths. It is no reflection on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah that he or she chooses to do more or less.
6. The Rabbi and Hazzan will evaluate each student to establish that the educational requirements [ Page 9 ] have been met.
7. It is customary at Beth El that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family serves as greeters at morning services on the *Shabbat* preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. They greet congregants as they enter, handing them *Chumashim* and other materials. We ask greeters to be conscious of noise levels and attempt to keep the back of the sanctuary and Jacobson Lounge free of disruption. Serving as greeters on the *Shabbat* before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah helps the entire family connect with the community and eases their anxiety in the week before their *simcha* (joyous event).

## Educational Requirements

In order to celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Beth El, students are required to meet specific educational requirements.

1. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student must be enrolled in a congregationally approved religious school, *i.e.*, **The Jewish Learning Center (JLC)** or the **Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union**. The Rabbi, in consultation with the Director of Congregational Learning, must approve alternative programs of Jewish education.
2. Students at **Beth El's Religious School** are expected to attend and complete the **Zayin Class Program**. This requirement may be extended to those students in alternative programs at the discretion of the Rabbi and *Hazzan*.
3. Each student is expected to attend at least thirteen (13) *Shabbat* services at Beth El - ten **(10) on Shabbat morning**, three **(3) on Friday night** - in the year prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah event. At least one parent should accompany the candidate to services. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family will thus build a relationship with the congregation and reinforce their learning in preparation for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
4. Each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* candidate will undertake an individual program with the *Hazzan* and/or the *Hazzan's* designee to learn the synagogue skills that he/she will need to lead the congregation and to read the *Torah* and *Haftarah*. This program takes about nine (9) months, and, **does not include July and August**. For example, the training program for a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* in November must begin by the preceding March.
5. For especially capable and dedicated candidates, the *Hazzan* has instituted an advanced program (the *SHA'TZ Club*) for learning synagogue skills. Completion of this program empowers the candidate to lead a major part of the *Shabbat Morning* service, including some of those parts normally lead by the *Hazzan*.
6. Each student will meet several times with the Rabbi, starting three (3) months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The intent is for the student to develop a deeper insight into becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and into the specific Biblical material he or she will read on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day. With the Rabbi's assistance and consultation, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will develop his/her *Mitzvah* project and prepare a *d'var torah* (sermon) to be delivered at services that morning.

## Tzedakah

Jewish tradition gives us tangible ways of expressing our gratitude for life's blessings. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah provides a number of opportunities for observing the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, with a variety of possible recipients. A few of these are:

Within the congregation:

- The *Kiddush* refreshments: Not only do you provide a *Kiddush* reception for the congregation, but we take great care not to waste food at Beth El. We encourage you to use or donate leftovers. Contact the Executive Director for more information.
- In honor of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah student, a "leaf" on our Tree of Life, located in the Jacobson Lounge, can be purchased for the cost of \$180. To order a leaf, please contact Stuart Skolnick.
- Beth El Tribute Funds: Please review the complete list of our general and special interest funds at the end of this packet. You could make a contribution in honor of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and/or special people who have helped you prepare for this moment.

- The Executive Director can advise you concerning various contributions to Congregation Beth El; the Rabbi and *Hazzan* can also help with suggestions for special projects.

Within the Conservative Movement:

- A contribution to the Jewish Theological Seminary, its Rabbinical School, or the Miller Cantorial School ([www.jtsa.edu](http://www.jtsa.edu))
- A contribution to the Masorti Foundation in Israel ([www.masorti.org](http://www.masorti.org)). Beth El has a sister congregation that is part of the Masorti movement. You can specify that you'd like your contribution to be sent to this synagogue - the Masorti *Kehila* of *Zichron Yaakov* called *VeAhavta*.
- A contribution to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program for the Special Child. This is a program in Israel run by Masorti ([www.masorti.org](http://www.masorti.org)).

Within Jewish institutions:

- A contribution to United Jewish Communities of Metrowest or one of its agencies ([www.ujcnj.org](http://www.ujcnj.org)).
- A contribution to any of the various institutions in Israel such as the JNF ([www.jnf.org](http://www.jnf.org)), Friends of the Israel Defense Forces ([www.israelsoldiers.org](http://www.israelsoldiers.org)), American Friends of Magen David Adom ([www.afmda.org](http://www.afmda.org)).
- To other charitable institutions of significance to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and family such as Locks of Love, Habitat for Humanity, American Cancer Society.

