



*Hebrew Tabernacle*  
**B'NEI MITZVAH  
HANDBOOK**

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is truly a milestone in a young person's life. It can be a period of great excitement, learning and anticipation, and yet, at the same time it may provoke anxiety, and even self-doubt. The clergy and staff of Hebrew Tabernacle Congregation are committed to ensuring that your child's simchah is a fulfilling and enriching one. To assist you as you begin this journey, we are providing this booklet to answer many of the common questions that arise. As always, if the answers you are seeking are not contained within these pages, please do not hesitate to call us. We are here to support you.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bar Mitzvah ceremony is not as ancient as many believe it to be. There is no hint of it in the Bible. By the first century CE, the ages of thirteen for a boy and twelve for a girl were recognized as the ages when they were obliged to fully participate in the rituals of the community. After a young man's thirteenth birthday he was able to read from the Torah, a legal right reserved only for adults. He was also legitimately counted as part of a minyan, was encouraged to marry, earn a living and raise a family. Though girls were not afforded the right to read from Torah, they were granted some legal rights of maturity at age twelve.

The Bar Mitzvah ceremony itself dates back to the 13th century. It is interesting to note that a boy actually became a Bar Mitzvah automatically upon reaching thirteen years of age. The ceremony was simply a form of acknowledgement. According to Jewish law, women were not obligated to fulfill most of the time-bound mitzvot because family responsibilities took precedence. The idea of recognizing young women at the "age of commandment" was introduced in Europe in the 19th century when some families honored their daughters on their twelfth birthday with a festive meal. In the United States, the first recorded Bat Mitzvah was that of Judith Kaplan in 1921. Judith Kaplan was the eldest of the daughters of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, founder of the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement.

While we realize that becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah no longer has legal impact, it is a religious ceremony that symbolizes the student's understanding of his or her role in the Jewish community. We look forward to discussing the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah further when we meet over the course of your preparations.

While this is an important milestone in the life of a young Jew, it is the joyous celebration of a PART of their Jewish journey. No one would expect to end his/her formal secular education at age 13; neither should we think of this process as an end. Rather, becoming an acknowledged adult member of our people is just the beginning of a lifetime of Jewish learning and growth. The most difficult religious issues and life questions need ever-greater maturity and knowledge for discussion and thought. We hope that your child will continue on his/her Jewish journey in Hebrew Tabernacle's Hebrew High program starting in 8th grade.

## **ABOUT THE B'NAI MITZVAH PROCESS**

### **Setting the Date**

During the student's year in Kitah Vav, your family should receive a B'nai Mitzvah Registration Form. This form needs to be filled out in order to receive a date and to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the Hebrew Tabernacle. Dates are assigned on a first come, first served basis, and we attempt to assign them close to the student's thirteenth birthday. The clergy and Hebrew School principal have final say on the dates assigned. Failure to meet any of the requirements delineated in this handbook may result in the date being taken off the calendar.

### **B'nai Mitzvah Meeting**

The families of the Kitah Vav students will attend a B'nai Mitzvah meeting. All students and parents are required to attend. The Rabbi and Hebrew School Principal will be present to answer any questions you might have about the months and years to come.

### **Clergy Meetings**

About three months before B'nei Mitzvah, students and their parents will have a meeting with the Rabbi. At this meeting, a timetable for the rest of the preparation period will be laid out. Please bring whatever family calendars are needed to this meeting. The rabbi will assign reading materials to be completed by the next meeting with the Rabbi.

The Rabbi will meet with the student again to work on the student's D'var Torah and to discuss the significance of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Other meetings may be scheduled based on the needs of the student and the family.

## **Tutoring**

Only Hebrew Tabernacle approved tutors may be used for the primary tutoring. The Rabbi, in consultation with the tutor, will determine the materials to be covered. Tutoring begins six months prior to a B'nei Mitzvah and will occur weekly throughout the six months. Each family is responsible for paying the tutor's fees; the Hebrew Tabernacle does not provide free tutoring. This being said, the clergy are available for extra sessions above and beyond the tutor's visits if the clergy deem it necessary. Tutors are currently charging from \$60-\$80 an hour.

All students with special needs will be accommodated and supported. We have tutors who work specifically with special needs students and tutoring may begin earlier than six months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as needed.

## **Rehearsals**

There will be one full rehearsal the week before B'nei Mitzvah. The Rabbi will conduct these rehearsals. At this rehearsal, the student will practice all the parts of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony including Torah reading, Haftarah, prayers, blessings, D'var Torah, etc.

