

# **A GUIDE TO BECOMING A BAR OR BAT MITZVAH AT BETH HAVERIM SHIR SHALOM**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Mazel Tov!**

Soon your child will become a bar or bat mitzvah. This is a wonderful time for your entire family! At this moment, as the event becomes a reality, you may be feeling the beginnings of excitement and confusion. In this booklet, you will find everything you wanted to know – and some things you never thought of asking – about the philosophy, requirements and procedures of the entire process. We hope to make this journey a smooth and meaningful one that you will remember all your lives.

### **The Bar /Bat Mitzvah Ceremony in a Ritual and Educational Perspective**

Jewish life includes a pattern of ritual ceremonies, each one marking a significant time in a person's life. With each event, every Jew relates in a more mature manner with our heritage and Jewish community. At birth, with the brit milah or naming ceremony, your child was welcomed into the covenant of the Jewish people. At an early age, your child was consecrated into Jewish learning in the religious school.

Now, at 13, your child will be called to the Torah as a bar or bat mitzvah, indicating a change in their religious status. "Bar" literally means "son" and "Bat" literally means "daughter." A "mitzvah" is a commandment. To become a bar or bat mitzvah is to become a son or daughter of the commandment. With this privilege comes the obligation to learn about and observe Jewish commandments and practices applicable as a modern Reform adult. The bar and bat mitzvah ceremony is a rite of sacred passage and not the culmination of a religious and education process. It is expected that your child's Jewish studies will continue beyond the bar and bat mitzvah into the confirmation experience. When your child receives their bar or bat mitzvah certificate, they affirm their lifelong commitment to active participation in Jewish life through study, celebration and good deeds.

## **REQUIREMENTS LEADING TO THE BAR /BAT MITZVAH CEREMONY**

1. The child must be at least age 13 according to the Jewish calendar.
2. Beginning with the fourth grade year, there is a requirement of a minimum of four consecutive years of Hebrew and Judaic education in the Beth Haverim Shir Shalom program before there can be a bar/bat mitzvah ceremony. New students to our school may fulfill this obligation with prior formal training at a previous congregation.

3. During the year prior to the bar /bat mitzvah ceremony, each student and his or her family are required to attend a minimum of 10 Shabbat services at Temple Beth Haverim. At least 4 of the 10 services must be on Shabbat morning. Other Shabbat mornings, as well as evenings, may be included in the remaining 6 services.  
*You will receive 10 service attendance cards. They must be handed to Rabbi Mosbacher or Cantor Perper at the end of the services your family attends.*  
To help maintain decorum, and to familiarize the family with the customs of Beth Haverim Shir Shalom, the parents are expected to attend all 10 services with the bar /bat mitzvah candidate. The interest of the parent, with the child, in the worship experience greatly enhances the entire bar /bat mitzvah experience.
4. Your child must complete the family mitzvah program called *Mitzvotaynu* before the bar /bat mitzvah ceremony by turning in the mitzvah forms to the rabbi, cantor or tutor. He/she will then prepare a speech highlighting several of the mitzvot performed and relating those mitzvot to the Torah and/or Haftarah portion. There will be meetings with the rabbi two months in advance to plan this presentation. (Information begins on page 20).
5. The family must be paid up-to-date on all financial commitments to the temple, including dues, school, book and bar /bat mitzvah fees, and building fund.

## **PREPARATION OF THE STUDENT**

1. Approximately one year in advance, your child will attend a special class with the cantor or other tutor, which meets for 10 weeks. At this group class, your child will review the prayers of the service.
2. Six to nine months in advance, your child will also attend regular tutoring sessions conducted by the cantor or a synagogue tutor. There he or she will learn his or her Torah and Haftarah portions. Lessons are weekly and last approximately 15-20 minutes. In consideration of the cantor/tutor's and other students' time, promptness is crucial. Students who arrive late may miss all or part of their lesson. If the rabbi or cantor deem it necessary, extra meetings may be needed to fulfill the requirements. If progress is still slow, rabbi or cantor may recommend outside tutoring at your own expense. If you are aware of any special difficulties or learning needs your child may be having, please share them with the rabbi or cantor as early as possible. (Please note: If you have special scheduling needs, you must let the temple secretary, the cantor or the tutor know before lessons are scheduled to begin.
3. Your child should study every day for 15-20 minutes. For the best results, he/she should practice reading out loud and use both the prayer book and the cassette tape/ CD. Parents should monitor their child's progress by listening to their practice sessions at home and through regular communication with the cantor or tutor. Even if you do not know how to read Hebrew, it is important to listen to your child for clarity, fluency and confidence.

4. Your child should always review what he or she already knows as well as working on new sections for the ceremony. The weekly tutoring alone is insufficient practice.

## **PREPARATION FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY**

1. Invitations and Announcements

Invitations should invite your guests to the ceremony in the temple. In wording the invitation, it is correct to use phrases like: X will be called to the Torah as a bar /bat mitzvah, Y will become a bar /bat mitzvah. This is a complete Shabbat morning service that begins promptly at 10:00 am.

2. Kippot (Yarmulkes), Tallit

The temple provides kippot automatically for all services. If you wish to provide inscribed kippot or have a specific color, they must be ordered privately.

3. Videos and Still Photography

In order to maintain the sacred nature of the service, no photographs may be taken during the service. It is recommended that photography sessions be arranged for a weekday during the week(s) preceding the ceremony. If it is done on Saturday morning, all photographs must be taken before 9 am. An appointment must be made with the temple secretary in advance. Rabbi Mosbacher and Cantor Perper would be honored to be part of your family pictures, if you choose, but you must make that appointment with them directly.