## Mitzvah Projects

The *Mitzvah* Project is an important part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. It is our hope that by performing community service, our students will become more aware of the larger community as they journey from childhood to adulthood.

Through study and discussion, the Rabbi will help each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student develop a project that addresses needs in the community as well as each child's unique interests and skills. *Mitzvah* projects could address needs in our own synagogue, the needs in the local community, or issues around the world. One year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, the family should meet with the Rabbi to begin this process.

Past Bar/Bat Mitzvah projects have included:

- Collecting *tallitot* and sets of *Tefillin* to send overseas to Jewish communities in need and maintaining the synagogue's supply of *tallitot*.
- Assessing, organizing and setting up a Recycling Program for the synagogue.
- Donating *Shabbat*-appropriate toys and storage containers to the synagogue and volunteering babysitting time for congregational programs.
- Collecting gently used or new children's books. Selecting a local deserving school or children's hospital and reading to the children. After the reading, the books were donated to the school or hospital.

- Collecting gently used or new sports equipment and bringing them to a local deserving school.
- Twinning programs: Contact *the Whippany UJC*, 973-929-3000, about twinning with a Holocaust survivor. Spend time with the survivor, interview him/her and relay information to the congregation in your *Shabbat* address. Another twinning program is offered through the *Jewish Foundation for the Righteous* ([www.jfr.org](http://www.jfr.org)). This program twins the candidate with a Gentile Rescuer from WWII.
- There are many, many more creative ideas that can be discussed with the Rabbi. The second Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Workshop focuses on the purpose of the *Mitzvah* Project and helps students create their *Mitzvah* Project.

## ***Shabbat* and Jewish Observance**

Because the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration usually takes place on *Shabbat*, we remind the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family that Congregation Beth El observes the traditions of *Shabbat* in accordance with the standards of Conservative Judaism.

1. Your family should arrive on time for services: 6:15 PM Friday evening; 9:15 AM Saturday morning; 8:30 AM Sunday morning; 7:45 AM regular weekday Beth El services; 7:30 AM *Rosh Chodesh* weekday services. The starting time of morning services can vary according to the calendar. Please consult with the Rabbi or *Hazzan*.
2. Please dress in a manner appropriate to a dignified religious service. Care should be taken so that women's clothing is modest and shoulders are covered. Jeans are not appropriate.
3. All men must wear a *kippah*. We encourage this at all times in the synagogue building, particularly since the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a religious celebration. All women are encouraged to cover their heads and must do so if ascending the *bimah*.
4. All Jewish men above the age of Bar Mitzvah should wear a *tallit* during services and must do so if ascending the *bimah* and receiving an honor. Jewish women above the age of Bat Mitzvah are encouraged to wear a *tallit* during services.
5. All Bar/Bat Mitzvah students will learn how to wrap *tefillin* and are expected to wear them at the Thursday AM service prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.
6. All Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are expected to wear a *tallit* for *Shabbat* morning.
7. Photography and video or sound recording violate *Shabbat*, as does the use of cell-phones and pagers. Please do not bring cameras, recording equipment, cell-phones, or pagers into Beth El, or use them anywhere on Beth El premises, during *Shabbat*. Please remind your guests of this as well.
8. Smoking is prohibited on Beth El property at all times.
9. As a Conservative congregation, we maintain standards of *kashrut*. All food brought into Beth El must be **kosher**, from a source having active, valid certification (*hashgachah*) as approved by Beth El's Rabbi. This applies to the candy tossed at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah during services, which must be acquired through the Beth El office. We encourage you to follow the guidelines of *kashrut* for all your celebrations. For more information on kosher caterers, please contact the Executive Director.
10. Should you be holding an off-site party on *Shabbat* afternoon following services and *Kiddush*, please provide directions to your guests in advance. They should not be distributed at the synagogue.
11. All items used in the synagogue on *Shabbat* must be brought into the synagogue building by 12:00 noon Friday afternoon. This applies to food, *kippot*, handouts, and floral arrangements for the *Shabbat* celebration and anything else planned for use at Beth El on *Shabbat* (including musical instruments).

