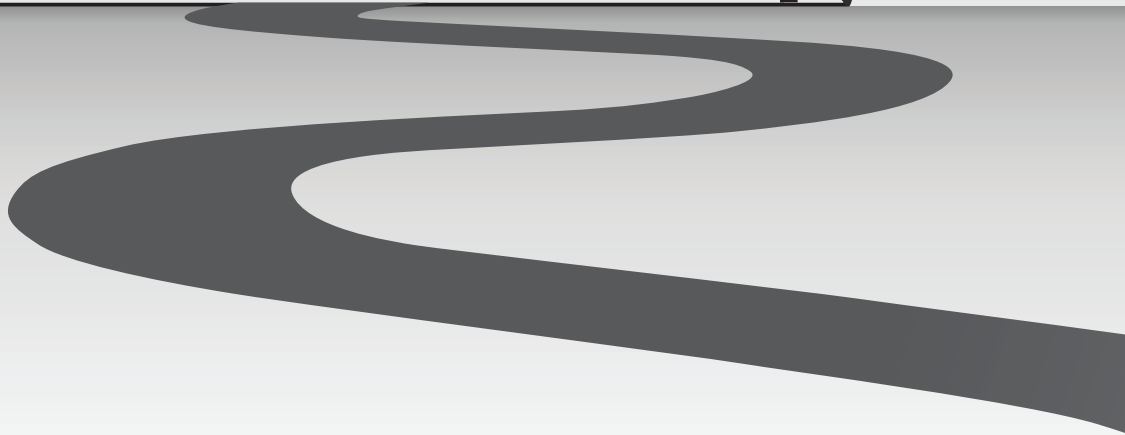
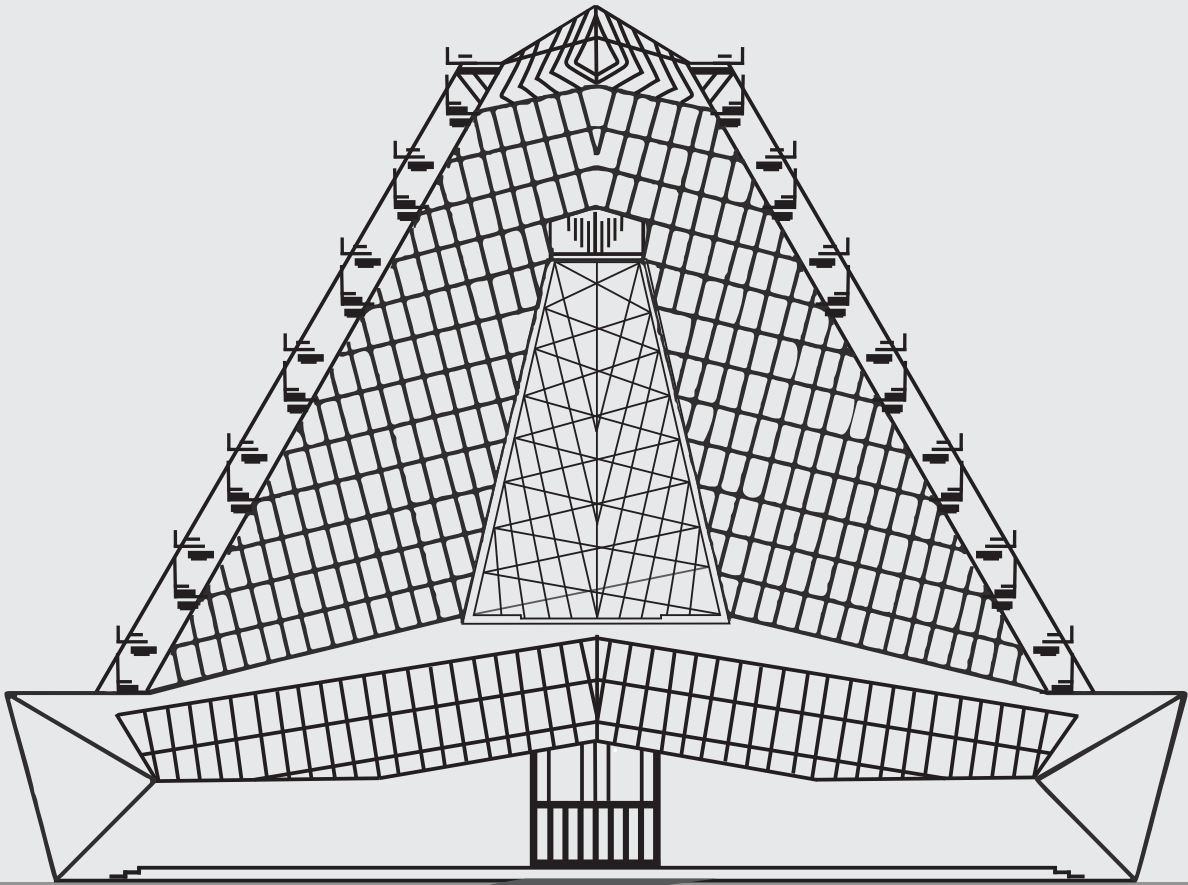




COUNTDOWN TO YOUR BAR/BAT MITZVAH



B'nai Mitzvah Guide

We are excited to collaborate with you and your family to make your child's B'nai 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 B'nai 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 B'NAI MITZVAH

The centerpiece of a child's participation is the Torah service. Typically, a B'nai 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 B'nai 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.