### **Video Taping-Please refer to Guidelines on Hosting a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Beth Haverim Shir Shalom**

4. Bima Flowers or Baskets

The family must provide flowers or bima baskets for the bima. Flowers are to be delivered on Friday before 1 pm and will be left for the Temple to enjoy throughout the next week. Or as an alternative, the Temple will create food baskets to be distributed to the Center for Food Action in Mahwah , Animal Shelter of Oakland or Jewish Family Services of Rockland.

5. Oneg Shabbat

**Please see the attached Oneg Shabbat page.**

6. Use of Temple Building

Please see the attached Guidelines for the Use of Temple Facilities page.

7. Tzedakah

It is considered one of the highest mitzvot to give tzedakah as a way of honoring all of life's special occasions. By giving tzedakah, we thank God for the many blessings

in our lives. For suggestions of charities to which you can give tzedakah, please speak to the rabbi. If you would like to honor the rabbi, cantor or tutor, it would be appropriate to make a donation to one of the many Beth Haverim Shir Shalom funds or the rabbi's or cantor's discretionary fund. Please contact the temple office for information.

8. Suggested Reading

On the Doorposts of Your House: Prayers and Ceremonies for the Jewish Home  
Central Conference of American Rabbis

Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Life Cycle  
Central Conference of American Rabbis

Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat mitzvah  
Jeffrey K. Salkin

Raising Your Child to be a Mensch  
Neil Kurshan

Teaching Your Child About God  
David Wolpe

## **LEADING UP TO YOUR BAR /BAT MITZVAH CEREMONY**

1. Your child will continue his or her learning sessions throughout the year (approximately) before the bar /bat mitzvah ceremony.
2. You have been assigned a date for your family to meet with the rabbi at least **two months** before the bar /bat mitzvah ceremony. At that meeting, the rabbi will discuss the details of the ceremony as well as the speech
3. You will be assigned three rehearsals, to be led by Temple staff members. They will occur during the three weeks immediately preceding the ceremony. They will each last approximately 1 hour. Both the child and at least one parent must attend these rehearsals. A run-through of the service will occur then. Please bring the Aliyah and Mitzvotaynu sheets completed to the first rehearsal as well as the blue binder with all prayers.
4. Ushering is a requirement for the family. (Please see Ushering Guide at the back of this Guide). You will generally be assigned to usher at the Bar /Bat mitzvah service immediately preceding your own. This will enable you to have a fresh and complete understanding of the entire service. This service may count within your service requirements. If you are unable to usher on the day of your assignment, it is your responsibility to arrange a switch with another family.

Please arrive no later than 9:30 am. Your job, as ushers is very important in helping to maintain the decorum needed for a spiritual experience during the service.

## **SERVICE PROCEDURES**

*The sacred form of Shabbat services, including readings, music and other ritual matters, is determined by the Rabbi and the Cantor to enhance the beauty of every Shabbat for the congregation. There are ample opportunities at each service for family and friends to participate by aliyot and under certain circumstances, reading Torah.*

### **Erev Shabbat/Friday Night**

1. The family must attend the Shabbat services immediately preceding the bar /bat mitzvah ceremony. Most services begin at 8 pm, although the family service begins at 7 pm. **Please note the time of the service in the Temple Topics.**
2. It is customary for the family to host the Oneg Shabbat. You will receive a list of instructions for this responsibility.
3. Please be sure to utilize the correct honors sheets depending on whether yours is a single or double celebration. Please note: families are given the same number of honors to distribute, whether it is a single or double celebration. If you are celebrating together with another family, please contact the cantor to determine whether you are “Family # 1” or “Family # 2”.

### **ALIYOT**

1. The mother or other Jewish female in the family helps to lead the candle blessing at the beginning of the service.
2. There are other honors available for the family on Friday night, including reciting the Torah blessings, lifting and tying the Torah, opening the ark for the Torah service, and opening the ark for the Aleinu section of the Service . You may utilize as many of these honors as you wish.
3. The bar /bat mitzvah child will lead the congregation in the Kiddush at the end of services.

### **Saturday morning**

1. People of any faith may open and close the ark curtains. Ritual Committee policy requires that all other honors (except the parents’ blessing) must be filled by members of the Jewish faith.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH HONORS SHEET PROCEDURE:

HONORS SHEET MAY BE ACCESSED VIA THE WEBSITE:

[WWW.BETHHAVERIMSHIRSHALOM.ORG](http://WWW.BETHHAVERIMSHIRSHALOM.ORG) UNDER "BNAI MITZVAH INFO".

PLEASE ACCESS FORM AND HAVE ALL HONORS "TYPED" NOT HAND WRITTEN. THIS FORM MAY BE SENT VIA EMAIL: [WWW.BETHHAVERIM.OPTONLINE.NET](mailto:WWW.BETHHAVERIM.OPTONLINE.NET) , HAND DELIVERED OR FAXED TO THE TEMPLE OFFICE NO LATER THAN YOUR 1<sup>ST</sup> REHEARSAL.

APPROXIMATELY ONE MONTH BEFORE YOUR BNAI MITZVAH, YOU WILL RECEIVE AN EMAIL REMINDER LINKED TO OUR WEBSITE FOR YOU TO REVIEW THE GUIDE ONCE MORE.

*Appropriate attire for those being called to the Bima a Beth Haverim Shir Shalom*

The following guidelines are intended to help members and guests dress appropriately when they are called to the Bima for an honor at Beth Haverim. There are many situations in our lives when we are expected to dress appropriately. Most schools have dress codes that define what types of clothes may be worn to school. When participating in organized sports, players are required to wear the team's uniform. Adults are expected to wear formal business attire when going on an interview or to an important business meeting. There are parties and special events where we are expected to wear formal evening clothes. So, too, when we are called to the Bima we should be appropriately dressed according to the Jewish values of modesty and respect. The following are the expectations regarding attire for those who are to be called to the Bima.