12. If you are providing transportation for your guests using commercial vehicles or buses, please arrange for such vehicles to park and pick up your guests on the public streets. **Buses and commercial vehicles may not park or pick up guests on Beth El premises, and may not use the Beth El parking lot during *Shabbat* for any reason. This is for safety and traffic congestion reasons. Arrangements can be made with the Executive Director to reserve parking on Irvington Avenue.**
13. Please ask your guests not to bring gifts to the synagogue.
14. Beth El takes no responsibility for personal property left on its premises.

## **Our *Shabbat* Services**

Your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration will enhance our traditional Beth El *Shabbat* service, usually in both our *Kabbalat Shabbat* (Friday evening) and *Shabbat* Morning services.

### **Hosting the Congregation**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family shares its *simcha* with the entire congregation by serving as host, providing light refreshments before Friday evening *Kabbalat Shabbat* services, and a more extensive *Kiddush* on *Shabbat* morning after the *Musaf* service. This sharing of a common meal is a material way of emphasizing the family's -and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's - ties to the congregation. The Executive Director will assist you with these details.

### ***Kabbalat Shabbat***

At Beth El, a simple service on Friday evening ushers in the *Shabbat*. This service takes place at 6:15 PM, runs about an hour, and consists of:

- Introductory psalms and hymns
- The *Sh'ma* and its blessings
- The Silent *Amidah*
- Closing prayers
- *D'var Torah*
- *Kiddush*
- *Aleinu* and a closing hymn

During this service, your child will lead the *Sh'ma*, the *Kiddush*, and his or her choice of a responsive reading. The Rabbi and *Hazzan* will assist in selecting appropriate material.

### ***Shabbat* Dinner**

You may have a kosher meal served to your family and guests at the synagogue following the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service. The Executive Director will assist in arranging this for you. You must use an approved kosher caterer, who may also be catering your *Kiddush* and/or luncheon on the following day. The Beth El office maintains an extensive list of approved kosher caterers and suppliers of prepared food.

## **Shabbat Morning Services**

Our *Shabbat* morning services begin at 9:15 AM, and end at approximately noon. It is in these services that your child will have the greatest opportunity to demonstrate his or her readiness to become part of the adult Beth El community with its religious privileges and obligation.

The order of our *Shabbat* morning services is as follows:

- *Birchot Hashachar* and *P'sukei D'Zimrah* (preliminary blessings and Psalms), usually led by a lay member of the congregation.
- *Shacharit* (the morning service), usually led by the Hazzan.
- The Torah Service - taking out the *Sefer Torah* (Torah Scroll), often led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah standing in front of the open Ark. The parents give a blessing to their child (A copy of this blessing worksheet is enclosed.) The Bar/Bat Mitzvah then carries the *Sefer Torah* in procession around the sanctuary to the *bimah*.
- Reading the Torah and Haftarah
- Raising and Dressing the Sefer Torah (Hagbaha and G'lillah)
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah *D'var Torah*
- Chanting the *Haftarah* by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- *Ashrei*
- Returning the *Sefer Torah* to the Ark
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah blessing and sermon by the Rabbi
- *Musaf*- sometimes led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Closing Prayers - often led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Our *Hazzan* has instituted a special program, *the SHA'TZ Club*, to train Bar/Bat Mitzvah students to lead the congregation in the more of the *Shacharit* service. If the candidate completes this program satisfactorily, he or she will be offered the opportunity to lead the *Shacharit* service as well. Thus, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah students at Beth El have the opportunity to conduct virtually the entire *Shabbat* morning service.

## **What the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Does at Shabbat Services**

### **On Thursday Morning before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is expected to participate in the Weekday Morning Service on the Thursday preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah *Shabbat*. This experience introduces the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to a weekday *Shacharit* service at Beth El. At this service s/he will be honored at the Torah and can participate in the service. Traditionally the Bar/Bat Mitzvah hosts a light breakfast for the morning *minyan* participants. Bring a camera! This is a great opportunity to capture your child's first *aliyah* as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## On Friday Evening

At the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service on Friday evening, the typical Bar/Bat Mitzvah will:

1. Lead the *Sh'ma* (including 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs).
2. Lead a reading of his/her choice from our *Siddur*.
3. Recite the *Kiddush* at the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service.

