

CELEBRATING YOUR CHILD'S BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Guidelines

Created - April 2005
Updated—Tamuz 5776/August 2016

Mazel Tov!

You are embarking on a remarkable journey. This booklet is intended to familiarize you with details concerning your child's upcoming simcha. It sets out some of the guidelines and traditions for becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel and is intended to answer many of your questions.

This is an important occasion in your son or daughter's life and for your family, and our synagogue staff wants to ensure that the process of learning, preparing, and celebrating is positive and meaningful for all involved.



Congregation Beth Israel
10460 N. 56th Street
Scottsdale, AZ 85253
Stacy Rosenthal,
Religious School Director
srosenthal@cbiaz.org
480-951-0323

Shalom

At Congregation Beth Israel, one of the greatest joys as your clergy and educators is being part of your simchas (celebration). Anyone who has ever attended a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel can sense the feelings of hamishness (the personal relationships we have with each child) and the warmth we share with the congregation. Our constant goal is for each student to feel a sense of accomplishment and a connection to God and this community. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah program provides valuable opportunities to strengthen your child's relationship as well as your own relationship with the synagogue and the teachings of Judaism. The Clergy, Religious School and staff are committed to working with you and your child as they learn what it means to assume responsibility as an adult member of the community and to fulfill the religious and moral commandments of our faith. We look forward to sharing this journey with your family.

Eligibility & Educational Requirements

Haberkorn Religious School Enrollment | To be eligible for Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel, the student must be enrolled in our Religious/Hebrew School program (unless the student is matriculating from another congregation's program) from 4th - 7th grade prior to becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. A "private" tutor for outside instruction may be hired and is the family's prerogative; however, individualized instruction does not exempt any student from being enrolled in our program.

Religious School Attendance | While enrolled in our Religious School program, students with excessive absences from both Sunday morning Religious School and Thursday afternoon Hebrew may not qualify for becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at the discretion of the clergy. Students currently enrolled at Pardes Jewish Day School are exempt from this requirement until they begin 6th grade.

Shabbat Service Attendance | In the months preceding the service, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah and at least one parent must attend 4 Shabbat evening (Friday), 4 Shabbat morning (Saturday) and 2 *Chevrah* Torah - Shabbat morning Torah Study at 8:45 am. These experiences will give families an opportunity to become familiar with the traditions at Congregation Beth Israel as well as shape the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student's relationship to our congregation. *See the Attendance Requirement by Grade schedule below.*

Member in Good Standing | Families should be members in good standing at Congregation Beth Israel prior to the service. This means that all membership contributions and fees must be paid in full at least sixty days prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah date. If you have any concerns about the status of your membership, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Cathy Rabovitz (480) 951-0323.

Pardes Jewish Day School Students | In their 7th grade year (or in some cases earlier depending on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date) Day School students are required to join our Thursday afternoon B'nei Mitzvah class. Their enrollment and participation in the class should be six months from their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Classes meet during the school year from 4:30 – 6:30 pm and during the summer from 4:00 – 5:00 pm (summer classes are not required but highly recommended).

Continued Education | Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel means assuming full Jewish spiritual responsibility and includes a commitment to continue in the Religious School program through the high school *Ma'ayan* program (8th – 12th grades). Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not the end of the journey; but rather an awesome moment along the way!

Generally, a Congregation Beth Israel member will celebrate the Bar or Bat Mitzvah at the age of thirteen. However, in some situations, life experiences and educational backgrounds indicate a need for more preparation time leading up to the actual ceremony. Our goal is to have all of our B'nei Mitzvah students ready educationally, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and developmentally. This decision will be made in consultation with the student, parents, and rabbis. To this end, all B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies are held on Saturday mornings, with additional participation during the Friday evening service.

Commitment to Attend Shabbat Services and Torah Study

Beginning in the fourth grade, each student will receive “credit” for Shabbat service attendance. We keep a binder with stickers and the names of each student listed. At the end of each Friday evening and Saturday morning Service the child will ask the presiding clergy (or Religious School Director) to place a sticker next to their name to show that they attended. If our records show that a student is not keeping current during the year with the service requirement we will notify you. Furthermore, service attendance outside of Congregation Beth Israel will not count toward fulfillment of this service requirement. However, attendance at a residential Jewish summer camp such as Camp Daisy and Harry Stein will fulfill part of this requirement.

