
Temple Beth Abraham

B-Mitzvah Handbook



Rabbi David K. Holtz

Cantor Lauren Phillips Fogelman



TEMPLE BETH ABRAHAM

25 LEROY AVE, TARRYTOWN NY 10591 (914) 631-1770 TBA-NY.ORG

Dear Parents,

Mazal Tov! Your child will soon become a *B-Mitzvah* at Temple Beth Abraham. This is a significant milestone on your child's lifelong educational journey, which continues formally at Temple Beth Abraham through High School Graduation at the end of 12th grade. The process, which leads up to the day of the ceremony, is a wonderful opportunity for learning and growth, not only for your child, but for the entire family as well. We know that you will want to make this important event a meaningful Jewish experience in your family's life.

In order to help you do this, we have put together a complete *B-Mitzvah program*. In addition to your child's regular Judaic and Hebrew School education, this program includes family education experiences as well as your child's individual preparation. Among other things, these experiences will encourage parents and siblings, as well as the *B-Mitzvah* child, to focus on what this event means in your lives and to help put the ceremony and celebration in their proper perspective. You will receive notification about dates and times, as they get closer.

Meanwhile, this handbook contains information about all aspects of the *B-Mitzvah* program at TBA, from the selection of a date all the way through the ceremony and celebration. Please keep it in a safe place, where you can refer to it as needed. If you have questions that the handbook does not address, please feel free to call us. We are delighted that your family is a part of this community, and we're looking forward to working with you.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi David K. Holtz

Cantor Lauren Phillips Fogelman

Table of Contents

<i>B-Mitzvah</i> Timelines.....	5
Educational/Service Preparation Timeline	5
Practical Matters Timeline	7
A Note on Language	8
Introduction	8
Putting the <i>Mitzvah</i> Back in <i>B-Mitzvah</i>.....	9
The <i>Mitzvah</i> Project.....	9
Including <i>Tzedakah</i> in your <i>B-Mitzvah</i>	10
Scheduling Information	11
Date Assignment	11
Reform or Conservative?	11
Timing.....	11
Policies and Standards.....	12
Our Mutual Responsibilities	12
The Congregation:.....	12
The <i>B-Mitzvah</i> Child:	13
Parent(s):.....	14
Financial Responsibilities	15
Preparation	16
Family Education Programs	16
B-Mitzvah Lessons	16
Two Rehearsals on the <i>Bima</i>	17
The <i>B-Mitzvah</i> Ceremony	18
Friday Night.....	18
Saturday Morning	18
Presentation of Temple Gifts.....	19
General Information	20
Appropriate Dress	20
Prayer Garments.....	20
Photography and Videography.....	20
Streaming.....	20
Flowers.....	21
Friday Night <i>Oneg</i>	21
Thank You Gifts	21
Tree of Life	21
The Celebration	21
Celebrating at TBA	22

Your Party – celebrating the occasion:	22
Caterer	22
Facilities	22
Decorations.....	22
Music	22
A Final Note	23
Suggested Reading List	24
Appendix A: Glossary	25
Appendix B: <i>B-Mitzvah</i> Date Request Form	27
Appendix C: <i>B-Mitzvah</i> Honors.....	29
General guidelines:	29
The Honors:	29
<i>Aliyot</i> List: Reform Ceremony.....	33
<i>Aliyot</i> List: Conservative Ceremony.....	35
Appendix H: Ushering Guidelines - How to Be an Usher	39
Appendix I: Gift Presentation Guidelines.....	41
Appendix J: Preparation.....	42
Seasons.....	42
Preparation	42
Prayer Class.....	42
Trope Class.....	43
Individual Tutoring	43
D’var Torah.....	44

***B-Mitzvah* Timelines**

Please review this list carefully. Fill in the blanks by putting the month and year you need to address these issues based on your actual *B-Mitzvah* date. Check off the item when you have completed it. This list is not entirely complete. It is meant to highlight what is necessary as preparation for your service and the use of our facility. It does not include items in preparation for your own personal celebration.