## On Shabbat Morning

1. The typical Bar/Bat Mitzvah **almost always does** the following:
  - Recites the *Sh'ma* in the Torah service and carries the Torah in procession around the Sanctuary
  - Chants the blessings for the *Maftir Aliyah*
  - Chants the *Maftir Aliyah* from the Torah
  - Gives a *D'var Torah*/sermon to the congregation
  - Chants the *Haftarah* and its blessings
  - Leads *Ein Keiloheinu*, *Aleinu*, and *Adon Olam*
  - Recites the *Kiddush* blessing over wine, the hand-washing blessing, and *Hamotzi*/Blessing over the challah.

On *Shabbat* Morning, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah **often** does the following:

- Leads the Torah Service to take out and return the Torah
  - Leads *Ashrei*
  - Chants additional Torah readings
3. With additional preparation, the student may lead the *Musaf* service.
  4. A student who has satisfactorily completed the *Hazzan's* special *SHA'TZ* club program, he or she may lead the *Shacharit* service. (The *SHA'TZ* club is a pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah enrichment program which trains students to lead the *Shabbat* service.)

## Family Participation on Shabbat Morning

In the context *Shabbat* morning services there are many opportunities for participation and for recognition of family and guests. In particular, the following honors are available to the family.

Up to **five (5)** of the seven *aliyot* during the reading of the Torah. Typically, the parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah share the seventh *aliyah*, permitting them to remain on the *bimah* while their child has the *Maftir Aliyah*. The fourth and fifth *aliyot* are reserved for the congregation.

There are **four (4)** *aliyot* for family and friends. Please ensure that the honorees you select are familiar with the procedure, and can recite or chant the blessings in Hebrew. The *Hazzan* and Rabbi are happy to review the blessings with your guests before the event. A copy of the blessings with transliterations are included with this packet. We suggest you distribute them a few weeks before the *simcha*.

Two weeks before the ceremony, provide the **Hebrew names** (in transliteration) of these honorees to the Rabbi's Assistant so that they can be properly recognized. (See enclosed *Aliyah* form).

The following rules apply to assigning the honors given out during the service:

1. An *aliyah* is preferably assigned to an individual. An *aliyah* may be assigned to a married couple or a couple celebrating an *aufruf*. We do not allow two individuals who are not married to have an *aliyah* together. Any exceptions are at the discretion of Beth El's Rabbi.
2. *Hagbaha* and *G'lillah* (raising the Torah scroll for display and dressing the Torah scroll) provides opportunities to honor **two (2)** persons for each Torah scroll used in the day's service. **It is important to select for *Hagbaha*, a person physically able to lift a heavy, awkwardly shaped object above shoulder level.** The people involved should preferably be experienced in this part of the ritual.
3. Opening and closing the Ark to take the Torah from the Ark before it is read, and to return it afterward. Typically two (2) honorees are selected for each, making a total of four (4).
4. Chanting from the Torah on *Shabbat* morning. Immediate family members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are encouraged to chant (*leyn*) one or more *aliyot*, and may distribute some or all of the Torah readings among capable members of the family.
5. The Torah is read from the scroll, and the reader is not permitted to refer to the printed text during the reading. Prospective readers should **contact the *Hazzan* at least ten days before the *simcha* to review their reading.**
6. Assisting the Bar/Bat Mitzvah or substituting for him/her in the recitation of *Ashrei*, *Ein K'Eloheinu*, or *Adon Olam*.
7. All recipients of the honors listed above must be Jewish according to the standards of Conservative Judaism as interpreted by Beth El's Rabbi. Non-Jewish family members can, at the Rabbi's discretion, be honored with participation in the service. The Rabbi will use her discretion in considering each request made by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family on an individual basis. Examples of opportunities for participation by non-Jews include:
  - A non-Jewish parent can participate in the parental blessing of the child.
  - A non-Jewish parent can accompany the Torah procession.
  - A non-Jewish relative can lead the Prayer for the Country or the Prayer for Peace.
8. We do our best to provide the celebrating family with many ways to honor relatives and guests. All the honors do not have to be filled. We are unable to give all the Torah honors to a family because at least two honors are always saved for the congregation to honor members with special occasions.

