

Dear Parents,

Mazal Tov! This Hebrew phrase, used to convey congratulations, literally means “good luck”. It is from an ancient idea that the stars, in proper alignment, influence our fortunes for good and for bad. Mazal is the star of fortune or fate or destiny -- and when we wish mazal tov we are wishing good fortune upon each other. And so we begin this journey with a mazal tov, as we will end it. Just as the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a moment for a congratulatory "mazal tov," so too is this moment, as you begin the journey, a "mazal tov" occasion. We want your journey toward preparing for this momentous day in the life of your family to be filled with good feelings, success, meaningful and enjoyable learning, and even, amidst the hard work, some fun!

But good fortune in such an endeavor does not come magically from heaven. We will create it together. It is our hope and our goal for you that we are able to provide advice, direction, assistance and guidance in all ways that will support you and make the process satisfying and happy and as relaxed as possible. Working together we can put the stars into alignment, making this journey transformative, joyous and holy. I invite you to turn to me, to our Educational Director, and to our B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, as well as the B'nai Mitzvah Committee for guidance and help. We have tried to thoughtfully and thoroughly consider all aspects of the process of planning and preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah in this handbook document. If anything is unclear, incomplete for your needs or problematic in your experience, please don't hesitate to let us know. We are committed to a partnership with you in making this day happen.

Good luck, mazal tov, and enjoy!

Rabbi Amy Joy Small

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The Meaning of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Why should your child celebrate becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah? Through this ceremony, your child gains an identity with his/her heritage and community, recognition of personal achievement through study, and a sense of self-confidence. Judaism is not only a religion but a way of living which enhances our lives. By learning its literature, prayers, and customs, a youngster can share more fully in this tradition. Equally important is the use of ritual to celebrate the transition from one stage of life to another. We recognize, as did our ancestors, the importance of marking our life cycle with a ceremony. A contemporary Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is a link in an unbroken chain of thousands of years of Jewish tradition. Every Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be understood as a symbolic renewal of Abraham's covenant with God.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is multi-dimensional. It is a very personal experience, often having a profound effect on the young person. Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is also significant for the parents, siblings, and extended family members. And, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is not a private moment, but one in which your child publicly acknowledges the importance of this occasion as part of the Jewish community and, in turn, the community celebrates the maturation of a young person.

As the student affirms a commitment to lead a responsible Jewish life, the Jewish people are renewed and strengthened. The celebration takes place because the Jewish community rejoices as another young person chooses to identify with it. This is the fundamental reason for the ceremony and celebration at the time of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The term Bar Mitzvah literally means "son of the commandments" and Bat Mitzvah means "daughter of the commandments." The child is entering a new stage in life, one marked with new obligations and new privileges. The child assumes responsibility for observing the teaching of the Torah and gains the right and obligation of taking a full role in Jewish rituals in the home and synagogue.

Introduction to the B'nai Mitzvah Process

Throughout the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process, you and your family will be guided and supported by several key people. The Religious School Educational Director is the point person for your child's Hebrew preparation and tutoring concerns. The Chair of the Religious School committee also will offer educational support. One of our parents serves as our B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator. This person can help you with any questions you have about many logistical aspects of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah or the reception. The Rabbi will lead your whole family through the spiritual understanding and preparation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Beth Hatikvah has a B'nai Mitzvah committee comprised of The Rabbi, the Educational Director, the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, the past Religious School Chairperson, and other congregational leaders with experience with the process. This committee is designed to guide and support you through this process as well as to address any particular concerns you may have. If you have a specific question and you don't know which person to ask, call the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, and you will be directed to the appropriate person.

There will be a variety of meetings to help you and your child prepare for this special occasion. At specific times during the year, your family will attend meetings with the other families who are also preparing for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. As well as being informative, these meetings will give you an opportunity to get to know the other families who are going through the same process, so you can share ideas with each other.

In addition to group meetings, your family will have individual meetings with the Rabbi. During those meetings, the Rabbi will assess your child's progress and discuss any individual questions or concerns you might have.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guidelines

