

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook



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Mazal Tov on beginning the journey toward celebrating your child becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*! Your child's Bar/ Bat Mitzvah is an exciting time for your entire family and marks a major milestone in the life of your child and family. It recognizes him/her becoming an adult in the Jewish community. It is a celebration of their relationship with God, *Torah* and the Jewish people; it is a celebration of their spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical maturation. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is not a conclusion it is a step along the way.

We hope that this booklet will answer all of the questions you may have about the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation* process at Temple Adat Elohim. It is a time of hard work and intense study for the student and often a time of exhausting planning for a meaningful celebration for the family. The Rabbi, the Cantor, Director of Education, Executive Director, and *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator are always available to handle any unanswered questions.

Important Contact Information

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History of Bar and Bat Mitzvah

Excerpted from Putting God on the Guest list (see Recommended Reading)

Bar Mitzvah, as a concept, actually emerged during the first centuries of the Common Era. An invention of the early rabbis, the term refers to a young man who has reached the age of thirteen plus one day. Most references to the age of thirteen come from stories the rabbis told about characters in the Bible-at thirteen, Abraham smashed the idols in his father's house (Midrash, *Pirkei De-Rabbi Eliezer* 16); Jacob and Esau went their separate ways-Jacob to the worship of God, Esau to idolatry (Midrash, *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:10). The age of thirteen became seen as the crossroads of spiritual, moral and religious maturity. Bar Mitzvah was the occasion when the community confirmed that the father had fulfilled the first part of the promise made at the *Brit Milah* (ritual circumcision) to bring his son to the study of *Torah* - a passage not only for the son but also for the father and in modern times, for parents.

The idea of mitzvah implies responsibility and obligation. It connects us to the covenant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, and of all Jews who proceeded each thirteen-year-old. It is sacred and deserves celebration.

Jews sensed this, and during the early Middle Ages, practices began to change. In the twelfth century, the religious rights of minors began to disappear. By approximately the late Middle Ages, minors could no longer wear *tefillin* (phylacteries) or be called for *aliyot* to the reading of the *Torah*. Since those rituals became the defining elements of Jewish maturity, they later became the essential features of the Bar Mitzvah observance.

In the late Middle Ages, it became customary for the Bar Mitzvah to offer a *drash* (sermonette or discourse). That *drash* has been transformed into the Bar Mitzvah speech, which serves as a *D'var Torah* (a sermonette on the Scriptural lesson) or as a personal prayer for the occasion. In many synagogues, the young person also leads the congregation in the Hebrew prayers in the service. In most synagogues, parents, grandparents, and other close relatives are given *aliyot* and other honors.

Starting in the second or third century of the Common Era, Jewish girls at the age of twelve had a legal responsibility to observe *mitzvot*. It was not until centuries later, however, that families began celebrating the girl's new status with some festivity.

The first Bat Mitzvah ceremony in North America, in May 1922, was Judith Kaplan's, the daughter of Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, the father of Reconstructionism. Rabbi Kaplan read the *Torah* portion and the *Haftarah* then Judith (at a respectable distance from the *Torah* scroll) recited the first blessing and read the *Torah* portion from her own *Chumash* (a book containing the Five Books of Moses). That was it. The institution of bat mitzvah was born without incident.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah is about ritual maturity. It is about growing up as a Jew. It is about becoming a fuller member of the Jewish community. But it is also about moral responsibility, about connection to *Torah*, to community, to God.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Adat Elohim

We are honored that you have chosen to celebrate your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* within the Temple Adat Elohim community. (Please note one does not get *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ed, one celebrates a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and becomes a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*) By taking this step, they are affirming their connection with the Jewish people and our tradition. In addition to the many who will wish them a *mazal tov* (congratulations) on completing their childhood studies of Judaism, we also extend a *todah rabbah* (thank you) for establishing their identity within our 3500 year history, a *todah rabbah* for claiming their place within the modern adult Jewish community, and a *todah rabbah* for leading us into the future.

The process of becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is not easy. As you already know, it requires years of study and practice. Yet, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is not an event. It is a status that is achieved by learning to lead a service, but even more so, it is a title your child earns by understanding the importance of community, *Torah* study, communal worship and *mitzvot* (sacred obligations). To this end, part of the process of becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is fulfilling *mitzvot* (which will be described in the following pages). Our hope is that this opportunity for doing *mitzvot* will be embraced as an opportunity and blessing rather than a burden. Fulfilling these *mitzvot* can be a wonderful experience not just for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* but for the entire family. The practice of these *mitzvot* can also be seen as a start to a life of finding greater meaning within our tradition.

Preparing to lead the service is an obvious goal of our study program. Our tutors and clergy will build upon the groundwork established within our Religious School program. Your child will learn to read prayers with confidence, sing with pride, and inspire our congregation through their words. Our goal during these months is to help hone their Hebrew skills so that they will feel more at home within our TAE worship services, and feel a greater sense of comfort in any synagogue during their lifetime.

In many ways the most powerful and important Jewish education happens after *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* when children are intellectually and emotionally more mature and able to learn and discuss Jewish topics on a much deeper level. It is our expectation that all students will continue through at least Confirmation in 10th grade, preferably through our Post-Confirmation program in 11th and 12th grades.

Finally, our hope is that through this process your family will feel embraced by the Jewish community. It is our privilege and joy as your Rabbi, Cantor and Educator to be able to spend this time with you. In some cases, this may be the first significant time that we have to learn about each other, ask questions, laugh and perhaps even cry together. We treasure this time to open doors for you and to show you the possibilities within Judaism. We also recognize that as much as we may be able to teach your child, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students are often our best teachers.

Thank you for embarking on this experience with us. May it be filled with blessings and love, a sense of accomplishment and pride, and the beginning of many good things.

If your child has learning challenges please let us know; we strive to work with each student individually according to their skills and abilities. Also if there are family concerns that we should be aware of please let us know. The types of things that are important for us to know include but are not limited to: divorce, blended family, illness of a parent or grandparent, loss of a parent or grandparent, etc.

L'Shalom,

Andrew Straus
Rabbi

David Shukiar
Cantor

Marcy Goldberg
Director of Education

Timeline

Sixth Grade Year:

In addition to learning many of the prayers and blessings students will lead during their Bar or Bat Mitzvah service, they will also learn how to interpret and chant the *Trope* found in our *Torah*. Not many communities teach the skill of using *Trope* to learn *Torah* portions. Temple Adat Elohim takes great pride in helping our students to learn this important skill which makes the learning of *Torah* easier and less stressful. The Cantor spends 30 minutes each week with the 6th grade classes to teach *Trope*.

Summer between 6th -7th Grade:

Students who will celebrate a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* in January-June of their 7th grade year begin tutoring weekly, on Tuesday nights, with a *Trope* Specialist in the summer before 7th grade.

Students who will celebrate a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* after completion of 7th grade will be required to attend at least 10 of the summer sessions before beginning weekly tutoring on Tuesday nights in September of their 7th grade year.

Seventh Grade Tuesday Night Program:

Teens who have become *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* are given the opportunity to share their newly gained knowledge and the skills they mastered with younger teens preparing for their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* while earning community service credit. Each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student will also have individual time with a *Trope* Specialist who will guide the student in preparation of their *Torah* and Haftarah. This special and unique program will help prepare the students for becoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. During the school year, we begin each week at 6:00pm with a Youth Group sponsored dinner.

Six months before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*:

Rabbi will meet with your family and other families who will be celebrating their child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* around the same time. During this group session, which parents and *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students should attend together, we will discuss the meaning of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, its impact on the family, provide an overview of the service and the training process, and answer any questions that family members might have. Students begin completing the required Mitzvah Projects (see page 8).