Nervousness at these rehearsals is very normal. At least one parent should be present at the final rehearsal. The student should bring their d'var Torah and tallit to the rehearsal. This is also a chance to break in new shoes and get them more comfortable.

## **RITUAL INFORMATION**

### **Honors: Shabbat Eve**

Candle Lighting: It is customary at Hebrew Tabernacle for one representative of the community to kindle the Shabbat lights on Friday evening. A member of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's family may have this honor. If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah has a younger sibling they may accompany an adult to the bimah for this honor or the whole family can light the candles together.

### **Optional Parts in the Shabbat Eve Service**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is required to participate in the Shabbat Eve Service. The student will:

- o Lead the congregation in the blessing over the wine (Kiddush) and/or the challah (Motzi).
- o Lead one or more prayers during the service.

Please Invite Your Out-of-Town Guests to Attend Services with You.

### **Student's Role in the Shabbat Morning Service**

At the service when a child becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah he/she will do the following:

- o Recite the blessing for putting on a tallit
- o Chant from the Torah
- o Chant the Torah and Haftarah blessings
- o Give a D'var Torah (teaching about the Torah portion)
- o Lead prayers during the service

### **Honors: Shabbat Morning**

Anyone who has an honor on the bimah must be appropriately dressed for the occasion. Honorees who are inappropriately dressed may be refused an honor, at the Rabbi's discretion.

Aliyot: There are at least four, and a maximum of seven, Torah honors called aliyot (plural of Aliyah). Family and friends may have the honor of at least two of them. The first Aliyah is reserved for the previous Hebrew Tabernacle Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the last one is reserved for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Each Aliyah involves honorees chanting the blessings in Hebrew, before and after the Torah reading.

Transliteration is available as an aid for people who know the blessings but are unsure of the Hebrew letters. If requested, the rabbi or your tutor can provide help with the blessings as a learning tool or as a refresher if it has been a while since someone's last aliyah. Aliyot may go to anyone Jewish who is Bar/Bat Mitzvah whom the family seeks to honor. Honorees often include, but are not limited to: grandparents, parents, older siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. Several people may go up for an Aliyah together.

Ba'al Koreh – If there is another member of your family or friend who would like to read Torah, in addition to the verses chanted by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, arrangements can be made to do so with the Rabbi.

Opening/Closing the Ark – The honor of opening and closing the ark curtain can be given to family and friends. As many as two people can have this honor per opening. The ark is opened before the Torah service, and again when the Torah is being returned. The honorees will be called up the Rabbi. They do not need to be Jewish.

Hagbah – After the Torah is read, we lift the Torah to display it to the congregation. This ritual is not easy and we do not want the Torah to be dropped. Therefore, we only allow individuals who have performed this ritual before to do hagbah. If you would like a member of your family who has not done this before to do so, they must make an appointment with the Rabbi to learn how to do so properly.

G'lilah – After hagbah, the ritual dressing of the Torah takes place. Up to two people may have this honor.

Motzi – Following services, if the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not doing the blessing over the bread him/herself, a member of the family may do so. This honor can be given to a grandparent or a younger sibling.

### **Honors for the Parents**

Parents almost always choose to have an Aliyah for themselves out of the allotted Aliyot. There will be a moment in the service for the parents to offer a blessing to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This can be something written by the parents themselves or they may choose from a selection of blessings/prayers that are appropriate for the occasion.

### **Honors for Non-Jewish Family Members**

We encourage family members to participate in Shabbat services as an important way for the student becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah to honor those whose love has brought them to this milestone. We recognize that some of these family members may not be Jewish, and that their support has been no less instrumental in guiding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah toward this day. Therefore, we seek to include non-Jewish parents and relatives in the celebration in meaningful ways. A non-Jewish parent may read a parents' blessing and non-Jewish family and friends may open/close the ark curtains. There are also English readings which non-Jewish family members may read to add their voices to the service. Please speak with the rabbi about other ways that non-Jewish family members can participate.

## Shamashing-USHERING INSTRUCTIONS

Ushers traditionally are the up-coming B'nei Mitzvah and their family. In other words, if your family is next on the calendar, you are expected to be Ushers.