Wear blouses and tops that cover the midriff, back and shoulders.

Skirts and shorts should be at least mid- thigh length

Tee Shirts should be devoid of vulgar, obscene, offensive, or inappropriate messages.

No pants with writing on the seat.

No sport cleats.

Refrain from wearing hoods, visors, sweatbands, or baseball caps.

Sport uniforms should not be worn.

**BAR /BAT MITZVAH HONORS SHEET FOR *SINGLE* (DUE AT 1<sup>ST</sup> REHEARSAL)**

Name of Bar /Bat mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of bar /bat mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_

**Candle lighting on Friday night:** (bar /bat mitzvah mother or other Jewish female):

\_\_\_\_\_

**Opening ark curtains before Torah service on Friday night:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Reciting Torah blessings on Friday night:**

English Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

**Lifting the Torah on Friday night (Hagbah):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dressing the Torah on Friday night (Gllah):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Opening ark curtains to put Torah away on Friday night:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Opening ark curtains before Aleinu on Friday night:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**BAR /BAT MITZVAH HONORS SHEET FOR SATURDAY MORNING SINGLE**

Name of Bar /Bat mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Bar /Bat mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_

**Honor #1 & #2 (two people)**

Open and close ark curtain at beginning of Torah service: \_\_\_\_\_ 1.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Honor #3 Undressing Torah**

\_\_\_\_\_

Honors #4 —Torah blessings (we need Hebrew names as well as Hebrew names of parents.

1. Aliyah 1 – up to 4 people
2. Aliyah 2 – up to 4 people
3. Aliyah 3 – usually parents
4. Aliyah 4 – bar /bat mitzvah

**Aliyah #1** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading):

English Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah #2** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading):

English Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah #3** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading):

English Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah #4** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading- BAR/BAT MITZVAH):

English Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

**Honor # 5**

**Hagbah** (lifts and holds up Torah) (One person)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Honor # 6**

**G'lilah** (rolls Torah scroll together) (One person)

\_\_\_\_\_

Parents come to pulpit to offer a public prayer for their child  
(Combined length of prayer: 2 minutes max.):

Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

**Honor # 7**

Return Torah to the Ark (one person to carry Torah):

\_\_\_\_\_

Siblings and parents join in processional:

Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

**Honor # 8 & 9**

Open and close ark curtains to return Torah: (Two people)

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

**ALEINU:**

**Honor #10 & 11**

Open and close ark curtain (Two people)

1 - \_\_\_\_\_

2 - \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer before Kiddush (One  
person) \_\_\_\_\_

**BAR /BAT MITZVAH CHILD'S HEBREW**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FATHER'S HEBREW**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MOTHER'S HEBREW**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BAR /BAT MITZVAH HONORS SHEET—FRIDAY NIGHT FOR *DOUBLES* (DUE AT 1<sup>ST</sup> REHEARSAL)**

*Note: each family fills out this form for their own family/friends*

Name of Bar /Bat mitzvah \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Bar /Bat mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_

**Candle lighting on Friday night: (bar /bat mitzvah mother or other Jewish female):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Opening ark curtains before Torah Service  
on Friday night: (up to 2 people):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reciting Torah blessings on Friday night (one person):**

English name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew name (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

**Lifting the Torah on Friday night  
(Hagbah): Family # One**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dressing the Torah on Friday night  
(Gelilah): Family # Two**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Opening ark curtains after Torah Service  
on Friday night: (up to 2 people):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Opening ark curtains before Aleinu  
on Friday night: (up to 2 people):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HONORS FOR SHABBAT MORNING DOUBLE SERVICE – FAMILY # 1

Torah Service:

Open and close curtain (up to 2 people): \_\_\_\_\_

Undress Torah Scroll (one person) \_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah # 1** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading – up to 4 people):

English Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name(s) and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah # 2** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading – up to 4 people):

English Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name(s) and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah # 3** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading-usually parents of BM)

English Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name(s) and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah # 4** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading – BAR/BAT MITZVAH):

English Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name(s) (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parents come to pulpit to offer a public prayer for their son/daughter (max. 2 min.):

Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

**Following Torah Service: Family # 1**

**G'lilah:** (rolls/dresses Torah scroll – 1 person \_\_\_\_\_)

Open and close curtain (up to 2 people): \_\_\_\_\_

**ALEINU:**

Open and close curtain (up to 2 people): \_\_\_\_\_

English blessing before Kiddush – Part 1 (one person) \_\_\_\_\_

**BAR/BAT MITZVAH CHILD'S HEBREW NAME:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**FATHER'S HEBREW NAME:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**MOTHER'S HEBREW NAME:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**HONORS FOR SHABBAT MORNING DOUBLE SERVICE - FAMILY NUMBER 2**

**Torah Service:**

Open and close curtain (up to 2 people): \_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah #5** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading—up to 4 people):

English Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name(s) (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah #6** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading—up to 4 people):

English Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name(s) (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah #7** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading—usually parents of BM):

English Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name(s) (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Aliyah #8** (Recites blessings before and after Torah reading—BAR /BAT MITZVAH):

English Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name(s) (and Hebrew names of parents): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hagbah:** (lifts and holds Torah while it is dressed-1person): \_\_\_\_\_

Parents come to pulpit to offer a public prayer for their son/daughter (max. 2 min.):

Parents: Family # 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion of Torah Service:**

Open and close curtain (up to 2 people): \_\_\_\_\_

One person to return scroll to the ark at conclusion of Torah service: \_\_\_\_\_



## Shacharit L'Shabbat/Saturday Morning

### Prior to the Service

1. The Shabbat morning service begins at 10 am. The family must arrive no later than 9:30 am.
2. If you are bringing your own kippot, please arrange them outside of the sanctuary. There are kippot and tallitot available for those worshippers who wish to use them.
3. If needed, a parking attendant is the responsibility of the family. Arrangements can be made through the Housing Committee.
4. Families should be seated by 9:55 am to encourage guests to be seated and quiet. Please: no visiting with guests after 9:55 am so that we can begin services on time.
5. There are no reserved or assigned seats, although it is customary for the parents and immediate family to sit in the front rows of the sanctuary.
6. Services begin promptly at 10 am and end at approximately 11:45 am.

