



B'nai Mitzvah Handbook



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Updated 060119

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Bar mitzvah means “son of the commandment”, and bat mitzvah means “daughter of the commandment.” Jewish youth at age 13 become bar or bat mitzvah as they lead a Torah service in their synagogue after years of preparation, guidance, and study in the areas of Jewish values, history, culture, philosophy, and language. Temple Sinai Religious School has a proud history of bar and bat mitzvah education in the Reform tradition.

Becoming a bar or bat mitzvah means taking on the religious and civic responsibilities as others in the Jewish community. Some of our communal expectations include:

- performing mitzvot (including a 13-hour mitzvah project in the months prior to one’s bar/bat mitzvah),
- being counted in a minyan for the purpose of communal prayer,
- leading prayer services,
- reading from the Torah,
- being accountable for one’s moral or ethical behavior,
- and with one’s family, becoming a participating member of the Temple Sinai and broader Jewish community.

For a Jewish child, the bar or bat mitzvah ceremony is likely the first time s/he takes on the responsibility of preparing to lead within the Jewish community. It is a rite of passage that signals the spiritual transition from child to adult in Jewish life and demonstrates the ability and willingness to be counted among the adult members of the community. Family, friends, teachers, and the entire community rejoice in the transmission of Jewish culture, ritual, tradition, and spirit that the bar or bat mitzvah ceremony signifies.

At Temple Sinai, the bar or bat mitzvah is a wonderful occasion for the whole congregation to celebrate together, to emphasize that we are an extended family, and to kvell about our students’ commitment to Judaism and lifelong learning. Our bar and bat mitzvah education program prepares our students to lead the Torah service, read and interpret the Torah and Haftarah (expectations may vary based on student exceptionalities), and to continue with their Jewish education beyond the bar or bat mitzvah ceremony, such as Confirmation, college coursework, and into adulthood. Some of our bar and bat mitzvah students have gone on to teach new students as tutors and instructors in our own Religious School and elsewhere.

Committing to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah Process

The celebration of a bar or bat mitzvah can be a profound experience in the life of a Jewish family. Temple Sinai is committed to making this event a beautiful and memorable one in the lives of our members. It is essential that each family keep this ceremony in proper focus and perspective. A service for a bar or bat mitzvah is first and foremost a religious ceremony and is held during our congregation’s communal worship service on Shabbat mornings. Through this service, students and their families reaffirm their deep connection to Jewish faith, history, culture, and tradition. This B’nai Mitzvah Handbook, and the policies and requirements, herein have been established to ensure that the learning process and preparation that culminates in our students’ bar or bat mitzvah ceremony is meaningful and rewarding, and that the standard of excellence of the Temple Sinai Religious School is maintained.

Orientation Meetings

Beginning in 5th grade, students and their parents/grandparent/guardians attend a B'nai Mitzvah Orientation session led by the Rabbi, Religious School Director, and Temple Sinai Leadership. Orientations are held at the onset of each school year. This approximately one-hour session is designed to provide an overview of the three-year process of learning and preparation toward becoming a bar or bat mitzvah, as well as the meaning of the ritual for students' identity as a Jewish adult, responsibilities therein, and opportunities for life-long learning.

If the Orientation session is missed, the Religious School Director makes arrangements for individual meetings with students and their families. Sometimes more than one meeting is scheduled to give families time to think about information and ask additional questions. As a member of Temple Sinai, the Religious School Director is often available for questions and readily shares her time, day or night, to support families.

Setting the Date

Families are encouraged to consider reserving their student's bar or bat mitzvah date as early as the 5th grade. All families must choose a date no later than 18 months in advance. Families should understand that, if not selected timely, they jeopardize being able to select a date that is close to the 13th birth date of their son or daughter due to other events that may be reserved on the Temple Calendar. Bar and bat mitzvah dates are reserved with the Religious School Director upon completion and signature of the B'nai Mitzvah Agreement and payment of at least the required deposit (see Fee Schedule), payment in full, or with documentation that the family has a Temple approved payment plan for the B'nai Mitzvah fees. Rabbi Bass and Cantorial Soloist Margaret Schmitt will officiate at the bar or bat mitzvah if scheduled at Temple Sinai. Families may not sign the B'nai Mitzvah Agreement and then hire outside clergy. The oneg on the Friday before the bar or bat mitzvah service for up to 50 guests in addition to regular Temple members, and the post-service kiddush at Temple Sinai for up to 50 guests in addition to regular Temple members is included in the Agreement. Menu-enhancements, additional guests, and other arrangements can be accommodated for an additional fee.