GETTING YOUR DATE

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

REQUIREMENTS FOR B'NAI MITZVAH

Students who currently attend Jewish day school or who are students in our Etgar Religious School program are eligible to have a B'nai 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 B'nai 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 B'nai Mitzvah date. Questions concerning outstanding charges should be directed to the Executive Director.

The B'nai Mitzvah fee, which is subsidized by the congregation, includes training and material costs, sponsorship of the wine, grape juice, challah, and cake for the congregation following Shabbat services, and flowers for the bimah (pulpit).

Timeline of the B'nai Mitzvah Process

2 YEARS OUT FROM SIMCHA DATE

Facility Reservations and Kiddush Lunch

We encourage you to mark this special occasion with a Sa'adat 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 B'nai 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.

1 YEAR OUT FROM SIMCHA DATE

Private Instruction with the Cantor

The Cantor will contact your family approximately 9 months before your child becomes B'nai 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 friend to help them review.

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 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.

6 MONTHS OUT FROM SIMCHA DATE

Preparing a D'var Torah with the Rabbi

Your child will meet with the Rabbi approximately six months in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to prepare a D'var Torah. In addition, the entire family will meet with the Rabbi the Thursday prior to the B'nai Mitzvah.

Preparing Honors for Family or Friends during the Service

ALIYOT

Five Aliyot (honors in which family members recite the blessings before and after the Torah is read) are reserved for family and friends of the B'nai Mitzvah family. The final Aliyah, called the Maftir, is for the B'nai 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 for man called to the Torah to wear a tallit and woman are not expected but are welcomed to wear. A non-Jewish parent is warmly invited to the bimah with their Jewish spouse but is not expected to say the blessing.

OPENING THE ARK

Two adults may be designated to open the doors.

UNDRESSING TORAH/DRESSING TORAH (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 B'nai Mitzvah are accorded this honor.

LEADING PRAYERS

Some ritual honors are limited only to those who are Jewish and above the age of B'nai Mitzvah. However, Beth Sholom is committed to inclusion. Non-Jewish parents are warmly welcomed to participate with their Jewish spouse in blessing their B'nai 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 B'nai Mitzvah.

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 arrange for these sponsorships.

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.

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 in 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.

2 MONTHS OUT FROM SIMCHA DATE

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.

Photographers

Videotaping from a fixed position and still photography is 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 B'nai Mitzvah so they can have a permanent record of their simcha. 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 programmed before Shabbat to record the entire B'nai 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.

Candy and other Gift Shop Items

It is our custom to shower the B'nai 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.

WEEK OF SIMCHA DATE

The Mitzvah Week

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

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

Friday Night – Your child is expected to participate in Friday night services at 6:00 pm the night before his or her B'nai Mitzvah.

Shabbat Morning – By the simcha morning your child will be prepared, relaxed and ready to become a B'nai Mitzvah.

B'nai Mitzvah Prayer Goals

Torah and Haftarah

Required:

- Torah blessings (1 before and 1 after Maftir reading)
- Maftir (last) Torah reading on Saturday
- Haftarah blessings (1 before and 4 after reading)
- Haftarah

Additional Readings

- Up to 7 Torah readings on Saturday
- Up to 3 Torah readings Mincha and Weekday (same for both days)

Basic Prayer Skills

- Tallit blessing*
- Sh'ma/V'ahavtah/Vayomer*
- Torah service Torah blessing*
- Ashrei* Bar'chu (Friday night and Saturday tunes)
- Aleinu*
- Friday night Kiddush
- Saturday -V'shamru/Kiddush/N'tilat Yadayim (hand washing)/Motzi (bread)

Additional Prayers

- Students who master the above will be given additional prayers to learn as appropriate

Mitzvah Project Form

Name: _____

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____

Name of Mitzvah you fulfilled: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Address: _____

Website: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

What did you do for your project to fulfill this mitzvah? (Be as detailed as possible.)

How did the experience affect you? What did you learn from it?

Would you recommend this project to future B'nai mitzvah students? Why or why not?

Honors for the Family & Friends during the B'nai Mitzvah Service

Please submit this completed form to the office 3 months before the B'nai Mitzvah service.

