

B'nei Mitzvah Handbook

Congregation Ahavath Chessed- The Temple



2025 - 2026 | 5785 - 5786



Table of Contents



2	Letter from Clergy
4	B'nei Mitzvah Timeline
6	History of Bar/Bat Mitzvah
6	Goals of our B'nei Mitzvah Program
7	Elements of Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Torah (Study) Avodah (Worship) Gemilut Chasadim (Acts of Loving Kindness) Israel
10	B'nei Mitzvah B'rit (Sacred Contract)
12	Temple Policies
14	Staff Contacts
15	Glossary of Worship Terms
16	Appendix: Resources for Further Reading
17	Appendix Service Honors Form



Letter from Our Clergy

Dear B'nei Mitzvah families,

We are so excited to be on this journey with you. Becoming B'nei Mitzvah is an enriching and powerful time for our young people and their families as our pre-teens prepare to lead their community in prayer, learn and teach Torah, and contemplate their Jewish identities as they move into adulthood. This experience is rife with opportunities for connection. There are opportunities to connect with your Temple clergy staff, teachers, mentors, and members of our sacred community. There are opportunities to connect with your peers. Most especially, there are opportunities to connect more deeply with Jewish history and tradition, with God, and with your own selves.

This handbook is designed to guide you through the process. As you will soon experience, there are many moving parts which require planning ahead and coordination as you approach your special Shabbat. The enclosed timeline, history, and guidelines are important resources, and of course you can always reach out to us, your tutor, and Temple staff who will be glad to assist you with whatever questions you may have- no inquiry is too small!

We recognize that this is a hectic and exciting time in your lives. Between weekly preparations with a tutor, speech meetings as the day gets closer, event planning, and everyday life, it is easy to become a bit overwhelmed and stressed. We are here to help you stay on track along the way, to answer your questions, and to make sure that this is a wonderful and meaningful once-in-a-lifetime experience for the Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah and your whole family!

We look forward to all that lies ahead, and are only a call or email away. Please do not hesitate to reach out at any time.

