

# **Beth Israel Congregation**

## **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook**

### **The Goal of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah Program**

According to Jewish tradition, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a ceremony, often occurring around the age of 13, which marks the transition from being a minor to becoming an adult. After this ritual, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah will be granted adult responsibilities and privileges in the Congregation. They should also understand Jewish values well enough to help them make ethical choices of their own.

The central purpose of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience is for the young person to give personal meaning to the process and ritual that signifies passage into Jewish adulthood. Our overall goal is that the attainment of the status of Bar or Bat Mitzvah be truly meaningful. To that end, these guidelines are intended to provide a framework for a personal journey that will necessarily be tailored to meet individual needs.

### **B’nai Mitzvah Requirements**

In order to allow sufficient time for preparation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students and their families should plan on a series of meetings with the Rabbi.

- There will be a preliminary meeting with the family, the student and the Rabbi to discuss overall expectations for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process. Ideally, this meeting should take place 1–2 years before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service, the family and the candidate will meet with the Rabbi to discuss the outline of the service and the roles that the participants will have. Suggestions for how to personalize this service will also be given. The family may choose to create their own booklet or use the congregation’s prayer book.
- Family members are expected to participate in learning sessions with the Rabbi.
- Ideally, students have completed an appropriate course of study either at our Hebrew school or at another comparable program. Students will also work intensively with the Rabbi or a private tutor to prepare for their B’nai Mitzvah.
- Students are required to complete a mitzvah project prior to the B’nai Mitzvah. The project involves engaging in thirteen hours of volunteer time (see appendix for details).
- Students are also expected to attend synagogue services, including Shabbat morning services, during the year prior to their B’nai Mitzvah.

## **Facilities and Fees**

We ask that our B'nai Mitzvah family be a member of the Congregation in good standing.

In addition, to cover the costs of the B'nai Mitzvah preparation, we charge a B'nai Mitzvah fee of \$775. This includes the security fee for the day of the event.

The Minnie Brown Center is available to members to use for a fee of \$200 to cover the cost of cleaning and maintenance.

Please contact our treasurer, Karen Filler, if you need a fee abatement for any reason.

It is the responsibility of Beth Israel to have the synagogue clean in preparation for the service.

Each user must accept Beth Israel as is and leave the facility as it was found with all furnishings and equipment in place. Failure to leave space clean with all trash removed will result in an additional cleaning fee of \$100.

## **The Service**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a congregational event and is open to all members.

Typically, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will have an Aliyah and chant the Torah Blessings, chant some of the Torah and/or the Haftarah readings of the week, give a D'var Torah about the reading, and lead some of the service. The exact role will be determined by the Rabbi, accommodating the special needs of any person. The Rabbi will also review any supplemental material planned for the service.

### **Honors for Family or Friends**

- Handing out kippot and booklets as people enter the sanctuary
- Opening and closing the ark
- Aliyot
- Chanting of the Torah
- Hagbah and G'lilah (raising and wrapping the Torah)
- Leading a part of the prayer service
- Leading an individual prayer

No candy or other food can be tossed inside the sanctuary.

The only photography allowed in the sanctuary during the service is a video camera set up on a tripod in the balcony. Any still photography in the sanctuary on Shabbat must be completed 1/2 hour before the official start of the service and/or after the completion of the oneg/kiddush.

## **Food**

Congregational events held at either the synagogue or the Minnie Brown Center need to follow the congregation's policy on Kashrut. This means that all food must be either dairy or vegetarian.

# Appendix

## Assigning Aliyot and Honors

- You will be asked to complete a form that specifies who will be honored during the service. Return this form to the Rabbi.

## What to expect when called to the Torah for an Aliyah

Our community embraces the wearing of tallit and kippot for both men and women. Those who are comfortable are encouraged to wear a tallit and kippah for an aliyah. Each person will be called to the Torah using his/her full Hebrew name, which includes his/her mother and father's Hebrew names.

- When called to the Torah, stand between the gabbai and the Torah reader.
- The Torah reader will point to the Torah portion. Before the portion is read, you may touch the Torah text with your siddur or tallit, kiss the siddur/tallit and recite the prayer for "before the Torah reading."
- The prayers for before and after the Torah reading can be read or sung. The prayers are already on the bima in large print.
- After the portion is read, you may touch the Torah text with your siddur or tallit, kiss the siddur/tallit and recite the prayer for "after the Torah reading."
- After the aliyah is finished, it is customary to move to the other side of the Torah reader.
- When the next person having an aliyah is finished, you may sit down.
- Hagbah (person who picks up the Torah) and G'lilah (person who dresses the Torah) will be called to the Torah by the gabbai to lift and redress the Torah.