Please note that the period for fulfilling requirements for grades 4-7 runs concurrent with each year’s Religious School calendar (September through May). Stickers received in the summer months may be applied to either the past year’s deficit or as “credit” toward the next year.

REQUIREMENTS | by Grade Year

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 4 Fourth Grade | 4 th Grade students and at least one parent must attend a minimum of six Shabbat evening and/or morning services during the year. |
| 5 Fifth Grade | 5 th Grade students and at least one parent must attend a minimum of seven Shabbat evening and/or morning services during the year. |
| 6 Sixth Grade | 6 th Grade students and at least one parent must attend a minimum of eight Shabbat evening and/or morning services during the year. Requirements also apply to 6 th grade PARDES students. |
| 7 Seventh Grade | 7 th Grade students (or before if applicable) and families, are asked to utilize the many Shabbat experiences at Beth Israel. To this end we will require the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least two sessions of Torah Study (Saturday mornings, 8:45-9:45am, year-round)• At least four Friday night services.• At least four Saturday morning services. |

These requirements also apply to 6th and 7th grade students who are currently enrolled at Pardes.

Students attending Jewish residential summer camps will receive stickers as follows: 2 Friday night, 2 Saturday morning, and 1 Torah study session. Parents are responsible for informing the Religious School of attendance at summer camp to receive credits.

Seventh Grade Religious School Information

Seventh graders are expected to attend the entire year of the program, regardless of when their Bar or Bat Mitzvah occurs. Our seventh grade program is comprised of two components: The *Gesher* Class, which is an ongoing program that runs throughout the entire school year, takes place on Thursdays from 4:30 – 6:30 pm. The topics are modular, allowing for students to switch easily between the *Gesher* Class and the B’nei Mitzvah Preparation class.

Seven months prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah (which may occur during sixth grade), our 7th graders will receive a letter informing them of their B’nei Mitzvah Preparation class start date. This class is taught by clergy and Hebrew faculty and provides small group and individualized instruction to prepare students for their Bar/ Bat Mitzvah.

Pardes Day School students will also receive a letter seven months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date informing them to begin attending B’nei Mitzvah Prep classes on Thursdays from 4:30-6:30pm.

Congregational Staff and Resources

At Congregation Beth Israel, we enlist the talents and support of the entire congregational family to make a Bar/Bat Mitzvah happen. The student and parent(s) are joined by the rabbis, the Religious School Director, music leaders, teachers, tutors, administrative staff, and our custodial staff to help create this holy experience. Our shared goal is to celebrate a sacred moment in the life of a young adult and his/her family.

The Clergy Team | Rabbi Stephen Kahn & Rabbi Rony Keller

The Clergy team provides your primary spiritual guidance through the B'nei Mitzvah experience. One of the rabbis will meet with the student to guide them through the D'var Torah writing process, helping the student study the text, and answering challenging questions.

The Rabbis also oversee the 6th grade Family Education program; a series of classes for parents and students to partake in during Sunday morning Religious School. These classes highlight the meaning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to you and your child; the basics of a Shabbat morning service; how to understand and derive meaning from a *Torah* portion; and discussions of Jewish beliefs to prepare for this major family milestone.

Kathy Brewer | Executive Assistant & Facilities Coordinator

Kathy will assist with the logistical details of the event, including building set-up, coordinating the catering, floral arrangements, "Jewish News" announcement, the service program, and more. kbrewer@cbiaz.org.

Coleen Fisher | Clergy Assistant

Coleen will oversee your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date request, and schedule all meetings and rehearsals with the rabbis. cfisher@cbiaz.org

Stacy Rosenthal | Director of the Religious School

Stacy will help transition your Bar/Bat Mitzvah from their traditional Hebrew education into the B'nei Mitzvah Preparation class. A special "Binder Ceremony" will be scheduled with Stacy to officially begin the process of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Stacy and the teaching staff at the religious school will assist in the preparation of learning prayers and Torah-reading trope (tune). The 7th grade teaching staff will address the concepts of prayer and community, social justice, and more. Stacy is also available to assist with participation in the Honors Program and a valuable resource for Mitzvah Project ideas. srosenthal@cbiaz.org

Congregational Mentor

In the final months, each Bar/Bat Mitzvah is assigned a mentor; a member of the congregational community (congregational liaison) to provide leadership and guidance. The Mentor will meet separately with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to practice, prepare and assist with the presentation and logistical flow of the service.