Three months before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*:

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator will call to make five appointments with the Rabbi and the student to interpret and understand his/ her *Torah* portion and to work on the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Drash (sermon). The student and at least one parent will attend these meetings together. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator will also schedule the 5 appointments with the Cantor.

Two months before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*:

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student and their parent(s) will meet with the Cantor to go over the prayers, *Torah* and Haftarah Portions and begin the home stretch of preparation.

One month before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*:

The Cantor will meet weekly for the final 4 weeks with the student to review prayers and run through the entire service, including reading from the *Torah*. These appointments will take place in our Sanctuary, with the microphones on to simulate an actual service. The student must have completed all of their Mitzvah Projects by this date.

Three weeks before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*:

The family turns in their Honors List (page 33-38) to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator. Please speak with the Rabbi if you have any questions.

Educational Requirements

If your child has special learning challenges please speak to us ASAP so that we can adjust our learning program to meet their needs.

A *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student must:

1. Complete three and a half years of Religious School classes at Temple Adat Elohim, prior to becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Credit can be given for attendance at another temple's Religious School, as assessed by the Director of Education. Students must be enrolled and attending Temple Adat Elohim Religious School through the end of seventh grade. In addition, we strongly encourage students to continue their Jewish education through Confirmation, in 10th grade and our Post Confirmation program in 11th and 12th grade.
2. Have knowledge of the Jewish holidays, Jewish history and culture, and the basic observances of the Jewish faith, all of which they will be taught during our Religious School classes.
3. Be able to read Hebrew, including chanting their portion directly from the *Torah* and Haftarah.
4. Be able to chant the prayers and blessings.
5. Complete Mitzvah Projects 1-4 listed below, which are designed to help the student recognize that *mitzvot* (sacred obligations) are an important part of being Jewish. (The 5th Mitzvah is optional.)
 - Mitzvah #1: Performing a community service project (see page 8).
 - Mitzvah #2: Attending 8 Shabbat (3 evening, 3 morning or afternoon, and 2 of your choice) services, beginning 12 months prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* (see page 9).
 - Mitzvah #3: Participating in two Shabbat dinners with their families (see page 10).
 - Mitzvah #4: Being a greeter at Shabbat evening and morning services. This can be done at the same time as Mitzvah #2 (see page 10).
 - Mitzvah #5: Participating in "Remember Us". This is an optional project. (See page 10).

Mitzvah Projects

MITZVAH #1 Community Service

Repairing the world, *tikkun olam*, is a central *mitzvah* (sacred obligation) of Judaism. Each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate* is expected to perform a community service project. The best way to get started is to think about:

1. **What are my strengths?** If you are good at reading, for example, you might choose to tutor someone or read to someone in a convalescent home. If you love animals, you might volunteer at an animal shelter.
2. **What are hobbies I enjoy?** If you like to garden, you might help a disabled neighbor with their gardening needs. If you are interested in the environment, you might collect cans and bottles for recycling and donate money you raise to an environmental organization.
3. **What are some areas I would like to learn about?** Some examples: If you want to learn more about homelessness, you might collect clothing, books, toiletries for our TAE homeless shelter; if you are interested in hunger, you might collect cans for a food bank, and pack and distribute food; if you are interested in the elderly, you might celebrate holidays at the Jewish Home for the Aging.
4. We do not require that the Mitzvah project fulfill a set number of hours. Rather we think it should be a result of a family discussion about what time commitment will be meaningful for the student. Ideally the mitzvah project will enable the student to stretch and grow in their ability to serve our greater community and know that they can make a difference in our world, can be God's partner in repairing our fractured world.
5. The students should be prepared to talk about how doing this mitzvah is reflective of Jewish values- what makes this a mitzvah. (see www.onlfoot.org or www.rac.org for source materials)
6. Please bring the Student *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Project Form (page 39) to your first meeting with the Rabbi.

Here are some places you can go to find a Mitzvah project:

1. Social Action Committee -TAE: socialaction@adatelohim.com.
2. Mana Food Drive: 3020 Crescent, Thousand Oaks, CA, (805) 497-4959
3. Gramercy Place Family Shelter: (213) 387-1238; takes clothes, toys, etc.
4. Many Mansions: (805) 497-0344; They own and manage over 400 units of affordable housing, serve approx. 1,000 adults and 200 children, provide on-site service programs that include job training, case management, homework literacy and a teen club.
5. Domestic Violence/ Battered Women of Ventura County: (800) 451-4499
6. SOVA: 16439 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406, Phone: (818) 988-7682, SOVAinfo@ifsla.org.
7. Community Food and Resource Program
8. Youth Service America: 1-800-VOLUNTEER (www.servenet.org)
9. No kill shelter or ASPCA
10. Senior housing visitor
11. Volunteering at Winter Shelter TAE homeless shelter or cooking and serving a meal during the off season
12. Local Library

MITZVAH #2 - Service Attendance

Each student must attend at least 8 Shabbat services (3 Friday nights, 3 services on Saturdays (morning or afternoon) and 2 of your choice) at Temple Adat Elohim in the 12 months prior to becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. This requirement must be completed by 3 weeks prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date. Students should be accompanied by a parent(s) for these services and the student must bring his/her notebook to help understand the service choreography outlined in their Siddur (prayer book).

<p>Student Name:</p> <p>Service Date:</p> <p><i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Date:</p> <p>Something I learned or experienced during the service</p>	<p>Student Name:</p> <p>Service Date:</p> <p><i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Date:</p> <p>Something I learned or experienced during the service</p>	<p>Student Name:</p> <p>Service Date:</p> <p><i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Date:</p> <p>Something I learned or experienced during the service</p>
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To meet the necessary requirements, please fill in the coupons above and hand them to one of our Clergy following each service.

MITZVAH #3 --Family Shabbat Ritual

Enjoy two *Shabbatot* together as a family. The Bar/ Bat Mitzvah student should take responsibility (in consultation with your parent(s) for planning a menu, cooking, setting up, cleaning up, leading the *b'rachot* (blessings) and asking your family questions about the experiences of the past week.

MITZVAH #4- Friday night and Saturday Service Greeters

Welcome members and non-members to Shabbat services. Represent our congregation by greeting service attendees and preparing the wine and *challah* at Saturday morning or afternoon services. We ask that you and your family participate in this *mitzvah* at least twice before becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Please go to

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d49a8ab28a2fd0-2017> to sign up for time slots.

MITZVAH #5 - Remember Us - The Holocaust B'nai Mitzvah Project



One of our wisest Jewish teachers, the Ba'al Shem Tov, taught: *Remembrance is the secret of redemption.*

It means that the simple act of remembering someone restores that person's value and meaning, and adds meaning and value to your own life.

One-and-a-half million Jewish children were lost during the Holocaust before they had a chance to grow into Jewish adults, many before their own call to the *Torah*.

This is an invitation to bring the memory of one of these children with you as you become Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The **Remember Us** program is simple and does not add any extra time:

1. The Cantor will give you the name of a lost child, and whatever information we know about him or her.
2. Keep that child in your thoughts - however you like - as you prepare for your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.
3. When you do a mitzvah, do it *b'shem* - in the name of- the child whose memory you are carrying.
4. When you stand in front of the *Torah*, speak the name of your child, in whatever way you choose.
5. After you become *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, our tradition allows you to do the mitzvah of saying the Kaddish prayer for a family member or someone who you want to remember who has died. You will learn it as part of your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* preparation.

