



B'nai Mitzvah Handbook

Rabbi Joshua Ben-Gideon: Senior Rabbi

Rabbi Cara Weinstein Rosenthal: Associate Rabbi

Cantor Ofer S. Barnoy

Eileen Bohrer: Executive Director

Sharon Solomon: Educational Director – Community Engagement & Development

Silvia Kogan: Religious School Assistant Principal/*B'nai Mitzvah* Coordinator

GREETINGS FROM RABBI JOSHUA BEN-GIDEON

Dear Parents,

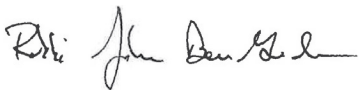
We pick a date to celebrate our children's *B'nai Mitzvah* years in advance. At that point, it is hard to envision the growth and maturation we will witness in them in the years in between that moment and this one.

The Hebrew expression *Livnot U'lehibanot* "To Build and to be Built" captures an essential truth about *B'nai Mitzvah* preparation. Our children grow and mature through the process of studying and preparing for their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. They will master the skills to lead our congregation from the *bima*, the skills of chanting from our holy texts with confidence. They will find their voices as they prepare to teach us *Torah*. These are powerful opportunities to step forward and grow increasingly responsible for themselves.

As you receive this handbook, you may experience a little anxiety along with your excitement and pride. A little worry is a good thing – it means we are taking the moment seriously. I want to assure you that your team here at TBS comprised of myself, Cantor Barnoy, Rabbi Rosenthal, Educational Director, Sharon Solomon, and *B'nai Mitzvah* Coordinator Silvia Kogan are here to make sure your experience is full of meaning and as smooth as possible. If we remember to keep the main thing the main thing, all will go well.

I look forward to studying and preparing with you over the next months. And of course, please know that the entire TBS family takes pride in your child's growth and wishes you *Mazal Tov* as you step towards this exciting milestone.

B'Shalom,



Rabbi Joshua Ben-Gideon

MESSAGE FROM TBS *B'NAI MITZVAH* COORDINATOR

Dear families:

Becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* is an important and wonderful life-cycle milestone for a Jewish child and his or her entire family. It is also a significant event in the life of our synagogue community.

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony and celebration represent many months and years of Jewish learning and experiences – within the synagogue, at your home, and in the world. It is important to note that the process of preparing for *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is as meaningful as the day itself; in fact, the more engaged and involved the pre *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student and family are in the months prior to *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, the more fulfilling the actual “day” will be to all who are present.

The process of planning this type of Jewish family event can be complex and intense. This booklet will help you answer the questions you may have about how Temple Beth Sholom views the process of becoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* – what happens before and what happens after – as one step in Jewish life-long learning.

If after reviewing this booklet, you still have questions, contact me. Together with the TBS team, we will do everything we can to make sure you, your family, and your proud *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* child have an experience you will always remember.

B'Shalom,

Silvia Kogan



B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator

Meet the Team



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B'nai Mitzvah Journey

Exciting learning opportunities for the entire family.



שְׁמַעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק הָיָה אוֹמֵר, עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד:
עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוֹדָה וְעַל גְּמִילוּת הַסְּדִים

Rabbi Shimon the Righteous was one of the last of the men of the great assembly.
He used to say: the world stands upon three things:
the *Torah*, the Temple Service, and the practice of acts of piety.

Pirkei Avot 1:2

TORAH תורה

- **Torah Workshop**

Under Cantor Barnoy's tutelage, our 6th-grade students will attend special *Torah* reading classes where they will study trope and other synagogue skills. As a culmination, the students will be invited to lead *Mishapacha Minyan* and read a few verses of the *Torah* portion of the day.

- **Tutoring**

Your child's assigned teacher will contact you by phone to schedule 25 weekly half-hour lessons. Please make every effort to find a time that will be kept on a regular basis. If at any point, you feel that your child is in need of extra lessons, please call Cantor Barnoy to discuss. It is expected that your child will prepare his/her assignment at home between lessons. The lessons serve to evaluate the progress and assign additional portions to be studied at home.

Please note that If your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date is in September or October, your child may need to begin lessons two months early to compensate for summer vacation. If your child will be away for the whole summer, we strongly urge you to arrange for a summer tutor for him or her, either privately or through his/her camp so that they may rehearse what they have already learned and be readily prepared when they continue their lessons after the summer.