When a family comes to the Religious School Director to set the bar or bat mitzvah date for their child, the Director will verify that the following requirements have been met:

1. The student will be at least thirteen (13) years of age on the desired date.
-All children must be 13 years old to become a bar and bat mitzvah at Temple Sinai. Bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies are held after, not before, a student's 13th birthday, though on rare occasions exceptions may be made if: a) the date is within four weeks of the student's 13th birthday, b) the student will be prepared by the earlier date, and c) and Rabbi Bass approves of the exception.
2. The student has expressed a desire to become a bar or bat mitzvah and to do the required work, and the parents/grandparents/guardians have expressed a desire to support the student, as demonstrated by a signed agreement and deposit.
3. The student has expressed a desire to practice Judaism exclusively even if raised in an interfaith home, and parents/grandparents/guardians have expressed a desire to support the student, as demonstrated by a signed commitment.
4. The student has completed three consecutive years of Jewish education at Temple Sinai Religious School with at least 75% attendance, or documentation that equivalent education was received at another Jewish school is on file and the student has successfully completed at least

one (1) year of Jewish religious education at Temple Sinai including the year prior to bar or bat mitzvah. Students must be registered and complete the 7th grade in its entirety.

5. Student has fulfilled the Shabbat and Family Service requirements established for their grade level each year they have been in attendance at Temple Sinai Religious School. Service attendance is recorded by the Religious School Director with support from the Rabbi, Cantorial Soloist, and classroom teachers on service attendance records maintained for each student.
6. Family is current on all fiscal obligations to Temple Sinai as verified by the Bookkeeper or Treasurer.
7. There are no conflicting Jewish holidays, unless approved by Rabbi Bass.
8. There are no other conflicting events on the Temple Calendar.
9. Clergy are available to conduct the service and support the student on the desired date.

Bar and bat mitzvah services are scheduled on Shabbat mornings at 10 am during the weekly Shabbat morning service. Although every attempt is made to meet the particular needs of each of our families, Temple Sinai cannot guarantee that a student will receive a specific date until the B'nai Mitzvah Agreement is signed and required deposit payment is made. The Religious School will not "hold" a date without a signed B'nai Mitzvah Agreement and deposit.

Bar and bat mitzvah dates are scheduled on a first-come first-served basis. It is the responsibility of the student and parents/grandparents/guardians to maintain eligibility during the period between scheduling and the date of the bar or bat mitzvah. The Religious School Director will make every effort to inform the student and family if eligibility problems should arise, however, the Religious School Director, Rabbi, and Administrative Board reserve the right to rescind the date s if eligibility is not maintained and arrangements have not been made by the family to correct issues that arise.

Once a date is set with the Religious School Director, notification is sent to Temple clergy, the B'nai Mitzvah Tutor, and relevant Temple Sinai administrators to ensure smooth preparations in terms of facilities, materials, and other items that go into the special day for the bar or bat mitzvah.

Students and families who choose to have their bar or bat mitzvah service in Israel, or some other location, should notify the Religious School Director of their plans. In such cases, the responsibility to acquire a clergy member to instruct the student rests with the family. Under such circumstances, Temple Sinai Religious School will NOT assign a bar or bat mitzvah date and will not assign the student for tutoring sessions with our B'nai Mitzvah Tutor. A document certifying that an external bar or bat mitzvah ceremony has been accomplished should be sent to the Religious School Director for the student's file.

Torah Parashah Assignment

Once the bar or bat mitzvah date is scheduled, the Religious School Director confers with the Union for Reform Judaism's Torah Portion Schedule and Rabbi Bass to determine the parashah (weekly Torah portion) that the student will be preparing. Students are provided with a workbook for their parashah study. Students will select about 10 verses that will be divided into three aliyahs for their service. These verses should be selected with support from Rabbi Bass and the student's parents to ensure the selection is meaningful to the student.

All students are expected to learn to chant their Torah portion, as well as recite the selection in English, and provide a d'var Torah as the major component of their speech. The d'var Torah is the student's interpretation of text relevant to their life and is guided through study meetings with Rabbi Bass.

Chants are provided as mp3 files by the B'nai Mitzvah Tutor when lessons begin at 10 months out (12 month for students requesting additional support).

Haftarah Parashah Assignment

Students will be assigned the Haftarah portion that accompanies their Torah portion. They will learn to chant the Haftarah blessings in Hebrew along with a shorter portion in Hebrew. In consult with Rabbi Bass, the Religious School Director, and the B'nai Mitzvah Tutor, it will be determined how many verses will be prepared to be read or chanted in Hebrew.

Student's Hebrew Name

Students' Hebrew names are recorded in their bar or bat mitzvah certificate. Ideally, Hebrew names are collected at the time that the B'nai Mitzvah Agreement is signed. Students who do not already have a Hebrew name can select a new name with Rabbi Bass' guidance and may include a brief naming ceremony should the student wish. Establishing a Hebrew name requires also knowing the Hebrew names of the Jewish parents of the child. If family information is missing, Rabbi Bass will help the family fill in the blanks. Their Hebrew name will not only serve them at their bar or bat mitzvah, but throughout their life at other major Jewish lifecycle events in which they may participate, and when they continue to participate in our communal services, such as when called to the bima to read Torah.

Preparing to Become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Working with the B'nai Mitzvah Tutor

Approximately 10 months in advance of a scheduled bar or bat mitzvah date, the Religious School Director coordinates the student's first meeting with the B'nai Mitzvah Tutor. Students with exceptional needs may meet with the B'nai Tutor earlier than 10 months in advance.