1. The student is expected to be committed to the Jewish faith. Congregation Beth Hatikvah welcomes intermarried families into our community. When a child of an interfaith household participates in our religious school, we will encourage and teach the Jewish faith and practice as part of a Jewish identity for each child.
2. Jewish education, involving acquisition of skills, Jewish experiences, study of Jewish history, belief, and practice is the core value celebrated in the ceremony of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. To that end, we provide a comprehensive program designed to help each child learn to love, value, and carry out meaningful Jewish living. We expect our B'nai Mitzvah candidates to complete our program or a program of equivalency as designed and approved by the B'nai Mitzvah committee.
3. The student should agree to complete the full year of religious school during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year.
4. The student must be in good standing at religious school, having maintained acceptable attendance.
5. The student's family must be members in good standing with the congregation, having met all financial obligations.
6. The student is required to have fulfilled the attendance requirements at Shabbat services.
7. It is our goal for the student to complete a Tzedakah project in honor of the occasion.
8. The student will complete our prescribed course of study in the recitation (reading and chanting) of prayers, Torah, and Haftarah portions.
9. We use the triennial cycle for Torah reading as found in the siddur. The selection will include seven aliyot of an average length of 3-5 verses each. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will chant minimally the seventh Aliyah and is encouraged to chant more according to his/her capability.
10. Haftarah readings vary in length with the average being approximately 26 verses. Students will be encouraged to do the entire Haftarah according to tradition. However, exceptionally long Haftarah readings may be shortened by the Rabbi, who may consult with the B'nai Mitzvah committee.
11. The student will study with the family and present a D'var Torah for the service. Its preparation will also be under the supervision of the Rabbi.
12. The parents may offer some personal thoughts and comments to their child in the form of an informal speech at the ceremony.

If there are extenuating circumstances, individual service requirements may be modified. The Rabbi will discuss this with the B'nai Mitzvah committee and the parents.

The Rabbi and the Religious School Director will regularly monitor the progress of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. Should your child have difficulty in completing the requirements, the B'nai Mitzvah committee will be consulted. The committee will make every effort to work with your family in order to help your child become ready for his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This could include additional tutoring or modifying the service. In extraordinary circumstances, the committee may postpone the date.

Setting the Date

Girls and boys will be eligible for a bar/bat mitzvah date at age 13. Families having met other requirements, will be invited to set the date for their child's bar/bat mitzvah two years to eighteen months prior to their child's 13th birthday.

Four years of religious school education or its equivalent as determined by the B'nai Mitzvah Committee in consultation with the rabbi and educational director, will be required for a bar/bat mitzvah. A year of religious school is defined as successful completion of the school year, including attendance and academic requirements of the religious school. Additional tutoring may be required when these goals have not been achieved.

New students who enroll in Congregation Beth must complete one full semester prior to consultation with the Rabbi and the Educational Director toward determining their date. In general, the preparation time for bar/bat mitzvah is eight months from the time the date is selected.

The date for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah is arranged through coordination between our Educational Director and the Rabbi. You will be asked to give the Educational Director three possible choices. After consulting with the Rabbi and checking the master calendar, the Educational Director will help you finalize a date. We ask you to keep the following in mind when picking possible dates:

1. We recommend that if possible you avoid American holiday weekends and summer months.
2. Weekends that include a Jewish holiday are at the discretion of the Rabbi.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service

The standard Congregation Beth Hatikvah Bar/Bat Mitzvah service involves a list of essential Hebrew readings that are the core of the traditional Shabbat morning liturgy. These prayers are listed near the end of the handbook. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will be asked to prepare the chanting/singing of the prayers on the list.

The main purpose of the student's tutoring is for the student to refine the chanting of the prayers as well as the chanting of the Torah and Haftarah portions. During the six months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Rabbi will make an assessment of the student's progress and ability that will define the exact nature of the student's role at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

Even if the student ultimately does not chant/sing each and every prayer at his or her service, our school has the following goals:

1. Our students will learn all the prayers even if the Rabbi or someone else chants some of them at the service.
2. Our students will read from the Hebrew text, not the transliteration.

Within the context of these proposed standards each individual service can and will be personalized based on the input of the student and the family. This will involve the selection of English readings, determination of how many readings, and how many people participate. These decisions will affect the character and length of the service.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbat Participation – Friday Night and Saturday Morning

Our students are expected to take an active role in both the Friday night and Saturday morning services.

On Friday night on the weekend of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child is expected to chant and/or lead a variety of prayers. (See prayer list)

For Saturday morning, your child is expected to do the following:

1. Chant the Torah blessing and the last aliyah
2. Chant the Haftarah blessings and the Haftarah portion.
3. Deliver a D'var Torah
4. Chant and/or lead a variety of prayers (see prayer list)

Preparation and Timeline

Preparation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah began the day your child entered religious school and formally started his/her religious studies.

The 18 months to two years prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be a time of intense preparation and commitment for your whole family. At the end of this process, your child will have led a prayer service, read from the Torah and Haftarah, and presented a D'var Torah. This is truly a cause for celebration.