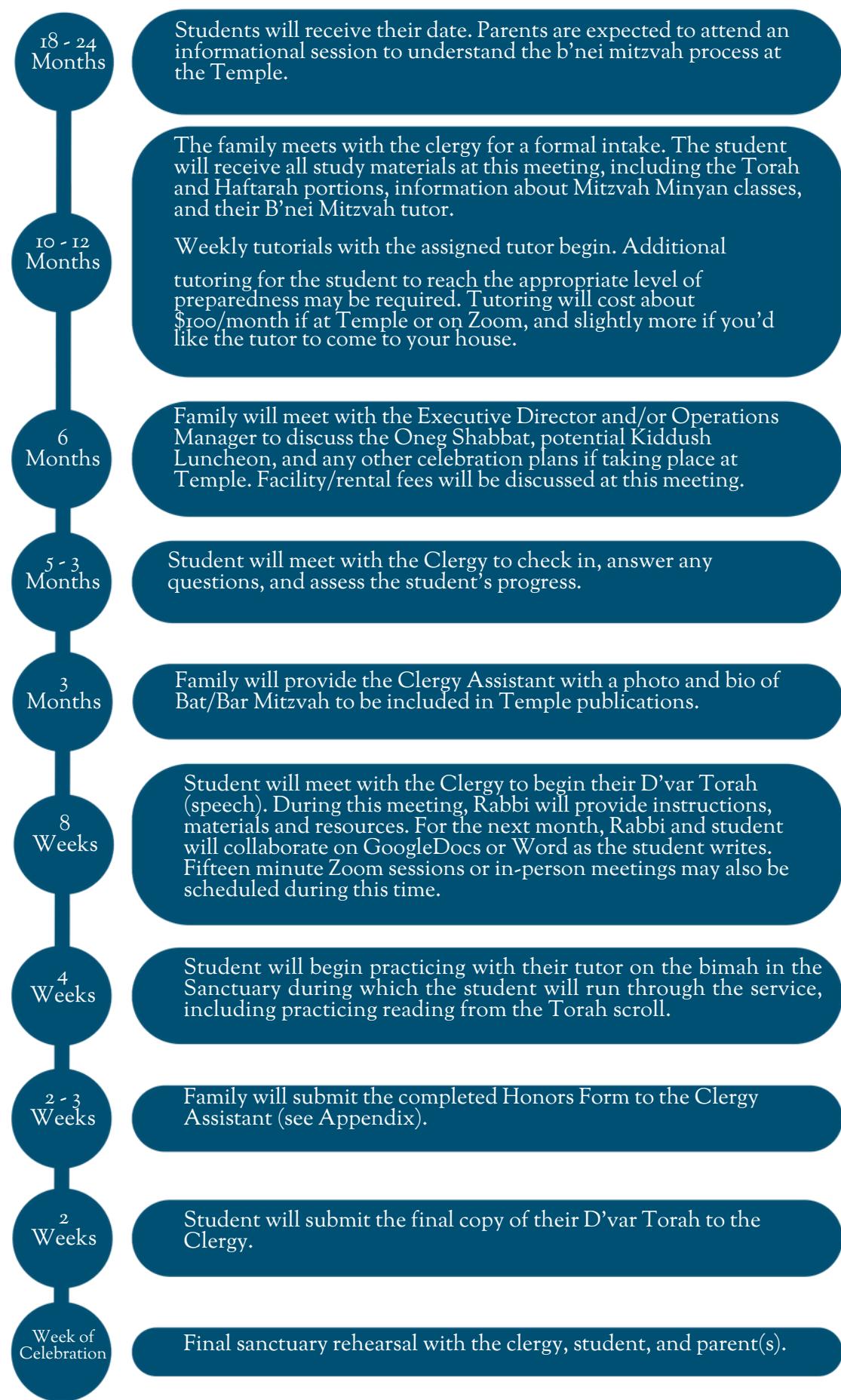
Maya Y. Glasser

Rabbi Maya Glasser
Senior Rabbi

Rabbi Ashley Englander

Rabbi Ashley Englander
Director of Lifelong Engagement

Timeline



Why become a Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah?

History

The term Bat or Bar Mitzvah means “daughter or son of the commandments”, and it signifies the attaining of religious adulthood. B’nei Mitzvah is the plural form, which is now also used in gender neutral contexts. It is important to understand that this term refers to the status of the individual, and that status is attained regardless of whether or not anything is done to celebrate it. The appropriate terminology is “becoming a Bat/Bar Mitzvah”, not “being Bar Mitzvahed”. In other words, the term is a noun referring to the child/young adult; it is not a verb referring to the process.

Though the origins of the term Bar Mitzvah may go back thousands of years, the ceremony as we experience it today began to appear around the 14th century. It evolved into a joyous celebration during the 16th century. A boy aged 13 was considered a full member of the religious community and was given an Aliyah – the rite of being called to the bima to recite the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah. Because this was an act only permitted to Jewish adults, it symbolized the youngster’s entry into responsible Jewish living in the community.

Starting in the 2nd or 3rd century, girls at the age of 12 years and 1 day had a legal responsibility to observe mitzvot (commandments). It was not until the 19th century that some families started celebrating the girl’s new status with festivity, and it was not until 1921 that the first formal Bat Mitzvah ceremony in America – that of Judith Kaplan, the daughter of Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan took place.

Bat/Bar/B’nei Mitzvah is a milestone on a journey, not only a ceremony; a communal acknowledgement that the child has reached adolescence, physically and emotionally. It is not

uncommon, however, for many children to wait several months, or often a year or more, past their 13th birthday to celebrate becoming a Bat/Bar Mitzvah.

In the Jewish community, when the child becomes a Bat/Bar Mitzvah, the child accepts additional responsibilities, most especially the full range of personal and spiritual accountability.

Goals

The overall goal of our B’nei Mitzvah program is to impress upon each student and their family that reaching Bat/Bar/B’nei Mitzvah is a milestone along the road to becoming an adult Jewish person, a road that is defined and delineated by the process of Jewish education within the Congregation. Becoming a Bat/Bar/B’nei Mitzvah is not the sole goal and focus of Jewish education, nor should it be seen as a final goal in and of itself. Within that context, there are several specific and realistic objectives which can be implemented in a variety of ways.