### Before Services

1. Your whole family should arrive no later than 35 minutes before the start time of the service. Consult the website calendar for the start time.
2. We will be using the Mishkan Tefillah *siddur* and the Plaut Chumash.
3. The *B'nei Mitzvah Family* might have prepared programs for the service. Please have a supply to give out to guests. Please take a look at the program to see if it contains the Hebrew text for the *Torah* and *Haftarah* readings. If not, you should also prepare to hand out copies of the black Plaut Chumash to those who might want to follow along during the *Torah* service.
4. You should be standing at the top of the steps into the Sanctuary where the book carts are located. Enter on the left side of the Gold Wing.
5. Wish everyone who enters a "Shabbat Shalom" and welcome them to Hebrew Tabernacle.
6. Hand each worshipper a siddur (prayerbook) and a program. Offer a *Plaut Chumash* and ask people to share it if they can.
7. Inform all worshippers that, if they choose, a *kippah* (yarmulke) and a *tallit* (prayer shawl) are available to them to use.
8. If at any point a worshipper needs to use the chair lift, please let one of the staff know.
9. If any children are not attending services with an adult, or are sitting apart from her/his family, they may only sit in the ground level seats. Please do not let school friends of the *Bat/Bar* Mitzvah sit in the top rows of the balcony.

### During Services

1. Please remain standing at the top of the stairs until the congregation is invited to be seated during the Amidah, at which point you may sit in the last row of the pews so you can assist any latecomers.
2. While the congregation is standing, it is disrespectful to enter or leave the Sanctuary. Worshippers entering can wait with you at the entrance to the Sanctuary until the congregation is seated, at which point they may take their seats.



3. Keep a few copies of the prayer book open to the current page. As worshippers walk in, hand them a prayer book which has already been opened to the proper place in the service.
4. Keep an eye on the school friends of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Do not allow them to wander about during the service, making noise or acting inappropriately. One strong word is often enough.
5. If you hear any noise emanating from the Gold Wing, go down into the Gold Wing and make an effort to quiet it down.
6. Some guests may be unaware of the proper behavior and decorum in a house of worship. If they or their children are disrupting the service, please speak to them.
7. When the Rabbi gives the signal, quietly distribute the candy to the worshippers. The Rabbi will tell the congregants when to throw the candy.
8. Photography or video are not permitted during the service.

### **After Services**

1. Please stand by the book carts and be prepared to take the prayerbooks, *chumashim* and programs.
2. Wish everyone a “*Shabbat Shalom*” on the way out of the Sanctuary as you take their materials.
3. While the Rabbi will announce that the worshippers should return the books and other materials to the rear of the Sanctuary at the end of services, there are always a few who leave things behind in the pews. Please go through the pews and collect everything after the worshippers have left, including candy and the wrappers. Also, please remove any papers or programs that may have been tucked into the books.
4. Take a walk through the pews, including the sides and the balcony, and retrieve any personal items that may have been left behind. Please bring these items to the Kiddush/Luncheon and make an announcement so they can be returned.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING KEEP THE SERVICE FLOWING SMOOTHLY!

## **EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

While technically anyone who is thirteen years of age has achieved the status of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, there are many requirements to become one in modern times. As you have read already, there is much that will need to be prepared for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. However, if a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to truly become responsible for his/her own Jewish observance, he/she must be educated in order to make good decisions. Listed below are the education requirements that need to be fulfilled. We have an excellent Hebrew School at the Hebrew Tabernacle and these requirements can be met there.

Students may require additional tutoring in Hebrew beyond that offered by the Hebrew School. Students must fulfill all Hebrew School requirements, including regular attendance, participation, and completion of work.

Each student is required to attend three years of Hebrew School at the Hebrew Tabernacle: Kitah Hay (5<sup>th</sup> grade), Kitah Vav (6<sup>th</sup> grade) and Kitah Zayin (7<sup>th</sup> grade). **Only the Rabbi and Hebrew School Principal will determine who is exempt from requirements.**

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING BNEI MITZVAH AT THE HEBREW TABERNACLE**

- **Membership.** Bnei Mitzvah is only open to members in good standing of the Hebrew Tabernacle. All outstanding balances, unless on an otherwise prearranged payment plan, must be paid in full before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Similarly, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date may only be scheduled by families in good financial standing.
- **Faith.** It is understood that all students who are becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the Hebrew Tabernacle are raised in the Jewish tradition.
- **Fees.** A Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee of \$500 must be received no later than one month prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This fee includes our standard Shabbat oneg on Shabbat morning and candy to be thrown at the service.
- **Service Attendance.** Students are expected to attend services at the Hebrew Tabernacle twenty (20) times in the two years prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These 20 services must be a mix of Shabbat Evening Services, Shabbat Morning Services, and Holiday Services. While the student may attend these services alone, we strongly encourage the whole family to come so that our style of

services will be familiar to your whole family on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The whole family is required to attend at least two Shabbat Morning Services in the months leading up to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In order to keep track of attendance, index cards are available for students to write their names on and place in the basket for Rabbi Paula..