Parents/guardians/grandparents are welcome to attend this meeting. This meeting is held to assign the workbook to the student, explain to the student how it is to be used in the classroom and at home in preparation for their bar or bat mitzvah, map out the preparation plan on the tracking form, and begin the process of selecting Torah verses to study.

The B'nai Mitzvah Instructor will work with students on perfecting their Hebrew reading/chanting of all required service blessings and prayers and Torah (and Haftarah) portions. Tutoring sessions are 30 minutes long and scheduled Sunday afternoons or on weekday afternoons or evenings. There is no specific quota for tutoring sessions. Students having difficulties keeping up with the study schedule may need additional tutoring sessions during the week. There is no additional cost to add tutoring sessions. Tutoring continues up until the week of the bar or bat mitzvah date.

Home Study

The tracking form is updated at each weekly tutoring session and is signed by a parent each week. It is very obvious to the B'nai Mitzvah Tutor when a student has not prepared for a lesson and this sets the student back and causes undue stress on the student and their family. Parents need to make sure their student is following the prescribed study schedule. Students are expected to study 10-15 minutes, six days per week. Students with learning challenges may need to set aside more time in their daily or weekly routine. Parents may encourage study time through regular reminders, creating a quiet atmosphere for study, and sitting with the student during study time to cheer them on and encourage their progress. Parents (or older siblings, cousins, or others) with the ability to read Hebrew can also support their student's by correcting errors in reading and pronunciation (please note Temple Sinai uses Israeli/Sephardic Hebrew pronunciation, e.g. hard vs. soft "t"s as in Shabbat versus Shabbos). Parents/guardians/grandparents should not correct trope or shorten or lengthen a parashah. Direct

such questions or concerns with the B'nai Mitzvah Tutor who will consult with the Religious School Director and Rabbi Bass as needed.

Reading Practice from the Torah

Depending upon the Jewish calendar and available Sunday sessions, approximately 4 weeks prior to a bar or bat mitzvah date, the B'nai Mitzvah Tutor will have the student begin to rehearse the reading or chanting of their Torah portion in Hebrew from the Sefer Torah (Torah scroll). This means that the student must have learned to read or chant their Torah portion from unpointed Hebrew by that time. The student will be given a few opportunities to practice reading or chanting from the Torah scroll before their bar or bat mitzvah. The B'nai Mitzvah Tutor will help them read with accuracy, teach them how to use a yad, teach them how to find their place between aliyot, and how to speak into the microphone, project, and pace themselves while reading from the Torah scroll.

Shabbat & Family Service Attendance Requirements

During the year prior to a student's bar or bat mitzvah they are required to attend/participate in four regular Erev Shabbat (Friday evening) services, four Family or Holiday services, and four Shabbat morning services for a total of 12 services. Students must attend at least four Shabbat morning services after beginning their preparation with the clergy in the two months immediately prior to their bar or bat mitzvah date. Students will be asked to participate as directed by the clergy and must come to services dressed appropriately and ready to accept any honor requested of them (not to worry, they will be prepared by this time to accept any honor, this practice is to help them get comfortable on the bima in front of the congregation).

Students must sign-in to the Service Attendance book when they attend any service at Temple Sinai. Services attended elsewhere must be verified by documentation (a copy of the service program if provided, or parent email).

Meetings with the Rabbi

As students and their families begin to select a bar or bat mitzvah date, look up Hebrew names, and select their parashah readings, they are encouraged to make their first of several appointments to meet with the Rabbi to ask her any questions they may have about the process from her perspective, verify Hebrew names, and get support for the beginning of the dvar Torah. It is the parents' obligation to schedule this meeting directly with the Rabbi. This first meeting should be scheduled 10 months in advance of the bar or bat mitzvah date.

Rabbi will be holding family education meetings throughout the year and families are required to attend at least three. Parents are encouraged to purchase a copy of *Putting God on the Guest List 3/E: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah 3rd Edition* (available at Amazon).

Follow-up meetings can be scheduled by parents as needed with the Rabbi at any time.

Selecting, Planning, & Completing a Mitzvah Project

All students who become a bar or bat mitzvah are required to select, plan, and complete a mitzvah project of their choosing several months in advance of their bar or bat mitzvah date. Temple Sinai requires each student to complete 13 hours towards their chosen mitzvah project. The mitzvah project must not directly benefit your child or your family in any material way. It can be an extension of an existing commitment but it should be in addition to that commitment and not just the same as community service for another school project. Students must demonstrate how they have gone above and beyond what they may have already committed to. Students are encouraged to be creative and pursue a mitzvah project that they have passion for and would enjoy. Students can volunteer their

services, raise money, create something that aids others, or organize an event that benefits a certain population. The focus may be local, regional, or global.