1. To help each student reach their full potential through the encouragement, guidance and support of clergy, staff, teachers and community.
2. To enable each student to lead the congregation in prayer and read and/or chant the Torah (holy scroll) and Haftarah (prophets) portions.
3. To instill a thirst for Jewish knowledge and a sense of Jewish identity, along with a feeling of belonging and community.
4. To encourage the practice of the mitzvot (commandments) of Torah (the study of Torah), Avodah (worship) and Gemilut Chasadim (acts of lovingkindness).

Elements of becoming a Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah

TORAH: STUDY

- Students are expected to be enrolled in and have satisfactory attendance at Temple's Religious School program, at least three consecutive years including the year of their B'nei Mitzvah. Students must be enrolled in the Temple Religious School or the Martin J. Gottlieb Day School through the year of Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah. An additional registration into the B'nei Mitzvah program is required during the year of their B'nei Mitzvah.
- Prior to beginning Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah tutoring, the student must demonstrate Hebrew reading proficiency. If the student does not possess the necessary proficiency, extra tutoring at the family's expense will be necessary prior to beginning tutoring. This will be determined by the Rabbis and/or tutor.
- As indicated in the Timeline, weekly instruction in the prayers of the Shabbat service, Torah reading and Haftarah portion with the tutor begin about 10 months prior to the Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah celebration.
- The student is expected to regularly attend the weekly tutoring sessions and maintain a regular practice schedule. It is recommended that the student spend a minimum of 15-20 minutes practicing each day; repeatedly "cramming" just prior to a tutoring session has been shown not to be a successful strategy. If the student does not satisfactorily meet these requirements, the Rabbis may require extra instruction at the family's expense, and/or postpone the date of the ceremony.
- Students are expected to attend their classmates' B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies whether or not they are specifically invited. Experience has shown that the more services a student attends the more comfortable she/he will feel leading the service. We encourage parents to join their children at these Shabbat morning services to set a positive example and make the Shabbat service a family experience.

- Students must attend the Shabbat Morning Mitzvah Minyans at least three times a year during the 24-month period leading up to their celebration.
- We expect all our children becoming Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah will continue their Jewish education through 10th grade Confirmation.
- The clergy and tutor will work with each individual student to design a program to meet their abilities and needs.

AVODAH: WORSHIP

Mitzvah Minyans

Geared toward our fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students - will be held several times through the school year. On Shabbat mornings MM will begin at 9:00. The students will gather to study something related to becoming B'nei Mitzvah, share experiences they are having as they prepare, and get a little social time with each other.

Students will be asked to attend MM at least three times a year leading up to their own service and, on the mornings that we do have a B'nei Mitzvah, the class will be encouraged to attend the service as a group both to support their peers and to develop increased familiarity with the service.

The Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah Ceremony

At Temple, the Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah ceremony symbolizes the opportunity for the student to be fully involved in the life of the congregation. This is celebrated by participation in the Friday evening and Shabbat morning services and by the completion of the Mitzvah Project.

Just as each child is an individual with varying abilities and talents, each ceremony can be customized, if necessary, to ensure that each student's unique gifts are engaged. We will prepare with and worship from the Reform movement's prayerbook Mishkan T'filah.

Shabbat Morning Service

The B'nei Mitzvah leads the congregation in a large portion of the morning service. This includes liturgy, along with that Shabbat's Torah and Haftarah selections. The student also delivers a D'var Torah, teaching the congregation the meaning of their Torah portion, as well as sharing thoughts about the meaning of becoming a Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah.

Family Participation

There are many opportunities within the Shabbat morning service for family members and friends to participate. We refer to these collectively as service honors.

Presentation of tallit: For those who choose to wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl), parent(s) (or another family member) may present it to their child at the opening of the Shabbat morning service. A *tallit* may be purchased through the Temple Gift Shop or stores recommended by the clergy, or you may choose to give the B'nei Mitzvah a *tallit* that belonged to a loved one. If the child chooses to wear a *tallit* during the Bat/Bar Mitzvah ceremony, it is important to understand that she/he should plan to wear it when attending future Shabbat morning services. The *tallit* is not "just for the Bat/Bar Mitzvah" – it is one of many ritual options in Reform practice at Shabbat morning services.