### During the Bar /Bat mitzvah Ceremony

1. Torah Transmission: Since a bar /bat mitzvah ceremony is the culmination of years of work by both the parents and the child, it is important to symbolically transmit the teachings of Torah from the parents to the child. This is done by a Torah transmission ceremony. When the Torah is removed from the ark, the parents will come onto the bima. After an introduction by the rabbi, the rabbi will pass the Torah from the parents to the child. After each parent embraces the Torah, the child will take the Torah from the rabbi and, followed by the parents, will walk down the side aisle and up the middle for a Hakafah. After the Torah service is over, before the Torah is returned to the ark, the child and his/her parents will walk down the side aisle again and up the middle for a second hakafah.
2. After the child completes the Haftarah blessings, parents are invited to offer a prayer in English. Parents may either choose one of the following readings or compose a prayer of their own. **If you choose to write your own prayer**, please keep these guidelines in mind:

This is a time to share some of your pride and love for your child with the congregation, and to point the way to your child becoming a good Jewish adult.

It is not appropriate to tell your life story or that of your child, or to attempt to map out the rest of his or her life. It can be a moment to emphasize some of the essential values you want to pass on to the next generation.

The blessing should not be at all retrospective, focusing instead on your hopes and dreams for the future.

Write it down and give a copy to Rabbi Mosbacher at the first “dress rehearsal.” Even the most eloquent parents can forget what they want to say at such an emotional time.

Remember the context. This is a religious service to celebrate your child’s status as a Jewish adult. It may be tempting to praise all of his or her talents and accomplishments, but dwelling on unrelated subjects (such as sports or music) will detract from the religious nature of the event. Such a speech would be more appropriate at a reception after the service.

Remember the congregation. This is not just a gathering of your family and friends, but of the community, and some things are better said in private. Thirteen-year-olds are notoriously sensitive to embarrassment, and funny stories about their early childhood can be perceived as cruel when they’re retold in public.

Keep it short. Stay under two minutes. You can and should tell your child how proud you are at other times, and you don’t need to explain all the details in this setting.

If what you wish to say doesn’t fit in with these guidelines, the Shabbat service may not be the right place for your words. Perhaps a toast at your s’udat mitzvah/reception is more of what you would like. By all means, take advantage of that opportunity.

Otherwise, you may choose from one of the following:

- A. Into our hands, O God, You have placed Your Torah, to be held high by parents and children, and taught by one generation to the next. Whatever has befallen us, our people have remained steadfast in loyalty to the Torah. It was carried into exile in the arms of parents, that their children might always be worthy of this inheritance. And now we pray that you, our child will always be worthy of this inheritance. Take its teachings into your heart, and in turn pass it on to your children, and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew, searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace. Thus will you be among those who labor to bring nearer the day when God shall be One.
- B. We give thanks for this day, and for the years of growth and learning that have preceded it. Now, as our child steps forth to affirm his/her commitment to the ideals and Mitzvot of our faith, our souls are joyful, our minds are at peace. We pray that this day’s service may long echo in our child’s memory. May it engrave on his/her heart the understanding that this day initiates a life more firmly dedicated to the study of Torah and the fulfillment of Mitzvot, to deeds of justice and kindness, to faithful membership in the Household of Israel.
- C. O God, we give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our child grow day by day, week by week, year by year. For the health and strength You have given him/her, for the mind and spirit with which You have endowed him/her, for his/her ability to elicit and return love – for all these precious gifts, we thank You. Watch over our child on this special day and every day. Grant him/her a growing understanding of the true significance of this occasion and a deepening loyalty to everything that it represents. May the teachings of our heritage guide him/her throughout life; and may he/she lead a life worthy of Your blessings.
- D. O God, gratefully we thank You for the joyous privilege of seeing our child attain this milestone. On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. On this day new dreams

and hopes are born. We pray that Your protecting and loving care will accompany him/her wherever he/she goes and in all he/she does. Help him/her to become all that he/she is capable of being. Give him/her strength to do all the good things that are within his/her reach. Keep him/her loyal to the best he/she has shown, and to the noblest Jewish teachings he/she has been taught. May his/her deeds find favor in the eyes of all and be worthy of Your blessings.

### 3. Aliyot/Pulpit Honors

There are several opportunities to honor your family and close friends during the Shabbat morning service. The form listing the honors available can be found in the back of this handbook. This form must be completed and handed in to the rabbi at the first rehearsal. Please inform each participant of his or her honor prior to the service.

#### A. Opening and Closing the Ark Doors

At the beginning of the Torah service, at the end of the Torah service, and during the Aleinu section of the service, one or two people may be called upon to open and close the Ark doors. As this honor can be given to people of any faith or age, it is appropriate to involve younger siblings and close friends at this time. This can be the same person, or up to six different people.