STUDENTS AND AT LEAST ONE FAMILY MEMBER SHOULD ATTEND EVERY B'NEI MITZVAH SERVICE THE PRECEDES THEIR OWN SERVICE.

- Shul-Hopping: Students are expected to “shul-hop” ten (10) times in the two years before their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These services should be Shabbat Morning Services as well. You may wish to visit a variety of synagogues: Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Ashkenazi, Sephardic, etc... After each visit, you need to fill out a “Shul-Hop Form.” On it are several questions designed to help you reflect on your experience at these synagogues. The Rabbi or Hebrew School Principal will collect these periodically when they meet with you.

- Mitzvah/Community Service Project. Since each student is about to become responsible for the mitzvot for him/herself, they will be expected to begin taking on the responsibility of the mitzvot now. In the two years leading up to his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each student will be required to do fifteen (15) hours of community service. This community service project can be at the Hebrew Tabernacle, or at another agency. This project can also be something you do alone. Regardless, your project needs to be approved by the Rabbi or the Hebrew School Principal. Upon the completion of your project, you will be expected to hand in a summary of your experience.

- Photograph/Biography. You need to provide a picture of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah (digital or snapshot) along with a short personal history, to be published in the congregation Eblast. Send the picture to [Office@hebrewTabernacle.org](mailto:Office@hebrewTabernacle.org)

- Advance Notice. Please get us the names (English and Hebrew) of anyone who will be participating in the service one month in advance.

- **Reciprocation. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is required to have an aliyah at the next Bar/Bat Mitzvah, so put it in your calendar now. Also, your family will usher at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah before yours, so please put those dates on your calendar as well.**

## **HIDDUR MITZVAH**

A mitzvah is a commandment; something we must do. Beyond our need to complete mitzvot, our tradition encourages us to imbue each mitzvah with an aspect of beauty. Beautifying a mitzvah is called hiddur mitzvah. For instance, we don't just build a sukkah, we decorate it; or we don't just put eight candles on a piece of wood, we have a nice chanukiah. There are many aspects of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah that can be beautified. Examples are listed below. We encourage hiddur mitzvah, however, we ask that in your attempt to make something beautiful you do not make the day about beauty. The focus should always be on the Shabbat service and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's participation in it, not his/her clothes or the lavishness of the party afterward.

### **FLOWERS**

The Hebrew Tabernacle does not provide flowers for B'nei Mitzvah. Many families choose to purchase flowers for the bimah in order to enhance the beauty of the Sanctuary. Other families also order flowers for the tables in the social hall for the oneg after.. If you order flowers, we ask that you have them delivered Friday afternoon and not on Shabbat. Separate flowers may be ordered for any additional celebrations you may be hosting in our building. Please let the office know about any deliveries.

### **KIPPOT AND TALITOT**

The Hebrew Tabernacle does have kippot available for worshippers in our Sanctuary. However, you may wish to order a set of special kippot for this event. These kippot may be personalized.

Many families give the Bar/Bat Mitzvah a tallit that has been handed down in the family while others purchase one that matches the student's personality. The student can be involved in picking out the tallit or it can be a surprise gift.

### **PROGRAMS**

Families sometimes choose to create a program for the B'nei Mitzvah service. In the program you may want to include: a summary of the texts to be read, explanation of certain rituals and objects, the major players involved as well as those being honored. Examples of previous programs can be obtained from the Hebrew Tabernacle office.

### **CANDY**

It is a tradition to throw candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the conclusion of their efforts. It adds to the sweetness of the occasion. Please follow these simple rules, so that this happy event does not get out of hand. We will provide the candy;

please do not bring your own. The ushers are responsible for making sure the candy gets handed out in an appropriate manner.

Please do not throw the candy until the Rabbi has given the okay to do so. Your child will likely wish to throw some of the candy back. One or two is OK, but please don't let it get out of hand. Please remind your child that he or she is now an adult according to Jewish law and must act accordingly. After all the candy has been thrown, the Rabbi will invite all the children up to the bimah to collect it.

