



BETH SHOLOM
CONGREGATION • ELKINS PARK PA



BAR/BAT MITZVAH GUIDE

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guide

Mazal Tov! We are excited to work with you and your family to make your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah training and celebration a meaningful experience. We look forward to our journey together in the transition of your children to young adults.

We hope that their experiences at Beth Sholom provide meaning and direction in their lives and will inspire them to lead lives of holiness. Now is the time to start preparing for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. As the date approaches, you will find answers to many of your questions in this booklet. Our clergy, professional staff and lay leadership will be glad to help you with any additional questions that you have. This is an exciting, and sometimes stressful, time and we hope that we can provide you and your family with the support and guidance that will make this experience meaningful and special.

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

OVERVIEW

The centerpiece of a child's participation is the Torah service. Typically, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah student leads the Torah service, chants Torah and Haftarah and prepares a D'var Torah (teaching). Each child will participate in the service to the extent that is appropriate given their learning style and level of comfort. The Rabbi and Cantor will meet with families to determine specific goals for your child.

In the year leading up to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we encourage you to attend Shabbat services—particularly Shabbat morning services—as often as possible with your child to help them feel acclimated to our Shabbat service experience at Beth Sholom.

PRIVATE INSTRUCTION WITH THE CANTOR

The Cantor will contact your family approximately 9 months before your child becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah to begin individual instruction. Weekly instruction will be up to 45 minutes per session and will include training in Torah and Haftarah chanting and prayer leading. Members of the family may also arrange to chant Torah; please speak with the Cantor. Your child can be paired with a teen buddy to help them review.

PREPARING A D'VAR TORAH WITH THE RABBI

Your child will meet with the Rabbi several months in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to prepare a D'var Torah. The entire family will meet with the Rabbi the Thursday prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Making Your Child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Meaningful

ATTENDING SHABBAT SERVICES

When families share in the activities of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year, the experience is enhanced immeasurably both for you and for your child. In addition to attending services on Friday nights and Shabbat mornings, we hope that you will join us for congregational Shabbat dinners and Shabbat activities. The more frequently your child participates in the religious life of our congregation, the more at home they will feel on the day of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

TALLIT, T'FILLIN AND KIPPAH

We encourage our families to purchase tallit, tefillin and a kippah for your child. These are available in the Sisterhood Gift Shop. If purchasing these items is a financial hardship, please speak to the Rabbi.

MITZVAH /HESED PROJECTS

As part of the process of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we ask all families to commit to a mitzvah or hesed project that will contribute to making the world better. The purpose of this project is to help our young adults understand that each of us has a responsibility to repair the world—to engage in tikkun olam. We ask that you work with your child to perform volunteer service to the Jewish community – or the larger community – in the years leading up to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Many places require a parent to be present, so we see this as a good bonding experience for parents and children. For ideas about mitzvah projects please speak to the Rabbi.

TZEDAKAH

Another way to enhance the meaning of this joyous occasion is to teach your Bar/Bat Mitzvah child about the mitzvah of tzedakah. Please consider asking your child to donate a small percentage of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah gift money to a tzedakah of their choice. Some families also choose to replace the bimah flowers with food baskets for our Mitzvah Food pantry.

CANDY AND OTHER GIFT SHOP ITEMS

It is our custom to shower the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with candy after their Haftarah blessings. Parents are invited to bring Sunkist Fruit Gems to the service. The Gift Shop offers kippot for your guests, wine for your celebration and a gift registry. Please contact them at 215-887-1342 ext. 114 for everything they offer.

PARENT BLESSINGS

Parents are invited to bless their child on the bimah, and are encouraged to write a special blessing that they give their child from the bimah on the day of the ceremony. The goal of this blessing is to set a brief aspiration for your child as they begin the process of entering adulthood. We ask that you avoid a blessing that would be more akin to a “toast” rather than a blessing. If you choose to write your own, please show a copy of your prayer to the Rabbi. The Rabbi can also help to find something already written.

PROGRAM HANDOUT

Please see the Appendix of this booklet for samples of program handouts. Programs include an introduction to the day and list the names of those being honored as well as their relationship to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. You are welcome to use any parts of the samples or write your own. Program handouts are due three weeks prior to your simchah.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Many families choose to participate in the following:

- Breakfast after Morning Minyan on the Thursday before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Extended Kiddush lunch for the congregation on Shabbat morning.

Contact the office if you wish to make arrangements.

Talking Tachlas...

GETTING YOUR DATE

At Beth Sholom a child celebrates becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah after their 13th birthday (according to the Hebrew calendar). B'nai Mitzvah are celebrated from September through June on (Shabbat) Saturday mornings. In certain circumstances, a family and clergy may choose to schedule a Bar/Bat Mitzvah on Saturday evening to accommodate a child's particular educational needs.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Students who currently attend Jewish day school or who are students in our Etgar Religious School program are eligible to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In most circumstances, students are required to have had five years of Jewish education.