Educational/Service Preparation Timeline

To Do	How Long Before Our Date	Our To Do Date	Done
Initial group meeting of parents with Rabbi. Rabbi gives deadline for Date Request Form. See Appendix B.	4 th grade		
Attend 6 th grade Family Ed sessions.	6 th grade		
Discuss with Cantor any educational, social, or behavioral needs for the student or family.	1 ½ years		
Service attendance recommendations for <i>B-Mitzvah</i>	Ongoing throughout Religious School		
Cantor will assign you, along with your Season (cohort), a date for your initial group meeting with the Rabbi	1 – 1 ½ years		
Contact the Clergy Assistant to make an appointment with Rabbi Holtz to meet with your child to discuss and choose a section of the <i>Torah</i> and <i>Haftarah</i> portions. We will send reminders, but it is your responsibility to make these appointments.	Before trope class begins		
Choose your <i>Mitzvah</i> Project.	1 year		
Begin thinking about who will receive honors and <i>aliyot</i> at your service. See Appendix C.	3 months		
Call the Clergy Assistant to make an appointment with Rabbi Holtz to meet with your child to discuss writing the <i>D'var Torah</i> (sermon). It is your responsibility to make these appointments.	10 weeks		
Commit to your ushering requirements. The Clergy Coordinator will work with you in selecting dates.	Preferably several months or weeks before your date		
Give "Gift Presentation Guidelines" to the person presenting Temple gifts. See Appendix I.	2 weeks		

To Do	How Long Before Our Date	Our To Do Date	Done
Rehearsal with Cantor to read from the <i>Torah</i> scroll for the first time and determine musical keys.	2 Tuesdays before the <i>B-Mitzvah</i>		
Service Rehearsal with Rabbi (for the entire immediate family). At this rehearsal, you will submit to the Rabbi your list of <i>aliyot</i> , honors, and the name of the person presenting the Temple gifts. See Appendix C.	Monday afternoon before the <i>B-Mitzvah</i>		

Practical Matters Timeline

To Do	How Long Before Our Date	Our To Do Date	Done
Submit form to reserve facility for a <i>Kiddush</i> , reception or celebration at TBA. Contact office for details.	At time of date request		
Non-refundable deposit of 50% required to reserve facility.	30 days after your date is assigned.		
The <i>B-Mitzvah</i> fee* will be billed in 4 installments beginning when your child's Season (cohort) begins their <i>B-Mitzvah</i> studies.	1 – 1 ^{1/2} years		
Submit agreement form for use of building facilities for <i>Kiddush</i> and/or reception. Contact office for details.	9 months		
All Temple commitments, building fund pledges, Religious School fees and <i>B-Mitzvah</i> fees are paid in full.* For Fall <i>B-Mitzvah</i> , this means that your Annual commitment for the Temple fiscal year (7/1-6/30) is due in full over the summer rather than by 12/31	3 months		
Final payment due (including security deposit) for facility rental for your celebration	3 months		
Purchase <i>Tallit</i> . You can order <i>Kippot</i> if desired.	3 months		
Furnish standard proof of insurance and certificate from caterer naming the Temple as an additional insured.	2 months		
Make an appointment for photographs at the Temple. Pictures with an open ark/Torah require one of the Clergy to be present.	2 months		
If using social hall, submit floor plan to Temple office indicating number of tables and chairs at each table. Contact office for details.	2 weeks		
We will contact you about your Flower and <i>Oneg</i> Dedications, the number of guests you are expecting at services, and the blurb/photo for our weekly e-blast,	3 weeks		

*All Temple fees are subject to change each year. Please contact the Temple Office for the fee schedule in effect during the year of your child's ceremony.

A Note on Language

Hebrew is a gendered language in which there is currently no word for *child*. In Hebrew, there are currently only words to identify boys or girls. One of our goals at TBA is to be as inclusive as possible, and there are many children under thirteen who are exploring their gender identity. Throughout this handbook, and in all of our communication, we are using the overarching term *B-Mitzvah* to refer to the coming of age ceremony of a Jewish child. Children and their families can choose to call their own ceremony a *Bar Mitzvah*, a *Bat Mitzvah* or a *B'Mitzvah*. All three of those possibilities are included wherever you see *B-Mitzvah*.

Introduction

The term *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is often translated as son/daughter of the commandments, but this doesn't really convey the meaning of the phrase. To become a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* really means to reach the age of religious responsibility.

In Talmudic times, parents were no longer responsible for their children's religious behavior when a boy reached thirteen and a girl reached twelve. At this point, a boy could be counted in a *minyan* (quorum of at least 10 males over 13 years of age required for Jewish worship) and was eligible to be called to the *Torah*; both boys and girls were responsible for observing *Shabbat*, fasting on Yom Kippur, etc. This required no particular religious ceremony. However, by the Middle Ages, a boy would mark his becoming a *Bar Mitzvah* by publicly reciting the *Torah* blessings, the *maftir* section (last three verses) of the weekly *Torah* reading, and the *haftarah* (reading from the prophets). There was no equivalent public ceremony for a girl upon becoming a *Bat Mitzvah* until 1922.