### **APPROPRIATE ATTIRE**

Our tradition teaches that one should try to wear fine clothes on Shabbat, for it is written (Isaiah 58:13) "and you shall honor," which is interpreted by the Rabbis to mean that the garments worn on Shabbat shall not be the same as those worn on weekdays. We recognize that standards for dress have become less formal than in previous generations. Still, it is our expectation that worshippers of all ages will come to services dressed in a manner reflecting "hiddur mitzvah." Blue-jeans, sweatshirts, t-shirts, bare mid-drift tops, baseball caps, and similar dress are not appropriate for a B'nei Mitzvah Service. Specifically, it is requested that everyone cover bare shoulders before being called to the Bima. Please encourage your guests to stay within these guidelines.

### **PROPER BEHAVIOR**

In order to maintain the dignity and sacredness of the service, please explain to your guests the importance of quiet during services. Ushers are instructed to ask guests who do not maintain proper decorum to leave the Sanctuary.

Children are not allowed to leave the Sanctuary without an accompanying adult. If you have young guests who are coming without parental supervision, they are your responsibility. These unaccompanied children must sit on the ground floor of the Sanctuary, they may not sit in any of the balconies.

### **CELL PHONES AND BEEPERS**

All cell phones and beepers are to be powered off during services while in the Sanctuary.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Photographs normally may not be taken in the Sanctuary during services. However, the B'nei Mitzvah family may designate ONE person as the photographer. This person must meet with the Rabbi prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to discuss the requirements that must be followed to photograph during this service. Photographers must cooperate with the clergy and our staff regarding all matters. Friends and family members will be reminded that they may not take

photographs. Family photographs may be taken in the Sanctuary at an earlier rehearsal as well as before or after the service.

### **KAVOD – RESPECT**

So that the feelings of each member of the B'nei Mitzvah class are respected, we ask that if you are invited any other students, the entire class be invited to any party you may be hosting in conjunction with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

### **VIDEOGRAPHY**

It is the policy of the Hebrew Tabernacle that NO videographers are permitted to take video during services. Again, friends and family members must comply with these rules as well.

### **INVITATIONS**

Your invitations should invite your guests to be at the Shabbat Morning services in the Sanctuary promptly at 10 or 11:00 am. Friday Eve Services in the Sanctuary start promptly at 7:30 pm (except for family services which begin at 6:30 PM). If you will be hosting a luncheon or other event after the oneg in the Social Hall, or elsewhere following services, this should be included on your invitation.

### **ONEG**

The Hebrew Tabernacle presents a modest congregational oneg at the conclusion of services. You and your guests are welcome participants. You have sponsored the Oneg with your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee. The oneg consists of wine, juice, challah, and cookies. If you would like to sponsor a more elaborate oneg, or make it a full lunch, we can help you make those arrangements. Please contact our office for more information. Any enhancements to the oneg must be available to all of the worshippers. If you would like a separate event for your guests only, you will have to wait until all of the worshippers have left the building. Even if you are planning an outside event, your family is expected to be at the oneg.

### **BOOKING AN EVENT**

If you wish to hold your own special private non-congregational event in the Hebrew Tabernacle Social Hall you will need to inform the Hebrew School Principal and the Hebrew Tabernacle office. These arrangements should be made as soon as possible in order to avoid a calendar conflict. There is a \$500 space rental fee. Outside caterers are acceptable provided they follow our kashrut rules; **Pork and shellfish are not allowed at any time in the Hebrew Tabernacle Building.** Any food being brought into the Hebrew Tabernacle kitchen **must be strictly Kosher.** Food being served that does not enter the kitchen is not required to be Kosher. However, even if you will not be using the kitchen, pork and shellfish may not ever be served.

The B'nei Mitzvah family will need to advise the caterer to be extra cautious in keeping the kitchen sinks free of any food scraps that could clog the sinks. HT will ask the family to provide a \$250 refundable deposit to ensure that the kitchen is left in working order.

Deliveries must not interfere with services on either Shabbat Eve or Shabbat Morning. Music including the use of a DJ or band is allowed as long as the volume is kept at a level that does not intrude on our neighbors.