Tutors | Religious School Approved

Families are welcome to hire an approved tutor to work one-on-one with students to prepare them for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. This does not take the place of attending the B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Class on Thursdays. Please contact Stacy Rosenthal regarding our current list of approved tutors.

Preparing for B'nei Mitzvah | One to Two Years From Date

Receiving a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date | During the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's fifth grade year, parents receive notice that Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date Requests are being taken. This is generally two years prior to your student's 13th birthday. Requests are sent by the Clergy Assistant, Coleen Fisher. Deposits and special date/time requests will need to be secured by Coleen Fisher and subject to Clergy approval. Any Shabbat after the 13th birthday is appropriate. The ceremony takes place during Shabbat morning services (Saturday morning) at 10:00 A.M. In the event that there are two requests for the same date, two services may be scheduled for that morning, the first at 9:00 A.M. and the second at 11:00 A.M. We do not schedule B'nei Mitzvah during July or August.

Facility Rental at Congregation Beth Israel | Once you have received your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, you will contact Kathy Brewer regarding the use of our ballroom (and/or other event spaces) should you choose to have your reception at the synagogue. Please note that the Ballroom is reserved on the basis of "first to book."

6th Grade Family Education | During the sixth grade Religious School year, family education classes are scheduled for parents and students as part of Sunday morning Religious School. The classes are taught by our clergy and each session is approximately one hour in length. Together, the family will examine what it means to become a Jewish adult; helping students understand their place in the community, while forming the basis of a collaborative B'nei Mitzvah year. Expectations for the year ahead will be discussed in further detail.

Schedule Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah | Within One Year From the Date

One Year Prior

Pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah Year Mitzvah Project | Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah means taking on the adult responsibility of living according to the *mitzvot*. Part of the learning process at Beth Israel includes a commitment to a family *mitzvah* project. A *mitzvah* project should include *mitzvot* of *Gimilut Chasadim* (Acts of Loving-Kindness) such as an on-going volunteer effort over several months which supports someone in need, as well as observance of *mitzvot* that include rituals, study and observance. By making the project a family commitment our children learn that living by the *mitzvot* is an important family value.

A few examples of projects completed by our families are: visiting patients in a nursing home regularly, raising money for a particular charity, collecting food or goods for a charity, and tutoring a special needs student. Members of our Mitzvah Project Committee are available to help your family with the various ongoing projects Beth Israel is involved with throughout the year. You can also look on our website at www.cbiaz.org and click on the "Mitzvah Project" link to find some upcoming projects which may be of interest for you and your child/ren.

Mitzvah Project & Honors Program | A Mitzvah Project outline and/or the Honors Program commitment form is due to Stacy Rosenthal in the Religious School. The Mitzvah Project proposal form is in the manual.

Six Months Prior

B'nei Mitzvah Orientation | At the beginning (August) and middle (January) of every school-year, parents of B'nei Mitzvah students are invited to the Orientation depending on their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. At this meeting, the Clergy and Religious School Director share key components of the program, including: *Hineini*-7th Grade Community Service Program; Thursday *B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Classes*; *Individual Tutoring Sessions* with the Cantor; *B'nei Mitzvah Mentor Program*, *Summer B'nei Mitzvah Class* and the *B'nei Mitzvah Honors Program*. Parents will gain a better understanding of the road ahead and the preparations needed for your successful and meaningful simcha.

"Moving Up" | At least six months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will "move up" in to the B'nei Mitzvah Preparation class. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will receive their Prayer Binder. This group class meets on Thursday afternoons during Religious School hours (4:30-6:30pm). Five months before, individual training sessions with the Clergy or Beth Israel tutor begin. At this point, we will work with the family to determine a path for success moving forward with regard to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's individual needs or interests.

Schedule Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah | Within One Year From the Date ~ *continued*

Five Months Prior

One-on-One Sessions | The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be scheduled for 20 one-half hour sessions with the Hebrew tutor. These sessions will be scheduled every other week leading up to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date by Coleen Fisher.

Four-Six Weeks Prior

Torah Study with Rabbi | One to two appointments will be scheduled with the presiding rabbi so that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will have the chance to study his/her *Torah* portion, examine major themes and concepts, as well as discuss ideas for the student's *D'var Torah*. Parents must attend these study sessions.

Mentor Assignment | A Mentor from within the CBI congregational family will be assigned to provide the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with support and guidance with the presentation of their Torah portion. The Mentor will schedule these meetings with the parents.