6. Become the *Kaddish*-sayer for the child whose memory you keep. Choose a good day to say the prayer and light a memorial candle. It could be *Yom HaShoah* (the day Jews everywhere remember the Holocaust), *Yom Kippur*, or the anniversary of your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

Through these simple acts, done in the normal unfolding of your own life, you will be helping to redeem the life of a lost Jewish child.

Remember Us: The Holocaust B'nai Mitzvah project: www.remember-us.org

Ritual Objects

There are several items that come into use during the service, and some guests may not be aware of the typical customs relating to those items, particularly those who are not Jewish.

Head coverings

Kippot, also called *Yarmulkes*, are worn by many people during religious services. While often identified as a particularly Jewish item, there is little in Jewish Law requiring them, and they are typically worn as a sign of piety and respect for God during prayers. It is not uncommon for non-Jewish men to wear them during the service, and doing so *will not be seen as a sign or statement about their own religious beliefs*. Many women choose to wear a *kippah* as well, especially in the Reform community. We encourage but do not require their use at Temple Adat Elohim. A small number of *kippot* are available in the foyer. If a large number of guests will be attending, the host family may want to provide extras. They can be purchased at low cost through the Sisterhood (see page 2 for contact information).

Tallit

The *tallit*, or prayer shawl, is worn to fulfill a biblical commandment to wear fringes (*tzitzit*) on the corner of one's garments. A shawl is worn with the fringes attached to remind us of our sacred obligations to God and the community. *Tallitot* are worn in our community by Jewish men and women over the age of thirteen. *Tallitot* are available for guests in the foyer. *Tallitot* are worn during morning services by congregants and at all services by those honored with an *aliyah* and by prayer leaders.

The Torah/Ark

The *Torah* scroll itself is considered a sacred object, because of its contents. Additionally, a *Torah* scroll represents nearly a year of holy labor by a single scribe. There are several things to keep in mind when handling such a revered item.

- NEVER is the side of the parchment with the writing touched by hands or fingers. A scroll can be expected to last for centuries, but not if it is touched. Parchment tends to pick up oils and dirt much more readily than paper. During our services, it is only touched lightly by the *tallit* fringes of some participants, and by the pointer (*yad*) used by the reader.
- When the Ark doors are open, the entire congregation stands. When the *Torah* is laid flat on the table for reading, or held by a seated person, people may sit.

Service Times and invitations

Shabbat evening services begin at **6:30 pm the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month and 7:30 pm on the 2nd and 4th/5th Friday of the month (subject to change).**

Shabbat morning services start promptly at 10:00 am and Mincha/Havdalah services start promptly at 5:00 pm. Morning services tend to last until 11:45 -12 noon, and afternoon services last until approximately 6:45 pm.

If you want, you might consider putting into your invitation that services begin at 10 or 5 with seating at 9:45 am or 4:45 pm. Please do not put an earlier starting time on the invitation hoping that guests will thus be on time (it is not fair to those who are on time).

Invitations can be ordered through our Sisterhood. (See page 2 for contact information).

What does a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* do?

There are basically three areas of participation for a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at a Shabbat service: to be a *Shaliach Tzibur* (leader of worship), *Darshan* (teacher of *Torah*), and *Ba'al K'riyah* (chanter of *Torah* and Haftarah).

Shaliach Tzibur

One of the oldest and most prestigious roles in the synagogue is to be the *Shaliach Tzibur*. Literally, the "representative of the community," the *Shaliach Tzibur* leads the congregation in prayer. Each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student joins with the Rabbi and the Cantor in this sacred role.

On Friday night, it is our custom for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* to light the Shabbat candles (accompanied by family members), chant the Kiddush, and lead at least one additional prayer.

On Saturday, the student has a larger role and leads many of the service's Hebrew and English prayers. In the instance of a shared service, the liturgy will be divided and prayers may be added to accommodate two students.

Darshan

Prior to the reading of *Torah*, the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* will deliver a *D'var Torah* (sermon) based upon the week's *Torah* portion. This teaching will be prepared in consultation with the Rabbi. Guidelines for the preparation of a *D'var Torah* can be found on page 14.

Ba'al K'riyah

Each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* assumes the role of the *Ba'al (at) K'riyah*, *Torah* reader, for the day. This entails the learning of up to eight *aliyot* from the week's *Torah* portion, which may range from one to three verses each.

The *Torah* is unvocalized (without the vowels or accents); moreover, each student is expected to learn the *Trope* or traditional cantillation melody. This skill is taught by the Cantor, *Trope* Specialists and tutors both in the Religious School and in private tutoring sessions.

Following the reading of *Torah*, many *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students chant the Haftarah or secondary biblical reading. Like the *Torah* reading, the Haftarah is chanted according to a specific melody to be learned from the Cantor, *Trope* Specialists and tutors. The number of verses to be read will be determined by the Cantor.

Materials

Each student will be provided with a copy of their *Torah* and Haftarah portions, which contains the Hebrew texts and English translations, as well as helpful commentary. In addition, the Cantor will make a CD of the *Torah* and Haftarah portions. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator will give each student a notebook that contains a *siddur* (prayer book), which they will use on the day of the ceremony.

An Important Note: Our congregation takes great pride in making every *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* celebration special, even though the participation of each student is basically the same. There are occasions when special circumstances necessitate an adjustment in the student's participation. We will do everything possible to work with each student as an individual, with the ultimate goal of maximizing their self-

esteem and sense of accomplishment. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you might have with the Rabbi or the Cantor. It is vitally important that we know of any learning challenges that your child has as early in the process as possible.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Drash (Sermon)

The *drash* gives your child an opportunity to teach the congregation about their *Torah* portion.

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* sermon is written under the guidance of the Rabbi. Three months prior to the service date the family will meet with the Rabbi to begin the study and writing process. The Rabbi will provide a suggested outline of the sermon and background material. Although the Rabbi will suggest topics, you are encouraged to use your creativity to come up with alternate topics.

There are two ways to look at the *Torah* portion:

You may choose to address the larger theme that runs throughout the text (e.g., talking about the concept of *law* for the portion that contains the Ten Commandments); or

You may choose to examine a single verse or even just a word in the *Torah* portion (e.g., what can we learn about the binding of Isaac from the fact that at the end of the story Abraham returns alone?).

The next step is to "identify" the question and/or the difficulty in the *Torah* portion.

Once you have done that, the Rabbi will provide you with opinions and commentaries on your topic written by scholars throughout the generations.

After quoting various scholars and rabbis, you need to consider how *you* would resolve the question or difficulty. What are your thoughts about it? What do *you* think is the way to read the *Torah*? The wonderful thing about *Torah* study is that there are no wrong answers. The process of *Midrash* is the combination of the text *and* the reader. *Torah* is only complete when we put ourselves, through our ideas and questions, into the text. This makes the *Torah* not just an ancient document but a living and never-ending source of Truth. Think of the *Torah* as a *ma-ayan*, a "well," or a *sha-ar*, a "gateway," to important ideas. What we want to hear are the ideas *you* have to offer about the *Torah*.

The last part of the *D'var Torah* is applying the lesson you have taught us to our lives today. This part is especially powerful when you apply it to your life, particularly as a Bat or Bar Mitzvah.

The three parts of the *D'var* then are: The introduction and identification of the question and/or the difficulty of the text; your solution; and applying the lesson (the solution) to our lives today.

Please Note...

The *D'var Torah* is **not** a thank-you speech. It is a teaching. On this day, the student is the teacher.

Should your child wish to include special thank you's for the day, this may be done in a separate presentation at the conclusion of the service. As with the sermon, this must be written out and approved by the Rabbi prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service.

What does a parent do?