Generational passing of the Torah Scroll: The Torah and its teachings have been passed down from generation to generation through an unbroken chain of tradition. In keeping with that tradition, families celebrating a B'nei Mitzvah in our congregation participate in this symbolic ritual in which parents and grandparents are invited to the bima as the Rabbi passes the Torah down the generations into the hands of the B'nei Mitzvah themselves.

Aliyot: Being called to the Torah to read/chant the blessings before and after a portion of Torah is read is known as an *Aliyah* (plural – *aliyot*), which means "going up". At Temple, families may have up to three *aliyot*. Jewish grandparents, parents,

older siblings, aunts, uncles, or friends may be honored with an *aliyah* to the Torah, either individually or in larger groups. Non-Jewish family members of those called up for an *aliyah* may accompany them onto the bima although they do not participate in the recitation of the blessing itself. You may find the Torah Blessings in the Appendix.

Parent(s) Speech(es): The parent(s) have an opportunity to share some words with their child towards the end of the service. There are several guidelines for these remarks:

- They should be addressed directly to the child, not to the congregation;
- They should express pride in the child's accomplishment, hopes for the future, and other thoughts centered on the religious experience. Delivering a biography of childhood accomplishments should be avoided.

They should be no more than 3-5 minutes total.

- The clergy will be happy to work with parents to prepare these remarks.

G'lilah/Golelet (Torah Dresser): A family member or friend replaces the Torah mantle (colorful covering) and *yad* (pointer) on the Torah scroll. This is a great honor for a younger family member or friend, but can be anyone whom you wish to honor, including those who are not Jewish.

Service Pamphlet: There will be a special handout for Shabbat morning services written by the clergy explaining the ceremony and honors to all of your guests. The clergy office prepares these, or the family may choose to create their own. Examples are available in the Temple office. If the family chooses to prepare a service pamphlet, information regarding the Shabbat morning service will be provided to you and must be included. Service pamphlets must be provided to the clergy to approve content no later than two weeks prior to the ceremony.

Ark opening and closing: Family members and/or friends may be invited to the bima to open and close the Ark. This is another opportunity to honor a younger loved one, or those who are not Jewish.

Should you have a large number of family members on whom you want to bestow honors, there are several other options that can be considered. Please discuss these with the clergy.

GEMILUT CHASADIM: ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS

B'nei Mitzvah Project Roadmap

B'nei mitzvah students are expected to participate in a Mitzvah project during the year prior to their ceremony. Please utilize the B'nei Mitzvah Project Roadmap attached to this handbook for more information.

“Remember Us” Program

Remember Us: The Holocaust Bnai Mitzvah Project offers an invitation to children preparing for bar/bat mitzvah to connect with the memory of children lost in the Holocaust before they could be called to the Torah. This is a very simple idea. The Project provides the student and the bar/bat mitzvah teacher with the name of a lost child, information about him/her, and suggestions for simple acts of remembrance:

- doing mitzvot b'shem (in the name of the child)
- mentioning the child in a dvar Torah or speech from the bimah
- taking on the mitzvah of saying Kaddish
- lighting a yahrzeit candle yearly

B'nei Tzedek

Your children have been learning about tzedakah, righteous giving, throughout their time in our Religious School. As a child becomes a Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah, they begin to assume new responsibilities as a member of the Jewish community.

A new opportunity for children to demonstrate their commitment to tzedakah is the B'nai Tzedek Youth Philanthropy Program which is presented and sponsored by the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida and the Gottlieb Family Philanthropic Fund. Children living in Northeast Florida are invited to establish a B'nai Tzedek Fund in their own name with a minimum contribution of \$125 to the Jewish Foundation of Northeast Florida. Checks should be made payable to “(Child’s Name) B'nai Tzedek Fund”. Your contribution will be matched by contributions of \$125 from the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville and \$250 from the Gottlieb Family Philanthropic Fund for a total starting balance of \$500. We encourage you and your child to add additional monies to the Fund at any time and in any amount and to ask friends and loved ones to contribute to the Fund to commemorate special occasions.