Today in all branches of Judaism in North America children mark their religious coming of age in public ceremonies. However, it is only in Reform and liberal Conservative congregations where the ceremonies are the same for all children. At Temple Beth Abraham we are proud to be part of the egalitarian tradition. We consider all children to be of age at thirteen, and their requirements for becoming *B-Mitzvah*, including preparation for and participation in the *Shabbat* service, are identical.

One final historical note: Classical Reform Judaism in the 1840's eliminated *Bar Mitzvah* as a rite of passage because the early Reformers felt that in modern life a child of thirteen was still a child, and ill-equipped to make serious religious decisions. They therefore substituted the new ceremony of Confirmation, which takes place at the end of tenth grade (when the children are generally sixteen). Held at the festival of *Shavuot*, when we celebrate the receiving of the *Torah*, Confirmation is an opportunity for the young adults of the community to publicly confirm their acceptance of Judaism.

For over one hundred years, most Reform Jewish children did not have *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* ceremonies. Then, largely as a result of congregational demand, this rite of passage was reinstated. In most Reform congregations, however, Confirmation remained the more important of the two ceremonies. This is still true today. It has also become an important rite of passage in many Conservative congregations. Though our thirteen year-olds have learned a great deal by the day of their ceremony, becoming *B-Mitzvah* does not mean that they know everything that there is to know about Judaism, or that their Jewish education has come to an end. Indeed, Jewish education, like all education, is a life-long process. However, it is unusual for thirteen year-olds to realize this on their own. The early Reformers may have been wrong to remove the *Bar Mitzvah* ceremony, but they were correct that our thirteen year-olds are still children. At Temple Beth Abraham we expect all of our *B-Mitzvah* children to continue their lifelong educational journey through High School graduation.

Putting the *Mitzvah* Back in *B-Mitzvah*

In the midst of the myriad details involved in preparing to become a *B-Mitzvah*, it is very important to remember what the event is all about. Becoming a *B-Mitzvah* is more than learning a set of skills and showing them off on the *bima*. It is a public statement that the child is ready and willing to accept the responsibilities associated with the road to adulthood. These responsibilities are summed up in the idea of *mitzvot* (commandments). By standing up on the *bima* during the ceremony, a *B-Mitzvah* is saying "I understand that God and Judaism expect certain things of me. I am willing to do my best to learn what they are, and to do them."

Though liberal Jews - Reform and Conservative - are less strict about exactly what is commanded, the overall concept remains. Whatever our personal level of religious observance, most of us agree that the ethical commandments are central to what it means to be a Jew. One of the most important of these commandments is *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Acts of *tikkun olam* permit us to be God's partner in creating the kind of world we want to live in. They give a sense of meaning and purpose to our lives, and give us an opportunity to feel good about our place in the world. It is in this spirit that we require all our students to complete a *Mitzvah* Project.

Many of the ethical commandments involve doing good things for others, and this is how the word *mitzvah*, which in Hebrew means "commandment" also comes to mean "good deed" in Yiddish. A *Mitzvah* project is in fact an opportunity to do a good deed, not just because it's nice, but because it is what God and Judaism expect/command.

The *Mitzvah* Project

The *Mitzvah* project is a personalized program of community service. It is our hope that this taste of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) will inspire your child to a lifetime of good deeds. Therefore, we suggest that you choose an activity that truly resonates with your child.

A note on types of projects: The word *tzedakah* (righteousness) refers specifically to money, and the idea that it is simply the "right" thing to do to offer financial help to those in need. *Tzedakah* is a crucial component of *tikkun olam*, because there are some things that only money can buy. We strongly encourage you and your child to make *tzedakah* part of his or her *B-Mitzvah* experience, perhaps by making donations to appropriate charities in honor of all your guests. Some other suggestions are listed on the next page.

However, experience has taught us that fund-raising for a cause, no matter how worthy, is not a great project for a child. We prefer that, rather than concentrating on collecting money, our students choose a project that falls under the category of *gemilut chasadim* (deeds of loving-kindness). This is about personal involvement, face-to-face encounters with the real world, and actively working for the benefit of others, often total strangers. The modern definition of *gemilut chasadim* corresponds closely with volunteerism. It includes such activities as visiting the sick, tutoring students, comforting mourners, caring for stray or injured animals, providing shelter for the homeless, and perpetuating the memory of someone who has died, among countless others.

In order to help you plan, one of the 6th grade Family Education Programs is designed to help you choose a *Mitzvah* project.