Besides *kvelling* (untranslatable), the parental involvement in a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* celebration includes: Attending the *parasha* (*Torah* portion) study sessions with the Rabbi.

Ensuring that the student is studying at home an average of 30 minutes a day 6 days a week.

Reading the weekly updates from the *Trope* Specialists, peer tutors and the Cantor.

Attend the 8 Shabbat services alongside their child.

Friday Night: Accompanying the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student to light the Shabbat candles.

Saturday: Participating in the ceremonial handing down of the *Torah*; being called up for an *aliyah*; offering a blessing on the *bima* for their child.

Ensuring that the student attends Tuesday night Religious School and all scheduled *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* sessions with the Rabbi or Cantor. (Parent(s) should be partners to ensure that the child is prepared - that is *tr*responsibility.)

Parents should encourage their children to continue their Jewish education through at least Confirmation in 10th grade and our Post Confirmation program in 11th and 12th grade. Judaism is a powerful tradition and has a great deal to teach us about our modern world. Numerous studies have shown that the most meaningful and impactful Jewish learning begins after *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* when teens have gained a degree of intellectual, moral and spiritual maturity.

Parents' Message

Rabbi Eliezer ben Rabbi Shimon said: A man is responsible for his son until the age of thirteen; thereafter he must say, "Blessed are You who has now freed me from the responsibility of the boy."
(Midrash Genesis Rabbah 63:10)

The tradition of the parent reciting a blessing upon a child's coming of age is quite ancient. The above text indicates that it was ritualized and probably performed on the occasion of the child's first *aliyah*. And, although it might seem a bit inappropriate to recite a prayer freeing yourself from responsibility for your child, its underlying principle should be most instructive in preparing your remarks to your child. Indeed, in many ways the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony marks the individuation of the child: it is the commencement of a young person's acceptance of adult responsibility and the freeing of the parent from that task.

The intent of the parental prayer in our service is to afford the parent(s) the opportunity to publicly acknowledge -- in a sacred setting -- the joy and pride they feel at that moment. More importantly, however, they can also use that time to share their hopes and dreams for their child, particularly in relation to their being called to the *Torah*. In other words, it's an opportunity to articulate the meaning of the moment.

This ritual is not to be confused with the addresses that take place at the *s'udat mitzvah* or celebration following the service. The message at the service is a unique opportunity -- in the presence of your community as well as friends and family-- to ask for God's blessings for your child. The gesture should

be addressed to your child, not the congregation. Moreover, it should be directed toward the future. Where is it that you hope this moment will lead your child? What do you hope that your child will take from it?

This opportunity to speak will be immediately after the *Torah* is returned to the Ark. You may wish to use some of the examples provided below or write something entirely unique. In any event, we encourage you to prepare your remarks in advance. We also respectfully request that your combined remarks not exceed 3 minutes.

Sample Prayers

Into our hands, Oh God, You have placed Your *Torah*, to be held high by parents and children and taught by one generation to the next.

Whatever has befallen us, our people have remained steadfast in loyalty to the *Torah*. It was carried into exile in the arms of parents that children might not be deprived of their birthright.

And now I pray that you, my child, will always be worthy of this inheritance. Take its teaching into your heart, and in turn pass it on to your children and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew, searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace. Thus will you be among those who labor to bring nearer the day when God will be One and God's name will be One. (Gates of Prayer)

###

May your eyes sparkle with the light of *Torah*,
and your ears hear the music of its words.
May the space between each letter of the scrolls
bring warmth and comfort to your soul.
May the syllables draw holiness from your heart,
and may this holiness be gentle and soothing
to you and all God's creatures.
May your study be passionate,
and meanings bear more meanings
until life arrays itself to you
as a dazzling wedding feast.
And may your conversation,
even of the commonplace,
be a blessing to all who listen to your words
and see the *Torah* glowing on your face.
(Danny Siegel)

###

Praised is God who has granted new responsibility to _____ and to us. As _____ begins to enjoy his/her new status among the Jewish people, a status that redefines our own role in his/her life, may God grant us the wisdom to continue as guides and counselors, allowing _____ in accordance with the teachings of our *Torah* as a responsible Jewish adult.

Baruch Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam

(For a male) shep'tarani mei-ancho shelazeh.

(For a female) *shep'tarani mei-anshah shelazoh.*

Praised are You, *Adonai* our God, who rules the universe, who has freed us of some responsibilities and conferred new ones upon _____

(The Rabbinical Assembly)

###

"We thank you, Oh God, for the joyous fulfillment we feel as our daughter/son reaches the threshold of womanhood/manhood/adulthood. O God, accept our thankfulness for the thirteen years that have come and gone; bless our hope for the years that are yet to be...."

We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son/daughter grow day by day, week by week, year by year. For the health and strength You have given him/her, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him/her, for his/her ability to elicit and return love -for all these precious gifts, we thank You...."

Including Special Guests

Many families wish to honor family members, friends and others who have been an integral part of the life of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. There are many opportunities to do this during the Shabbat service.

Because many of our traditions involve affirmation of a covenantal relationship with *Torah* and the Jewish people, some of these honors are reserved for members of the Jewish faith.

Tallit-Wearing a *tallit* is a sign of entrance into adult responsibility in the Jewish community. The *tallit* is usually presented to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* by parent(s) or grandparent(s), but anyone may be chosen for this honor. The presenter should understand the full meaning of wearing a *tallit*. Please ask the Rabbi or Cantor if you have any questions.

Ark- The Ark contains our *Torah* scrolls and is opened before the *Torah* is passed from generation to generation. One honor to be given out is the opening and closing of the Ark as we prepare to read the *Torah*.

Torah Passing- Passing the *Torah* from generation to generation represents the *Shalshet Kabbalah* (chain of our tradition). Parent(s) (Jewish or not), and Jewish grandparent(s) and Jewish great-grandparents are invited to participate in this honor.

Undressing and Dressing the Torah-- The *Torah* is undressed and then dressed before and after the *Torah* is read. Children and adults (Jewish or non-Jewish) of any age are welcome to participate in this honor.

Aliyot- "Being called up to read the *Torah*," is an honor usually reserved for family and close friends who recite a blessing before and after a portion of the *Torah* is read. The reading of the *Torah* in public is an ancient tradition, dating back to the third century B.C.E. Those who chant the blessings must be Jewish and at least 13 years old because, with these blessings, the individual affirms acceptance of the *Torah* and its Jewish teachings. The last person to receive an *aliyah* is the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Our *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator has copies of the Hebrew blessing.

available for you to send in advance to those who will receive this honor, or can be found on our website at <http://www.adateloheim.org/Torah-Blessing-Before-s/7651.html> and <http://www.adateloheim.org/Torah-Blessing-After-s/7683.htm>.

All Honorees - Please remind all honorees to dress modestly and appropriately (see page 19 for further guidelines).

Jewish family members who are being offered an honor are encouraged but not required to wear a tallit and or kippah. Non-Jewish family members and friends are welcome to wear a kippah as a sign of respect but are not required to.

Physical disabilities will not prevent anyone from participating in any of these honors. We can adjust the service to meet a friend or family member's disability or challenge.

Including Non-Jewish Family Members and Friends

As a community, we greatly value the contribution of parents in raising their children as Jews. We want to acknowledge and thank those non-Jewish parents who have played an active role in helping create Jewish families and raise Jewish children. We use the occasion of a child becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* to honor parents of all faiths, while respecting the integrity of individuals and our Shabbat service. Our policy at TAE is to invite parents (Jewish or non-Jewish) to speak to their children on the *bima*, to pass the *Torah* from generation to generation, to accompany their spouse while the *Torah* is read, and to stand with their family as their child lights the Shabbat candles on Friday night. If you have any questions or concerns about our inclusion of non-Jewish family members and friends, please speak with the Rabbi and the Cantor.