Every year for 20 years, all B'nai Tzedek participants are asked to select any Jewish charitable 501(c)(3) organization of their choice in the Northeast Florida area to receive a contribution from their fund. The amount of the contribution will be 5% of the fund balance as of the anniversary of the Fund (minimum \$25). The Fund will be professionally invested and managed with the Jewish Foundation’s other funds. There is a 1% annual administrative fee.

After 20 years, the Fund will convert to a permanent Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Northeast Florida in the name of the original B'nai Tzedek donor. It must meet the minimum balance required by the Foundation, and will be regulated by the then current bylaws of the Foundation. All questions and comments should be directed to the Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida.

ISRAEL

Awareness of and support for the modern State of Israel is an integral part of Jewish life at the Temple, and as a result, it also plays an important role in the process of preparing for and becoming a Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah.

The Joan Levin Gift of Israel Program

Launched in the fall of 1994, the Joan Levin Gift of Israel Program is designed to help subsidize organized trips to Israel for teens aged 16-22 years old, and has to date helped over 125 teens experience Israel. The program is funded and administered by the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida annual campaign.

Enrollment is automatic and teens receive a voucher from Federation for the program. The voucher has a six-year window to be redeemed for a matching fund to travel to Israel on a recognized program of Federation mission. The participants contact Federation about the use of the Gift of Israel voucher.

Students who go to college outside of Jacksonville are still able to use their voucher as long as their families remain in Jacksonville. More information is available by contacting the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida.

North American Federation of Temple Youth

The North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) is the Reform Jewish movement's national youth organization. Each B'nei Mitzvah will receive a gift certificate toward a NFTY experience in Israel at a time of their choosing.



B'nei Mitzvah B'rit

Students and their parent(s) should read and sign the following by their first B'nei Mitzvah meeting with the clergy.

B'nei Mitzvah Expectations and Protocols

Expectations of Students:

- Attend three out of four Saturday morning “Mitzvah Minyans” that are calendared for the year:
 - Attend the youth Torah Study facilitated by a clergy member
- Be an usher at three Erev Shabbat services a year that are pre-assigned by the clergy and staff; if a student cannot attend their scheduled service, they can swap with another family, or they should watch it via live stream and complete a guided questionnaire to be submitted to the clergy.
- Attend at least two B'nei Mitzvah services (per year) beginning in 5th grade
- Participate in a mitzvah project before the B'nei Mitzvah (mitzvah project guidelines will be provided)
- The family needs to be in good standing as members of Temple (fully paid fees according to their dues level or payment plan)
- The student must be enrolled in Religious School during their B'nei Mitzvah year
- The student must be enrolled in Religious School (or another Jewish Religious School) at least three years leading up to their B'nei Mitzvah date.
- The student must participate in check-ins with the clergy during the two years leading up to their B'nei Mitzvah
- The students and parents must sign this b'rit, covenant, before or during their first B'nei Mitzvah meeting with the clergy member.
- All students must be enrolled in the B'nei Mitzvah program, including payment of those one-time fees
- Clergy has the discretion to determine the expectations of all students on a case by case basis.
- Temple's B'nei Mitzvah program is the only B'nei Mitzvah program the student is enrolled/participating in.
- Students should provide work of their own (eg. their b'nei mitzvah speeches), that is free of plagiarism or any use of AI.

Expectation of Parents:

- Parents will support their child during their preparations, helping tutors and clergy keep students accountable and on track for the ceremony.
- Parents will ensure that their child will be at their tutoring sessions, Religious School classes, and meetings with clergy members on time. If a student is regularly late or absent, this can jeopardize their ability to have a ceremony on the date they are assigned.
- Parents will check in with their child about all of their requirements and projects, and ensure that their child is completing these requirements
- Parents will communicate with Temple staff and clergy respectfully whether in person, email or over the phone.
- If a child needs to reschedule their appointment with their tutor or rabbi, the parent will give ample notice before the scheduled time.

We are looking forward to sharing this wonderful time with you!

Student's Signature

Date

First Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Second Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Temple Policies

The Temple staff is delighted to help you plan your upcoming B'nei Mitzvah. Understanding the policies in advance and adhering to them will make everything run more smoothly. Close communication with the Executive Director and/or Operations Manager is essential. (Note: the word "Family" refers to the parents or guardians of B'nei Mitzvah candidates.)