The following timeline is provided for your convenience.

- I. One Month Prior to 11th Birthday (25 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah)
 - A. The Educational Director will contact you to set the date.
 - B. You and your child will be invited to attend B'nai Mitzvah Family Education
- II. 12 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah
 - A. You will meet with the Rabbi to assess your child's progress and have a preliminary discussion of desires and goals.
 - B. You will receive the Torah/Haftarah materials and prayer tape.
 - C. The Rabbi will continue the one-to-one educational process with your family and to monitor your child's progress.
 - D. Weekly tutoring will be discussed with the Educational Director.
 - E. The Rabbi will discuss a mitzvah project with the student and family.
 - F. Families are instructed to attend Bar/Bat Mitzvah Friday night and Saturday morning services at Beth Hatikvah.
- III. 6 Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah
 - A. The Rabbi will continue the one-to-one educational process with the family.
 - B. The Rabbi will discuss the D'var Torah.
 - C. Weekly tutoring will begin if it has not already started.
- IV. From 6 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date
 - A. The Rabbi will continue the one-to-one educational process with the family.
 - B. One month prior, the student will present the prayers, Torah and Haftarah portions, and D'var Torah to the Rabbi.

Materials

Your child will need the following materials to prepare for his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

1. A copy of our Siddur, *Kol Haneshamah*
2. A Chumash (a book that includes the Torah and Haftarah portions)
3. A tape of the prayers to be learned
4. Haftarah and Torah materials

The Siddur is purchased through your child's religious school class. The Chumash may be ordered through the Educational Director.

Each family purchases a set of prayer CD's in 4th grade. At that time, you receive 2 CD's, one with the Friday night service, and one with the Saturday morning service. When your child begins the B'nai Mitzvah tutoring process, he/she is given a set of CD's that have the torah blessings on them, so that you may distribute them to people who will be having an aliyah at your event. The cost for the set is \$18.00, and this includes all of the above. Replacement CD's for the Friday/Saturday set is \$15.00.

Each child receives printed material regarding his/her torah and haftarah portion from the educational director. This is supplemental text and commentaries to help your child understand and interpret his/her parsha and to help with the preparation of the d'var torah. This is given to your

child when he/she begins the process, or sooner, if you request it. When your child begins tutoring, he/she is given a booklet with the torah and haftarah portion, a tape/CD of the haftarah, and a copy of the tikkun that shows the torah portion both with and without vowels and cantillation marks. The 7 aliyot are differentiated on this sheet and also in the booklet. There is no charge to the families for these materials.

The tutor is responsible for making the tapes of the torah readings, both for the child and for the other torah readers. It is up to the discretion of the tutor as to how much to charge for these tapes. The family needs to discuss this with the tutor and make sure that the tapes are given to them in ample time, according to the family's needs.

One note: When your child practices the blessings before and after the Haftarah, please make sure he/she is using the Reconstructionist version that is found in our prayer book. Many commercial tapes use a different version that changes many words and phrases in this blessing. There are quite a few changes in the blessing after the Haftarah.

Attendance at Worship Services

Beth Hatikvah offers many opportunities to join the community in worship and celebration including Friday night services, holiday services, and special events such as the community Passover Seder, the Tu b'Shvat Seder, etc. Attending these services is an integral part of the journey toward Bar or Bat Mitzvah and, we hope, a meaningful experience for your family. It is important for several reasons:

1. Attending services helps children feel a part of the spiritual community of Beth Hatikvah and the Jewish people through prayer and celebration.
2. It teaches children about the procedures and rituals involved in community prayer and builds a knowledge foundation that will serve them as they continue through adulthood.
3. It helps both the child and the family become familiar with a service that they will participate in during the weekend of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

For all these reasons, the committee recommends a commitment on the part of the family to attend services as often as possible. We really do believe that this is an essential and helpful piece of your children's religious education, and that more is better. However, because we understand that the family's participation in services must be manageable in the context of their lives, the guidelines below are intended to be flexible. As part of the B'nai Mitzvah planning process with the Rabbi, each family will be asked to make their own individual family covenant (commitment) for attending services. These, then, are the guidelines we hope will help accomplish the goals we have cited:

Up To Grade 5

Attend as many of the worship services and celebrations as possible in accordance with the age and attention span of your child. Make it a family activity and begin setting the stage for becoming a member of the spiritual community. When appropriate, help your child follow along in the prayer book and participate.