Your child should feel proud of their participation in their *Mitzvah* Project, as are we of them! As a way to share their experience with the TBA community, we suggest they create

a poster board which we will display in the Temple Lobby for the week leading up to their *B-Mitzvah*.

The *Mitzvah* Project Posterboard should contain:

- Their name
- The name of the organization where they volunteered
- A paragraph about the project and their experience
- Photographs of them volunteering or pictures related to the project
- Literature about the organization (if available)

Including *Tzedakah* in your *B-Mitzvah*

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Create or purchase invitations that incorporate the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*.
- Make sure the leftovers from your reception are donated to a local shelter.
- Distribute your flower or plant centerpieces to a local nursing home.
- Create centerpieces that can be donated to a cause you are interested in—baskets of canned foods, baskets of toiletries, etc.
- Set aside a certain percentage of the gifts your child receives to give for *Tzedakah*.
- Include a lovely card in your invitation requesting that guests bring canned goods or other necessities to the *B-Mitzvah* service and donate them to a local food pantry or deliver items to another organization of your choosing.
- Mazon – a Jewish Response to Hunger. Donate 3% of the total expenses for the *B-Mitzvah* to this wonderful organization. It will go a long way toward making your *B-Mitzvah* an inspiring (even “holy”) event.

It is our hope that your child will incorporate the *mitzvot* of *tzedakah* and *gemilut chasadim* throughout their *B-Mitzvah* experience, celebration, and most importantly, throughout their Jewish life.

Scheduling Information

Date Assignment

B-Mitzvah dates are assigned by the Ritual Committee based primarily on your child's birthdate. The *B-Mitzvah* Date Request Form (see Appendix B) asks you to indicate certain preferences for your ceremony. We will do our best to accommodate all requests. Once all dates have been assigned, you will receive a letter from the Ritual Committee indicating your child's *B-Mitzvah* date.

The size of our class determines if any of our children share a *B-Mitzvah* date. When a date is shared, we try to pair students from different school districts in order to minimize conflicts over friends attending the receptions. If your child has any educational, social, or behavioral needs that might make it difficult to comfortably share a date with another student, please note this on the Date Request Form (Appendix B).

Reform or Conservative?

We are very fortunate to be able to offer the option of a *B-Mitzvah* service held in either the Reform or Conservative tradition. In either case, the *B-Mitzvah* child will have an opportunity to lead part of the service, chant the appropriate blessings, chant portions of the *Torah* and *Haftarah*, and deliver a *D'var Torah* (sermon). We strongly encourage you to choose the setting in which you generally worship. This will permit both your child and your family to feel comfortable and at home on the day of the ceremony.

Timing

We are an egalitarian congregation, and therefore the *B-Mitzvah* ceremonies generally take place on *Shabbat* morning:

Conservative *B-Mitzvah Shabbat* services begin promptly at 9:00am and end at approximately 12:00pm. Shared services will end at approximately 12:30pm.

Reform *B-Mitzvah Shabbat* services begin promptly at 11:00am and end at approximately 12:45pm. Shared services will end at approximately 1:00pm.

Please note that Conservative *Shabbat* services take place each week, whether or not there is a *B-Mitzvah*, and the Rabbi and Cantor lead this service. On the days when there is a Reform *B-Mitzvah*, we engage a *ba'al tefillah* (service leader) to conclude the Conservative service. However, the Rabbi and Cantor will not leave the Conservative chapel until the *Torah* service concludes, generally around 10:30 a.m. Therefore, **the Reform *B-Mitzvah* service cannot begin earlier than 11:00 a.m.** We understand that this may impact your choice of catering halls, and we hope that you understand that we are trying to meet the needs of all our congregants.

In some instances, we may be able to schedule a *B-Mitzvah* at another time when *Torah* is read. One possibility is during a *Shabbat mincha* (late afternoon) service. Note that the precise time of this service will vary with the time of year, and is determined by the Rabbi. Another possible time for a ceremony is the morning of *Rosh Chodesh* (the celebration of the new month). This is often helpful for families who wish to invite guests who will not travel on *Shabbat*. If a *Shabbat* morning *B-Mitzvah* poses a difficulty for your family, please consult the Rabbi about these alternative dates or times and note this on the Date Request Form (see Appendix B).

Policies and Standards

Our policies and standards, to which the members of your family are being asked to commit themselves, are an attempt to ensure that the *B-Mitzvah* at TBA are important, meaningful events which are the fruition of an investment of time and effort on the part of the child, the family, and the congregation.