If extra tutoring is required you must arrange for the lessons at your own expense.

The Board of Education's policy is that *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* lessons may not take place when the child is scheduled to be in Religious School or *Makom* High school classes.

- **D'var Torah**

Three months before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony, your child will start the process of writing the *D'var Torah* with a member of the clergy. In the *D'var Torah* your child will be encouraged to incorporate a *Mitzvah* project of his/her choice. A separate short thank you speech can be given at the end of Services.

- **B'nai Mitzvah Family Programming**

During the 6th grade year you will be invited to participate in special family programs. These programs revolve around the meaning of the day of *Bar or Bat Mitzvah* and what it means to be a Jewish adult.

These programs, are often held during Religious School hours. They offer families an opportunity to think more deeply about the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* experience and ultimately, enhance the meaning of the day.

These programs are for all of the *Bar and Bat Mitzvah* families in a given year. Whether you receive your Jewish education in our Religious School or at the Solomon Schechter Day School or any other approved religious education institution, you are all *children of Beth Sholom* and we want to make sure that each of you takes advantage of these wonderful opportunities.

AVODA עבודה

- **Participation in our *Mishpacha Minyan***

We strongly encourage students, once they have learned their Trope to put their skills to use in our *Mishpacha* (Family) *Minyan* that occurs once each month. We will help you prepare a short *Torah* reading and you and your family will have an *Aliya* to the *Torah*. It is a special moment and a window into your future experience as a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

- **Attending services regularly**

Attendance by your family at *Shabbat* Services at Temple Beth Sholom prior to your *simcha* is required and encouraged. We want you to feel more comfortable in our sanctuary and with our Service. The frequency of this requirement is prescribed by Temple Beth Sholom's Board of Education.

G'MILUT CHASADIM גמילות חסדים

- **The *Mitzvah* Project**

We are very much concerned that the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* process reflects the ethical and communal responsibility incumbent on a Jewish adult. To this end, we require each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student to design and complete a *Mitzvah* project during the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* year.

During the *Vav* (sixth grade) year students will start participating in different *Mitzvah* projects. Projects vary according to students' interest, in light of current events or opportunities that arise in our community. Each family event will have a *mitzvah* component to encourage families to get involved as well. We encourage creativity and whole family involvement. Each of us has something to offer and we can all learn and get inspiration from one another. If you would like us to advertise your child's *mitzvah* project, please send us the information and we will post it on the *Mitzvah* Project page on our website.

We would like to encourage each one of the families to take upon themselves a *mitzvah* to be performed during the year of their child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS FOR *BAR AND BAT MITZVAH*

- Attendance in Temple Beth Sholom Religious School, Solomon Schechter Day School, or a school affiliated with the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education or its equivalent for a minimum of five years prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Current enrollment in such a school at the time of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is mandatory. Regular attendance and passing grades are required.
- Yav students are expected to attend twelve *Minyanim* Services this year.
- Serving as a Greeter at *Shabbat* Services will help our families feel more comfortable with the rhythm and flow of the Service. It is also a wonderful addition to make all of our guests feel welcome. You will be asked to serve as greeters on a Saturday morning service prior to your *simcha*.
- Selection and completion of a *Mitzvah* Project which reflects the ethical and communal responsibility incumbent on Jewish adults.
- The Board of Education and Religious Affairs Committee reserves the right to postpone the ceremony of students who fail to meet any of our requirements.

CHOOSING A DATE FOR THE CEREMONY

- By fourth grade you will receive a form with the date of your child's Hebrew birthday and a calendar for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* year. Please fill out the form indicating 3 possible dates. You will be notified of an assigned date after careful consideration by the committees involved.
- Please note that due to the large number of *B'nai Mitzvah*, it is possible that *Shabbat* morning Services will be shared between two families.
- We will do our best to meet your requests, however they are not guaranteed and should not be considered definitive until you receive a written confirmation from our office.

INCLUSION PROGRAM (*TIKVAH*) AT TBS

Temple Beth Sholom is an inclusive Conservative, egalitarian congregation that provides a sense of home to all, regardless of physical, cognitive, behavioral, or emotional abilities. We do our best to meet the individual needs of our members and guests, ensuring full access to our temple community. We urge families with children who have special needs to discuss their individual child's accommodations with us.