Non-Jewish family members may accompany the person reciting the blessings, though we respectfully ask that they not recite the blessings themselves as this would serve as an affirmation of Jewish faith and practice and we do not want to place someone in the uncomfortable position of making a public statement of this kind without fully understanding the commitment they are making. We also respectfully ask that you do not bring younger children (under the age of 13) to the *Torah* for the *aliyah*.

Families with Divorce or Parental Separation

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony can pose many challenges for a family when there has been a divorce or separation. Feelings of joy and pride in your child will hopefully supersede all other feelings and guide the family through this special time. Our philosophy is guided by the idea that this is a celebration of your child and their Jewish life. It is most helpful when decisions about *aliyot* and other honors, parental speeches, and forms of celebration are made mutually and amicably. Our Clergy are always available for guidance in helping to make decisions that are in keeping with the spirit of the occasion and in the best interests of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Families in which one of the parents is deceased

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony can pose many challenges for a family when there has been a death of a parent. Feelings of joy and pride in your child can also be mixed with feelings of sadness and loss. Please speak to Rabbi or Cantor so that we can best guide you and your family to create a joyful ceremony that honors the memory of the parent who has passed away.

Conduct, Attire, and Customs in the Sanctuary

Attire

Proper attire should be worn by the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, all attendants and guests. This is a religious ceremony in the Sanctuary of our temple, and attire should reflect the sanctity of the day. For men, this could mean business suits, slacks and sweaters, etc. For women, slacks or appropriately modest skirts or dresses. Shoulders should be covered. (A tallit should not be worn to cover bare shoulders) Garments like blue jeans and t-shirts would not be appropriate, nor would overly suggestive or revealing clothing.

Behavior

It is customary for a number of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*'s friends or schoolmates to be invited. Many of these guests may not have experience in a service setting. We recommend that you send a letter to them and their parents before the service explaining the significance of the day, the preparation involved and a bit about the service. (See *Putting God on the Guest List* for suggestions) Please make sure that all guests are aware that cell phone usage, talking, texting, excessive moving about and/or leaving the sanctuary and other distractions are discouraged. All guests should be aware that the service itself commands their respect and attention, as it represents a great deal of effort over many years by the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. If there are school-age guests attending without their own families, it is suggested that they be seated together in the Sanctuary. We ask that the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family assign a family member or friend to monitor their behavior. Younger children are required to sit with their families. If guests are being disruptive, they may be asked to leave the Sanctuary.

Small Children

Crying is a normal part of life for babies and small children, but can be distracting. To allow all guests to enjoy the service, including those with small children, our "cry room" (called the "Shalom Room") is located in the Sanctuary, with windows and a sound system to allow those in the room to see and hear the service.

Cell phones and other handheld electronic devices

All attendees should turn off cell phones (including the camera and video app.) and other handheld electronic devices during the ceremony. If a pager or phone must be left on for emergency reasons, it must be in a silent mode. Any talking or texting on a cell phone is inappropriate and should only be done outside the Sanctuary. It is also distracting when phones are used as cameras therefore we ask that all guests respect the sanctity of the service by refraining from taking photos or videos during the service.

Other Rules of Conduct

There are several practices that are unique to Jewish religious services, and go somewhat beyond basic manners and courtesies. These apply to all attendees. They include:

- When the doors to the Ark are open and when the *Torah* is out of the Ark, all present stand except while the *Torah* is laid on a table for reading or held by a seated person on the *bima*.
- There are certain prayers during which the congregation stands. It is not required, but courteous to do so even by those not actually participating in the prayer.
- People should not leave or enter the Sanctuary while the congregation is standing, or while the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is speaking or being addressed.
- Food, drink, and chewing gum are not allowed in the Sanctuary.

The people leading the service will make it clear when to stand or sit. People without experience with the service need not worry.

Photography/Videotaping

Recording your service using still and video are wonderful ways to preserve the memories of the event. With that in mind, we have created these policies to allow TAE members the opportunity to photograph/record important events in their lives while preserving the sanctity of the service.

PRE/POST-SERVICE PICTURES

We encourage you to have your photographer capture pictures before or after the service. (Please provide the name of your photographer, in advance, to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator) If you choose to do this, you must coordinate with our *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator, who will arrange for the Sanctuary to be available and prepared for your photo shoot. You may also take pictures on alternative days (pending availability of Sanctuary). These sessions must also be coordinated with our *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator. We generally schedule photography sessions during the following times:

Monday	11 am-6pm
Tuesday - Thursday	11 am-2 pm
Friday	11 am-4pm
Saturday	8 am - 9:30 am (before a morning service) 12 pm -1:30 pm (after a morning service) 3 pm -4:30 pm (before an afternoon service) 7 pm -8:30 pm (after an afternoon service)

If pictures are being taken immediately before the Saturday service, the photographer and all equipment must be out of the Sanctuary 30 minutes before the beginning of the service. **During these photo sessions, no Bima furniture may be moved (including the *Torah* Table and the lecterns where the Rabbi and Cantor stand),** We also respectfully ask that no pictures be taken with anyone on top of the *Torah* table or the piano. Your photographer may move the chairs around as long as they are placed back in their original position when the session is finished.

If you would like pictures with the *Torah*, you may only use the *Torah* on the far right hand side of the Ark. This is the *Torah* with the red cover. You may not use either of the other two scrolls for photos. We expect the *Torah* to be treated respectfully and placed back in the Ark when pictures are finished.

The clergy are happy to be in your pictures, if you so desire. Clergy are available for pictures before services (as soon as the Rabbi comes to the Sanctuary after *Torah* Study for a morning service and 4:25 pm for an afternoon service). These would have to be the final pictures of the session. Pictures may also be taken immediately following the service.

STILL PHOTOGRAPHY DURING SERVICE

Principal: For our members and guests to enjoy a service without distraction maintaining the sanctity and beauty of Shabbat and the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Service while providing access to capture this joyous occasion.

Your photographer can be in the media/sound booth taking pictures during the service. (The media/sound booth is immediately on the right as you enter the sanctuary through the main doors)

If the camera has a silent shutter, the door to the booth can be open and the photographer may take pictures through the open door without leaving the booth. If the clergy or Sound Tech believes the

shutter noise to be distracting, they will ask the photographer to close the door and take pictures through the window.

Flash photography is not allowed under any circumstances.

We ask that guests not use their cell phones for photography/videography during the service.

No photography or videography is permitted during our Friday night services.

DVD OF SERVICE

Fee: \$125

If you would like Temple Adat Elohim to provide a DVD of the service for you, you must fill out the DVD Request Form (page 40) prior to the day of the service. After the form is filled out and submitted, you will receive an email confirmation of your video request. If you have not expressed a desire to have the service recorded to DVD, our Video/Sound Tech will contact you before the service to confirm that you do not want a DVD created. If you choose to have a DVD created the day of the service, your temple account will be billed.

You may hire your own videographer who can be in the media/sound booth taking video during the service. A sound feed is provided from the board via XLR cable. The video camera must be stationary throughout the service. The videographer may set up in the doorway and video through the open door as long as our TAE Sound Tech has access to enter and leave the sound booth during the service.

If the family wishes to have a photographer and videographer in the booth at the same time, the family may choose to have the videographer record through the window of the booth and the photographer shoot through the open door (camera shutter must be silent) or the photographer may shoot through the window and the videographer may shoot through the open door. The video camera must be stationary during the service.