Our Mutual Responsibilities

TBA continues to be a growing, thriving, and nurturing congregation because all who are involved here work together under the basic assumption that a synagogue should feel like an extended family. As in any family, this means that we all share in the joys of one another's *simchas* and in the work and preparation that make them possible. The following are the responsibilities to which each of us is committing:

The Congregation:

The clergy and leadership of Temple Beth Abraham promise that:

1. From Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade, we will provide your child with the opportunity to fulfill all the goals of our Religious School curriculum. These include:
 - acquiring basic skills in Hebrew reading
 - understanding the meaning of the prayer service
 - becoming proficient in the observance of Jewish rituals
 - learning Jewish ethics and values and how they apply to everyday life
 - identifying with the needs of other Jewish communities, particularly the State of Israel
 - becoming familiar with Jewish history
2. Throughout your child's educational experience, we will do all we can to reinforce the values which you are teaching at home: pride in being Jewish; a love of our culture, history and traditions; and an eagerness to explore the role that Judaism plays in our modern lives.
3. During your child's sixth grade year, we will provide several *B-Mitzvah* related Family Education Programs led by the clergy and the sixth grade educators.
4. During the year prior to your child's *B-Mitzvah*, we will provide a range of specialized instruction designed to make this important point in your child's education as meaningful as possible for all involved.

The B-Mitzvah Child:

Every *B-Mitzvah* child is required to:

1. Attend Religious School for a minimum of four years prior to the date of the *B-Mitzvah* and complete all educational requirements to the satisfaction of the Director of Education and Youth Engagement, the Rabbi and the Cantor.
2. Register for and attend Religious School through the completion of the seventh grade, or the grade during which the *B-Mitzvah* falls. This is a joint policy of our Ritual Committee and Board of Education.
3. Seriously consider continuing your Jewish education through Hebrew High School. Remain a part of your Religious School community and study relevant issues that will benefit you throughout your Jewish life. The Temple is so committed to this that 8th grade tuition has been included as part of the *B-Mitzvah* fee*.
4. Create or select a *Mitzvah* Project. See the section in this handbook entitled “Putting the *Mitzvah* Back in *B-Mitzvah*” (pages 10-11).
5. Our experience tells us that a critical part of preparing to become a *B-Mitzvah* is regular attendance at services. Students will learn prayers, blessings and how to read and chant *Torah* and *Haftarah* through independent individual study, classroom study and one-on-one tutoring. They will learn how to lead a service, however, by attending services they are able to appreciate and comprehend what they are learning and see it into action.

And it is not just students that benefit. We have found that when parents attend with their children they too familiarize themselves with services and are then able to make their own family *B-Mitzvah* experience more comfortable, meaningful and customized to their wants and needs.

Accordingly, our service attendance recommendations focus on what we believe is most important. At the beginning of the 6th and 7th grade Religious School year you will receive the service attendance recommendations.

Be excited!

* All Temple fees are subject to change each year. Please contact the Temple Office for the fee schedule in effect during the year of your child's ceremony

Parent(s):

It is your responsibility to:

1. With your child, attend the initial Seasons meeting led by the Rabbi and Cantor during which you will discuss preparation, logistics and expectations. Our Wednesday 6th and 7th graders are divided into classes based on their *B-Mitzvah* date and we refer to this as a Season.
2. Supervise and support your child's preparation at home. Read (together as a family) the entire assigned *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions and help your child understand them. Under the guidance of the Rabbi, assist your child in preparing a *D'var Torah* (sermon). Sign your child's homework sheet daily after they have completed practicing for a minimum of 20 minutes.
3. Discuss the ideas of ***Tzedakah*** and ***Mitzvah*** and how you and your child can incorporate them into their *B-Mitzvah* experience.
4. Support your child in fulfilling the service attendance recommendation by attending services together. Our focus is not on forcing attendance but on creating a sense of confidence and familiarity for both child and parent. Familiarity with our congregational melodies and traditions will help make your family's *B-Mitzvah* experience more meaningful.
5. Help your child select and complete their *Mitzvah* Project
6. Attend the *B-Mitzvah* Family Education Programs held in your child's sixth grade year.
7. Serve as ushers at *B-Mitzvah* service(s) for fellow congregants. Please see Appendix H for ushering guidelines.
8. When sending out invitations, please consider your child's Religious School classmates. We know it's not always easy to include everyone, but if you're inviting many members of the class, please try to invite the whole class if possible and avoid excluding others. We are a community, and it can be genuinely hurtful when some are left out.