#### B. Aliyot to the Torah

One of the greatest honors for a child who is becoming a bar /bat mitzvah is to be called to the Torah for the first time. In addition, the father, mother and eight other family members or friends who are Jewish and over the age of 13 can be honored by reciting the Torah blessings. There are a total of 8 aliyot during the Torah reading section of the service. We are eager to help make this portion of the service run as smoothly as all the rest. If you or your family members need a tape recording of the blessings or other special assistance, please do not hesitate to ask.

#### C. Hagbah/Lifting the Torah and Galilah/Tying the Torah

After the Torah is chanted, the honor of lifting the Torah is given to a relative or friend. Since the Torah is lifted high and turned around so that the congregation can see the Torah, this honor should be given to someone strong enough to perform the aliyah. A second person then helps dress the Torah before it is returned to the ark. Both of these honors are given to a Jewish person who is over the age of 13.

#### D. Kiddush

There is an optional reading before the Kiddush that can be given to someone as another honor. The optional reading is as follows:

God of days and years, Author of life, our times are in Your hand. We thank You day by day for Your abounding blessings and, as year follows year, we are grateful for all Your gifts. We gather together in special thankfulness to share in the happiness of our dear \_\_\_\_\_ . Be with him/her always as the joy of his/her life. May

he/she be blessed with health and happiness, and the strength to overcome sickness and sorrow. We pray that our lives may be filled with good and abundance of blessing; and may we have the joy of coming together for many more years, as a family united by mutual reverence and love. Amen or. This occurs at the very end of the service in the back of the sanctuary

## **CONFIRMATION**

*We fully expect that all young people who become bar /bat mitzvah at Beth Haverim Shir Shalom will continue on to confirmation.*

Once you and your child have experienced the beautiful ceremony of bar /bat mitzvah, your connection to Judaism is not over. From the beginning of your child's Jewish life, you made a commitment to share all of its aspects within the Jewish community. The next step from a statement of mature interaction with Judaism during the bar /bat mitzvah, is an affirmation of that interaction through the process of Confirmation.

The first confirmation ceremony took place in Berlin, Germany in 1817. It was there, at the birthplace of Reform Judaism, that a group of 16- and 17- year -olds appeared before their congregation to affirm their Judaism. Originally, Confirmation was a substitute for bar mitzvah, since it was thought that a child's Jewish education should not end at the age of 13. Today, throughout the United States and many other countries, students who continue their Jewish education after bar /bat mitzvah celebrate their confirmation in the tenth grade on Shavuot, the Festival of the Giving of the Torah.

The Kadimah program at Beth Haverim Shir Shalom aims at developing a more mature understanding of Judaism in order for each child to take a firm stance in the confirmation of their faith in God and their Jewish identity. Beginning in the 7th grade and continuing through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, this program emphasizes a wide variety of topics of interest to your child. Including various holiday celebrations, trips, guest speakers and discussions, this curriculum is geared toward helping bridge the gap in Jewish education between bar /bat mitzvah and adulthood.

## **MITZVOTAYNU – THE FAMILY MITZVAH PROGRAM**

Mitzvot lie at the heart of not only the Bar /Bat mitzvah experience, but also at the heart of all of Judaism. These commandments help guide us in making our lives and the lives of others more holy. By performing mitzvot, we are able to work together to improve the world, to lead a life complete with Jewish values, and to develop a personal relationship with God.

During the bar /bat mitzvah experience, the entire family shares in the fulfillment of many mitzvot. Beyond the preparation for the actual ceremony, there are other opportunities to interact with your Judaism. We learn from Simeon the Righteous, in Pirke Avot: “The world depends on three things: on Torah, on worship and on deeds of loving-kindness.” The Mitzvotaynu program is based on these words of wisdom.

Mitzvotaynu means “our commandments,” and is so named for the participation that is required by both the bar /bat mitzvah candidate and the parent(s). Each family must complete a total of 6 mitzvot by the first rehearsal with the rabbi. Of these 6, two must come from each of the three categories of mitzvot – Torah/Study, Avodah/Worship, and Gemilut Chasadim/Acts of Loving-Kindness. Below you will find the lists of options for mitzvot, and the forms that must be filled out. The involvement of the family in the choice of mitzvot and the fulfillment of them will help round out your bar /bat mitzvah experience, bringing to reality the idea of becoming a son or daughter of the commandment.

## Mitzvah List

### 1. TORAH/STUDY

#### REQUIRED BY ALL:

Working with the rabbi, complete a speech about your Torah and Haftarah portions.

#### CHOOSE ONE FROM THE FOLLOWING:

- A. Create a drawing, painting, collage or sculpture to illustrate your Torah portion.
- B. Add a new Jewish book to your home library. Read it and write a paragraph describing what you liked about it and what you learned from it. This may not be a religious school textbook.
- C. Research the meaning of your Hebrew name. Find out whom you were named after and learn more about that person's life. Learn to write your name in Hebrew.
- D. Research the genealogy of your family and create a family tree going back many generations. Find out where your family came from and why they immigrated to America.
- E. Visit the Holocaust Center or Jewish Museum with your family. Write a paragraph describing your experience there.

### 2. AVODAH/WORSHIP

#### REQUIRED BY ALL:

Attendance by bar /bat mitzvah student and at least one parent at 4 Shabbat morning services and 6 other Shabbat mornings, or evenings.

#### CHOOSE ONE FROM THE FOLLOWING:

- A. Write a prayer about the meaning and joy of becoming a bar or bat mitzvah, to be read at the celebration following services.
- B. Write a report on your favorite three prayers found in the Mishkan T'filah, A reform siddur. What do you like about them?
- C. Cook two traditional dishes for a Jewish meal or Shabbat dinner.
- D. Observe Havdalah at the end of Shabbat with the appropriate blessings.
- E. Affix a mezuzah on the doorpost of your house or your room. Use the blessings and short service found in On the Doorposts of Your House.