The mitzvah project must be proposed in consultation with the Director and Rabbi Bass before it is begun no later than one month after the Torah portion has been selected. Students are encouraged to find a connection to mitzvah project and the lessons of their Torah portion and will be reflected in the student's speech. The speech should also include discussion of what the mitzvah project involved, who it helped, and how those in attendance can do similar mitzvah work on their own. The speech should reflect how the student grew from the experience as related to their becoming a bar or bat mitzvah. Speeches are reviewed and approved by the Rabbi.

Temple Sinai can help students who are open to new community service experiences. Suggested mitzvah projects include Adopt-a-Grandparent, March to Miriam, and service work with Family Promise.

Speech Preparation - Dvar Torah

It is the student's responsibility to prepare a speech - dvar Torah - for the bar or bat mitzvah service. The dvar Torah is the student's own commentary of the Torah and Haftarah parshiot assigned to them (see Outline of a Drash in the Appendices). Torah and Haftarah portions are challenging to interpret, and we encourage families to be involved in the learning process by helping their child understand what the portion is about and discussing the deeper meaning of the text. However, the student should do the writing and editing of their own speech. Rabbi Bass will assist with speech preparation which includes understanding and interpreting the Torah and Haftarah portions and connecting their deeper meaning to one's own life, learning to write and speak about their impressions, discussing their mitzvah project (see below), and delivering the speech with an appropriate tone. Students will have additional time in class on Sundays to prepare their interpretations with support from their peers.

Vocal Training with the Cantorial Soloist

Approximately 4-6 weeks prior to a bar or bat mitzvah date, students meet weekly on Saturday and/or Sunday mornings with Cantorial Soloist Margaret Schmitt to learn their cues throughout the service, practice reciting the assigned English pieces of the service, learn how to control and project vocals from the bima. On Shabbat mornings, the student will be called up to the bima to recite a prayer or song to help her or him become comfortable reciting in front of our congregants.

Final Rehearsal

The Rabbi and Cantorial Soloist facilitate the final rehearsal, with the B'nai Mitzvah Instructor present, held in the sanctuary on a weeknight prior to the bar or bat mitzvah date. Parents/grandparents/guardians are required to attend the rehearsal with the student.

Service Leadership Expectations

It is the expectation of Temple Sinai Religious School and Clergy that students becoming a bar or bat mitzvah are able to:

- Lead the Shabbat morning service, providing the congregation with page numbers and cues on when to rise and sit;
- Lead the Torah service chanted in Hebrew;
- Read or chant the following
 - Tallit blessing
 - Hallelu

- Chatzi Kaddish
- Barchu
- Yotzeir Or (in English) w/ Hatima (in Hebrew)
- Sh'ma / V'ahavtah and Lamaan
- Emet reading in English
- Michamocho
- Amida
- N'kadesh (congregational responses only, with choreography)
- Ldor va dor
- Torah Blessings
- Shma, Echad, Gadlu
- Haftarah Blessings
- Chant their Torah portion in Hebrew without vowels directly from the Torah scroll;
- Recite their parashah in English from the written text;
- -Chant their Haftarah portion in Hebrew;
- Write and deliver a kavanah (prayer interpretation);
- Write and deliver an original prayer;
- And write and deliver a culminating d'var Torah speech.

Temple Sinai encourages our students and their families to make b'nai mitzvah an increasing priority leading up to their big day. We understand that students have other extra-curricular commitments that are meaningful and important. Families should work together to rearrange different commitments to make the transition to a bar and bat mitzvah the highest possible priority. For questions regarding any exceptional student needs, parents must speak with the School Director and Rabbi.

Temple Sinai Religious School also requires students to learn to recite the following:

- Blessings for the Shabbat Candles
- Motzi and Short Kiddush
- Shehechianu
- Mourners Kaddish
- Aleinu
- Hatikvah
- Select holiday prayers, blessings, psalms and songs (such as the Four Questions, Chanukah candle blessings, blessings for the lulav and etrog, and so on)
- Lastly, students should be able to demonstrate familiarity with and ability to read select prayers, blessings, and songs for major holidays, Havdalah, and other life cycle events.

Family Matters

Parental participation in the bar and bat mitzvah process extends beyond event planning (though this is a big job), chauffeuring students to school and tutoring sessions, and encouraging students to consistently study (which is of utmost importance). Parents/grandparents/guardians are also encouraged to:

- Attend services and family programs regularly as a family;
- Attend at least 3 of Rabbi's family education programs the year of the bar or bat mitzvah;
- Participate in your child's mitzvah project (without doing it for her or him!);
- Listen and offer feedback of your child's speech without writing it for him or her;
- Include your child in decision-making for the bar or bat mitzvah celebration; and
- Involve siblings in planning and celebration.

Friday Evening Service Participation

The bar or bat mitzvah student is required to attend the Friday evening Shabbat service the night before their scheduled bar or bat mitzvah. Mothers/female guardians/grandmothers of the student are encouraged, if they are able, to lead the blessings over the Shabbat candles. Fathers/male guardians/grandfathers of the student are encouraged to help lead the Kiddush. Parents may review their parts with the Rabbi and/or Cantorial soloist who will help them prepare. Friday evening Shabbat services begin at 7:30 pm, families must arrive by 7:15 pm to check in with Temple Sinai's VPs of Religious Activities.