Bulletin Information | Kathy Brewer will contact you to obtain a photograph and brief statement from your child for publication in the monthly bulletin and provide instructions for submitting to the Jewish News.

Two Weeks Prior

Service Participation Form | At this time you will complete the information form with details of service participants for the Shabbat Service. Please be prepared with the Hebrew names of participants in the service.

One Week Prior

Rehearsal | A final rehearsal with the clergy or tutor are held on the bimah.

The Week Of

Thursday Night Press Conference | During Thursday night's t'filah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will preside over a "Press Conference" regarding their Torah portion with their 4-6th grade peers. Parents and out of town guests are welcome to attend.

Coffee With the Rabbi | Friday morning leading into Shabbat, the officiating Rabbi meets with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah over coffee to prepare for the momentous weekend ahead.

One Year Following

B'nei Mitzvah Anniversary Presentation | On the one year anniversary of the service, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be invited to present the congregational gift to the current Bar/Bat Mitzvah who shares their Torah parsha during their service.

The Ceremony

Erev Shabbat-Friday Evening | Typically, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child participates in the Erev Shabbat Service on the Friday evening prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah service by chanting the *V'ahavtah*. Parents have the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles. Times for services vary from time-to-time so please confirm the time of Friday evening services by calling the office or checking on our website.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah service is a community celebration, not a private event. There may also be a baby naming ceremony, pre-nuptial blessing or special honor given to members of our Congregation in addition to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah during Friday evenings and/or Shabbat morning Services.

Shabbat Morning Service | During the Shabbat morning Service your Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will participate by leading the congregation in the reading of prayers, chanting the *Torah* and *Haftarah* blessings, chanting passages from the *Torah* portion of the week, chanting the *Haftarah* in Hebrew, and delivering a personal message to the congregation.

The clergy and staff will work with families that have special circumstances to ensure that the ceremony is performed properly and memorably.

During the service parents or designated relatives are invited to sit with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and/or participate in the service. Following are some of the honors in which family and friends may participate:

Aliyot | The word "*aliyah*" literally means "going up" referring to a person who goes up to the *Torah*.

Traditionally, at Beth Israel the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family has four *aliyot* as follows:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah has his or her own *aliyah*,

Parents usually have an *aliyah* and,

Close relatives or family friends may be offered an *aliyot*.

Congregants attending Shabbat or additional family members may also be reserved an *aliyot*.

Participants should have sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to read the blessings with some fluency. There will be an English transliteration available on the pulpit for those that need it.

It is helpful to send copies of the prayers or special readings to those guests being honored so that they can review them. The clergy are available by appointment to review the blessings with anyone who needs help. Those called to the *Torah* for an *aliyah* must be above the age of thirteen and Jewish. A non-Jewish biological parent may accompany an honoree to the *bimah* but is not permitted to recite the blessing.

Please make sure that those given the honor of reciting the blessing, practice well in advance of the Service.

Parent Speeches | There are three options available to parents who wish to address their child from the *bimah* on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

CBI Parent Prayer | Parents may utilize one of the eight prayer options available on our website.

Open Ark Blessing | A sacred moment in front of the open ark for a private and personal family prayer.

Parent Speech | A traditional speech by the parents from the *bimah*, no more than 350 words, must be submitted to the officiating Rabbi no later than the Wednesday prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Any speech submitted after the deadline cannot be delivered from the *bimah*. Please note that the topic of the speech should be connected to the week's *Torah* portion and should focus on Jewish themes throughout. Please feel free to contact the clergy for further questions, clarifications, or for a sample speech.

Tallit Presentation | Many families choose to present the Bar or Bat Mitzvah with a *tallit* at the beginning of the service or in the rabbi's study before the service. On some occasions it is a *tallit* that was passed down from previous generations and on other occasions a new one is purchased. Please note, if presenting the *tallit* at the beginning of the service, any short speech given at that time should be no more than one hundred words and must be submitted to the officiating Rabbi for approval no later than the Wednesday prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Opening & Closing the Holy Ark Doors | This honor involves opening and closing the Ark. There is no age or religious restrictions for Ark Assistants. Often, younger siblings or relatives are assigned this task.

G'lila (Binding/Dressing) Torah Assistants | The "Dressing of the *Torah*," occurs at the end of the *Torah* service. Typically this honor is performed by a younger sibling, cousin, or friend.