Financial Requirements*

The following categories describe what obligations will arise throughout the process of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. These costs are subject to change; please contact the temple office for the most up-to-date information. Families are expected to be in good standing at all times to keep your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date on the temple calendar.

Tuition

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Tutorial Fee is included in the 7th grade Religious School tuition.

Oneg Shabbat

Fee: \$210

The family of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* traditionally co-sponsors, along with TAE, the Friday evening Oneg Shabbat that takes place the night before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service. This is a social gathering for those who attend Friday night services, and typically consists of cookies, fruit, snacks, juice, and coffee. Any leftover food is the property of Temple Adat Elohim.

Flowers/Sanctuary Decorations

Fee: \$120

There is an additional cost for flowers and Saturday morning Kiddush. Please contact the temple office for specific costs. Flowers are not required. Please contact the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator for alternate options.

Thanking the Clergy and Staff

An appropriate way to thank the Clergy for guiding your child to become a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is through a contribution to their discretionary funds, which are used for supporting temple programming and the needy in our community and furthering the goals and values of Temple Adat Elohim. Contributions are also encouraged to the temple on behalf of other staff, teachers and tutors who have helped your child along the way. (Tipping of any staff member is strongly discouraged) Many families choose to have a leaf added to our tree of life in honor of their child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. This is a beautiful permanent remembrance of this special occasion.

Reception/Catering

It is not required that a post-service reception be held at TAE. However, we offer an excellent facility that is naturally convenient to your guests, and we have a selection of approved caterers for you to choose from. Please contact the temple office for details. (See page 23). Regardless of where you choose to hold your celebration, we encourage you to share your blessings by incorporation *tzedakah*. Please visit the MAZON website for ideas: www.mazon.org.

Catering Options at Temple Adat Elohim

Temple Adat Elohim wants to be your destination for your family's celebrations. Our Catering Committee has revised our policies to better meet the needs of our community. **Options 1 and 2** are for events where there will be food brought in from an approved list of vendors. For these events, the kitchen will not be available. **Option 3** is for parties where you want to utilize the services of one of our established caterers. Note*** Options 1 and 2 are for Morning Services ONLY. **Please direct all catering and social hall rental inquiries to our Executive Assistant, Cindy Leshtz at cleshtz@adatelohim.com or (805) 497-0171.**

Option 1: "Mini Kiddush" (morning services only)-1.5 hour limit

You may choose to have a Mini-Kiddush from Bea's Bakery delivered to the Temple the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

- 1) There is a minimum of 50 people required at \$10.00 per person. (a \$500.00 minimum)
- 2) Included in the \$10/person charge are: Fruit platter(s), bagels and cream cheese, cookies and babka. Also included are: paper goods, coffee, tea, water and lemonade.
- 3) There is a Maintenance Fee of \$125.00
- 4) There is a Room Fee of \$300.00, which includes a set-up of tables, chairs and tablecloths.

Option 2: Extended Kiddush (morning services only)- 2 hour limit

You may choose to have a pre-approved food & beverage provider drop off trays, etc., without use of our catering kitchen, which remains locked at all times. Prior approval of the vendor and menu is required by Aliza Goland, our Executive Director. This option is available to TAE members only. To reserve the Social Hall:

- 1) Contact Cindy Leshtz at the temple (805) 497-7101, ext. 201 to reserve the social hall for your event.
- 2) Cindy will assist you in Filling out a Facility Request Form available from the temple office. This form must be submitted along with a \$750 non- refundable room rental fee.
- 3) Hosts will be required to submit a Certificate of Insurance with Temple Adat Elohim named as additional insured. Your homeowners or renter's insurance provider should be able to provide you with this. TAE must have this certificate on file before the room reservation can be guaranteed.
- 4) The TAE Kashrut policy must be followed for any food delivered and served at the event. All menus are subject to approval and must be submitted to Cindy at least 2 months prior to your event.
- 5) Once your menu has been approved the following additional charges will be applied to your account and must be paid in full two weeks prior to your event::
 - \$500 security deposit. This will be refunded within two weeks after your event providing there is no damage to the facility.
 - \$175 for Security Guards. A minimum of one Security Guard is required for any event where alcohol will be served, or if there will be minor children attending without their parents.
 - \$75 to set up the dance floor. This covers set up and tear down. (Optional)

Option 3: 4-hour luncheon or dinner receptions

You may choose from TAE's list of pre-approved food & beverage providers (see page 25) to cater your party. These providers have agreed to the requirements set forth by the Board of Directors for use of our Catering Kitchen, Social Hall, Foyer and Courtyard. The following procedures should be followed to engage a provider (caterer) and reserve the Social Hall for your party:

- 1) Contact Cindy Leshtz at the temple, (805)497-7101, ext. 201 to reserve the social hall for your event. A deposit of \$500.00 is required to secure the room. This will serve as a security deposit and will be refunded within two weeks following your event providing there is no damage to the facility.
- 2) Contact the provider (caterer) of your choice to discuss your event. Once you have an agreement with the caterer, that caterer will send TAE a copy of your contract. The following additional charges will be billed to your account and must be paid in full two weeks prior to your event:
- 3) Additional fees:
 - \$175 Security Guards. A minimum of one Security Guard is required for any event where alcohol will be served, or if there will be minor children attending without their parents.
 - \$75 to set up the dance floor. This covers set up and tear down.

Social Hall Reservations

1. Our Social Hall is available to your family for your celebration. Reservations for the Social Hall can begin as much as 2-3 years prior to your scheduled event.
2. If you are celebrating a morning *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service at 10:00 AM your family has the first priority for a luncheon reception in the Social Hall from 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM.
3. If you are sharing a morning service, reservations for the Social Hall are on a first-come-first-served basis.
4. If you celebrating a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service at 5:00 PM, your family has the first priority for a dinner reception in the Social Hall from 6:30 PM - 11:30 PM.
5. The family holding the evening service will have the first priority to reserve the Social Hall for an evening reception. This reservation must be made at least 12 months prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date. If after this time, they have chosen not to use the Social Hall, then the family holding the morning service may have the option to reserve the Social Hall for the evening.
6. If your family chooses a morning service and no afternoon service is calendared on that date, you may reserve the Social Hall for an evening party.
7. The Social Hall is considered reserved only upon confirmation from our caterer.

Types of Events:

Extended Kiddush- generally this is a small meal immediately following a morning Shabbat service and is limited to 2 hours.

Luncheon Reception - held immediately following a morning *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* or other celebration. Must be concluded by 4:00 p.m.

Dinner Reception - held immediately following an afternoon *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* or other celebration. Cannot begin before 6:30 p.m. and must be concluded by 11:00 p.m.

Shabbat Dinner- held on Friday evening prior to Shabbat services. May begin as early as 5:00 p.m. and must be concluded by 7:25 p.m.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Social Hall reservations, please call the temple office at (805) 497-7101.

Approved Caterers

BSC Events

www.bscevents.com

818-345-0009

Contact: Scott Floman

From an intimate party with close friends to a gala wedding BSC Events will work with you to provide the fare you desire as well as the service that highlights your personal ideas and tastes. We do tray passed or Buffet Style Cocktail Parties, Formal or Casual Dining, Corporate, Brunch, Bar & Bat Mitzvahs, Showers and almost any event.

We offer a wide variety of cuisines, all using the best and freshest ingredients available. At BSC Events we can handle all of your party planning needs from rentals, DJ's, Florists and many other vendors. With over 22 years in business BSC Events has the experience and presentation to provide your event with an amazing outcome. Call us to book your next event...