Honors

Families are encouraged to invite a select few members of their family to make a limited number of honors during the service as a way to acknowledge their role in raising and educating their son or daughter. The honors form lists all of the honors available to your family for the bar or bat mitzvah service. All families are allotted the same number of honors. These honors are traditional, enrich the service, and in no way detract attention away from the bar or bat mitzvah student.

For safety reasons, all individual honorees must be older than 13 years of age, with the exception of younger children accompanied by an adult. All honorees receiving honors involving holding, dressing, passing down, or walking with the Torah or reading the Torah blessings, must be Jewish. Honorees chanting the Torah blessings must be able to do so. Rehearsal is required! If the honoree is not well versed in the Torah blessings, or it has been years and they are not willing or able to rehearse, do not select them for this honor. Non-Jewish honorees may open and close the Ark doors or offer an English alternate to the Torah blessing as indicated in the siddur.

Parents or other family members may be honored by placing a talit upon the student's shoulders at the beginning of the service and/or reciting the Torah blessings (if they are willing and able). Non-Jewish parents can offer an alternate to the Torah blessing as indicated in the siddur and may stand with the rest of the family for the passing of the Torah.

Students recite from a minimum of three Torah readings. There is also the option of adding a Torah reading for a family member who is Torah proficient.

The honors form must be completed one month prior to the bar or bat mitzvah date and submitted to the Temple Sinai Office. Last minute changes to honors assignments will be made only in the event of no shows due to sudden illness or travel conflicts.

For safety and to follow minhag (custom), when approaching the bima, please go up the left [Rabbi's] side (United States flag) and down on the right [Cantor's] side (Israeli flag). ALWAYS USE THE HANDRAILS.

Parents are encouraged to say something to their child on their special day. One or both parents may choose to speak, but the total length of speaking time should not exceed the length of the student's dvar Torah.

Logistics

Dress Code in the Sanctuary

Tzniut, or modesty, is a primary tenet of Judaism, including Reform Judaism. We may choose to dress and adorn ourselves how we wish outside of Temple Sinai, but in the sanctuary and Temple facilities we must dress to show respect for Torah, God, and tradition. Inappropriate dress can also offend and distract others attending the service.

Appropriate dress for attending a bar or bat mitzvah for the student, family, and ALL guests is the same and should follow these rules:

- No ripped, tattered, dirty, or wrinkled clothes.
- No casual wear or casual footwear (flip flops are explicitly forbidden as a safety issue, sneakers in any color are too casual and should not be worn).
- No clothing shorter than 2 inches above the knee.
- Shoulders must be covered.
- A tallit may be worn by anyone who has become a bar or bat mitzvah.
- Makeup, perfume/cologne, and jewelry should be modestly applied so as to keep the focus on spirituality. In addition, perfume and cologne can aggravate allergies.

It is understood that parent hosts are not responsible for the dress of their guests, however it is expected that parents will inform guests of the dress code and encourage adherence to it by including the dress code in the invitations and when accepting RSVPs. Guests can also be encouraged to change into different dress for a celebratory gathering at another location after the kiddush concludes that day.

Decorum in the Sanctuary

All service participants and guests are asked to refrain from chewing gum, eating, drinking, talking loudly, giggling, trying to distract the student, or otherwise disrupting the service. No food or drink (including bottled water) is permitted in the Sanctuary (exceptions are made only for infants under the age of two and those with medical needs).

All communication devices must be turned off or on vibrate mode so as to not disrupt the service. Using electronic devices is prohibited for social media, phone calls, texting, and all other purposes.

If you or a guest must leave the sanctuary, please do not do so while the Ark doors are open or while the Torah or Haftarah is being read.

Service participation by guests is encouraged, but not required. However, out of respect, all guests must rise as they are able when the congregation stands throughout the service.

Video and photos may be taken as long as the act of doing so is not intrusive; however, no flash photography or bright video lighting is permitted.

Musical Accompaniment

The B'nai Mitzvah Agreement fees do not include the use of the Temple Sinai Organist. Families who wish to have the Organist accompany their child's service may hire the Temple Organist for an additional \$250. To do so, please request the Organist through Cantorial Soloist Margaret Schmitt, no later than one month prior to the bar or bat mitzvah date. Checks are due upon order, details will be provided at that time.

Food Baskets, Bima Flowers & Decorations

Temple Sinai now displays and donates weekly food baskets in lieu of bima flowers, sponsored by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family. The cost for donations of food baskets is equivalent to the cost of bima flowers, and is not included in the B'nai Mitzvah Agreement. Families who wish to order bima flowers may still do so. Food baskets or bima flowers are ordered and paid for at the Temple Office, currently through either of the Co-Vice Presidents of Operations.

Any additional flowers and decorations are the financial responsibility of the family and may either be ordered through the Temple florist (via the individuals noted above), or a florist of your choosing. Floral arrangements must be delivered and in place before the Erev Shabbat service begins the Friday evening before the bar or bat mitzvah. Parents must call the Temple Office to get approval for additional flowers and decorations and to make any such arrangements with the Co-Vice Presidents of Operations.