Families must be members in good standing of Beth Sholom Congregation.

FEES

Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee will appear three years before your simcha and is payable in three annual installments after you receive your date. Beth Sholom Board of Directors policy requires that all synagogue dues and fees be paid in full six months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Questions concerning outstanding charges should be directed to the Executive Director.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee, which is subsidized by the congregation, includes training and material

דברים במידת הויקה
FOR FAMILY OR FRIENDS DURING THE SERVICE

Talking Tachlas...(continued)

costs, sponsorship of the wine, grape juice, challah and cake for the congregation following Shabbat services, and flowers for the bimah (pulpit).

The cost of sponsoring the Morning Minyan breakfast and/or Kiddish lunch for the congregation is separate from the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee. If you elect to have a separate Kiddush lunch for your family and guests, you will be charged a room rental fee.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Videotaping from a fixed position and still photography are permitted during lunch following Shabbat services using available light only. After Shabbat, all photography is permitted. Pictures may not be taken during services on Shabbat. Many families arrange to have a photo session either before or after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah so they can have a permanent record of their simchah. Please let the office know if you wish to have the clergy available for your pictures.

DIGITAL RECORDING OF THE SERVICE

There is recording equipment in our Main Sanctuary that is programmed in advance of Shabbat to record the entire Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. There is no cost for this recording.

MUSIC

During Shabbat, only modern Israeli and Jewish music may be played to enhance your celebration. If you wish to have a Saturday evening celebration

at Beth Sholom, you may begin your reception with a cocktail hour prior to the conclusion of Shabbat. During this time, all rules pertaining to Shabbat must be observed. Please contact the synagogue before scheduling your party to find out what time Shabbat concludes. After Shabbat, all types of music and photography are permitted.

YOUR INVITATION

Shabbat services begin at 9:30 am promptly. At 9:15 am you will be invited to visit with the Rabbi in the Sanctuary study. If you choose to have a Saturday evening service, Shabbat Minhah, Ma'ariv and Havdallah services begin according to sunset. Please check our calendar.

CONNECTIONS

Your child will be featured in Connections, our congregational newsletter, in the issue that includes the month of his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. You will be asked to complete a form and supply a digital photo of your child about 2 months in advance of the Connections publication deadline.

AFTER THE DAY

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a significant milestone. It symbolizes the attainment of a stage in your child's religious education. We are very proud that almost all of our students continue their religious studies at Jewish Teen Collaborative or Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy after their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We encourage all teens to chant Torah at Beth Sholom. Please discuss these options for your child's continued growth and learning with our Rabbi.

דברים במידת הויקה
FOR FAMILY OR FRIENDS DURING THE SERVICE

The Mitzvah Week

During the week of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, there are three times the child and their family participate in services. We believe these opportunities allow the congregation to more fully celebrate with you and will help your child to feel comfortable participating in services.

Morning Minyan: Your child will participate in Morning Minyan on the Thursday morning before his or her date. Services begin at 7:20 am, but plan to arrive at 7:10 am. In addition to leading parts of the service, your child will receive an aliyah and read from the Torah.

Friday Night: Your child will participate in Friday night services at 6:00 pm the night before his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Shabbat: By the simcha morning your child will be prepared, relaxed and ready to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Honors for Family or Friends During the Service:

ALIYOT

Four aliyot (honors in which family members recite the blessings before and after the Torah is read) are reserved for family and friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family. The final aliyah, called the Maftir, is for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. Aliyot may be apportioned in groups. Anyone who is called up for an aliyah must

be 13 years of age or older. It is expected that people called to the Torah wear a tallit. Non-Jewish relatives are invited to the bimah with Jewish relatives.

A copy of the brachot (blessings) that are recited by those honored with aliyot is on page 142 of Siddur Sim Shalom in Hebrew and transliteration, and a transliteration and translation of the Torah blessings will be provided at the bimah.

OPENING THE ARK

Two adults may be designated to open the doors.

UNDRESSING TORAH/DRESSING TORAH - HAGBAH AND G'LILAH

One or two people may undress the Torah before it is read and redress the Torah after it is read. Often the younger siblings or cousins of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are accorded this honor.

LEADING PRAYERS

Some ritual honors are limited only to those who are Jewish and above the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. However, Beth Shalom is committed to inclusion. Non-Jewish parents are warmly welcomed to participate with their Jewish spouse in blessing their Bar/Bat Mitzvah child on the bimah. In addition, non-Jewish parents and family members are warmly welcomed into our community and may lead an English reading at the service and help with select rituals. Please speak with the Rabbi to arrange for this participation.

Please provide a list of the honors and aliyot to the Rabbi and Cantor at least one month before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Facility Reservations and Kiddush Lunch

We encourage you to mark this special occasion with a se'udat mitzvah (festive meal or reception) at Beth Sholom. If you are interested in renting one of our rooms for your event, please contact the office as soon as possible after you receive your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to reserve room(s). A contract will be emailed to you and requires your signature, along with a deposit.