תְּלֵנוּ כְּאֶחָד — "All of us, as one." This Jewish value reminds us that inclusion strengthens our TBA community, and we should strive to make everyone feel welcome.
9. If your child has a special relationship with a TBA staff person, you may want to invite them to the b-mitzvah. Please remember to reach out and invite them, as it is not assumed they will attend every service.
10. Encourage your child to seriously consider continuing their Jewish education through Hebrew High School.
11. Be enthusiastic and demonstrate it to your child!

Don't worry – we're here to help you!

Financial Responsibilities

You will be responsible for the *B-Mitzvah fee** applicable for the year of your child's event. The fee includes time with the Rabbi, Cantor, and tutors; all study materials, the accompanist, the flowers and the sponsoring of the *Oneg Shabbat* on the Friday prior to the *B-Mitzvah* ceremony. You will be contacted in advance of the ceremony regarding your dedication of the flowers and how many guests you are expecting.

The *B-Mitzvah* fee will be billed in 4 installments beginning when your child begins *B-Mitzvah* lessons (approximately 1 - 1 1/2 years before the *simcha*). The first installment of the *B-Mitzvah* fee, and each subsequent installment, will be due upon receipt of the bill.*

The *B-Mitzvah* fee, as well as all outstanding Temple commitments, building fund pledges and Religious School fees must be paid in full no later than three months before your child's ceremony, subject to any financial arrangements previously made with the Temple.* For Fall *B-Mitzvah*, this means that your annual commitment for the Temple fiscal year (7/1-6/30) is due in full over the summer rather than by 12/31.

Compliance with Requirements

One of the most important aspects of becoming a *B-Mitzvah* is the recognition that with the beginning of adulthood comes the responsibility to faithfully fulfill one's commitments and obligations. In order to be assigned a *B-Mitzvah* date, both you and your child are required to sign the date request form (see Appendix B) - indicating your acceptance of the Temple's policies and standards. Please note that this includes the statement that the Ritual Committee reserves the right, on behalf of the Congregation, to cancel or postpone the *B-Mitzvah* in the event of unexcused noncompliance with the requirements.

* All Temple fees are subject to change each year. Please contact the Temple Office for the fee schedule in effect during the year of your child's ceremony

Preparation

B-Mitzvah at TBA is part of a lifelong process of religious education which begins at birth and which extends through High School and beyond. The foundation of *B-Mitzvah* instruction is laid throughout the education process.

Nevertheless, specific preparation is required during the period just before our children become a *B-Mitzvah*. At TBA this preparation is conducted by Rabbi Holtz, Cantor Fogelman, the Director of Education and Youth Engagement, and Temple Beth Abraham's Religious School Educators. In addition to the educational benefits, the close involvement of our clergy means that they and the learners get to know one another, making for a more meaningful and personal ceremony.

Family Education Programs

During your child's sixth grade year, you will be invited to attend several Family Education Programs each focused on a different aspect of *B-Mitzvah*.

B-Mitzvah Lessons

Approximately twelve months before the *B-Mitzvah* ceremony, your child will begin formal preparation. We will contact you with the date for your initial Seasons meeting with Rabbi Holtz and Cantor Fogelman.

The specific preparations and lessons for your child will depend on the type of service you are having but most of our learners will take a 10-week *B-Mitzvah* prayer class and a 10-week trope class as part of Religious School on Wednesdays (our pre- and post- *B-Mitzvah* program) at some point during the 6th and/or 7th grades.

A detailed description of the preparations for each type of service is outlined in Appendix K.

Service Attendance Guidelines

We encourage students of all ages, along with their families, to attend *Shabbat* and holiday services regularly at TBA. We have suggested numbers of services depending on your child's grade. Students should enter their attendance of services in the notebook in the lobby.

Sixth Grade:

Learners in 6th grade having a *B-Mitzvah* in the Reform tradition should attend at least 5 services per semester. Each semester, these students should attend 2 *B-Mitzvah* and 3 *Shabbat* evening services. We suggest that Family *Shabbat* be only one of these evening services.

Learners having a *B-Mitzvah* in the Conservative tradition should attend at least 5 services per semester. Each semester, these students should attend 4 *Shabbat* Conservative morning services and 1 *Shabbat* evening service.

Seventh Grade:

7th Grade First Semester Requirements: Learners having a *B-Mitzvah* in the Reform tradition should attend at least 5 services from September through January. These students should attend 2 *B-Mitzvah* and 3 *Shabbat* evening services. We suggest that Family *Shabbat* be only one of these evening services.

Learners having a *B-Mitzvah* in the Conservative tradition should attend at least 5 services from September through January. These students should attend 4 *Shabbat* Conservative morning services and 1 *Shabbat* evening service.