Grades 5- 7

Attend between 9 and 15 services a year. At least half of these should be Friday night services in order to become familiar with the service that will begin the Bar or Bat Mitzvah weekend. The rest can also be Friday night services or any of the other prayer opportunities the congregation or other Jewish organizations provide. Encourage your child to sit with you, to follow along in the prayer book, and to participate actively along with the congregation. Let the Rabbi know if your child would like to help lead any part of the service.

It is helpful for you to see Beth Hatikvah b'nai mitzvah services before your event. Attending someone else's service will give you first hand knowledge of the procedures and may give you some

ideas to personalize your own ceremony. Therefore, we encourage you and your child to attend at least one and preferably several Beth Hatikvah b'nai mitzvah services during the three years leading up to your event. It is important to attend at least one in the year immediately prior to your event. You can check the Beth Hatikvah calendar for dates or contact the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator.

Tutoring

The amount of tutoring any child needs depends on the skill level of that child. You should discuss your child's tutoring needs with the Rabbi and the Educational Director one year prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The Educational Director can provide names and contact information for some tutors. Because a tutor for Bar/Bat Mitzvah training needs specialized skills, any tutors you find on your own need to be approved by the Rabbi. This would need to be done no less than 9 months in advance of your child's date. The Educational Director will discuss the materials with the tutor and stay in contact with the tutor to determine how your child is progressing. The success of any tutoring relationship depends on a positive rapport between your Bar/Bat Mitzvah child and the tutor. Please feel free to contact the Rabbi or the Educational Director to discuss a concern with your tutoring relationship.

Even before tutoring begins, you should be encouraging your child to practice his/her prayers. If at all possible, you should practice as a family. The prayer list near the end of this handbook lists the order in which your child should be learning the prayers, and it corresponds to the prayer CD which is distributed through our Religious School.

Tallit and Kippot

A tallit and kippah are traditionally worn by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. Several local stores that carry these items are Rabbi Sky in Maplewood, Chai Judaica in Millburn, and The Lubovitch Outreach Center and CBL Fine Art both of which are located in West Orange. Families have also ordered these items from the Internet or from the manufacturer in Brooklyn. Another possibility is to purchase a tallit kit so that you may select a scarf or fabric that is to your liking and transform it into a tallit. The Rabbi can give you additional information about the Internet, the manufacturer, and the tallit kit.

Often a family purchases kippot for the congregation in honor of their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This is not required. However, if the kippot from the congregation are used, many of them have a name inscribed from another child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

It is also customary for anyone having an Aliyah or reading from the Torah to wear a tallit and kippah. The tallitot are already at the synagogue. You do not need to purchase them. A few tallitot and kippot should be put on the table in the front of the sanctuary for this purpose.

Additional Materials for the Saturday Morning Service

The text of the Torah and Haftarah portions are not found in the regular Siddur, but in a book called the Chumash. Because our congregation does not have a supply of Chumashim at this point, the family is asked to make copies of the Torah and Haftarah portions for their guests. The Rabbi will show you what you need.

There may be people attending the ceremony who are not familiar with Beth Hatikvah or with the meaning of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Therefore, some families may choose to prepare a small brochure that explains some of the rituals and provides information about Beth Hatikvah. The B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator can provide you with samples of both the brochure and the photocopied Torah and Haftarah portions from previous Bar/Bat Mitzvah services.

Family and Friend Participation

There are many opportunities to honor family and friends by having them participate in your

service. While some opportunities are appropriate for any of your guests, others are reserved for only those of the Jewish faith or for those with certain skills.

Family and friends can participate with English and Hebrew readings throughout services both Friday night and Saturday night. The family is asked to provide the Rabbi with a list of ten to twenty readings and names of people chosen by the family to participate. These readings can include prayers and other readings from the back of the prayer book, commentaries from the service, and poems or readings from other sources, which will need to be approved by the Rabbi. Some of these readings can be given to friends and family members who are not Jewish. The Rabbi will also make suggestions for readings. The Rabbi needs these readings in order to prepare an outline of your service. Therefore, it is important to give these readings to the Rabbi as soon as possible but no later than one month before the ceremony.

Some honors that can be given to any Jewish family and friends include opening and closing the ark, dressing the Torah, and lifting the Torah. Some of these honors may be given to younger children. It is the family's choice whether to have the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child carry the Torah or to give this honor to someone else.

An honor that can be given to someone who is Jewish and over the age of 13 is an aliyah. Before and after each Torah portion, blessings are chanted. The person reciting the blessing is fulfilling the honor of the aliyah. There are 7 aliyot at a Saturday morning service, five of which are yours to assign as honors to your guests. The sixth one is traditionally reserved for the parents. The seventh is the one your child will chant. The aliyah can be chanted alone or in a small group. To help your friends and family learn the Reconstructionist version, these blessings are available from the Educational Director.