Friday Evening Oneg

Families are responsible for hosting the Friday evening oneg for Temple members and all guests in either the Social Hall or Finkelstein Hall after services the evening prior to their child's bar or bat mitzvah. The basic oneg price is included in the B'nai Mitzvah Agreement. Families that are expecting more than 25 guests should notify the Co-Vice Presidents of Operations. Additional fees for food service may be applicable.

Shabbat Morning Kiddush

The B'nai Mitzvah Agreement includes a light spread of bagels, shmear, assorted pastries, coffee, and tea. This kiddush will be available in the Social Hall just outside of the sanctuary for both Temple members and all guests. So as to not conflict with Torah Study, the Torah Study group and their limited kiddush will be reassigned to a location elsewhere in the synagogue. ***Families are required to notify the Co-Vice Presidents of Operations of their final RSVP head count no later than two weeks prior to the bar or bat mitzvah so that Operations can set out a large enough spread to accommodate guests.*** If more than 50 guests are expected, a fee for additional food will be charged. Families can also enhance the kiddush menu via a private caterer. Families interested in doing so must contact the Co-Vice Presidents of Operations.

Facilities Rental, Catering & Kashrut

Finkelstein Hall may be rented for the celebration following the bar or bat mitzvah ceremony. Linens, china, decorations, and catered food and beverage can be ordered with the Co-Vice Presidents of Operations. Food served must be kosher-style (no pork, no shellfish, etc.). It must be understood that our synagogue's kitchen facilities are not kosher. Kosher food may be brought in and served, but the kosher caterer must provide their own mashgiach to certify that the food is served in a way that preserves kashrut. Outside catering must be approved by the Co-VPs of Operations no later than one month prior to the bar or bat mitzvah date. DJs, bands or musicians, and other entertainment are welcome to enhance your celebration. The Co-Vice Presidents of Operations can make recommendations and families are encouraged to speak to them about options and pricing.

Photography & Video Recording

Photography is permitted in the sanctuary the morning of the bar or bat mitzvah ceremony until 30 minutes prior to the start of the service. Families must therefore arrive early as photography must be completed by 9:30 am. Families should consult with the clergy about their availability for photos before and after the service. The sanctuary must be closed down no later than one hour after the service concludes. ***Photography and video arrangements must be made at least two weeks in advance with the Executive Vice President or Vice President of the Religious School for the purpose of coordination with the Co-VPs of Operations, Co-VPs of Religious Affairs, School Director, and clergy.***

Video recording is permitted during the ceremony however no lighting may be employed. The video camera must be set up against the back wall of the sanctuary in the far right corner and cannot obstruct aisles or exits.

Flash photography is not permitted during the service. Please note this in the invitations to guests.

Tablet Announcements

Bar and bat mitzvah announcements can be published in the Temple Sinai Tablet, a monthly newsletter mailed to all member homes and posted on the Temple website. If you would like to have an announcement published, please draft a 250 word maximum announcement in Microsoft Word and email it along with a recent head shot of the student to tablet@templesinaipbc.org by the first Friday of the month prior to the bar or bat mitzvah.

Invitations & Programs

It is traditional to invite one's classmates and teachers to the bar or bat mitzvah service (even if the classmates and/or teachers might be attending anyway). The service invitation can be over email or a simple invitation unattached to the celebration invitation. There is no obligation to invite classmates, teachers, or clergy to the celebration afterward, though it is a nice gesture to invite classmates to the party if the function is held at Temple Sinai. We understand that financial constraints may prevent families from inviting large groups of friends to celebrations so we do not require or even encourage any family to invite all classmates to such events. Consider holding a larger kiddush afterward where all classmates can attend, preserving a later afternoon or evening gathering for family and closest friends only. Regardless of what feels right for your family, please be as respectful, tactful, and as honest as possible when communicating plans to classmates so as to reduce the chance of bruised feelings. Remember to put God on your guest list and use that idea as your guide. It's the lifelong commitment to Judaism that matters and this is but one of many Jewish lifecycle events that your child will experience in their lifetime.

Some families create their own programs as a memento and to help guests understand the service. We have some recent samples you may use as for ideas, but we cannot help you design, create, or print any programs. A simple program similar to Temple Sinai's Friday evening folded pamphlet can also be used as a model. ***All programs must be reviewed 1 month prior to the bar or bat mitzvah date by the School Director or designate prior to going to print.***

Sisterhood Gift Shop

It is traditional to give ritual items to the bar or bat mitzvah student such as Star of David or Chai jewelry. Certain gifts that can enhance the experience for the student are particularly appropriate to give prior to the bar or bat mitzvah, include a yad (Torah pointer), tallit, or kippa. These gifts are not exclusive to boys. These items are typically in stock in the Sisterhood Gift Shop. Special/custom order items can be ordered through the Sisterhood Gift Shop as well. Please consider doing so months in

advance of the bar or bat mitzvah date to ensure ample variety to select from and prompt delivery. Gift Shop purchases financially benefit the Temple.