Seventh Grade Second Semester Requirements: All 7th Graders should attend at least 3 services of any kind from February through June.

Two Rehearsals on the Bima

On the Tuesday before the *B-Mitzvah* ceremony, your child will meet with the Cantor on the *bima* to read from the *Torah* scroll for the first time and choose keys for the prayers your child will chant with piano accompaniment (Reform service only).

On the Monday before the *B-Mitzvah* ceremony (unless the Monday is a holiday), your family will meet with the Rabbi for a dress rehearsal of the service. This is an opportunity for the entire family to increase their understanding of what will happen by walking through the service. It is strongly recommended that the *B-Mitzvah* child wear the shoes that they will be wearing at the service to become familiar with the feel of new shoes, slippery soles and/or higher heels on the *bima*, carrying the *Torah*, and standing at the podium. At this time, the parents will submit to the Rabbi the list of honors and *aliyot* (specific honors) and the name of the person presenting the Temple gifts (see Appendix C). If you have questions, or wish to meet with the Rabbi or Cantor earlier, please feel free to contact and schedule an appointment with the Clergy Assistant.

If you are planning a *Kiddush* or catered event at TBA, this is also the time to schedule a few minutes with the Facilities Manager who will be setting up for your event. At this time, you will discuss the Facilities Set-Up Form and the diagram of where to place tables and chairs in the Social Hall and/or Cocktail Area. Please note: it is your responsibility to provide wait-staff to set up, serve, and to clean up after the event.

The *B-Mitzvah* Ceremony

A *B-Mitzvah* is not a stand-alone ceremony; it always takes place as part of a congregational service, most often on *Shabbat*. This is because this milestone in your child's education marks the moment at which they can stand up before the congregation and serve as a *shaliach tzibur*, a prayer leader. The point of a *B-Mitzvah* ceremony is for the child, now of age to be considered a Jewish adult, to publicly demonstrate that they have learned enough to be worthy of that designation. Therefore, your child will be asked to take an active role throughout the service.

Friday Night

At the *Shabbat* evening service, the night before the *B-Mitzvah*, your family will be invited to attend the service. Family members will lead the congregation in the introduction to candle lighting and *Kiddush* (blessing over the wine). The *B-Mitzvah* child will lead the congregation in *Kiddush*.

Saturday Morning

The Child's Participation

As part of the ceremony, your child may:

1. Lead the congregation in portions of the service in Hebrew and in English
2. Chant the *Torah* and *Haftarah* blessings
3. Chant a selected section of the *Torah* portion (Reform) or chant the *Maftir* (Conservative)
4. Chant a section of the *Haftarah* portion and read the translation (Reform), or chant the entire *Haftarah* (Conservative)
5. Present an original *D'var Torah* (sermon) about the *Torah* and/or *Haftarah* portions
6. Lead the congregation in the chanting of *Kiddush* and *Motzi* (blessing over the wine and challah)

Your child will be encouraged to participate to the fullest extent of their ability. Educational, social, or behavioral needs should be brought to the attention of the Rabbi and the Cantor at the beginning of the *B-Mitzvah* training process.

The Family's Participation

All members of the family are invited to participate through *aliyot* and/or other honors. Please see Appendix C for more information about *aliyot*.

Please note that Temple Beth Abraham is committed to being sensitive to and inclusive of interfaith families. In particular, we believe that a non-Jewish parent who is raising a Jewish child is deserving of the same honors and participation as the Jewish parent.

The parents may:

1. Present the *tallit* to your child at the beginning of the service
2. Read the Parents' Prayer just before you pass the Torah to your child
3. Be honored with an *aliyah* to the Torah (a non-Jewish parent comes to the Torah but does not recite the blessing)
4. Give a personal blessing to your child just before their *aliyah*

Siblings who have already become *B-Mitzvah* may be honored with an *aliyah* to the Torah (as can other extended family members). Younger siblings are generally given a different honor, such as opening the ark. They also are asked to lead *motzi* at the end of the service.

Presentation of Temple Gifts

Toward the completion of the service, your child will be presented with gifts on behalf of the congregation. These include an engraved *Kiddush* cup, a *Tanakh* (Bible), a URJ/RootOne gift certificate for travel to Israel on a URJ High School summer program, and Membership Benefits to The Jewish Museum in New York City for the family. You may choose a fellow congregant to make the presentation, or the Clergy or Director of Education & Youth Engagement may also be asked. Please see Appendix I for gift presentation guidelines.