## **Opportunities to Contribute to Beth Israel in Honor of B'nai Mitzvah**

Those experiencing life cycle events often ask how they may most appropriately show their appreciation to the Beth Israel community for their assistance and support. Below is a list of possible ways to make meaningful contributions towards supporting our synagogue in its service to the community:

- Hebrew School Scholarship Fund: Any donation made to this fund goes directly to defray the cost of tuition for families in need.
- Building Fund: This supports a number of much needed building improvements, capital and otherwise, planned for Beth Israel.
- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund: The Rabbi maintains a private fund to assist any Beth Israel member in need or to support any synagogue or community endeavor, at her personal discretion. Donations should be made out to "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund."
- General Fund: Any donations not specifically designated for one of the funds outlined above will automatically be applied to this fund, which directly supports the Beth Israel's operating budget. General fund donations afford the synagogue maximum flexibility in pursuing its mission.
- Yahrzeit Memorial Plaques: Beth Israel is proud of its particularly beautiful wall mounting for the traditional bronze plaques bearing the names of deceased loved ones. Individual plaques may be purchased for \$250.

All contributions to Beth Israel are deeply appreciated and are specially noted in the synagogue newsletter.

## **B'Mitzvotav – An Opportunity to do Mitzvot**

In Pirke Avot we read, “The world rests on three things: on Torah, on worship and on acts of loving-kindness.” Study of Torah encompasses your religious school training and preparation for B’nai Mitzvah. Avodah (worship) is done through attending services, leading the congregation in prayer at your B’nai Mitzvah and chanting your maftir and Haftarah portions and their blessings.

What about the other 613 mitzvot? How can you do the mitzvot of Gemilut Chassidim, “Acts of Loving-Kindness?” To work towards this goal, all B’nai Mitzvah students will be required to volunteer for at least 13 hours: 10 hours in the community, and 3 hours helping either the synagogue or people from your everyday activities. Our social action committee would be happy to assist a student who is interested in their activities.

Helping the synagogue:

- Contribute to one of the synagogue funds in honor of or in memory of someone
- Pledge a part of your B’nai Mitzvah gift money to the charity of your choice
- Volunteer to help with the facilities or the religious school.

Helping people in daily life:

- Show hospitality by inviting a new classmate or neighbor over for a meal
- Write, call or visit your grandparents. Send a card for a birthday, anniversary or just to say you are thinking of them.
- Comfort a mourner by paying a visit or sending a card.
- Help your family with a chore that will indicate your growing responsibility and maturity.
- Help a person who lives in your neighborhood by raking leaves, shoveling snow, or running an errand.
- Help a new parent with simple chores she/he may need done around the house.

# B'nai Mitzvah Project Contract

Name of B'nai Mitzvah Student

B'nai Mitzvah Date

Below is a description of the volunteer activities I, \_\_\_\_\_, will complete before my B'nai Mitzvah date. The contract includes the agencies and/or organizations to which I will volunteer my time, the activities I will do, and the number of hours donated to each activity.

I am also acknowledging that I will complete a total of 13 hours of volunteer time with 10 hours being devoted to the community at large and 3 hours to the synagogue or to people from my everyday activities. This contract must be signed by the B'nai Mitzvah student, the student's parent(s) and the Rabbi.

[illegible]

---

B'nai Mitzvah Student's Signature

---

Parent's Signature

Rabbi's Signature

## Mitzvah Log

Date	Task	Organization's Name	Hours Donated

\_\_\_\_\_  
B'nai Mitzvah Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
B'nai Mitzvah Date

## B'nai Mitzvah Honors

Name:

Hebrew Name:

Birthday:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date:

Parent:

Hebrew Name (if applicable):

Parent:

Hebrew Name (if applicable):

### Shabbat Morning Service Honors Torah Portion:

Role	Name (English and Hebrew if applicable)	Relationship to B'nai Mitzvah
Opening the ark before taking out the Torah		
Closing the ark after the Torah is read		
1 <sup>st</sup> Aliyah		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Aliyah		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Aliyah		
4 <sup>th</sup> Aliyah		
5 <sup>th</sup> Aliyah		
6 <sup>th</sup> Aliyah		
7 <sup>th</sup> Aliyah		
Maftir		
Hagbah: Person to lift the Torah after reading		
Galilah: Person to dress the Torah after reading		
Parents Blessing to B'nai Mitzvah		
Prayer for our Country, p. 376		
Additional reading or poem (TBD)		



**Names of family members who are no longer alive that the B'nai Mitzvah family would like mention of on this special occasion**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship to B'nai Mitzvah</b>