Cielo Catering

818-522-4994

www.marcy@cielocateringevents.com

Contact: Marcy Feldman

Marcy Feldman, Director of Catering, brings her knowledge of being in the catering business for *over* 16 years. Ray Swanson, Chef, has many years of experience working in the catering business as well.

Together they will combine their dedication and passion and love for all things culinary by delivering unforgettable, exciting and memorable *events* and the promise that with Cielo Catering+ Events, "THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!"

Mr. Omelette

805-222-5674

www.mromeletteca.com

Contact: Dave Model

With *over* 27 years of experience catering *events* from casual parties to elegant affairs, Mr. Omelette offers many unique and delicious menus to choose from. Their chefs professionally prepare made-to-order omelets, crepes, waffles and pasta dishes that will have you and your guests raving. Mr. Omelette is used exclusively for our Kiddush Lunches.

Silver Spoons Catering

818-996-2911

www.silverspoons.com

Contact: Scott Tessler

We believe our excellent catering rests on these three guiding principles:

- Prepare the freshest and finest food available
- Furnish highly trained, service-oriented, friendly event staff
- Provide a sophisticated and exciting ambiance to create the perfect event

Temple Adat Elohim Notices

Bazman Hazeh

Each issue we recognize the students celebrating *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* in our newsletter. You will be contacted approximately 3 months in advance to provide the temple office with a digital photo (.jpg) of your child as well as a short paragraph (100 words) about your child. Photos and paragraphs are due in to the temple office 2 months prior to your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

Friday Announcements

Each week we highlight the student(s) celebrating their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. We will use the photo and paragraph you submit for the Bazman.

Newspaper Notices

Should you wish to place a notice regarding your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* in the Los Angeles Jewish Journal Celebrations section or Ventura County Star; we suggest you provide the following information:

- Name of Synagogue
- Name of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Student
- Both Parents' Names
- Date of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*
- Child's Hobbies and Interests
- Mitzvah Project

You can send the above information (by email or snail mail) preferably at the beginning or end of the month.

Contact information for the *L.A. Jewish Journal*:

Send *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* announcements to:

PERSONALLY SPEAKING:

The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles
3580 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1510
Los Angeles, CA 90010
celebrations@jewishjournal.com

The *Ventura County Star* also accepts submissions in the "Your News" section. Some items from *Your News* are also picked up on their main website and/or printed in the Ventura County Star newspaper. Contact information can be found at:

Recommended Reading

The Meaning of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*

Leneman, Cantor Helen. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Basics, A Practical Guide to Coming of Age Together*, Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1996

Salkin, Jeffrey K. *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah*, Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992.

Salkin, Jeffrey K. *For Kids: Putting God on the Guest List: How to Claim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Bar or Bat Mitzvah*, Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998.

Torah

Fields, Harvey J. *A Torah Commentary for Our Times*, New York: UAHC Press, 1991.

Plaut, W. Gunther, ed. *Torah: A Modern Commentary*, New York: UAHC Press, 2005.

Basic Jewish Concepts

Diamant, Anita and Howard Cooper. *Living A Jewish Life: Jewish Traditions Customs and Values for Today's Families*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1991.

Grishaver, Joel Lurie. *40 Things You Can Do To Save The Jewish People*. Los Angeles: Alef Design Group, 1993.

Kushner, Harold, *To Life: A Celebration of Jewish Being and Thinking*. New York: Warner Books, 1993.

Telushkin, Joseph. *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know about the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History*. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1991.

Mitzvah Project

Siegel, Danny. *Gym Shoes and Irises: Personalized Tzedakah (Books 1 and 2)*. Spring Valley, NY: The Town House Press, 1988.

Recommended Web Sites

For a link to a wide variety of Jewish resources on the Internet, you can go to:

www.adateloheim.org

www.urj.org

www.socialaction.com

www.onlfoot.org

www.reformjudaism.org

www.myjewishlearning.com

www.mazon.org

Glossary

<u>Aliyah:</u>	literally means "going up." It refers to the honor of being called up to the bimah to recite or chant the blessings over the <i>Torah</i> . Plural: "aliyot."
<u>Aron Hakodesh:</u>	literally means "the Holy Ark," the special cabinet in which the <i>Torah</i> scrolls are kept in the synagogue.
<u>Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</u>	literally means "son/daughter of the commandment." It is a ceremony marking a youngster's becoming, at age 13, an adult member of the Jewish community. Plural: "B'nai Mitzvah."
<u>B'racha:</u>	literally means "blessing." Plural: "brachot".
<u>Bima:</u>	literally means "stage." This is the location from which the services are conducted.
<u>D'varTorah:</u>	literally means "word of <i>Torah</i> ." It is an explanation and/or interpretation of the weekly <i>Torah</i> portion.
<u>Haftarah:</u>	literally means "completion." It is a selection from the Books of the Prophets, read or chanted after the weekly <i>Torah</i> portion, during the service on Shabbat and holidays. The Haftarah passage is thematically linked to the <i>Torah</i> portion of the week.
<u>Havdalah:</u>	literally means "separation." It is the ceremony that marks the end of the Shabbat and the beginning of the new week. Havdalah takes place at the end of Shabbat with blessings over wine, spices and the Havdalah candle.
<u>Kippah:</u>	also called "yarmulke," is the ritual head covering worn during services as a sign of modesty, reverence, and respect.
<u>Mitzvah:</u>	literally means "commandment," a religious obligation; mitzvah refers to one of the 613 commandments in the <i>Torah</i> . It has come to mean "good deed." Plural: "mitzvot."
<u>Motzi:</u>	the blessing chanted or read over bread.
<u>NerTamid:</u>	literally means "Eternal Light." It is the light over the Ark that is never turned off, meant to recall the lamp that was always burning in the Temple in Jerusalem, to remind us of God's continuous presence in our midst.
<u>Oneg Shabbat:</u>	the celebration of the Shabbat following Friday night services.
<u>Parashah:</u>	the weekly <i>Torah</i> portion, also referred to as the "sidra."
<u>Sefer Torah:</u>	the handwritten scroll of the <i>Torah</i> that is read during services.
<u>Seudat Mitzvah:</u>	a festive meal that honors a lifecycle event or a simcha (joyous celebration)

- Shehecheyanu:* literally means "God who has kept us alive." This is the blessing for beginnings and other significant occasions in people's lives such as birth, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and marriage.
- Shema Yisrael:* literally means "Hear, O Israel," and is the main statement of Jewish belief, affirming that "God is ONE." Recited during the worship service, the congregation declares: "Hear O Israel, Adonai is our God, God is One."
- Siddur:* literally means "order." It is the Hebrew term used for the prayer book.
a ritual prayer shawl with fringes (tzitzit) worn during all daytime prayer services to remind Jews of God's commandments.
- Tikkun Olam:* literally means "repairing the world." It is the concept in Judaism that Jews, as part of the human family, have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of the world.
- Torah:* literally means "teaching" or "direction." *Torah* is the Five Books of Moses, which includes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- Tzedakah:* literally means "justice" or "righteousness." It is the Hebrew word we use for charity and charitable acts. It is customary to give tzedakah prior to lighting the Shabbat candles in the home, in honor of a simcha (a joyous celebration), and in memory of a loved one. We keep a tzedakah box, as many synagogues do, just outside the Sanctuary.
- Ve'ahavta:* literally means "and you shall love." It is the prayer from Deuteronomy 6:5-9 that obligates us to love God and to teach Judaism to future generations; it is part of the Shema, the central prayer of the service.
- Yad:* literally means "hand." It is the pointer used while reading from the *Torah* scroll.



March 2, 2007

Week 171, Day 5

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Bar/Bat Mitzvah: Beginning, Not An End Rabbi Jan Katzew

The following op-ed piece is from the March 2, 2007 issue of the New York Jewish Week and is reprinted with permission.