- To receive a confirmed Bat/Bar Mitzvah date, the family must be members of the Temple in good standing. **All outstanding dues, fees, and assessments are due and payable 60 days before the ceremony.** This includes the B'nei Mitzvah fee of \$700 and any additional fees associated with optional services. These optional services include:
 - Musical accompanist: \$250
 - Sound technician: \$300
 - Produces video livestream: \$100 (static video streaming is included in the base fee)
- The Temple encourages all families to host their celebrations at Temple.
- As the Temple calendar can become very busy, a meeting with the Executive Director or Operations Manager should be set at least 6 months before the event. As part of this meeting, you will discuss Temple facility usage and policies. Advanced planning can help to alleviate anxiety and address individual concerns.
- When the Temple is the site of any portion of your celebration, all vendors - including caterers, musicians and florists - are required to provide Certificates of Insurance covering Worker's Compensation, Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability Insurance. Caterers are also required to supply Food and Products Liability Insurance and a Health Department Number two weeks prior to the event. Caterers must abide by the Temple's policies and procedures. While we do not endorse specific vendors, we encourage families to support vendors who support Temple as paid advertisers. IF wine, beer or liquor will be served, the Temple must be listed as an additional insured on the provider's insurance policy. One-day riders can be purchased. If there is not a caterer and wine, beer or liquor will be served, the renter will be required to have event insurance.
- Temple custodial staff must be present at all functions. Custodial staff will be the first to arrive and the last to leave the Temple. Custodial staff does not assist with the serving of food or drink, or bus tables unless specifically hired to do so. Their function is to set tables and chairs in advance, oversee the operation of the kitchen/facilities and be available for any building emergencies. The caterer is responsible for all set-up and breakdown of items on top of the tables and any other decorations.
- We encourage the B'nei Mitzvah family to sponsor the Oneg Shabbat dessert reception that takes place after services on Friday evening. You may choose to ask Temple Sisterhood or a private caterer to prepare the Oneg Shabbat.
- No pork products or shellfish may be served at the Temple. In addition, meat and dairy products can be on the same table, but may not be served on the same dish.
- **Payment of 50% room rental fees secure the room reservation. Balance of all fees is due 30 days prior to the scheduled event.**
- A silk floral arrangement for the bimah is available at no charge. Other items, such as fresh flowers, a FANN (feeding Area Needy Neighbors) basket or another bimah arrangement, can be arranged at the family's expense and coordinated with staff.

- No still photographs or individual video may be taken at any time during services. It is the responsibility of the parents of the B'nei Mitzvah student to inform family members and photographers of this policy. Families may schedule photos before services on Saturday morning, which can include clergy and the Torah.
- The service will be streamed through Temple's YouTube Channel and produced, remotely, by our streaming service LiveControl. Temple can provide you with a shareable link you can send to family and friends, and you can download the video after services are completed. If you would prefer a private/password protected livestream video, please request so in advance.
- We ask the Bat/Bar Mitzvah family to ask two family members or friends to serve as ushers for the Shabbat morning service.
- We encourage inviting the Bat/Bar Mitzvah student's teachers and the religious school class to the ceremony.
- Students and their families are expected to join us for Friday night Shabbat services the weekend of the student's B'nei Mitzvah. The student will lead the candle blessing, a short kiddush, and a choice between two prayers (Amidah or V'ahavta) that Friday evening during Shabbat services.
- Sisterhood's Judaica shop is available to supply gifts and special orders for the occasion. Some families choose to provide personalized kippot (skull caps). This is optional as Temple custom does not require wearing a kippah.
- A member of Temple's Board of Trustees will present gifts to the B'nei Mitzvah on behalf of Temple, Clergy, Brotherhood and Sisterhood. Should the family have a preference for a specific Board member with whom they have a relationship, that request should be shared with the Temple President at least 6 months in advance.
- Temple requirements, both educational and financial, are expected to be met in order to progress with the celebration of your family's simchas as scheduled.