OUR FACILITIES

The Fischman Memorial Auditorium graciously accommodates 100 to 350 people with a band and dance floor. The N. Herman Bornstein Auditorium comfortably accommodates up to 125 people. Both rooms offer tremendous flexibility in planning your decorations. Please remember that catering, florist, entertainment, photographic and videographic arrangements and charges are separate.

KIDDUSH

After Shabbat services your child will participate in Kiddush, the blessings over the wine and challah. After your child recites the blessings, the congregation partakes of the wine, challah and lunch. Beth Sholom, based on the number of guests expected, orders Kiddush cake and wine. You may choose to sponsor Kiddush lunch for the entire congregation. Since you are hosting the congregation and creating a special feeling of Shabbat sharing, there will not be a room rental fee. You can arrange your menu using the approved caterer of your choice or our in-house catering option.

Alternatively, you may sponsor a Kiddush lunch for your guests only. In this case, there is a charge for the use of a separate room. In the spirit of Shabbat and community, the congregation strongly encourages families who can do so to sponsor a congregational Kiddush lunch.

If you choose to have your celebration elsewhere please consider kosher catering, or a dairy or vegetarian meal to reflect the Jewish values that we are celebrating.

CONTRACTORS

All contractors involved in your celebration (musicians, florists, photographers, videographers, entertainers, decorators, etc.) must carry sufficient Workers' Compensation, Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability Insurance. Please furnish the name and phone number of everyone you engage so we can obtain current Certification of Insurance naming Beth Sholom Congregation as "Additional Insured". If any contractor you have selected does not carry Liability Insurance, he/she will have to secure coverage or you will have to find another provider for that service. The Board of Directors has mandated that there are no exceptions to this policy.

Florists and decorators: Florists and decorators are expressly prohibited from using any fastening devices such as wire, staples or nails on walls, woodwork, curtains or tables in their decorations. Any requests for decorations to be hung from the ceilings must have prior approval of the Executive Director. All decorations used must be flame

Facility Reservations and Kiddush Lunch (continued)

retardant. Smog and fog producing devices may not be used as they interfere with our smoke detectors. The use of glitter and confetti is not permitted in the building.

SECURITY AT YOUR PARTY

To ensure the safety of the children attending your party, and to preserve and protect the appearance of our building the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, House and Religious Committees have instituted a policy that all who hold a celebration at Beth Sholom must employ one security guard for every 40 children attending. The security guard should be scheduled from one half hour before the party begins until the end of the party. Let us know so we can contact Cardinal Point, our security company.

Notes

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Contacts and Checklist

We hope this manual is helpful. There is, however, no substitute for personal contact with our clergy and staff. Feel free to raise any questions or concerns you may have directly, by phone or email. We will do everything we can to ensure your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah and your family's simhah are truly memorable. Mazal Tov and please stay in touch:

Rabbi Glanzberg-Krainin

rdgk@bethsholomcongregation.org

Cantor Agar

cantoragar@bethsholomcongregation.org

Julie Atchick, Director of Program and Etgar

jatchick@bethsholomcongregation.org

Jan Nossbaum, Family Engagement Specialist

jnossbaum@bethsholomcongregation.org

Robin Minkoff, Executive Director

rminkoff@bethsholomcongregation.org

See the following checklist for additional information:

☐ **Reserve facilities as soon as possible**

Julie Atchick

215-887-1342 ext.216

jatchick@bethsholomcongregation.org

☐ **Appointments with Cantor Agar 9 months prior**

215-887-1342 ext. 110

cantoragar@bethsholomcongregation.org

☐ **Meeting with Rabbi 6 months prior**

215-887-1342 ext. 102
rdgk@bethsholomcongregation.org;

☐ **Submit Connections bio and picture; you will receive the form via email**

Julie Atchick
215-887-1342 ext. 216
jatchick@bethsholomcongregation.org

☐ **Aliyot sheets submitted
Sponsoring Minyan breakfast
Photo session scheduled
Submit program handout
1 month prior**

Julie Atchick
215-887-1342 ext. 216
jatchick@bethsholomcongregation.org

☐ **Parent blessing 1 month prior**

Rabbi Glanzberg-Krainin
215-887-1342 ext. 101
rdgk@bethsholomcongregation.org

☐ **Gabbai 1 month prior**

Let the Rabbi know if you choose to honor someone as a Gabbai. This person needs training so discuss your choice with the Rabbi.

☐ **Congregational Kiddush lunch 1 month prior**

Julie Atchick
215-887-1342 ext. 216
jatchick@bethsholomcongregation.org

☐ **Kippot, T'fillin, Talit, Candy**

May be purchased from the Sisterhood Gift Shop. The Gift Shop has many beautiful items as well as a large selection of Kosher wines.
215-887-1342 ext. 114