Name of B'nai Mitzvah (English) _____

Name of B'nai Mitzvah (Hebrew) _____

Date of B'nai Mitzvah Ceremony _____

Aliyot

Five Aliyot (honors in which family members recite the blessings before and after the Torah is read) are reserved for family and friends of B'nai Mitzvah Family. The final Alyah, called the Maftir, is for the B'nai Mitzvah Child, Aliyot may be apportioned to individuals or in groups. Anyone who is called up for an Aliyah must be 13 years of age or older. It is expected for a man called to the Torah wear a tallit and while women are not expected, they are welcome to wear a tallit. A non-Jewish parent is warmly invited to the bimah with their Jewish spouse, but not expected to say the blessing. Please list the family/friends receiving Aliyot. List their English and Hebrew name followed by their parent's Hebrew names.

ENGLISH NAME AND HEBREW TRANSLITERATION (NAME AND PARENT'S NAME)

Aliyot 1 _____

Aliyot 2 _____

Aliyot 3 _____

Aliyot 4 _____

Aliyot 5 _____

Opening the Ark

Two adults may be designated to open the doors of the ark.

Person 1 _____ Person 2 _____

Undressing/Dressing the Torah/G'lilah

One or two people may dress the Torah before it is read. Often the younger siblings or cousins of the B'nai Mitzvah are accorded this honor.

Person 1 _____ Person 2 _____

Leading Prayers

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

Prayer for Peace _____

Prayer for Our Country _____

Prayer for Israel _____

Musaf Service Prayers

Ark Opening for Aleinu (up to two people, English name only)

Person 1 _____ Person 2 _____

Adon Olam

This is the concluding prayer of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service. Individuals or groups are welcomed for this honor to lead this prayer, i.e. camp and school friends or cousins.

Catering at Beth Sholom Congregation

Congregants are encouraged to sponsor Kiddish luncheons to celebrate, or honor loved ones. At Beth Sholom we currently offer three options for catering a kiddush luncheon. A description of each can be found below.

Please note catering plans are due no later than 6 months before the date of a planned event. Each subsequent month, an extra 10% fee will be added to the Kitchen Usage fee.

Option A: In-house Catering (a.k.a. our Kitchen Ladies)

This option is for events with a maximum of 80 people. This includes our Shabbat regulars and up to 30 of your guests. This option is intended for smaller, intimate events that can be handled in-house.

- \$500 for Shabbat Regulars which include our 50 weekly attendees
- \$25 per person for each of your invited guests. (up to 30 people)
- Includes all paperware (plates, cups, napkins and plasticware) and drinks (water, coffee, tea and lemonade)
- 10% Kitchen Usage Fee on total cost - Check to Beth Sholom Congregation

(Example: 25 invited guests would cost \$500 + \$625 + \$112.50 = \$1,237.50)

Option B: In-house Catering with our professional caterer Maya Dvir

Congregants can select this option for any sized affair or event. Please note that unless you are having a private kiddush with a room rental, you must include our 50 Shabbat Regulars in your total number of attendees.

- Contact Maya & Roe Dvir directly at thedvirim@yahoo.com to come up with a menu
- Prices are provided directly by Maya Catering
- Includes paperware (plates, cups, napkins and plasticware) and drinks (water, coffee, tea and lemonade)
- 10% Kitchen Usage Fee on total cost - Check to Beth Sholom Congregation

Option C: Outside Caterer

This option is available for any event, any size. Please note that unless you are having a private kiddush with a room rental, you must include our 50 Shabbat Regulars in your total number of attendees.

- Choose a caterer from our approved list; our kitchen is strictly Kosher
- Make your arrangements and provide the name and contact information of caterer to Beth Sholom
- 10% Kitchen Usage Fee on total cost - Check to Beth Sholom Congregation

Volunteer Opportunities exist in many categories. Below are just a small sample of ideas. Start by determining how you would like to make a difference, then create a project that has personal meaning for you and your family.

Mazon- Food Insecurity

Beth Sholom Merow Family Mitzvah

Food Pantry

Help to stock shelves, organize food donations for distribution or create a fundraiser doing something you love to raise monetary donations.

Jewish Relief Agency

Warehouse in Northeast Philadelphia

One Sunday a month pack and/or deliver food boxes to those with food insecurities in different sections of Philadelphia.

Contact info: volunteering@jewishrelief.org

Philabundance

Jewish Family Services Food Pantry

Sunday Mission Breakfast

Volunteer at various homeless shelters.

Contact info: Philabundance <https://www.philabundance.org/volunteer> 215-339-0900; Jewish Family Services Food Pantry 609-822-1108; Sunday Mission Breakfast 877-306-HOME

Penn Hillel's Soup Kitchen

Volunteer to set up, feed and interact with guests. Prepare food to go.

Contact info: <https://pennhillel.org/program/soup-kitchen-at-hillel/>

University City Hospitality Coalition

Volunteers needed to help serve meals at multiple sites in University City.