PLANNING THE CEREMONY

OPTIONS FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH CEREMONIES AT TBS

The ceremony for *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* occurs during the following worship Services that are led by our Rabbis and Cantor.

- **Saturday Morning – 9:15 AM (Single or Double *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*)**

In addition to the *Haftarah* portion, a child may be eligible to chant from the *Torah* if he/she has had *Torah* Trope training. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* may read additional Hebrew and English prayers and will present a *D'var Torah* an introduction to the *Torah* or *Haftarah* reading.

Music accompaniment has always been a part of our TBS *Shabbat* Service and a part of our history as a congregation. In response to the evolving nature of our community, the accompanist's schedule is determined based upon a number of factors including the availability of the accompanist, schedule, special programming, etc. There will be no fee for use of the accompanist.

Honors: Three Torah honors (not including the Bar/bat mitzvah) and three Ark openers per family.

Kiddush: Please check with the office about different options for the celebratory kiddush.

- **Saturday Mincha, Ma'ariv and Havdalah (Single *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*)**

This Service begins at sunset on Saturday afternoon. Since the *Haftarah* is not chanted Saturday evening, the child will read from the *Torah*. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* may lead additional Hebrew and English prayers and present an introduction to the *Torah* reading (*D'var Torah*). In addition, he or she may lead the brief *Havdalah* Service at the conclusion. The family is invited to participate in the *Havdalah* ceremony.

Honors: Three Torah honors (including the Bar/Bat Mitzvah), ten Ark openings and four other honors.

Kiddush: The evening celebratory meal must be a Colbeh catered function at our synagogue.

If you have a family need for a date that is not on Shabbat morning or afternoon, please make an appointment with Rabbi Ben-Gideon to discuss.

- **Honors:**

You will receive a form from our *B'nai Mitzvah* coordinator to assist you with *Aliyot* (honors before the *Torah*) and Ark openings. Please fill out the form to the best of your ability and submit it two weeks prior to your *simcha* to ensure that the Service will run smoothly.

Please note that in addition to the *Aliyot* of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and their families, honors are offered to Temple members, some of whom may be observing a *yahrtzeit*, celebrating an *aufruf* (pre-wedding honor) or the naming of a baby girl, or other significant life event.

All men called to the *Torah* are required to wear *Tallit*.

- **Participation in the Service:**

The Religious Affairs Committee of Temple Beth Sholom has established the following sequence for those who are willing and capable to perform the following on *Shabbat* morning:

- o Blessings for the *Aliyah* to the *Torah*
- o *Haftarah* and its blessings
- o *Maftir* (last portion of *Torah* reading)
- o *Ashrei* and concluding hymns
- o Additional *Torah* reading
- o *Kabbalat Shabbat* (The Friday Night Service)
- o *Psukei D'Zimra* (The Preliminary Morning Service)
- o *Shacharit* (*Shabbat* Morning Service)

- **Thursday Mornings Tefillin/Minyan Service:**

After their 13th Hebrew birthdate there is an obligation for your child to use their *Talit* and *Tefillin* during their prayers every weekday morning and as an egalitarian congregation we encourage all of our students, male and female, to take on this *Mitzvah*. To initiate them into this important rite we have a wonderful tradition for your child to attend a Service in our Chapel on the Thursday before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at 6:45 AM - so your child can put on their *Talit* & *Tefillin* and receive an *aliyah* to the *Torah* to celebrate this milestone. Please contact *B'nai Mitzvah* Coordinator, Silvia Kogan to schedule.

THE BIG DAY

The *Shabbat* morning service begins at 9:15 AM. Please arrive by 9:00 AM to allow enough time to get ready. Please be at the synagogue on time. *Shabbat* Morning Services are usually completed by noon. Our custom is that the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Family sits in the front section of the Sanctuary.

- **The Tallit Ceremony**

Our congregation is egalitarian and thus we encourage all our boys and girls to begin wearing a *Tallit* when they become *B'nai Mitzvah*. There is a *Tallit* ceremony at the service during which the parents will place a *Tallit* on their child's shoulders, followed by the child's recitation of the Blessing for Wearing the *Tallit* and the parents' recitation of the blessing of gratitude - *Shehecheyanu*.

She-He-Che-Ya-Nu

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן
הַזֶּה.