## Sharing the Day

From time to time, several happy occasions need to be celebrated on the same *Shabbat*. Aside from the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, these may include:

- Naming of a congregant's newborn daughter or granddaughter
- Calling up of an engaged couple (*aufruf*)
- Celebrating a special anniversary or birthday

These events are important to our congregation, as a whole, as well as to the congregants directly involved. The congregation expects that they will be celebrated at their proper time, and sees them as enhancing the joy of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

Beth El usually offers an *aliyah* to those celebrating events of such significance. It is important for the congregation to celebrate their *simchas* well as yours, and you may be asked to yield some additional opportunity for other events to be marked.

This may be an opportunity to read one of the seven *aliyot* from the Torah, or to mark their day by showing generosity to the congregation in a public material way such as sharing in the presentation of flowers at the *bimah* or in the cost of the *Kiddush*.

## The *Shabbat* Morning *Kiddush*

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family provides a *Kiddush* (light meal) to the entire congregation following morning services. The *Kiddush* may be a simple spread or an elaborate buffet luncheon in the Jacob & Bertha Rudd Auditorium.

The Executive Director can help you plan the *Kiddush* to meet your needs and the congregation's standards. Whatever you choose, there are some specific guidelines to follow:

1. The *Kiddush* takes place immediately following services, and is itself a religious function. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family are expected to be present at the congregational *Kiddush* for a sufficient time in order to allow individual congregants to offer their good wishes and congratulations.
2. All in attendance at services are invited to *Kiddush*. You may host a private luncheon for your guests, but both your guests and the congregation at large must be invited to the same *Kiddush*. There may not be a separate *Kiddush* for guests distinct from that offered to the congregation at large.
3. Food service at the *Kiddush* should begin immediately after the *Kiddush* ritual, however elaborate the *Kiddush* may be. Even when there is no Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Congregation Beth El offers a simple *Kiddush* as described above for hungry congregants who have just participated in a service for almost three hours.
4. In order to accommodate mourners in the congregation, instrumental music may not be performed in the first 45 minutes of the congregational *Kiddush*.

## Entertainment

The host family may provide musical entertainment for their private celebration or for the congregational *Kiddush*. If such is provided on *Shabbat*, the following rules apply:

With respect to music:

1. Only Live "Jewish" music may be played. It excludes ballroom dance music, rock pop ballads, etc. This includes Israeli songs and dances, Yiddish and Hebrew songs, *klezmer*, etc. No pre-recorded music is permitted, i.e., CDs, Ipods, etc.
2. According to Jewish Law, if an instrument is broken, it cannot be repaired on *Shabbat*.
3. If instrumental accompaniment is included, the performers are limited to three (3) instrumentalists. We strongly encourage the use of a *capella* singing groups.
4. As noted in the preceding section, no music may be performed for the first 45 minutes of the congregation's *Kiddush*. If you are holding a private luncheon in the Rudd Auditorium, music can begin as soon as the celebration begins. We encourage you to notify your guests that music will be present so mourners can prepare.

Other entertainment may be employed on *Shabbat*, but only for activities consonant with *Shabbat*

observance. No **activities involving cutting, writing or drawing, lighting candles or other use of fire or flame, photography, video or sound electronic recording are permitted on *Shabbat*** either by an entertainer or by a guest. **Please remember that all materials such as party favors necessary for the entertainment must be delivered to the synagogue before noon on Friday.**

## Countdown to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Event

Here is a partial checklist, arranged in time sequence, to help you in your planning. We try to give you an approximate lead-time for each item, so that you can determine "when to do what".

***The summer months (July and August) of the year of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are not counted in the synagogue planning schedule.*** The office operates on reduced hours, the professionals have their vacations, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction is not offered. For example, for a November date, "six months in advance" means "the March preceding".