Staff Contacts

Rabbi Maya Glasser, Senior Rabbi

Office Phone: 904-733-7078 x303
Cell Phone: 914-450-1861
E-mail rabbiglasser@thetemplejacksonville.org

Rabbi Ashley Englander, Director of Lifelong Engagement

Office Phone: 904-733-7078 x302
Cell Phone: 727-422-3618
E-mail rabbienglander@thetemplejacksonville.org

Edwinna Harris, Operations Manager

Office Phone: 904-733-7078 x301
E-mail eharris@thetemplejacksonville.org

Lynn Busch, Comptroller

Office Phone: 904-733-7078 x306
E-mail lbusch@thetemplejacksonville.org

John Yowan, Communications Manager

Office Phone: 904-733-7078 x313
E-mail jyowan@thetemplejacksonville.org

Lori Eisenberg Castro, Religious School Coordinator

Office Phone: 904-733-7078 x304
E-mail leisenbergcastro@thetemplejacksonville.org

Jessica Black, Executive Clergy Assistant

Office Phone: 904-733-7078 x309
E-mail jblack@thetemplejacksonville.org

Glossary of Terms

Aliyah: The act of going up to the Torah to recite blessings that thank God for the Torah. One blessing is recited before each Torah reading and one blessing is recited after each Torah reading. There are typically three aliyot at Temple on Shabbat morning. The Oleh (male) or Olah (female) is the person who “goes up” to the bima to recite the blessings.

Amud: The reading table from which the service is led and the Torah read. **Aron Kodesh:** The ark containing the Torah scrolls.

Atzei Chayim (Eitz Chayim – singular): The “trees of life”, or wooden poles of the Torah to which the parchment is attached, and which serve as handles.

Bima: The “raised platform” or area where the reading is done. **B’nai Mitzvah:** “B’nai” is the plural form of “bar,” meaning “Children of the Commandments.” This term is used for multiple students sharing a ceremony. If the students are all female, the plural form becomes “b’not.”

Cantor: An ordained spiritual leader of the congregation specializing in music; officiates at the service with the Rabbi.

Chumash (Chumashim, plural): The Torah in bound book form, often also containing the Haftarah (section of Prophets) portions, as well.

D’Var Torah (plural: *Divrei Torah*): Speech that explains and illuminates the Torah text.

G’lilah: The act of rolling and tying the Torah scroll. The golel (male) or golelet (female) is the person performing g’lilah. **Haftarah:** A portion from the Prophets section of the Tanakh (Bible) corresponding to a particular Torah portion.

Hagbah: The act of raising the Torah scroll. The magbiah (male) or magbihah (female) is the person performing hagbah.

Hakafah: A procession around the congregation with whomever is carrying the Torah in the lead.

Kiddush: Sanctification blessing for Shabbat or Festivals, recited over a cup of wine or grape juice. This phrase also may refer to the luncheon following the Shabbat morning service, which begins with the blessing.

Kippah (Hebrew) or **Yarmulke** (Yiddish): Ritual head covering, sometimes called a “skull cap”.

Motzi: The blessing over bread. On Shabbat a special braided egg bread called challah is eaten.

Oneg Shabbat: The reception after the Friday night service that celebrates the joy of Shabbat with refreshments and socializing.

Parasha: The section of Torah read during a given week. Each week during the year has its own parasha.

Rabbi: The ordained spiritual leader of the congregation; officiates at the service.

Siddur: The prayerbook. Here at the Temple, the name of the siddur is Mishkan T’filah, the official siddur of the Reform Movement.

Shabbat: Hebrew for Sabbath, the special seventh day of the Jewish week when we celebrate our uniqueness as free persons and are able to separate ourselves from the work week. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday evening and ends at dark on Saturday evening.

Torah: The Five Books of Moses, which is the first section of the Tanakh (Bible). The Torah scroll contains these five books written by hand in Hebrew on specially prepared parchment by a trained scribe called a sofer.

Tzitzit: The “fringes” on a tallit (prayer shawl), often used to kiss the place at the beginning and ending of an aliyah passage. The tzitzit remind a Jewish person over the age of 13 of God’s commandments.

Yad: The pointer used by the Torah reader, often shaped like a hand. The Torah reader takes care not to touch the scroll directly with his or her own hand, so that the yad (“hand” in Hebrew) becomes an extension of the reader to assist in an accurate and smooth reading.