Another way people participate in the ceremony is by reading one of the Torah portions. However, reading from the Torah requires a special skill, and therefore not everyone can participate in this way. There are seven Torah readings on Shabbat and festivals. The bar/bat mitzvah child will read at least the seventh, and possibly more of them, based on his/her skill level.

The public, ceremonial reading of the Torah is the most sacred moment in a Jewish prayer service. It involves deep symbolism of our connection with our history, our ancestors, our covenant with God, and our commitments as Jews.

Therefore, since the fourth century BCE, Jewish communities have been reading Torah aloud in a special ceremony, and we have developed special ways to read the Torah that convey the sacredness of the moment. The Torah is customarily chanted according to the trope, or musical chant, that our ancestors developed.

Insofar as the sacredness of the Torah reading is such a central moment for us as Jews, we are careful to make sure that only skilled Torah readers come forward to read from the scroll. Parents of B'nai mitzvah youngsters are encouraged to seek help from the rabbi if they would like to read Torah at their child's ceremony and do not yet have this skill. The rabbi will help them to master the Hebrew and chanting, as their tutor does for the child.

Other family members and friends who wish to read Torah should be of sufficient skill, both in Hebrew and chanting. If they have experience as Torah readers, we would be happy to have them as a Torah reader at your child's bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.

In Jewish tradition, those reading a Torah portion chant directly from the Torah just as your child will do. We want to encourage participation of family, friends, and members of the congregation. If necessary, Torah readers may use a copy of the printed Torah reading, which contains the vowels to assist them in their reading.

Reading from the Torah is a great responsibility, which requires preparation. If you don't have enough people who can commit to that preparation and/or are already fluent Torah readers, the B'nai Mitzvah coordinator can provide a list of members of our congregation who are willing and able to be called to read Torah. It is advisable to ask them at least six months in advance so that they

can set aside the time to prepare. The tutor can provide tapes and study materials for them. The Rabbi and Educational Director are available for guidance and assistance in this process.

A chart to record Bar/Bat Mitzvah Assignments of Torah Honors and Torah Readings can be provided by the Rabbi or the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator. Below are the categories on that chart.

Open the ark (beginning and end of Torah service) 2 people

Carry the Torah (beginning and end of Torah service) 2 people

Person receiving the aliyah (Please provide the Rabbi with each person's Hebrew name.)

aliyah one

aliyah two

aliyah three

aliyah four

aliyah five

aliyah six

aliyah seven

Torah Readers

aliyah one

aliyah two

aliyah three

aliyah four

aliyah five

aliyah six

aliyah seven

Lift Torah (Hagbah)

Dress Torah (Gelilah)

(There is a form at the end of this guide that can be used to record these honors.)

Family Tzedakah: Honoring Your Child's Life Passage

Tzedakah, the act of giving, is a central theme in Jewish life. It is a Jewish custom to give Tzedakah at each life cycle moment. Many families honor this rite of passage through the mitzvah of Tzedakah. We recommend that families consider a personal way to enrich this occasion. While our goal is to have the B'nai Mitzvah students involved in a large Tzedakah/social action project as part of the process of preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a variety of suggestions are listed below. Also the JEA located at the UJC MetroWest Campus in Whippany has several mitzvah opportunities. The Educational Director has information about these opportunities.

1. A social action project is done individually, with the family, or other B'nai Mitzvah students.
2. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah child donates a portion of his/her monetary gifts to a charitable organization of his/her choice. The Rabbi can provide ideas for this in your meeting.
3. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah child donates a portion of his/her monetary gifts to the congregation. This money could be earmarked for a particular expenditure, such as buying Chumashim to be used at future Bar/Bat Mitzvah services, or just given as a general donation.

4. Instead of flowers on the tables at the reception, the family makes centerpieces out of collections of books, toys, hats and mittens, food items, or other useful things that are then donated to the needy.
5. The child donates his/her time as a personal service. Some suggestions are at a soup kitchen, a day care center, tutoring, helping an elderly neighbor, or at a pet shelter. There are age requirements at some facilities. JEA and Jersey Cares both publish resources for activities such as these.

Ushering

We want your guests to feel comfortable at your child's ceremony. Therefore, it is important to have ushers who will welcome your guests and attend to any needs during the ceremony. Two ushers are necessary, one who stands outside the sanctuary and one who stands just inside the sanctuary. The responsibilities of each usher are outlined below. In order to support each other with this, parents of children in the B'nai Mitzvah class are asked to usher for each other. The Educational Director will prepare a schedule. Parents may switch dates with each other as long as they notify the Educational Director and the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator. The doors to the sanctuary are kept closed in order to insure that it is quiet throughout the ceremony. Therefore, the outside usher misses the ceremony. If you are asked to usher for a family with whom you have a close relationship, you might want to switch that date with someone else.

Responsibilities of the usher outside the sanctuary

1. Guests often arrive early. Therefore, you should be ready to begin your ushering responsibilities at least 15 minutes before the ceremony.
2. As the guests arrive, welcome them and show them where to hang their coats.
3. Hand them a prayer book and any handouts.
4. Offer a kippah.
5. Encourage guests to sit toward the front.
6. When latecomers arrive, see if it is an appropriate time for them to enter the sanctuary. If it is one of the key events such as reading from the Torah, have the guests stand just inside the sanctuary near the door until that part is over so as not to disturb the service.
7. It is important to remain there for the entire time. Guests often arrive throughout the ceremony.

Responsibilities of the usher inside the sanctuary

1. Make sure the children who are not accompanied by parents are behaving. Please go over and speak to them when necessary. When large groups of teenagers sit together, they can become restless. If this happens, invite them to take a break by leaving the sanctuary for a short period time if it seems like an appropriate time.
2. If the family has someone videotaping the ceremony, one of your responsibilities is to make sure our videotaping guidelines, which are listed in this handbook, are followed. It is important that the video camera is unattended. While someone can sit with it to make sure it is not disturbed, nobody should be standing next to it or attending to it in any manner. Doing any of these things would call attention to the video camera and diminish the sacredness of the ceremony. The Rabbi will have previously spoken to the family and the videographer about this. However, you need to speak to the videographer during the service if the guidelines are not being followed.

3. At the end of the service, both ushers should help collect all the prayer books and the handouts from the sanctuary. The prayer books should be placed the cart outside the sanctuary. The handouts should be placed in the box in the closet for ritual burial of sacred text.

Onegs

It is the custom in our congregation, that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family provides the Friday night oneg in honor of their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Friday night oneg follows the guidelines of the usual onegs on Friday night. You can make it as simple or elaborate as you wish depending on the number of additional guests you expect.

You are responsible for making sure the oneg is provided, set up, and cleaned up. However, it doesn't mean you need to do it all yourself. Many families find a friend or relative to take over the oneg responsibility for them. Also, in the past, fellow parents whose children's dates are in close proximity have gotten together and taken care of the oneg for each other.

An oneg on Saturday morning is optional. Keep in mind that if you choose to have an oneg on Saturday, you are responsible for leaving everything clean and in order or finding someone to take care of this. If you are thinking of having an oneg on Saturday, talk to the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator about the logistics.

Facilities

If you are having your ceremony on-site, the congregation can take care of most of your needs. The sanctuary fits about 300 people. You might want to put some ribbon across the back pews, so people sit more toward the front. If the prayer books are not by the entrance to the sanctuary from Friday night, you will find them in the large walk-in closet in the oneg room. You need to put a few tallit and kippot on the table where the Torah is read, so people can use them when reading their Torah portion or having an aliyah. The rest of the tallit and kippot should be placed at the entrance to the sanctuary near the prayer books. You are welcome to bring in flowers for the day, but please remove them after the ceremony, so everything can be left in order. You should discuss the need for a microphone with the Rabbi. Parking at St. Paul's is tight. The B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator has a map of additional places to park in Chatham that you can copy and give to your guests.

Some families choose to hold the ceremony off-site. Because we don't have a staff to move all the necessary items, this responsibility falls in most part to the family. Below is an outline of what must be moved.

Kippot – If you are purchasing your own kippot, you can just bring them to the ceremony. Most people put them in a basket so they can be placed outside the sanctuary near the prayer books. A few need to be put on the table where the Torah is read so people can wear them when reading from the Torah or having an aliyah. If you are using the synagogue's kippot, you will need to get them Friday night after services and return them by the following Friday night.

Tallitot – You will need all of the congregation's tallitot. A few should be placed in a basket or just on the table where the Torah is read, so people can wear them when reading from the Torah or having an aliyah. The rest should be placed near the prayer books where people enter the sanctuary. Again, you can take them Friday night after services and return them by the following Friday night.

Books – We have about 150 books. Around 50 of the books are used for services on Friday night and religious school services on Saturday morning. If you are using 100 books or fewer, they can be moved ahead of time if the place where you are having the ceremony has someplace safe to store them. If you need more than 100 books, please talk to both the Educational Director and the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator. About 20 books fit in the kind of box used for computer paper, but that makes a very heavy box. It is helpful to use a hand truck to move the boxes.

Ark – We have one movable ark. It is on wheels and not too heavy but very unwieldy. You would

need a truck or van to transport it. If you want to use this ark, contact the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator to find out where it is being stored. It is up to the family to move it and return it. If you do not want to use this ark, there are two other possibilities. One is to wrap the Torah and keep it on a table. The second is to find out if the place you are having the ceremony has any kind of movable cabinet you could use for the Torah.

*Although the Torah needs to be moved, this is not your responsibility. The Rabbi will transport the Torah to the ceremony and back to the synagogue again.

Please discuss your arrangements with the facilities chair, and keep the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator informed as well. Everything needs to be returned to the synagogue in time for services the following Friday night. Please contact the facilities chair to arrange a time for returning everything when there is access to the building.

Candy

An optional custom is to throw candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child during the ceremony to wish the child a sweet life. Traditionally this is done after the Haftarah blessings, but we have moved this to the end of the service, after Adon Olam, so that the rest of the children can come up to gather the candy just after it is thrown. If you chose to add this optional custom to your child's service, you will need to purchase the candy. Please be sure to purchase candy, which is soft and wrapped (Sunkist fruit gels are a good choice.) Please note that the candy may only be thrown by members of your family who are sitting near the front. Please discuss your plans with the rabbi during your preparatory meetings, at which time you will learn precisely where the candy distribution is placed in the service order.

Photography and Videotaping the Ceremony

The peaceful, spiritual, and holy space of Shabbat is created through the beautiful observances of community, family and personal reflection and celebration. In an attempt to create and protect the purely spiritual nature of the day, *halachah* (Jewish law) lists many prohibitions regarding everyday actions which diminish the sacredness of the space and time of Shabbat. We as Reconstructionists, while not bound by halachah, feel spiritually connected to the intention, and often the practice of Jewish tradition. Therefore, while many of us may not be completely shomer Shabbat, Shabbat observant, we use the sacred structures of Jewish practice to bring spirituality and holiness into our lives. Shabbat, therefore, is observed to the best of our ability while we are congregated together as a sacred community.

Traditionally, we refrain from using electronic equipment as one way that the sacred space and time of Shabbat is preserved. During our prayer service it is particularly important to remove distractions so that we can truly "listen" (Shma) and experience the Divine presence. It is respectful to leave non-essential electronic devices, which so dominate our everyday lives, out of prayer services. This value is challenged at the particular moment of celebration of Bar and Bat Mitzvah. We, who are so accustomed to immortalizing all of our memorable events on film, wish to do so on this very special day. Therefore, as a Reconstructionist community, we seek to integrate the needs of the secular and the religious by allowing photography and videography under strictly defined circumstances. By allowing photography and videography we acknowledge the emotional needs of the family; by defining rules for how the photography and videography may take place, we take the global view and act to preserve the sacredness of the service.

Therefore, we ask all families approaching Bar and Bat Mitzvah to observe the following policy:

1. Still photography may take place at B'nai Mitzvah services of Congregation Beth Hatikvah after the conclusion of the service. Prior to the service, once the service has begun, and through its conclusion, no still photography is permitted, even from the rear with available light.

2. With prior arrangements, the Rabbi can be available to pose for “ceremonial” pictures after the service concludes.
3. We permit the videotaping of the service itself on condition that, during the service, the camera is stationary and not in view of the congregation. This will usually mean that the camera is positioned in back of the congregation. The Rabbi will instruct the videographer concerning the appropriate location for the camera. The videographer may sit with the camera if there is a concern that it may be knocked over given the confines of the space. However, the video camera must be unattended – it is not permissible for anyone to stand by it, to approach it, or to attend to it in any manner during the service. This would call undue attention to the camera and would inappropriately diminish the sacredness of the service.

This presents some special challenges for people who are not using professional videographers. Please discuss these challenges with the Rabbi so you can help to prepare your videographer. The Rabbi will also contact your videographer to discuss the issues involved and best mechanisms for handling them.

Beth Hatikvah ushers are charged with ensuring that the sacredness of the worship space is appropriately maintained. If there are any concerns during the service, the ushers will work with the videographers as any issues arise.

Before you contract with a videographer, please check with the Rabbi. Some videographers have previously proven unwilling to follow our rules and procedures, and they would not be welcome choices for our families.