Torah Passing Ceremony (*L'dor va' dor*—from generation to generation) | An important part of the *Torah* service at Beth Israel is the *Torah* passing ceremony, when the *Torah* is literally passed from one generation to the next generation within the family and finally to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Participants are biological Jewish great grandparents, grandparents and parents. This is followed by a *Torah* procession around the sanctuary.

Jewish and Non-Jewish Family and Friends | At Beth Israel we welcome the participation of non-Jewish family members and friends. Although we do not pass the *Torah* through their arms, they stand with their family as we honor their commitment to raise a Jewish child. For certain ritual parts of the ceremony, such as the *Torah* passing, lighting of *Shabbat* candles and being called to the *Torah* for an *aliyah* the participants must be Jewish. We do have a special blessing to be recited before the *Torah* reading for non-Jewish parents only.

Printed Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program | A printed Bar/Bat Mitzvah program will be provided by Congregation Beth Israel on the morning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. The program will include: explanations of various rituals, the day's *Torah* reading, and personalized family information. Please submit all information for the program to Kathy Brewer no later than the Wednesday prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Samples are available upon request.

Operational Services Provided by Our Synagogue

Flowers | Flowers for the *kiddush* and/or reception area, if desired, can be provided by a florist at additional cost. If you would like to sponsor bima flowers for *Shabbat* morning services, please inform Kathy Brewer in the office.

Personnel | One member of the administrative staff will be present on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to help assure the smooth functioning of all details for the event. Custodians are on hand to assist you with any last minute needs. Family greeters are always welcome to assist in handing out prayer books and helping people to their seats when necessary.

Security | If you would like security for your luncheon or dinner, please contact Kathy Brewer to make arrangements at an additional cost.

Event and Facility Manager | Kathy Brewer is available to help you before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If you are interested in hosting your reception in the Ballroom, it is best to inquire immediately. Kathy can provide a list of caterers, photographers, florists, bands, and DJs. She is a great resource, regardless of your event location.

Oneg/Kiddush | It is traditional at Beth Israel for the family to sponsor an *Oneg/Kiddush* on the Friday evening prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and/or on the Saturday morning following the ceremony, in honor of this special celebration. If you choose to sponsor an *Oneg/Kiddush* please notify Kathy. She can assist you with menu options.

Beth Israel Customs

Dress | The Bar or Bat Mitzvah is encouraged to participate with *kippah* and *tallit*. These may be borrowed from the Synagogue or purchased from a Judaica source. Also, please note that appropriate Shabbat attire is requested.

Candy | Throwing candy while singing “*siman tov u’ mazel tov*” endangers our B’nai Mitzvah students and clergy and is disrespectful to the sanctity of the Service. Therefore, we do not allow candy to be thrown during any part of the Service.

Photos | Photographers are welcome to take pictures from a stationary place in the rear of the Sanctuary or Chapel. However, flash pictures may not be taken during the service as such activity disturbs the religious spirit of *Shabbat* and detracts from the worship experience. Please arrange for photos to be taken before the service, and inform the staff when you plan to arrive. Posed photos, with flash, may be taken at this time.

Videography | Video taping of the ceremony is permitted from the rear of the Sanctuary or Chapel. It is vital that the individuals doing the taping be thoroughly briefed by Kathy Brewer so that there will be no problem with the lighting, or electrical outlets. If your videographer is not familiar with our Synagogue, they are required to call Kathy to arrange for a time to familiarize themselves with the Synagogue and the lighting.

Tree of Honor Plaque | It is traditional at CBI to remember this occasion by purchasing a plaque in honor of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah to be installed on the Tree of Life Wall in our Rotunda. Plaques are available for a \$300 donation. Contact Kathy Brewer.

Resources

Congregational Staff (480) 951-0323

Rabbi Stephen Kahn, Rabbi Rony Keller ext.141

Stacy Rosenthal, Religious School Director ext.201

Kathy Brewer, Facilities & Events ext.111

Coleen Fisher, Bar/Bat Mitzvah Scheduling ext.141



B'nei Mitzvah Project | Achievement Plan

Congregation Beth Israel

Name _____ (English) _____ (Hebrew)

Today's Date _____ Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date: _____

I plan to participate in the B'nei Mitzvah Honors Program: Yes No

Mitzvah Project (Please describe in your own words)

Why did you choose this project?

How do you plan to fulfill the ten hours of service?

Please fill in this information and return to:

Congregation Beth Israel | Haberkorn Religious School
Stacy Rosenthal | 10460 N. 56th Street | Scottsdale, Arizona 85253