### 3. GEMILUT CHASADIM/ACTS OF LOVING-KINDNESS

#### REQUIRED BY ALL:

Give at least 18 hours of volunteer work to such places as the temple, religious school, nursing home, hospital, or any other community service dedicated to helping others.

*If you need ideas to fulfill your community service requirements, the Michelle Mitzvah Group has some suggestions. Whatever you choose, remember that the purpose of community service is to help others in need and feel proud about the mitzvah project you choose. You can become a “mitzvah hero” in your own special way. For more information, call Bobby Mass at 201-934-0833.*

### **“Bold, Brave, Courageous” – Helping our wounded soldiers**

The Michelle Mitzvah Group will continue its collection of much needed items for our troops recuperating in our nations military hospitals. We have made contact with a NJ non profit called Bold, Brave, Courageous. Their website is [www.boldbravecourageous.com](http://www.boldbravecourageous.com) There are baskets and poster signs located in the front entrance and education wing of the temple for collection of personal care items. This non profit group also could use assistance in spreading the word about this much needed cause and to encourage monetary contributions as well. These contributions will be used to purchase specific needed items for the wounded soldiers.

We need volunteers to assist us in this ongoing effort.

In addition to sending “items” to our troops, it would be a great idea to send letters of support as well. Our troops are far away from home, family and friends. They most definitely enjoy receiving mail from people showing their support and telling them how much we appreciate their fight for freedom.

Another idea is to talk with your teachers in school about getting your classmates involved in this campaign. Perhaps you can talk with the principal of your school about getting the entire school involved in this project. You can design your own flyer describing your project and distribute the flyer to friends, neighbors, and relatives. Whatever you choose to do, your efforts are important and much appreciated!!

### **Center for Food Action (CFA)**

The Michelle Mitzvah Group has an ongoing year round collection effort for the Center for Food Action located in Mahwah. There are baskets and poster signs located in the front entrance and education wing of the temple for this campaign.

One of our efforts is a **monthly “theme” campaign**. Beginning in September and running through the following May, we will choose a food “theme” and ask every child in our religious school to bring at least one item relating to that particular theme to religious school during that month. Some of the monthly themes will include “Peanut Butter and Jelly” ; “Breakfast Cereals” ; “Paper Goods” ; “Baby Diapers and Formula” ; & “Juice Boxes”

We could use a few assistants to help grow and promote this program. You can expand this idea to your school as well and get teachers, friends, neighbors, and relatives involved too.

## **Soup Kitchen ; Thrift Shop & Food Pantry in Suffern, NY**

We have made contact with the Christ Episcopal Church in Suffern. For many years they have been serving the community by providing a soup kitchen ; thrift shop and food pantry for the needy. Volunteers are needed there to help serve lunch in the soup kitchen and to collect items and work in the thrift shop and food pantry. What a great idea for a family to do community service together.

## **“Baby Basics Program” for Childrens Aid & Family Services**

The mission of Children’s Aid and Family Services is to help children, families, and communities to heal, to learn, and to grow. This program was founded to provide free nutritional and hygienic essentials for babies from birth through two years and to provide support to low income families here in Bergen County.

You can organize a drive to collect baby formula, diapers and baby wipes and then donate these much needed items to this cause. Get your friends, family, neighbors and school involved with your efforts.

For more information go to the baby basics website at:

[http://www.cafsnj.org/services/family/baby\\_basics.html](http://www.cafsnj.org/services/family/baby_basics.html)

You can also call Shakeemah Smith at 201-445-7015 for more information on how to get involved.

## **Letter Writing Campaign to an Elected Official**

Why not organize a letter writing campaign to your local congress person, senator, or the Mayor and council of your local town about important social or political issues of concern to you. For instance, you might be concerned about environmental issues, bicycle helmet laws, people driving while talking on their cell phones or something else happening in your town or community you feel needs change.

Our elected officials are there to serve the people (you) and what better way to get involved than to write thoughtful and meaningful letters.

Why not ask your parents, grandparents, other relatives and friends to also get involved?

## **Tomorrows Children Fund at Hackensack University Medical Center**

*The Tomorrows Children's Fund was founded by a group of dedicated parents to help their children and others like them with cancer and serious blood disorders. With the help of friends like you, today, TCF provides a warm, healthy and loving environment for children in treatment; a full scope of services to relieve families' emotional and financial stress; the very best possible medical care; and funding for research on these diseases. All of which confirms our belief that through hope, hard work and heartfelt generosity, extraordinary things are possible*

### **“Art Kits” Project**

There are several projects that can be done for the children with cancer and blood disorders at Hackensack Medical Center.

One idea is to organize and assemble “art kits” for the children. All that you need to do is to buy or make inexpensive boxes and fill the boxes with fun stuff for the kids. These kids need things to keep them busy and occupied while they sit and get their treatments.

Some of the items needed are crayons, puzzle books, a deck of cards, small bottles of bubbles, books, craft items, etc. All items must be “new” and unopened. Many of these items can be inexpensively purchased at your local dollar store.

### **“Cartoon Band-Aid” Collection**

It has come to our attention that the hospital uses a large amount of colorful cartoon band-aids for the children while they are being treated. These band-aids are always needed. All boxes must be *new* and unopened.

One idea is to design a flyer describing your project to collect cartoon band-aids. You can distribute the flyer to neighbors, friends, and relatives and ask them to donate them to your collection

Another idea is to set up collection boxes around town. Perhaps you can contact the local library, post office, schools to allow you to set up a box for the collection of the band-aids.