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-Nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, she-he-che-ya-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu ve-hi-gi-a-nu laz-man ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

At the conclusion of this ceremony the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* will ascend to the bima for the balance of the Service and the parents will return to their seats.

- **Family Participation**

We encourage the members of the family to become involved but please remember the focus should be kept on the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. It is his/her special day. It does add to the special feelings of the day when members of the extended family participate in the *Torah* reading. Opportunities for family involvement include:

1. Post *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* – Reading *Torah* (please talk to Cantor Barnoy)
2. Pre *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* – Siblings can be called up to participate in *Ein Keyloheynu* or *Adon Olam*.
3. English readings at *Shabbat Mincha* or weekday *B'nai Mitzvah*.

For more information, please consult the Rabbis or the Cantor.

- **Traditions**

While we encourage you to provide kippot and head coverings for your guests, in order to maintain consistency, the office has the display materials needed. We print a *Shabbat* brochure every *Shabbat* that includes all pertinent information relating to both the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* as well as the *Shabbat Service*.

DEDICATION OPPORTUNITIES TO HONOR THIS OCCASION

In the spirit of *Mitzvot*, it is customary to make a donation in honor of the *Simcha*. For more information, contact the synagogue office.

- **Haftarah Scroll**

Our synagogue commissioned the writing of a beautiful *Haftarah* scroll which is on display in the lobby and is read by the congregation every *Shabbat* and Holiday. It is a wonderful opportunity to mark your child's *simcha* by dedicating a word, a verse or the entire *Haftarah* that your child will chant.

- **Tree of Life**

The Tree of Life, located in the Gallery, is for joyful events. It is a way to remember the day in a permanent way. Think how meaningful it will be for your child to be able to see his/her name on a leaf on the tree in the years to come. There are both small and large leaves available, as well as rocks beneath the tree, which are available for sponsorship.

- **Brick in the Early Childhood Center**

Create a lasting legacy of your family's connection to Temple Beth Sholom with the purchase of an engraved brick for the Courtyard in our new Early Childhood and Lifelong Learning Center.

- **Tzedakah (Charity)**

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* celebrates your child's entrance into Jewish religious responsibility in many ways. By means of his/her *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, your child will express his/her involvement in the other areas of Jewish responsibility such as *Tzedakah* – the Jew's responsibility for the welfare of people. We encourage your child to use his/her *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* as an opportunity to support a worthwhile cause of your child's choosing. The cause and amount should be a family decision.

KAVOD – DECORUM

SPECIAL REMINDERS AND HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS SAFEGUARDING THE DIGNITY OF THE SERVICE

We are very proud of the warm, friendly and inspiring atmosphere that we have created in our synagogue. The most important aspect of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* experience is what takes place in the Temple at the Service. It is certainly appropriate to celebrate the happy event with a festive social gathering. However, we encourage you to seek ways to incorporate the religious message of the moment in the social celebration.

Care must be taken that the social event does not overshadow the religious event itself. As part of your child's religious education we seek to impart a sense of values which reflect Judaism's rich heritage. We try from the beginning to inculcate the ability to distinguish between what is essential and what is trivial, between the essentials in life and the merely glittering. We would like to partner with you in helping us transmit to your child the values inherent in the ceremony and rituals rather than the party celebration. We encourage you to combine your celebration with the transmission of lasting Jewish values.

The following are certain things you can do to help us sustain this atmosphere, especially on *Shabbat*:

1. Please remember that your *Shabbat Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a feature of the regular *Shabbat* Service. The regular Service is the standard and your affair must conform to its guidelines and practices. Your sensitivity in this area will be appreciated.
2. To keep with *Shabbat* practices please refrain from bringing packages to the synagogue during *Shabbat*. Please advise your friends to bring gifts to you instead.
3. Photographing and videotaping are not permitted on the premises on *Shabbat*. Families may choose to have professional photographs taken in the sanctuary either during the week before or after the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Please arrange a mutually convenient time to do this with your tutor to schedule a one-hour photo session. Your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* tutor or a member of the clergy must be present if you need the Ark opened.
4. The use of cellphones is prohibited on *Shabbat*. Please advise your guests that in case of emergency they should speak to our ushers who will direct them to a private place.
5. Please advise all Jewish adult males that they will be required to wear a *Tallit* during our Service. Adult Jewish women have the option of wearing a *Tallit* as well. In addition, all male guests must wear a *kippah* which are available at the entrance to the Sanctuary.
6. A word about modesty: Modesty is always in good taste at Temple. To help us preserve the dignity of synagogue worship, you and your friends are urged to dress appropriately. Strapless dresses and/or extremely short skirts are inappropriate during Services. Jeans and sneakers are also inappropriate. We leave it up to you to use good judgment in selecting appropriate attire for the synagogue Service.