Books

Gordis, Daniel. *Becoming a Jewish Parent: How to Explore Spirituality and Tradition with Your Children*. Three Rivers Press, 2000.

Greenberg, Gail Anthony. *MitzvahChic: A New Approach to Hosting a Bar or Bat Mitzvah That is Meaningful, Hip, Relevant, Fun and Drop-Dead Gorgeous*. MitzvahChic, LLC, 2003.

Kushner, Harold S. *When Children Ask About God: A Guide For Parents Who Don't Always Have All the Answers*. Schocken Books, Inc., 1995.

Leneman, Cantor Helen. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Basics: A Practical Family Guide to Coming of Age Together*. Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001.

Rossel, Seymour. *A Spiritual Journey: Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah Handbook*. Behrman House, Inc., 1993.

Salkin, Rabbi Jeffrey K. *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah*. Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005.

Wolpe, David J. *Teaching Your Children About God: A Modern Jewish Approach*. Harper Perennial, , 1994.

Websites

[B'nai Mitzvah Project Roadmap](#) “Bnai Mitzvah Project Road Map.” Areyvut, 30 June 2018, arevvut.org/resources/ bnai-mitzvah-project-road-map/. [B’nei Mitzvah and Interfaith Families](#) Nemitoff, Rabbi Arthur. “Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planning Issues for Interfaith Families.” My Jewish Learning, 6 Feb. 2023, www.myjewishlearning.com/article/special-planning-issues-for-interfaith-families/. [Moving Traditions Podcast Series, @13](#) Florin, Paige, and Jillian Finkelstein Brownstein. “Podcast Archives.” Moving Traditions, 9 Sept. 2019, www.movingtraditions.org/category/podcast/. [Youth Philanthropy Program](#) “Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida Philanthropy Programs.” drive.google.com/file/d/1IPlG2m3QBea2l2_eE3UdejIfgjQmG74c/view. Accessed 23 July 2024.

<http://www.rememberusprojects.org/bnaimitzvah.html>

Service Honors Form

Please fill out completely and review with the Rabbi 1 month prior to the ceremony.

Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah full name:

Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah Hebrew Name:

Hebrew Names of Parent(s):

Family Pictures

Will you be taking pictures prior to the service? Yes No

Please note: The last photograph can be no later than 10:10 a.m. so the photographer can be out of the sanctuary by 10:15 a.m. No still photography is permitted in the sanctuary during the service.

Additional Service Options

Do you want the livestreamed produced? (\$300) Yes No

Do you want a sound technician? (\$250) Yes No

Do you want a piano accompanist? (\$100) Yes No

Shabbat Morning Greeters: Please provide names of 2-4 people to pass out service pamphlets and greet guests entering the sanctuary:

Who will present the tallit (prayer shawl) to Bat/Bar/ B'nei Mitzvah?

This occurs towards the beginning of the service when the student blesses & puts on their tallit publicly for the first time. Usually, parents or grandparents participate.

Ark Openers: This occurs twice during the service; please share names of 2-4 people total. This honor works well for younger siblings and people who are not Jewish.

Passing the Torah: Parents, grandparents, great-grandparents join the Bat/Bar/ B'nei Mitzvah on the bimah to symbolize generations of family; please list their names here. All are welcome to participate; please indicate if any names below are not Jewish.

Aliyot/ Torah Blessings: All people called up must be over the age of 13. Those who are not Jewish are welcome to participate as long as there is at least one Jewish person in the group.

(1) Name(s) & Relationship:

(2) Name(s) & Relationship:

(3) Parents

(4) Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah

G'lilah:

1-2 people to assist with dressing the Torah.

(1) (2)

Kaddish Names: Please share names and relationship to the Bat/Bar/B'nei Mitzvah of any deceased loved ones whom you would like remembered on this occasion.

Service Location: The Chapel is recommended for up to 80 guests. The Sanctuary is recommended for 50+ guests. Please mark 1 location below.

Chapel Sanctuary

Contact Us

Congregation Ahavath Chesed
8727 San Jose Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32217 (904)733-7078
rabbieglander@thetemplejacksonville.org
www.thetemplejacksonville.org