In what follows, all dates are in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

**Three years or more:** Reserve date for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah *Shabbat*. Check with Rabbi, *Hazzan*, Executive Director. Make sure your child is on track with respect to his/her educational program.

**Nine Months or more:** Firm up plans for entertainment: caterer, photographer, invitations, musicians, etc. Verify suitability of selections with respect to *kashrut* and synagogue standards. Double-check choice of caterer for in-house *Kiddush* and parties with the Rabbi.

**Nine Months:** Schedule meeting with Rabbi to discuss Bar/Bat Mitzvah and *Mitzvah* Project. Make arrangements with *Hazzan* for Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction. Please keep all your appointments. Bear in mind that you and your child have an obligation with respect to attendance at *Shabbat* services.

**Don't leave this to the last minute.**

**Six Months:** Contact the Rabbi's assistant, to schedule study sessions with the Rabbi.

*Consider who from your family might be a Torah Reader, and start making arrangements with the Hazzan. Bear in mind the potential for a simultaneous simcha that you might be asked to share with.*

*Review plans for food, entertainment and flowers/bimah decorations (flowers should be delivered Friday AM prior to photos) with the Executive Director.*

*Order Tefillin and Tallit for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, kippot for guests.*

*If you choose, arrange for photographs to be taken at Beth El the Friday morning before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.*

**Three Months:** Submit an autobiographical article (on disk or via email) with a photo to the office for the *Beth El Bulletin*.

**Two Months:** Make appointment with the Executive Director to discuss all event details. Discuss participation in services on the Thursday preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Arrange for breakfast for the *minyan* for Thursday. Discuss options for a personalized Bar/Bat Mitzvah booklet (optional) to accompany the *Shabbat* handout, order leaf for Tree of Life (optional).

**Two Weeks Before:** Turn in *Aliyah* List to the office with Hebrew and English names of family honorees **on the form provided in this kit.**

**Preceding *Shabbat*:** Usher at *Shabbat* services with your Bar/Bat Mitzvah child.

**Preceding Thursday Morning:** Attend *Shacharit* services and host the breakfast. Bring a camera!

**Preceding Friday Morning:** Make final adjustments. Family photographs and rehearsal with Rabbi and *Hazzan*. Flowers, food, *kippot* (with hairpins if required), handouts, delivered by 12 noon.

## Bar/Bat Mitzvah Check List

Following are the basic tasks that will need attention in the months (or years) before your child's special day. This will serve as a quick summary of all the details in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guidebook.

- Hire Caterer.
- Hire Photographer.
- Hire Musician (optional, must follow guidelines in handbook)
- Reserve Beth El Auditorium for your celebration, if necessary.
- Call *Hazzan* and set up appointment for lessons.
- Call Rabbi and set up appointment to set your *Mitzvah* Project and to study for the *D'var Torah*.
- Compile guest list with addresses.
- Order invitations, RSVP's, thank you notes, direction cards, purchase stamps (weigh invite first).
- Attend a minimum of 13 *Shabbat* services.
- Determine and begin *Mitzvah* Project (in consultation with Rabbi Roston).
- Assign honors/Torah readings to family/friends with enough notice, and get full Hebrew names.
- Meet with Beth El Sisterhood representative to order guest *kippot* and your child's *tallit*.  
*Tefillin* should be ordered on [www.fjmc.org](http://www.fjmc.org).
- Address, stamp and send invitations with directions to Beth El to guests.
- Submit child's picture and Bar/Bat Mitzvah article to the Beth El office at least 8 weeks before *simcha*.
- Meet with Executive Director to discuss the following:
  - Thursday morning minyan
  - Bring a camera on Thursday morning!**
  - Kabbalat Shabbat* service questions
  - Shabbat* morning questions, *Kiddush* and celebration
  - Order bimah flowers (Call our office for suggestions).
  - Leaf for the Helen & Irving Cohen Tree of Life (optional)
  - Other forms of *tzedakah*
- Submit *aliyot* form with all necessary Hebrew names.
- Compose a personalized handout (optional) for the *Shabbat* morning Service - must be approved by our Ritual Committee and delivered before Friday at 12 pm.
- Usher with your child the *Shabbat* before his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah