

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

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B'NAI MITZVAH

PACKET

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OVERVIEW

What, or Who, Is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

“At age thirteen one becomes subject to the commandments.” (Mishna Avot 5:23)

The words “Bar/Bat Mitzvah” refer more to the person who becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah rather than to the ceremony that celebrates the occasion. It does NOT mean the person is an “adult” by Jewish law. Boys at age 13, and 12 for girls, become obligated to obey the Mitzvot/commandments of the Torah. This obligation occurs from their Hebrew birthday. The ceremony does not produce any additional responsibilities or privileges. It simply celebrates the fact that having entered adolescence as defined by Judaism, the person involved is now responsible for his/her actions according to the tenets of Judaism.

While the idea of **Bar Mitzvah** is found in the Talmud, the actual ceremony has evolved over time. The first **Bat Mitzvah** celebration took place in 1922; the celebrant was Judith Kaplan, daughter of the distinguished Conservative Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan.

It is when the Congregation comes together in prayer, study and fellowship, usually on a Shabbat morning, or any time the Torah is read, that this significant moment in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s life and in the life of the family is recognized.

In accordance with Judaism’s value system, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks his/her passage to **moral maturity** by demonstrating the ability to do what Jews consider to be a preeminent activity of a mature adult: namely, the ability to read our sacred books and interpret them.

Therefore, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in our Congregation who has attended our Religious School or Day School regularly, may:

- β Chant Torah with the traditional trope (*maftir*)
- β Chant the *Haftarah* (Prophetic portion) with the traditional trope
- β Speak to the Congregation on the meaning and implication of both
- β Lead some of the prayers.

Each Congregation B’nai Israel candidate has been preparing for his/her becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah for many years now, in Religious or Day School as well as at home. During the year of the celebration, however, new material is emphasized and the family is increasingly involved in the preparations.

Parents should **emphasize** that the celebration that attends this great transition is but a milestone along the path to becoming a knowledgeable, practicing Jew.

Parents should encourage their son/daughter to **continue** religious education through Confirmation and beyond. Congregation B'nai Israel and our larger Jewish community provide multiple interesting learning experiences through high school years and beyond.

Parents are crucial **role models** for their children. Those who participate in daily weekly, on Shabbat and Holiday services, exemplify the Jewishly-committed adults our children should emulate.

Parents who establish a **home** where Judaism is actively and positively practiced, teach adolescents to aspire to the best that Judaism has to offer. When parents are themselves committed to "**mitzvah**," the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony fits naturally into a transitional context.

Requirements

1. To be eligible for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony at Congregation B'nai Israel, candidates must have regularly attended for at least several years:

A. Religious School

OR

B. Private tutoring in conjunction with the clergy and Religious School Principal

AND

If a student formerly attended full-time Jewish Day School and stopped, they must currently attend Religious School.

C. Other programs designated for the B'nai Mitzvah Class

Our Religious School has been restructured with a new dynamic curriculum. It meets on Wednesday from 4:30 - 6:15 P.M. and Sunday from 9:30 A.M.- 12. A schedule of other Religious School programs is available from the school.

2. Candidates learn Torah and Haftarah trope and related synagogue skills with the Hazzan during **Religious School in 6th grade** (Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Institute). There will also be **weekly individual instruction** with the **Hazzan or a qualified approved teacher** beginning approximately 9 months prior to the B'nai Mitzvah date.

3. Students will meet with the **clergy** several times before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to discuss various aspects of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, their individual *parasha* and its interpretation.
4. During the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year, each candidate's **regular attendance** at Shabbat morning services is **vital**. It is the best way to become familiar with services and to develop a feeling of ease and comfort in the synagogue.

Parents' regular attendance at services **with** their children helps instill the good habit of Shabbat attendance, not only this year, but **after** the Bar/Bat mitzvah ceremony as well. The service begins at 9:30 A.M. Families are urged to experience several "full" services before their actual celebration.

To this end, Congregation B'nai Israel requires each Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate to attend Shabbat morning services on average at least twice per month during the 9 month period of Bar/Bat Mitzvah training. Attendance is monitored by the Clergy. Credit will be given for attending other synagogues, Jewish camps etc.

5. **Tefillin** – Students will learn how to "lay *tefillin*." This is part of the 6th grade Religious School curriculum. Each student will be responsible for obtaining his or her own set of *tefillin*. Some can be borrowed from the synagogue.
6. **Mitzvah Project** – Students are encouraged to complete a Mitzvah by 7th grade. Ideas and guidelines will be provided by the clergy.

In the event of extenuating circumstances, every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the fulfillment of the above requirements.

How Dates Are Chosen

According to the Talmud, a boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah at 13 years and 1 day, a girl a Bat Mitzvah at 12 and 1 day. The date is calculated on the Hebrew calendar from the date of birth. Since Congregation B'nai Israel is an egalitarian congregation, dates are generally set for age 13 for both boys and girls. The closest available Shabbat after the 13th birthday is generally assigned.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates will be set by the clergy around 4th grade. Should there be compelling reasons, you may request to reschedule to an alternate date. For a girl the date can be earlier since she need only be 12 years of age.

Families must be members in good standing and candidates must currently be meeting B'nai Mitzvah eligibility requirements (as set forth above) to have a date assigned and to continue to reserve it. **Students currently in 6th or 7th grade without a confirmed Bar/Bat Mitzvah date should contact the clergy.**

Preparation

The 6th grade year at Religious School prepares the entire family for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. The focus is Jewish lifecycle, synagogue skills and Torah and Haftarah trope (cantillation). Parents may attend.

During the 7th Grade year of Religious School, students only attend on Sunday. Topics include: Comparative Judaism, Comparative Religions, Anti-Semitism, Israel, Hebrew, History, Jewish ethics (i.e. gossip, hospitality, ecology, peace in the home, respect for parents, pursuing peace, etc.), *Pikuach Nefesh* / Preserving Life (i.e. drugs, alcohol, sex), tattoos, and *Tzedakah*. It also includes "Mitzvah Trips" to perform various *Tzedakah* projects (i.e. visiting nursing homes, helping at a food bank, visiting a shelter, community service, etc.). Students are expected to continue attending until the completion of the school year, even after their Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

Individual instruction is weekly with the Hazzan. Students learn the *Haftarah* specific to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, the *Maftir* from the Torah and some of the service. Criteria which determine what each student will do, while complex, are designed with the student's best interests in mind. Each student is expected to practice regularly and diligently. Please be on time for appointments. If appointments can't be kept the office must be notified.

Students also meet with clergy or an approved teacher to discuss their individual *parasha* (portion). Students are guided, culminating in a *D'var Torah* and *D'var Haftarah* to be delivered by the student to the congregation at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. Speeches should be completed a few weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration, allowing ample time to rehearse.

Final Rehearsal

A full run-through rehearsal with the Hazzan takes place the week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. This is only for the student. Other service participants should also practice with the Hazzan. Those in town can practice

after the final rehearsal, preferable that this be done in person, but if not feasible then over the phone.

Photography

This could be done on the Friday before. Clergy and office staff can help facilitate this. Photography is not permitted during the actual ceremony.

The Service

1. Prior to the service, at **9:20 A.M.**, parents meet in the Hazzan's Study to present the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with their *tallit* at this time. This can also be presented in the service and done publicly.
2. The service on Shabbat morning is at 9:30 A.M. in the Katz Sanctuary. Kindly make sure everyone dresses and behaves respectfully. Guests should arrive as close to 9:30 as possible. *A Guide to Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is available for guests unfamiliar with Congregation B'nai Israel. A *Transliteration Book*, which corresponds to our prayerbook is also available.
3. If family or friends would like to read from the Torah please discuss with the Hazzan well in advance. The Hazzan arranges Torah readers for remaining readings.
4. It is customary for guests to shower the Bar/Bat Mitzvah *gently* with soft (kosher) candies at the conclusion of the Haftarah blessings. **Candy is provided by the Congregation.** If you do not wish to observe this custom, please let the Hazzan know.
5. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family and guests sit in the front of the Sanctuary. This makes it easier for our *Gabbaim* to find and direct honorees to the *bimah* and ark at the appropriate time to expedite the smooth flow of the service.
6. Services are generally over around 12:00 P.M. but vary according to the length of the Torah and Haftarah portions, presentations, speeches, special prayers and other factors. A *Kiddush* luncheon follows the service.
7. Parents, should they wish, are given an opportunity to address their child publicly towards the end of the service. This should be brief and to the point.

Kibbudim (Honors)

1. The *Kibbudim Sheet* (included in this packet) to be completed by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family should be discussed with the Hazzan the month before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date and returned **2 weeks before**.
2. On the *Kibbudim Sheet* one *aliya* is reserved for the Congregation. This allows those with special occasions (baby-naming, birthday, *aufruf*, anniversary, *yahrtzeit* etc) to receive honors.
3. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family receives up to 6 *aliyot* plus the *Maftir* (for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah), as well as these options:
 - β Opening and Closing the Ark (2 groups of 2 or more)
 - β Carrying the Torah (2 people)
 - β Hagba [*raising the Torah*] (1 strong experienced person)
 - β G'lila [*tying the Torah*] (1 person)
 - β Two English readings (adults only)

This adds up to a total of **16** optional honors (in addition to the *Maftir*). Groups may also be called for *aliyot* to increase the honors.

Torah honors are assigned to Jewish men and women above the age of 13 and 12, respectively. Please check that *aliya* honorees know the appropriate blessings (included in this packet.). Males, regardless of age, must wear a head covering and tallit. Women who are called to the *bimah* and ark must also wear a head covering.

4. Children under Bar/Bat Mitzvah age can participate in special honors.
5. Non-Jews may participate in the service with English readings.
6. Honorees in the service should arrive by 10:00 A.M. Latecomers cannot be guaranteed their honor.

The Kiddush Luncheon

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sponsors the *Kiddush* luncheon. Congregation B'nai Israel facilities are available for Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations to members in good standing. There is no charge for the Katz Sanctuary and since the *Kiddush* luncheon is open to all attendees, there is no extra charge for the Barry Social Hall. These are included in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee. For information on other charges such as extra maintenance, kitchen use, clean-up, linens etc., consult the staff who are always available to help facilitate your events.

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Kashrut

Our facilities are kosher. To ensure *kashrut*, only kosher foods from approved sources are permitted in our building; food and utensils from individual's homes are not permitted.

Carrying

Because there is no *eruv* in Toledo, the carrying of items (including catered food and flowers) in and out of the building on the Sabbath must be avoided. All items needed for the services and reception must be delivered by 3:00 P.M. Friday. Likewise, no items should be taken from the synagogue during the Sabbath (e.g., flowers, leftovers, centerpieces, gifts etc). Gifts should be brought to the reception or delivered to the home rather than brought to services.

Photography

Neither still nor video photography is allowed on Shabbat. Please make arrangements with the office for photos and/or videos either before or after Shabbat.

Invitations

Services start at 9:30 A.M. and invitations should read 9:30 A.M. You are not limited to the number of people you may invite to services. If you are expecting more than 200 guests, please let the Office Manager know.

It is customary to invite the Rabbi and Hazzan and their spouses to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration and the *Kiddush* lunch following the ceremony. **All members of the student's Religious School class MUST be invited to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.** This avoids the hurt feelings when a few students are excluded, which is so contrary to what Bar/Bat Mitzvah is about!

Fees

A family must be current in synagogue dues and Religious School fees before Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons can begin and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fees must be paid in full no later than 60 days prior to the ceremony. The fee for Bar/Bat Mitzvah is \$500.00 dollars. This fee covers the many various additional administrative and educational costs associated with your event, and is subject to change with appropriate notification.

Traditionally, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class students do not buy gifts for one another. Rather, \$100.00 of this fee represents the cost of a leaf to be placed in honor of each student from the other Bar/Bat Mitzvah students.

Within three weeks of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration, a deposit of at least 50% of the estimated charges owed to t B'nai Israel must be paid. Final payment of the entire remaining balance is due **five business days after receiving a final bill** from B'nai Israel. If the amount of the initial deposits exceeds the actual charges, B'nai Israel will issue a refund check after receiving all final bills.

Checks should be made payable to Congregation B'nai Israel. The congregation also accepts Visa, MasterCard and Discover.

Babysitting

The Congregation will provide an onsite babysitter if needed. Please let us know two weeks prior how many children you expect so we can plan accordingly. There is no additional charge.

Synagogue Etiquette

The following guidelines are to be observed in our building and on our grounds on Shabbat:

- β Smoking, photograph, use of electronic devices, use of phones (except for true emergencies) and handling of money are not permitted.
- β Gifts should not be brought into the synagogue building on Shabbat. Guests should be instructed to deliver them to the home or to the reception.
- β All males, regardless of age, are required to wear a head-covering. *Tallitot* (prayer shawls) are available for Jewish men and women over the ages of 13 and 12, respectively.
- β Women who are called to the *bimah* and ark are also required to wear head-coverings which are available.
- β Worshippers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, are requested to dress in a manner that befits the holiness of the sanctuary and the Shabbat. Please advise your guests of the appropriate dress. If you have questions, ask the clergy.
- β No food (including chewing gum) is permitted in the Katz Sanctuary.
- β It is permissible for guests especially children to leave the service for brief periods of time. This should not take place during the *haftara*, the *kedusha* prayer, when the ark is open or during the sermon. When

re-entering the sanctuary at this time, there is room to stand near the inside of the door till it is appropriate to return to your seat.

- β *Transliteration Booklets* which correspond to our prayerbook, are available for anyone with difficulty reading Hebrew and are at the entry to the Katz Sanctuary.

Contributions

We encourage every Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to fulfill the mitzvah of *tzedaka* (charitable contributions) in honor of the occasion.

Here are some appropriate examples:-

Congregation B'nai Israel

These can be to various synagogue funds, and through the purchase of a leaf on the Tree of Life (a form is included in this packet) or other kinds of gifts.

Mazon

Mazon is an international organization that serves as a Jewish response to hunger. "Mazon" means sustenance, and its goal is to have families celebrating a *simcha* donate 3% of the cost of food to *tzedaka*.

If you wish to make a contribution, please make your check payable to Mazon, Inc. and send it to Congregation B'nai Israel to the clergy's attention. Mazon place cards are available to families who wish to make such donations.

Food Pantries

Jewish Family Services Food Pantry: In place of flowers, food baskets may be placed on the *bimah* or as centerpieces, etc. Speak with the office to make these arrangements.

B'nai Tzedek Program

All Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are encouraged to participate in the Toledo Jewish Community Foundation's *B'nai Tzedek* teen giving program. Participants establish a \$500 philanthropic fund in their name by contributing \$125 from their Bar/Bat Mitzvah presents. This is matched by funds from the Suzanne & Allan Cohn Teen Philanthropy Fund and by the Toledo Jewish Community Foundation. This will bring the initial value of the teen philanthropic fund to \$500. Participants may then contribute additional gifts to their fund at any time (although no further matching gifts will be provided after the initial gift). Each

year, the teen fund holder will have the opportunity to choose which organizations they wish to support from a list of approved Jewish charities. For more information on the B'nai Tzedek funds, you may contact the Jewish Federation at 419-884-4461.

Expressions of Thanks

Parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may wish to express their thanks to the clergy for their special role in facilitating the simcha. Monetary gifts Israel are placed in their respective Discretionary Funds which help meet the charitable and educational needs of our Congregation and community. Checks should be made out to the "Discretionary Fund" and sent directly to the clergy. Modest gratuities to the custodian and kitchen staff may also be appropriate.

About the Party

We urge you to have a reception in honor of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah that does not violate Shabbat and Jewish dietary laws of *kashrut*. As mentioned in the overview, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony marks an adolescent's acceptance of the commandments. It is only fitting that this be reflected in a celebration that takes these commandments into account. Any assistance that the Congregation can provide in helping you achieve this goal will be happily given.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The “Rewards”

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah student who has:

- β Attended Shabbat morning services regularly
- β Participated in all the programs and projects of the Religious School as stipulated in this Manual
- β Successfully participated in services on the morning of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration and delivered a D’var Torah and D’var Haftarah

will receive a gift from the Congregation, a gift from the Sisterhood and the Men’s Club, a 2-volume set of the *Jewish Book of Why* from the families of Calvin and Arthur Katz, a gift from our USY youth group, a certificate of Bar/ Bat Mitzvah, and the satisfaction of knowing that he/she has followed in the footsteps of generations of Jewish adolescents who have taken their rightful places among our People.

Enjoy!

This is a very special and momentous occasion in the life of your child and your family, as well as that of Congregation B’nai Israel. May we all be privileged to spend many *simchas* together in good health and happiness!

This manual has been prepared to help you achieve the most wonderful Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information:

Hazzan Ivor Lichterman – ilichterman@cbitoledo.org
 Office Manager -Michelle Carr – mcarr@cbitoledo.org
 Religious School Principal – Kim Brody – kbrody@cbitoledo.org
 Phone: 419-517-8400

Note: All information in this packet is accurate as of 11/20/2014 . The Congregation reserves the right to make changes, additions and corrections as warranted; every effort will be made to notify the families of B’nai Mitzvah of such in a timely fashion.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATION CHECKLIST

DURING 4TH GRADE YEAR

- ❑ The Hazzan provides the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date based upon the student's Hebrew birth date. This allows plenty of time to book the facility and outside vendors (musicians, florist, photographer, etc.).

ONE YEAR

- ❑ Attend Bar/Bat Mitzvah Institute (during the 6th grade year).
- ❑ Meet with the Office Manager regarding reserving spaces for a reception and/or evening affair, as well as Shabbat morning *Kiddush* luncheon.
- ❑ Book caterer (check with the office for a list of approved caterers), florist, photographer, videographer and musicians.
- ❑ Bring dues current and pay Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee.
- ❑ Attend Shabbat services regularly as a family to fulfill the requirement of attending at least twice per month beginning in the 6th grade year.
- ❑ Arrange out of town guest accommodations.

NINE MONTHS

- ❑ Begin individual sessions with the Hazzan. You will be contacted by him or someone from the office to schedule these meetings.

SIX MONTHS

- ❑ Develop a guest list with current addresses.
- ❑ Order invitations, kippot, napkins, etc.
- ❑ Pick out *tallit* for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, available for purchase from the Phyllis J. Diamond Judaica Gift Shop (call the office for hours).
- ❑ Discuss event details (menus, floor plans, *Mashgiach*, etc.) with caterer and office manager.
- ❑ Pay all synagogue financial obligations.

THREE MONTHS

- ❑ Finalize event details (including *Kiddush* luncheon, floral arrangements, etc.) with Office Manager.

- ❑ Contact the Hazzan regarding any family or friends who would like to read from the Torah.

TWO MONTHS

- ❑ Begin individual sessions with the clergy. You will be contacted by him or someone from the office to schedule these meetings.
- ❑ Arrange honors (*Kibbudim Sheet*). The Hazzan is available for assistance.
- ❑ Address and mail invitations (at least six weeks) to out-of-town guests.
- ❑ Submit a one paragraph biography and photo to the office for the synagogue Bulletin.

ONE MONTH

- ❑ If a service brochure is desired, arrange to have one printed.
- ❑ Have your caterer contact the office manager to discuss arrangements for use of the kitchen and other facilities.
- ❑ Coordinate with the clergy for photos, if desired.
- ❑ Finish writing *D'var Torah* and *D'var Haftarah*.
- ❑ Coordinate out-of-town guest airport and event transportation.
- ❑ Address and mail in-town invitations. It is customary to invite the clergy (and their spouses) and classmates of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

TWO WEEKS

- ❑ Turn in *Kibbudim Sheet* to the Hazzan.
- ❑ Adjust seating arrangements.

ONE WEEK

- ❑ Turn in final set-up and counts to Office Manager.
- ❑ Confirm delivery times for food, floral arrangements, etc. All deliveries must be made by 3:00 P.M. on Friday.
- ❑ Attend Shabbat morning services with entire family, from the beginning (9:30 A.M.).

ONE-TWO DAYS

- ❑ Bring all supplies, such as *kippot*, programs, centerpieces, etc. to the synagogue. Please label with your name. It is inappropriate to bring such items into the synagogue on Shabbat.

- Do any necessary cooking in the synagogue kitchen (with prior arrangement with Kitchen Supervisor) if appropriate.
- Photos with family and/or clergy.
- Run-through rehearsal with the Hazzan and those with honors (if possible).
- Delivery of flowers, food, etc. prior to 3:00 P.M.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATION DAY

- After remembering to bring everything you need for the big day, eg Bar/Bat Mitzvah binder, student and his/her immediate family meet with the clergy in the Hazzan's Study prior to the service, at 9:20 A.M.

- *Shep Nachas!*