Wearing a Tallit

Wearing a tallit is optional for bar and bat mitzvahs although it has become *minhag* (custom) at Temple Sinai and can be an honor for parents as well who will wrap the tallit around the shoulders of their son or daughter at the beginning of the service. Temple Sinai Judaica Shop has a selection of tallit and can help families make a custom order too. Some families pass down tallit from a beloved relative helping connect generations and their commitment to Judaism.

Kippot for Guests

Temple Sinai has plenty of kippot, as well as tallitot, for guests. Some families choose to purchase kippot for their child's bar or bat mitzvah, often with the child's name and bar or bat mitzvah date imprinted on the interior as a memento. Making a Donation in Honor of your Bar or Bat Mitzvah Gifts of cash and bonds are not uncommon for the bar or bat mitzvah. As a way to say thank you, students may donate a small gift of "chai" (\$18) from their gifts. To honor their years of learning and growth such a donation may be offered to the Temple Sinai Religious School Scholarship Fund to help other students afford their studies. Another great option is to plant a tree in Israel through the Jewish National Fund (which just happens to cost \$18, and can be processed online via the JNF website). These donation ideas are merely suggestions and are in no way expected.

Celebrating

We have already mentioned the need to be tactful regarding invitations and suggested modesty with regard to a family-centered celebration. Here are a few more items to consider.

Honors at the Post-service Celebration

The bar or bat mitzvah service has a limited number of aliyot to honor family. No family likes to have to make the tough decisions about who may be invited onto the bima or not. Age, health, Jewish background, and Hebrew skills all play a role and this may help narrow the pool for bima honors. Still, your family may wish to bestow additional honors. Candle lighting rituals during the post-service celebration is a time-honored tradition that can help alleviate this problem for most families and is particularly helpful for divorced and extended families who may have several family members they would like to honor.

Becoming a Member of Temple Sinai

As you well know, becoming a bar or bat mitzvah means, in part, that you are accepting some adult responsibilities in the Jewish community and at Temple Sinai. Here are some ideas for you to give serious thought to.

Enrolling in Confirmation Class

Confirmation is the next natural step in the ladder of Jewish lifelong learning. Your bar or bat mitzvah was only the beginning. Confirmation class focuses on developing leadership skills, modern-day heroism, contemporary Jewish ethics, global issues, Shoah studies, and conversational Hebrew. Confirmands support School holiday programs and events, participate in worship services on the High Holy Days, summer months, and other times throughout the year.

Attending Services & Receiving Bima Honors

Whether or not you enroll in the Confirmation Program you will be invited to participate in Friday evening and Saturday morning services on occasion, sometimes during Family and Holiday services, and

sometimes during regular services. We hope that you will consider receiving a bima honor to open and close the Ark, carry the Torah, recite a blessing or prayer in Hebrew, sing a song in Hebrew, recite from the siddur in English, or even read from the Torah. Each time that you do, remember that you are keeping up the practice of helping to lead a worship service which enhances the service for everyone while enriching your soul. And you will use these skills throughout your life!

Volunteering in the Religious School or Other Temple Office

Temple Sinai teens play a vital role in the Religious School as classroom teaching assistants, technical and operations support, and Hebrew tutors. We particularly value and work with students who have committed to completing the Confirmation Program because of the leadership development component of the program which serves to help prepare our teens for volunteer service in the School and elsewhere in the synagogue. Teens can also join the Adult Choir, or volunteer in the Temple Office, Library, or Social Action Committee, and we highly encourage you to do so. Some of our students have gone on to become paid classroom teachers at Temple Sinai, and elsewhere. You may even find yourself looking into Judaic studies programs for college, master's degrees in Jewish education or non-profit administration, and perhaps even Rabbinical or Cantorial school!

Planning Your Trip to Israel

Visiting (or perhaps one day studying in or moving to) Israel, is a goal that we expect each bar or bat mitzvah student to have. There are ways to travel for free, via Birthright trips and other sponsoring agencies. As a gift from the Religious School, each student receives a \$250 gift certificate for travel to Israel through a NFTY program. Getting involved in Jewish community agencies such as Hillel and Jewish Student Union in college can help. Taking courses in Hebrew and Judaic Studies in college can connect you to people who can help you find ways to finance a trip. College study abroad can be subsidized with college loans and/or scholarships. There are even volunteer service opportunities that only require that you pay for airfare or other small fees. It may take you until adulthood to travel to Israel, but setting your sights on a trip sooner than later makes it that much more easy to accomplish. And accomplish it you will!