Another idea is to approach the local supermarkets and ask if they are willing to donate the band aids for the children at the hospital.

There are so many creative ways for you to coordinate this effort.



## Tomorrows Children Fund at Hackensack University Medical Center (continued)

### Host a Fundraiser

Hold an event to benefit the patients at the Tomorrows Children's Fund. This can be a fun way of socializing while also helping children in need. Event ideas:

“Thon” – Dance-a-thon, Walk-a-thon, Run-a-thon, Basketball-a-thon, Bowl-a-thon – you get the idea! Set a place and time and gather friends and family for support. Participants can pay an entry fee and obtain pledges from family and friends for the time they donate.

Sales – Bake sale, tee shirt sale etc.

Dances, movie nights, car wash, penny wars, concerts and so many other ideas.

TCF can provide pencils, buttons and a banner (on a loaner arrangement) to help you advertise your event.

### Host a Drive

Items can be collected and delivered to TCF to help cut their expenses. Due to health restrictions, *all items must be new*.

Always in need:

Colorful cartoon band-aids

Arts & crafts materials

Games, toys, stuffed animals, puzzles, model kits, craft kits.

CD's, tapes, video tapes, computer games (IBM), video games (Sega, Nintendo 64, Sony PlayStation (non violent only), CD “boom boxes,” PlayStation machines.

Food products for TCF pantry – canned and nonperishable foods as well as paper and cleaning products. Especially needed: Parmalet milk, hot and cold cereal, canned fruits, fruit juices, soup, one can meals, peanut butter, jelly, pudding, jello, canned stew, pasta products, spaghetti sauce, tuna, rice, canned meats, canned vegetables, baby food, sugar, flour, pancake mix, laundry detergent, disposable diapers.

New books and magazines

Gifts for teenagers

Clothes

*Note: Items are especially needed for teenagers and infants (birth to 1 year old). These age groups are the most ignored, therefore, the mostly needed. For infants some ideas are rattles, clothing, mobiles.*

## Tomorrows Children Fund at Hackensack University Medical Center (continued)

### Decorate Treatment Areas

Each month, TCF attempts to furnish their outpatient clinic and inpatient floor with special decorations. In December and January, snowflakes and snowmen greet their patients. February-Valentines; March- kites and shamrocks...etc. Decorations can be purchased from stores or handmade- tape cannot be used to place decoration. Instead, must use fun tack or suspend from ceiling with curling ribbon.

This is an easy and much needed project.

### Help Clean Treatment Areas

Help is needed weekly to clean all toys in the playroom with a chlorinated wash to prevent spread of infection – not a glamorous job, but one that is very much needed.

### “Adopt” a TCF Child or Family

Each patient is remembered at TCF with a special present to mark a birthday. TCF can provide first names and ages of patients for you to purchase an age appropriate gift which can be sent to TCF for distribution.

At Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, TCF can provide you with the name of a family for you to “adopt” providing a complete meal for the family to enjoy. Your basket should include all *non-perishable* items for appetizer, vegetables, dessert and could include paper napkins, candy and a gift certificate for a local food store for the main course. Some groups have elected to also purchase a family gift or a small gift for each member of the family.

*Please contact Bobby Mass for more information about the Tomorrows Children’s Fund ideas and projects. His phone is 201-934-0833 or e-mail him at [pugphoebe@yahoo.com](mailto:pugphoebe@yahoo.com) You can also contact Kathy Ambrose, the administrative director of the Tomorrows Children’s Fund at 201-996-5504. Visit the TCF website at [www.atcfkid.com](http://www.atcfkid.com) for more information about this wonderful organization.*

## *Other Community Service Ideas.....*

**Insert a letter in your invitations** to your guests encouraging everyone to bring a “donation” with them to services on the morning of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. You can ask them to bring a non perishable food item for the Center For Food Action or a box of cartoon bandages or art supplies for the kids with cancer. If your community service project involves working with animals, you could ask your guests to bring a toy for a dog or cat. If you have gotten involved with the baby basics program you can ask your guests to bring a package of baby diapers or baby wipes. You can then make a sign that you can display in the front lobby of the temple and direct your guests to place their items in baskets provided. This is a great and easy way to get everyone that you have invited involved in your community service work. An example of a letter is as follows: Remember, this letter can be modified for any item that you want to collect. There are many ideas you can get involved with.

*Dear Friends and Family:*

*For my Bar/Bat Mitzvah project, I am collecting much needed items for children who have cancer. I am working with an organization called the Tomorrow's Children Fund at Hackensack University Medical Center. Please help to put smiles on the faces of these children by donating Band Aid brand character bandages with fun designs printed on them. Please bring one new box of bandages with you to my Bar/Bat Mitzvah service where I will have baskets set up for collecting these items. Thank you for participating in this very worthwhile cause. I'll see you at my Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Thanks. Joey*

Get involved in making craft items to donate to sick children, people in nursing homes etc. You can make quilts, dolls, hand painted t-shirts, hats etc for those in need.

Take the coins that you have collected in a tzedakah box to the Commerce Bank coin counting machines (they do not charge extra). The bank will give you the money back in bills. Then go with your family to your local supermarket to purchase much needed items for the Center for Food Action in Mahwah. To make the experience even more meaningful, you can arrange to bring the items that you purchase directly to the Center for Food Action. You will then see first hand how these much needed items are distributed to people in need.

## **Other Community Service Ideas.....continued**

Another idea is to contribute your tzedakah monies to **Ziv Tzedakah Fund** ([www.ziv.org](http://www.ziv.org)) The Ziv Tzedakah Fund, founded and chaired by Danny Siegel, is about Mitzvahs - Fixing Up the World with whatever talents and resources we have as individuals.