**Please give a gratuity to the building staff to show appreciation for excellent service and for any extra cleanup and setup they may have done.**

### **CELEBRATE THROUGH TZEDAKAH: GIFTS OF TIME AND RESOURCES**

It is traditional in synagogue life for Jews to express their gratitude through charitable gifts, to share the joy of their own celebration with those in need. Tzedakah, often defined as "charity," more accurately means "justice." Tzedakah can be donated in the form of time and money. Both gifts are sacred and therefore very important.

The synagogue depends on the charitable support of its members. A child's becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a wonderful time to demonstrate such support through a charitable gift to the synagogue. Donations to the Hebrew Tabernacle are responsible for a large percentage of our annual budget. Donations can go to a variety of funds, offsetting a multitude of costs for the congregation. We invite Bnei Mitzvah families to contribute what they can.

We are often asked how a family can demonstrate their appreciation to the clergy. The Rabbi has a charitable Discretionary Fund to which donations can be made, as does the Hebrew School Principal.

Now that they are adult members of the Jewish community, Bnei Mitzvah should be encouraged to volunteer their time at the Hebrew Tabernacle. Our congregation functions because the members of the congregation volunteer in a variety of ways, our young adult members are as crucial as any other. Like other adults, they may be asked to be on committees, participate in shivah minyans, perform aliyot, usher and much more.

All adult Jews, our Bnei Mitzvah included, are responsible for tikkun olam, repairing the world. Therefore, though there is no post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah community service requirement, we strongly encourage you to continue to serve the community at large.

If you would like suggestions of charities which could use your time and/or your money, please consult with the Rabbi.

## MITZVAH/COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

There are many ways in which you can fulfill the 15-hour requirement for a community service project. You may not select a project without the approval of the Rabbi or your mentor. You may choose a Jewish activity or a non-Jewish activity. The general requirement is that your time is spent making the world a better place. If you are working independently, you will need a way to prove to the Rabbi that you have fulfilled your commitment. If you are working with an organization, they will have to write a letter saying that you spent 15 hours with their organization.

Below, you will find some ideas for community service projects that you may want to consider. These are just suggestions, you may find your own.

### IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS:

The Hebrew Tabernacle

The Hebrew School

HT special event volunteer

The Isabella Home for the Aged

Self-Help

FYI

Fort Tryon Park

New York Presbyterian Hospital

YM & YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood

### ELSEWHERE:

HUC-JIR Soup Kitchen

UJA-Federation

The Jewish Museum

The Jewish Heritage Museum

## GLOSSARY

We do not like to assume that every family is familiar with all the terms that may be used in this process. Therefore, we are listing some words below that are associated with the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony.

**Aliyah**: literally “going up;” the blessings before and after the *Torah* readings; it is an honor to be invited to recite these blessings.

**Amidah**: literally “standing;” the central section of the service which is traditionally read standing.

**Baal Koreh**: literally “master of reading;” the name for anyone who reads from the *Torah* scroll.

**Baruch Sheptarani**: literally “Blessed be the One who separated;” traditionally the blessing that released parents from being punished because of their child’s actions. Nowadays it has come to be a



blessing marking the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* has completed their goal.

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah**: literally translated as “Son/Daughter of the Commandment,” more accurately understood as “commanded one.” Figuratively, it means the age of responsibility. **Bimah**: the pulpit or raised area at the front of the sanctuary.

**Bnei Mitzvah**: more than one *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Used when referring to more than one child.

**Challah**: the ritual bread which is blessed in Jewish meals and ceremonies.

**Chanukiah**: the special lamp that is lit during the holiday of Chanukah.

**Chatzi Kaddish**: literally a “half *kaddish*,” the prayer between two sections of the service. **D’var**

**Torah**: literally “a word of *Torah*,” a teaching or expounding on a *Torah* text. **El Maley**

**Rachamim**: literally “God, Master of Compassion;” it is the traditional memorial prayer. **Glilah**:

literally “the act of rolling up;” the act of rolling up and dressing the *Torah* after it has been read.

**Haftarah**: the portion from the biblical Prophets or Writings that is read after the reading of the *Torah*.

**Hagbah**: literally “lifting;” the act of lifting the *Torah* so the congregation can see it.

**Hakafah**: literally “procession;” the ritual procession with the *Torah* around the sanctuary.

**Heksher**: the mark delineating something as kosher.

**Kiddush**: literally “sanctification;” the blessing over wine that marks the Sabbath day separate from other days.

**Kippah**: *yarmulke* or head covering.

**Kitah**: literally “a class.”

**Minhag**: literally “a custom.”

**Minyan**: literally “a counting;” the quorum of ten adult Jews required to say certain prayers at services.

**Mi Shebeirach**: literally “May the One who blesses;” a whole category of prayers for people who either merit or need special blessings.