Shabbat Morning Bar/Bat Mitzvah Order of Service

Siddur: *Mishkan Tfilah*

P. 190 Tallit blessing

P. 218 Hallelu

P. 224 Chatzi Kaddish

P. 226 Barchu

P. 228 Yotzei Or (in English) with Hatima (in Hebrew)

Original "Ahavah Raba" (prayer about Torah written by the student)

P. 232 Shma

P. 234 Vahavta and Lmaan

P. 238-239 Emet (any of the three English readings)

P. 240 Michamocha

P. 242-246 Amida

P. 248 Nkadesh (congregational responses only with choreography)

P. 248 Ldor Va Dor

Passing Down of Torah

P. 266 Shma, Echad, Gadlu

Torah Service (Torah blessings, three aliyahs chanted, Haftarah blessings, short Haftarah portion chanted)

Delivery of Dvar Torah by Student

Praisings on the Student by Congregation Leaders and Parents

Plus:

- Kavanah delivery on a prayer of the student's choice anywhere in the service

Outline of a Drash for Bar or Bat Mitzvah

- I. Introduction
 - a. Context of the Torah portion (where it fits with the rest of the Torah) (1-2 sentences only)
 - b. Summary of Torah portion (3-4 sentences)
 - c. Particular part you are focusing on (1 sentence)
 - d. Question(s) or issue(s) that you through about (1-2 sentences)
- II. Jewish Tradition and the Rabbis' Thoughts About Question(s) or Issue(s)
 - a. Which rabbis or what traditions taught you about this particular question?
 - b. Which rabbi or tradition you agree or disagree with about this question or issue, or your own thoughts about it
- III. What This Can Teach Us
 - a. What you think we can learn from this idea
 - b. How it relates to you as a bar or bat mitzvah
 - c. (Perhaps tie in to mitzvah project)
- IV. Concluding Remarks and Acknowledgements
 - a. Thank everyone who came to support you (and acknowledge those who could not be there, including those unable to travel and those who are no longer with us who are there "in spirit")
 - b. Thank the organization leadership if you did a mitzvah project in your local community for letting you have the opportunity to serve them
 - c. Thank rabbi, cantor, tutor, school director, and all teachers
 - d. Thank your family for their support, naming specific members of immediate family and explaining something they did to help you

For help:

1. Go to your local library or use the Temple Sinai library
2. Visit urj.org and follow the links to Torah Study and then your portion
3. Use your Weekly Parashah Workbook in class and at home with your family
4. Contact the Rabbi anytime you feel stuck, have a question, or want to run an idea by her regarding your portion

General Timeline / Checklist

Grade 5

- Attend mandatory b'nai mitzvah parent meeting
- Meet with School Director to select date
- Enter into contract and pay deposit
- Locate student's complete Hebrew name for contract (if they don't have one, family needs to go to rabbi for a naming)

1 year out

- Second payment on contract made

10 months out

- Third and final payment on contract made
- Family meets with Rabbi
- Student gets assessed by B'nai mitzvah instructor and receives study materials - lessons begin
- Torah and Haftarah readings selected and approved by Rabbi and School Director
- Mitzvah project selected and signed off by School Director and Rabbi.

9-3 months out

- Family attends three family education meetings with Rabbi
- Student begins mitzvah project work

3 months out

- Talit/kippot ordered
- Flowers, photo/videography hired
- Student begins dvar Torah

6-8 weeks out

- Student begins final preparation lessons with Cantor

1 month out

- Honor sheet submitted to Temple office
- Organist contracted and paid for (optional)
- Programs reviewed and approved by School Director
- Programs printed
- Kiddush/oneg orders finalized

2 weeks out

- Photography scheduled

Week of

- Mid-week evening rehearsal

Friday evening before

- Family attends 7:30 pm service for honors

Shabbat morning

- Service begins at 10 am!

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Study Checklist

Student's Name: _____ Bar/bat Mitzvah Date: _____

Torah Portion (book/chapter/verses): _____

Haftarah Portion (book/chapter/verses): _____

Lesson Date: _____ Lesson Duration: _____ Next Lesson Date: _____

Lesson Focus (Tutor: circle what is reviewed at session and * items to study for next session)	Comments to Student and Parents from Tutor on Progress of Items Studied During Session	✓ if Study of Item is Complete (<i>this is a cumulative column</i>)
Prayer for Private Torah Study		
P. 190 Tallit blessing		
P. 218 Hallelu		
P. 224 Chatzi Kaddish		
P. 226 Barchu		
P. 228 Yotzei Or (in English) with Hatima (in Hebrew)		
P. 232 Shma		
P. 234 Vahavta and Lmaan		
P. 238-239 Emet (any of the three English readings)		
P. 240 Michamocha		
P. 242-246 Amida		
P. 248 Nkadesh (congregational responses only with choreography)		
P. 248 Ldor Va Dor		
P. 266 Shma, Echad, Gadlu		
Torah blessings		
Haftarah blessings		
Torah Aliyah 1		
Torah Aliyah 2		
Torah Aliyah 3		
Haftarah Portion		
Dvar Torah written and recited		
Original prayer (Ahava Raba) written and recited)		
Kavanah written and recited		
Candle blessing		
Long kiddush		

Parents: Please Complete This Section and Sign Below With Your Child Prior to Each Session With Tutor:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Student Signature: _____ Parent Signature: _____

Signature Page

I have read and understand all information provided in this manual.

Student: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Copy to parent/guardian(s), original to School office.