CATERING YOUR AFFAIR

Temple Beth Sholom is proud to recommend the services of our exclusive in-house caterer, Colbeh Caterers. Colbeh is available to help you plan your celebration. Colbeh can be contacted at the synagogue at (516) 801-0800. Please remember that those planning to have a *Shabbat Mincha Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, a *Rosh Chodesh Sunday Bar/Bat Mitzvah* or a special Holiday *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* are obligated to have a Colbeh affair at the synagogue. You are encouraged to speak to Colbeh as soon as possible as dates fill up quickly. The affair with Colbeh Caterers must be booked at least 18 months in advance. The Caterer has the right to book an event if they have not received a booking in this time period.

- ***Kashrut and Shabbat Observance***

We strongly encourage you to affirm the spirit and traditions of our people as you decide on the particulars of your affair. The appropriate collation at the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* should be *Kosher*. Your affair should not require your guests to violate *Shabbat* by having to travel unnecessarily to an off-premise location following the Service.

- ***How to plan your Kiddush at TBS***

As your child nears the age of *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, Temple Beth Sholom's professional staff is here to help you plan for this significant event. Along with the Rabbi, Cantor, and the Religious School Staff, we will work with you to plan an event that both works for your family and helps you feel a deep connection with the TBS community. Planning involves practical questions, like catering choices and delivery schedules; educational questions, like guidance in tutoring; and religious questions, such as how to make the process meaningful and enhance your child's Jewish identity.

Financial Matters: Temple Beth Sholom members are expected to be in good financial standing at the time *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* dates are assigned. All members are encouraged to fulfill their financial obligations to the synagogue as early as possible.

At the latest, all fees and annual membership dues must be paid in full two weeks in advance of the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* date. All families are welcome to meet with the Executive Director, Eileen Bohrer several months prior to your event. Families who require a special financial arrangement are encouraged to speak with the Executive Director one year before your service.

Kiddush Luncheon: A *Kiddush* luncheon is an opportunity to gather with friends and family immediately following your child's *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* Service. A large *Kiddush* luncheon that is open to everyone who has attended services is a wonderful way to celebrate and we encourage this kind of celebration. The TBS community is in the synagogue on *Shabbat* and along with you rejoices in your child's accomplishment on your special day. During *Kiddush* we build connections that make TBS a strong, vibrant community. By sponsoring *Kiddush*, you teach your child a valuable lesson about sharing lifecycle milestones and you foster the sense of community that is so important.

Many families opt to sponsor the luncheon for their guests and all congregants. Where this is not financially viable a fixed amount may be donated towards the luncheon. All options for available spaces, catering and menus, and many other items can be discussed during our meeting.

To beautify your day, you can order flowers for the *bima*. Please contact the main office for pricing and selection.

Please feel free to contact the Executive Director at 516.621.2288 extension 113 or at ebohrer@tbsroslyn.org.

Congratulations on your upcoming *simcha*!

THE NEXT STEP...AFTER THE *BAR/BAT MITZVAH*

Makom - the place for teens to forge their own identity.

You've worked hard to accomplish the skills necessary to be called for an *aliyah* to the *Torah* as a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. When you have finished, you breathe a sigh of relief and say to yourself, *Whew, that's done!* But are you really *done*? Becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* actually marks the beginning of your adult Jewish journey. What is it that awaits you after the *Bar Mitzvah*? At TBS, the continuation of your journey can be found in the *Makom* Hebrew High School, a three-part higher level of learning that is paired with hands-on social action and community service. The classes led in the *Machon* Beth Sholom Institute provide a solid foundation in the philosophy, ethics and values of Jewish living. It is an incredible opportunity to forge a close relationship with our clergy and our incredible staff. These class sessions morph into ACTIV8! offering hands on social action and community involvement. *Madrichim* training brings a more precise and focused involvement into our own religious school community. There is something for everyone in *Makom* whether it is *Torah* discussions or social action or becoming a *madrich* - it's up to you to choose your Jewish path...