**Mishna**: literally “teaching;” the title of a Jewish legal work. It was compiled by Rabbi Judah the Prince around the year 200CE.

**Mitzvah**: literally “commandment.”

**Motzi**: literally “the one who brings forth;” the blessing thanking God for bringing forth bread from the earth.

**Oleh/Olah**: literally “one who goes up (male/female);” a person who has an *aliyah* to the *Torah*.

**Oneg**: literally “enjoyment;” the celebration with food and drinks following services. **Parashah**: the *Torah* portion of the week.

**Rosh Chodesh**: literally “the head of the month;” the first day of the new month on the Jewish calendar. The new month begins when there is a new moon.

**Seder K’riat ha’Torah**: the portion of the service when the *Torah* and *haftarah* are read. **Shivah**: literally “seven;” the week long period of mourning after the funeral. Typically a service needing a *minyan* is conducted at the home of the mourners.

**Shul**: a synagogue.

**Sukkah**: the booth that Jews are commanded to build during the festival of Sukkot (booths) so that we remember the transient lifestyle of our ancestors.

**Tallit**: a Jewish prayer shawl once only worn by men and boys from the age of *Bar Mitzvah*. Today, girls and women wear them also. A *tallit* must have *tzeitzeit* on the corners. *Talitot* is the plural of *tallit*.

**Talmud**: Jewish legal work consisting of two parts (the Mishnah and the Gemara). It was compiled and edited between the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

**Torah**: also known as the Five Books of Moses. The *Torah* is the first section of the Hebrew Bible.

**Tzedakah**: literally “justice;” the term has come to represent charity – a form of meting out economic justice.

**Tzitzit**: specially tied fringes on the corners of the *tallit* that are meant to symbolize the *Mitzvot*.

**Tzniut**: literally “modesty;” the rules governing proper attire.

**Hebrew name**: a Hebrew name is used for ritual purposes. It is composed of your Hebrew name and the Hebrew name of both your parents. The word “*ben*” or “*bat*” is inserted to mean “son of” or “daughter of,” and the letter *vav* is used to mean “and,” e.g. Yoseif Tzvi ben Mordechai v’Esther; Sara Rivka bat Hannah v’Shalom. If someone with an honor does not have a Hebrew name, they may be called up by their English name.

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Rabbi Paula Feldstein

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### ***BNEI MITZVAH REGISTRATION FORM***

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently members of the Hebrew Tabernacle?: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the student currently enrolled in the Hebrew School? \_\_\_\_\_

What Hebrew School Class are they in?: \_\_\_\_\_

What grade are they in at "regular" school?: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the student's birth date?: \_\_\_\_\_

What date would you like to request (please see the *Bnei Mitzvah* Handbook for guidelines on choosing a date)?: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there special significance to this date?: \_\_\_\_\_

By requesting a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date from the Hebrew Tabernacle, we hereby agree to all the terms and conditions laid out in the *Bnei Mitzvah* Handbook. These conditions include, but are not limited to: the student fulfilling all Hebrew School requirements, the student fulfilling all of the *Bnei Mitzvah* requirements and the family fulfilling their requirements. By requesting a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date, we hereby acknowledge that we must be members of the Hebrew Tabernacle in good standing and that all fees\* owed to the Hebrew Tabernacle and its Hebrew School will be paid no less than 30 days before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

\_\_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_\_ Parent

## SHUL-HOP FORM

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

\*This form should be filled out after you visit each shul. You may bring this with you to the shul, but please remember that writing is not permitted in every shul on Shabbat.

Date you attended shul: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of shul attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of shul attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Rabbi and/or Cantor that led the service: \_\_\_\_\_

What type of shul was it (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Askenazi, Sephardic)?:

\_\_\_\_\_

How long were services?: \_\_\_\_\_

Were there instruments used? Which ones?: \_\_\_\_\_

What was the prayerbook like? And what was it called?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the inside of the sanctuary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the service like?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you enjoy it? If so, why? If not, why?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were there things at this service that you wish we would do at the Hebrew Tabernacle? If so, what? Why?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were there things that you witnessed that you are happy we do not do at the Hebrew Tabernacle? If so, what? Why?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_