Contact info: volunteers@uchphiladelphia.org

Organization: Saint John's Hospice

(1221 Race St)

Make food to be distributed to the homeless population. Can be as simple as PB and J Sandwiches.

Contact info: <https://saintjohnshospice.org/volunteer/volunteer-info/>

Hachnasat Orchim - Welcoming the Stranger

Philly Friendship Circle

Participate in their MVP program designed for young teens teaching them about inclusion. Spend Sunday afternoons gathering where teens are paired with children/teens with special needs to play together and develop friendships.

Contact info: <https://www.phillyfriendship.com/>

The Mitzvah Circle

Host a clothing collection drive, sort donations in the warehouse, create packages for those in need.

Contact info: <https://mitzvahcircle.org/volunteer/individuals-families-groups/>

JFCS-Jewish Family & Children's Services

Volunteer opportunities include grocery delivery, clothing drives, virtual volunteering and building relationships with seniors.

Contact info: <https://jfcsp Philly.org/children-teens/>

Cradles to Crayons

Cradles to Crayons is working to mitigate clothing insecurity in the Greater Philadelphia Area. Participate in hands on processing of goods that are donated, making them ready to distribute directly to children in need.

Contact info: <https://www.cradlestocrayons.org/philadelphia/take-action/volunteer/in-the-giving-factory/>

HIAS PA

Make welcome basket, make basic needs baskets, create a fundraiser doing something you love to raise donation money.

Contact info: <https://hiaspa.org/get-involved/volunteer/>

Reach Out and Read (ROR)

Collect books to donate to hospitals and other organizations.

Contact info: <https://reachoutandread.org/get-involved/>

Bikur Cholim – Caring for the Sick

The Jared Box

Give the gift of play by putting together boxes that will be donated to children in the hospital.

Contact info: thejaredbox@gmail.com

Sara Smiles Foundation

The charity creates Inspiration Kits to be sent to kids in the hospital. Set up an inspiration station to create notes for the kits or have a fundraiser for monetary donations.

Contact info: <https://saras-smiles.org/>

Kibud Zekanim – Honoring Our Elders

The NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community)

Participate in projects run through this JCFS agency to deliver food, complete projects for seniors and build relationships with clients.

Contact info: <https://jfcshilly.org/the-norc-naturally-occurring-retirement-community/>

Ahavat Ha'Aretz – Stewardship of the Planet Earth

Jewish National Fund

Create a fundraiser doing something you love to raise money to plant trees in Israel.

Contact info: <https://www.jnf.org/>

Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim – Caring for Animals

Thorncroft Equestrian Center

A center that provides riding lessons for people with special needs. Must be 13 years old to volunteer in person.

Contact info: volunteer@thorncroft.org; 610-644-1963

Israel Guide Dog

Create a fundraiser doing something you love to raise money for the Guide Dogs.

Contact info: <https://israelguidedog.org/>

What, When, and How of the B'nai Mitzvah Journey

Three Years to B'nai Mitzvah

- Parents receive date letter from Jan
- Parents confirm date with Jan
- Students receive their date at a Friday Service and date reveal party dinner
- Parents sign contract and send to Jan
- Arrange payment plan of B'nai Mitzvah fee with Finance Director

Two years to B'nai Mitzvah

- Student and family start to consider the possibilities for the mitzvah project, ideas available on the BSC website
- Arrange for Beth Sholom room rentals for the celebration with Susan

One year to B'nai Mitzvah

- Contact Cantor to schedule lessons
- Receive your torah portion from Cantor
- Send vendor information and accompanying insurance forms to Susan
- Send completed mitzvah project form to Susan

Six months to B'nai Mitzvah

- Contact Rabbi G-K to begin D'var Torah preparation
- Confirm kiddish luncheon catering plans with Susan
- Arrange sponsorship of Thursday morning minyan breakfast (optional)
- Purchase tallit and tefillin from gift shop (optional)
- Purchase Kippot

Three months to B'nai Mitzvah

- Send photo of your child to Susan
- Send Shabbat Program information to Susan
- Send completed honors and aliyot with Hebrew names form to Susan

Two months to B'nai Mitzvah

- Practice on the bimah with Cantor and Rabbi during your lessons
- Schedule time for a family meeting with the Rabbi with Susan
- Send detailed Kiddush lunch arrangements to the caterer
- Send completed Parent Blessing to Rabbi
- Schedule photography session (clergy and open ark optional) with Susan
- Purchase Sunkist candy for service (optional)

Week of the B'nai Mitzvah Celebration Expectations

- Thursday Morning: 7:30 am Morning Minyan
- Friday Evening: 6:00pm B'nai Mitzvah child will attend and participate in Friday evening services with Cantor
- Saturday Morning: Family arrives for services at 9:15 am