Ziv Tzedakah Fund is a non-profit organization dedicated to the collection and distribution of funds to various little known Tzedakah projects. It provides money and support for individuals and programs that offer direct, significant, and immediate services with a minimum of overhead and bureaucracy. Ziv is also involved in bringing the educational message of Tzedakah to communities and Jewish schools throughout the United States, Canada and Israel and empowers ordinary people to become Mitzvah heroes.

- Contact the **Volunteer Center of Bergen County**, your one-stop shop for anything and everything related to being a volunteer or involving volunteers to get things done in Bergen County. No matter who you are or what your situation is, we can help link you to the perfect volunteer job! We work with more than 500 private and public non-profit agencies in and around Bergen County and maintain a database with hundreds of volunteer opportunities suitable for individuals and groups of every description

Volunteer Center Of Bergen County  
64 Passaic St.  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
Tel: 201-489-9454  
[www.bergenvolunteers.org](http://www.bergenvolunteers.org)

Help a classmate or friend who is sick by keeping him/her company, and bringing homework or books from school.

Make a contribution to a temple fund in honor or in memory of someone you care about.

Participate in the MAZON program by giving 3% of the cost of your Bar/Bat mitzvah to MAZON, a Jewish organization that feeds the hungry.

Donate your centerpieces from your bar/bat mitzvah celebration to a worthwhile place. For example, if they are flowers, send them to a senior citizen's residence; if they are baskets of food or toys, donate them to a hospital, food center, or animal shelter.

Join the Michelle Mitzvah Group throughout the year when they visit Blythedale Children's Hospital (November, February and June); Wanaque Convalescent Center (Christmas Day); Crop Walk for Hunger (October); Coat Drive (October- December) ; Homeless Shelter in May etc These events are great to do as a family.

## MITZVOTAYNU FORM

*(Must be filled out and handed to rabbi at first rehearsal)*

Name of Bar /Bat mitzvah Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Bar /Bat mitzvah Ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the mitzvot your family performed:

### 1. Torah/Study

Completion of Speech

When was it done? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel when you completed the mitzvah?

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Mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_

When was it done? \_\_\_\_\_

Who in the family participated? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel when you completed the mitzvah?

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### 2. Avodah/Worship

Dates of services attended: Shabbat morning (4)

\_\_\_\_\_

Shabbat other (6)

\_\_\_\_\_

Mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_

When was it done? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who in the family participated? \_\_\_\_\_  
How did you feel when you completed the mitzvah?

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### 3. Gemilut Chasadim/Acts of Loving-Kindness

Mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_  
When was it done? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who in the family participated? \_\_\_\_\_  
How did you feel when you completed the mitzvah?

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Mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_  
When was it done? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who in the family participated? \_\_\_\_\_  
How did you feel when you completed the mitzvah?

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## **GLOSSARY**

Aleinu – The prayer of adoration chanted and read towards the end of the service in front of the open ark.

Aliyah/Aliyot – The word literally means “going up” it is used to refer to the honor of reciting the blessings over the Torah. Often it is used any time one is called to go up to the Bima for an honor.

Bar mitzvah – The word literally means “son of a commandment.” A boy, having reached puberty, is now traditionally considered responsible for carrying out the laws of Judaism. The word refers specifically to the child and not to the ritual ceremony of being called up to the Torah. B’nai mitzvah is the plural.

Bat mitzvah – The word literally means “daughter of a commandment.” A girl, having reached puberty, is now traditionally considered responsible for carrying out the laws of Judaism. The word refers specifically to the child and not to the ritual ceremony of being called up to the Torah. B’not mitzvah is the plural.

Bima – The pulpit in a sanctuary.

Haftarah – The word literally means “conclusion.” It refers to the reading from the Prophets. It is usually thematically connected to the Torah portion for a particular Shabbat. This reading is done not from a scroll, but from a book.

Hakafah – The procession which brings the Torah into the congregation.

Kiddush/Motzi – These are the blessings done at the end of the service over the wine and the bread.

Kippah (Yarmulke) – This is a skullcap worn according to custom by both men and women if they wish during prayer.

Mitzvah/Mitzvot (plural) – This word literally means “commandment” but has also come to be understood as “good deed” since all that God commands is for the good of the people. For Reform Jews, it denotes desirable acts, both ritual and ethical, which define us as Jews.

Oneg Shabbat – This phrase literally means, “delight of the Sabbath.” It refers to the time after the Shabbat service during which there is socializing, eating and drinking to celebrate Shabbat.

Parashah – This term refers to the section of the Torah read on any particular Shabbat.

Siddur – This term refers to the Jewish prayerbook.

Tallit – This is the prayer shawl traditionally worn during morning services, or anytime Torah is read. It is based on the commandment to wear fringes. According to the Talmud, a Jewish law book, both males and females may wear it once they reach the age of bar /bat mitzvah.

Torah – The handwritten parchment scroll kept in the ark and containing the Five Books of Moses.

Tzedakah – This term literally means “righteousness or act of justice” and is used to refer to the duty of the Jew to assist others through charity or volunteer work.

### **PEOPLE TO CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS**

Rabbi Joel Mosbacher – (201) 512-1983

Cantor David Perper – (201) 512-1983

Principal – Rebecca McVeigh – (201) 337-0255

Education Chairperson – Terry Sitomer – (201)236-4886

Ritual Co-Chairs Nancy Levene – (201)236-6059

Marilyn Taylor – (201)934-1986

Community Service: Bobby Mass (201) 934-0833

Oneg Shabbat Information – Temple Office (201) 512-1983