About a year ago, I received a call from a motion picture marketing executive who asked me to preview the soon-to-be-released "Keeping up with the Steins," a "commentary" on b'nai mitzvah as they are celebrated in North America. My interest was piqued: A mainstream movie about the commercialization of b'nai mitzvah ... perhaps this would engender a "teachable moment," particularly in light of these propositions, which experience has shown increasingly to be true:

- Adults are spending too much of their disposable income on b'nai mitzvah celebrations.
- B'nai mitzvah children internalize the message that the religious ceremony is less meaningful than the party that follows.
- Families believe that bar and Bat Mitzvah represent the end of formal Jewish education.
- Parents are living vicariously through their children and, consequently, creating celebrations that are more for adults than for middle school students.
- American Judaism has assimilated values that are more consonant with America than with Judaism.

While I defer to the judgment of others, I left the movie feeling profoundly underwhelmed, but hopeful that viewers would be moved to converse with family members and friends about just how much, in this particular case, art imitates life. We have turned a rite of passage into a rite of passage, the responsibility of attaining religious status into the entitlement of social status. "Keeping up with the Steins" is an unlikely candidate for an Academy Award, but it has served a purpose if it causes us to pause and consider the cultural phenomenon that prompted its production and distribution.

According to Avot de Rabbi Natan (Chapter 16), at the age of 13, the yetzer tov (good impulse) is born and with it, our capacity for conscious pro-social, empathic and compassionate behavior. B'nai mitzvah are intended to catalyze a character-building process that lasts a lifetime. It is therefore painfully ironic that we may be party (pun intended) to the yetzer hara (evil impulse) running amok at precisely the moment when the yetzer tov first sees the light of day.

I realize that I am skating on thin ice - or treading on sacred ground - by criticizing the manner in which b'nai mitzvah are being celebrated by America's Jewish families, many, if not most, of whom have yet to embrace the idea that a bar or Bat Mitzvah is a simcha that marks the beginning of a choice to lead a Jewish life.

Arguably, the greatest challenge we face in Jewish education inheres to the perception that a bar or Bat Mitzvah represents an endpoint. By mandating minimum expectations for becoming bar or Bat Mitzvah, we have created an artificial bubble of Jewish learning between grades three and seven. The bar or Bat Mitzvah party for the youngest child in the family too often celebrates the end of synagogue affiliation.

"Mitoch lo lishma ba lishma" - out of an ulterior motive (may) come a pure motive. This principle adduced in Maimonides' Mishneh *Torah* (Hilchot Talmud *Torah* 3:5) epitomizes our assignment as ~~Jewish~~ educators. We have three or four years in which to persuade families who came for a service that they really came for a covenant. We will not always win, but I hope we never will give up. Some of us who are now teachers of *Torah* may have arrested temporarily our Jewish study at age 13.

I realize that cultural change is a complex, foreboding process and that urging families to infuse their children's b'nai mitzvah with religious meaning and significance designed to last a lifetime is akin to pointing a hose at a tidal wave. However, the hose we are using draws water from sacred sources that regenerate, so I choose to believe that we are reaching one extreme that is destined to moderate and, thus, achieve a dynamic equilibrium.

As we live longer, it becomes less reasonable that one's Jewish life should reach its apex at age 13. Instead, we can help to place bar and Bat Mitzvah in the perspective of lifelong Jewish learning and living - an acceptance of communal responsibility, a beginning of conscious commitment and a promise to make a meaningful contribution to the people of Israel in covenant with the God of Israel. A rich Jewish life does not have to be expensive - at least it should not have to be expensive.

We are already b'nai and b'not mitzvah. Our children, on the other hand, are just in the process of becoming. Bar and Bat Mitzvah is a process and a status that regrettably has devolved too often into a product and an event. It is our collective challenge to take a population of episodic Jews and help them live continual Jewish lives, so that life's celebrations and tribulations will be seamless parts of their Jewish identities rather than an interruption in their "normal" lives.

Rabbi Jan Katzew is director of Lifelong Jewish Learning at the Union for Reform Judaism.

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Bar/Bat Mitzvah Honors List

Please return this form to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Coordinator at least three weeks prior to the service. This form will be used by the Rabbi and Cantor during the service, so please use ink and print. Please note that as per the policies of Temple Adat Elohim, there are some age and religious requirements for the following honors (see pages 14-15). Please speak with one of our Clergy if you have any questions.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date: _____

Student's English Name: _____

Student's Hebrew Name: _____

Parents' Names: _____ and _____

HONORS

Present Tallit: (any adult) _____

Open & Close Ark Doors: (as we take the *Torah* from the ark) (any participants) _____

Generational Passing of the *Torah* (Parent(s) (Jewish and non-Jewish), Jewish grandparent(s) & Jewish Great Grandparent(s)):

Name

Relationship to Student

Name	Relationship to Student
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Undress *Torah* (Jewish and non-Jewish participants): _____

Aliyot: Jewish participants over the age of 13 are called to the *Torah* using their English and Hebrew names (if known). Non-Jewish participants over the age of 13 may be called to the *Torah* with their English names but, in honor of our Jewish traditions, we respectfully ask that they not recite the *Torah* blessings.) (In general no more than 4 individuals should be called for each Aliyah.) Check with the Cantor approx. 1 month before your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* to find out how many aliyot there will be.)

English Name

Hebrew Name

1. _____

2. _____

English Name

Hebrew Name

3. _____

4. _____

English Name

Hebrew Name

5. _____

6.

English Name

Hebrew Name

7.

8. (*Bar/Bat Mitzvah*)

Dress *Torah* (Jewish and non-Jewish participants):

Hold *Torah* on pulpit (Jewish adult):

Open the ark for the returning of the *Torah* to the ark. (optional; any participants) _____

Speak to our children (Jewish/non-Jewish Parent(s) of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* are invited to speak to their child(ren) (3 minutes maximum combined). (See pages 15-16):

Kaddish: Please list names of any deceased family members who are being remembered on this day. It does not need to be their *yartzeit* (the anniversary of their death) nor must the loved one be Jewish to be remembered with our kaddish reading. Please include a child's "Remember Us" twin as the last name on your list (see page 10).

Name

Relationship to Student

Student Mitzvah Project Form

Please bring this form with you to your first appointment with the Rabbi.

Name: _____

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date: _____

For my mitzvah project I will

What organization are you working with?

What makes this a mitzvah and not just a good deed? (i.e. how does it fulfill a Jewish value or mitzvah?)
(see www.onlfoot.org) for source materials.)

DVD Request Form

Title of Event _____

Date of Event _ _ _ _ _

Name of Person
Requesting Set-Up _____ Phonenumber _____

Specifications/ Requirements

Check List (for office use):

- \$125.00 check received /check# _____
- Email TAE videographer (if his services are being used)
- Copy form and attach with payment and original and give to Accounting.

Bat Mitzvah Checklist

Parent + student attend services and meetings with Rabbi and Cantor

- Meet with the Rabbi to get Torah portion book and other information: _____

Attend Services (3 Friday night, 3 Saturday morning or afternoon, 2 of your choice) and complete form

Friday night

Saturday morning

Saturday afternoon

Ritual: Help plan, cook, set up, clean up and lead blessings for 2 family Shabbat dinners

Greeter: welcome attendees; prepare the wine and challah for 2 services (Fri night and/or Sat morning)

Meet with the Rabbi and Cantor 5 times each (3 months before):

Rabbi (bring form for approval at first meeting)

Cantor (To review prayers, Torah, and Haftarah)

- Complete Mitzvah project (1 month before)