In order to facilitate the clearest possible communications, please give the name and address of your photographer and/or videographer to the Rabbi so that she may send them our policy in advance of the event.

Please do not ask your photographers or videographers to do anything that would be contrary to this policy.

Your understanding and partnership in making this life cycle event as smooth and as sacred as possible is greatly appreciated.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Prayer List (order in which prayers are to be learned)

Page 277	Shema	chanted alone	Fri. p.m. & Sat. a.m.
Page 247	Barchu	chanted alone	Fri. p.m. & Sat. a.m.
Page 383,385	Torah Service	some alone	Sat. a.m.
Page 277	V’ahavta		Fri. p.m. & Sat. a.m.
Page 291	Mi Chamocha	some alone	Sat. a.m.
Page 79	Mi Chamocha	some alone	Fri. p.m.
Page 405	Chatzi Kaddish	chanted alone	Fri. p.m. & Sat. a.m.
Page 399	Torah Blessings	chanted alone	Sat. a.m.
Page 393	Service Holding Torah		Sat. a.m.
Page 409-413	Haftarah Blessings	chanted alone	Sat. a.m.
Page 445-449	Aleynu		Fri. p.m. & Sat. a.m.
Page 119	Kiddush	chanted alone	Fri. p.m.

Page 5	Hadlakot Nerot	chanted alone	Fri. p.m.
Page 295-297	Avot	chanted alone	Sat. a.m.
Page 299	Gevurot	chanted alone	Sat. a.m.
Page 303-305	Kedusha	chanted alone	Sat. a.m.
Page 441	Etz Chayim		Sat. a.m.
Page 443	Eyn Keloheinu		Sat. a.m.
Page 459	Adon Olam		Fri. p.m. & Sat. a.m.
Page 269	Or Chadash	chanted alone	Sat. a.m.
	Yotzer Or	chanted alone	Sat. a.m.
Page 291	Tzur Yisrael		Sat. a.m.
Page 41-47	Lechah Dodi.		Fri. p.m.
Page 63	Ahavat Olam		Fri. p.m.
Page 85	V'Shamru		Fri. p.m.
Page 381	Kaddish Titkabel	chanted alone	Fri. p.m. & Sat. a.m.
Page 433	Yehalelu	some alone	Sat. a.m.

Prayers for Friday Night – Erev Shabbat

P. 5	Hadlakot Nerot – candlelighting
41-47	Lechah Dodi
51	Tzadik Katamar
55	Chatzi Kaddish
57	Barchu
63	Ahavat Olam
65	Shema
65	V'ahavta
77-79	Mi Chamocho
85	V'Shamru
115	Kaddish Titkabel
119	Kiddush
121-125	Aleynu
133	Adon Olam

Shabbat Morning

P. 247	Barchu
247	Yotzer Or

269	Or Chadash
277	Shema
277	V'ahavta
291	Mi Chamocha
291	Tzur yisrael
295-297	Avot
299	Gevurot
303	Kedusha
381	Kaddish Titkabel
383	Torah Service
385	Torah Service (reading #1)
393	Service holding Torah
399	Torah blessings
405	Chatzi Kaddish
409-423	Haftarah blessings
433	Yehalelu/Hodo Al Eretz
441	Etz Chayim
443	Eyn Keyloheynu
445-449	Aleynu
459	Adon Olam

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Assignment of Honors

Responsibility	First Person Receiving Honor	Second Person
Open Ark		
Carry Torah		
Aliyot	Person(s) Receiving Aliyah	Hebrew Name*
Aliyah One		
Aliyah Two		
Aliyah Three		
Aliyah Four		
Aliyah Five		
Aliyah Six		
Aliyah Seven	Reserved for Bar/Bat Mitzvah	
Aliyah One	Torah Reader	
Aliyah Two		
Aliyah Three		
Aliyah Four		
Aliyah Five		

Aliyah Six		
Aliyah Seven		
	Person Receiving Aliyah	Hebrew Name*
Lift Torah (Hagbah)		
Dress Torah (Gelilah)		

* The Hebrew name includes the individual's first name (and middle name if they feel it is important to use it), then the word *ben* (son of) or *bat* (daughter of); and then their father's Hebrew name; then "v" (meaning: and), and then their mother's Hebrew name; e.g. Miriam bat David v'Golda; Yosef ben Shmuel v'Sarah. Individuals are called up by their Hebrew names for only the honors of: the *aliyah* (reciting the Torah blessings), *hagbah* (lifting the Torah) and *gelilah* (dressing the Torah.)