General Information

Appropriate Dress

Though we prefer not to focus on externals, the fact is that the clothes we wear make a statement about who we are, where we are, and what we are doing. We do not want to be fashion police, but we ask that, no matter where you are going after the service, you and your family be dressed appropriately for participating in a religious service in a House of God. This especially includes anyone who will be coming up on the *bima*. By appropriate dress, your child could wear:

If wearing a suit: Jacket and tie.

If wearing a dress or skirt: Dress or skirt with hemlines of reasonable length and shoulders covered (nothing sleeveless or strapless). Please note that a *tallit* does not count as a shoulder covering.

Prayer Garments

As an egalitarian congregation, we encourage but generally do not require folks of all genders to wear both a *kippah* (headcovering) and *tallit* (prayer shawl) during the entire *Shabbat* morning service. The two exceptions are:

- *Aliyah* to the Torah - We ask that anyone called to the *bima* for this honor put on a *tallit*.
- *B-Mitzvah* students – It is our custom for anyone involved in leading the service to wear both a *kippah* and a *tallit*. Therefore, all *B-Mitzvah* children wear both during the entire service. A *B-Mitzvah* is an ideal moment for your child to acquire their own *tallit*.

Photography and Videography

The taking of photographs during the service is strictly forbidden. Please remind your guests and family to please not take photos or videos on their cell phones during the service. Photographs may be taken at the Temple during the week prior or just before your service takes place by making arrangements with the Temple Office and Clergy. In order to take pictures with the ark open or with the Torah, one of the clergy must be present. **They are typically available for photos on the bima with the Torah at 10:20am for the 11:00am B-Mitzvah service.**

If your child is having a Conservative *B-Mitzvah* please contact the Rabbi and/or Cantor to discuss the timing of the photography.

As a service to our members, we record all b-mitzvah services. We trim the recording and add a title. You will receive a thumb-drive and link to the recording.

Streaming

Please note that the *B-Mitzvah* services are live-streamed and can be viewed in real time. The link to stream TBA *B-Mitzvah* services (and the Friday Reform Shabbat services) can be found on the Temple website: <http://tba-nyc.org/live-service-streaming/> - just scroll down to make sure you are on the correct service time/event and then click to view the live-stream event.

Flowers

The donation for the flowers that adorn the *bima* for the *Shabbat* of your child's *B-Mitzvah* as well as for the *Erev Shabbat* service are included in the *B-Mitzvah* fee*.

Our florist will select flowers that are appropriate for the season for flowers on the *bima*. If you are purchasing any additional flowers, please do not use lilies or heavily scented flowers. Please remember this when planning to have flowers at a reception held at TBA.

It is a long-standing tradition at TBA for the families of the *B-Mitzvah* child to dedicate the flowers in memory of loved ones. You will be contacted a few weeks prior to the *b- mitzvah* to obtain the dedication information that will appear in the emailed TBA Weekly Update and at the Friday night services.

Friday Night Oneg

It is customary that the parents of the *B-Mitzvah* children dedicate the *oneg* (gathering following the *Shabbat* service) in honor of the *B-Mitzvah* child. This dedication is listed in the Friday night service announcements. The *oneg*, consisting of cookies and coffee/tea, is included as part of your *B-Mitzvah* fee*. If the families wish to add to the food served, they should contact the Temple Office two weeks prior to the *Oneg* to make the arrangements. Please remember that the *oneg* is strictly *parve* (neither meat nor dairy) and nut free.

Thank You Gifts

It is customary, but not required, to give a donation in your child's honor as a "thank you" to the clergy. These donations can be given to the Rabbi and Cantor's discretionary funds or any other Temple fund that you choose. Other gratuities to Temple staff are at your own discretion.

Tree of Life

A wonderful way to commemorate your *simcha* is to add a leaf to our Tree of Life which is in the Temple's Lobby. Leaves engraved with your child's *B-Mitzvah* information and the date are permanently displayed for all to see and serve as a tangible reminder of your family's *simcha*. You can pick the branch where your leaf will be displayed. Since it takes up to 4 weeks to have the leaf engraved, please contact the Main Office in advance of your *simcha* to place an order. Leaves are a minimum of \$360.00 each and can hold up to 4 lines of text.

The Celebration

A significant part of every *simcha* (joyous occasion) is the celebration. It is completely fitting that the joyous occasion be marked in a joyous way. In fact, the *B-Mitzvah* meal, which dates to the Middle Ages, is called a *seuda mitzvah* (a *mitzvah* meal or a meal) which is required as part of the religious event. However, because it is a religious event, our tradition has also long emphasized the need for moderation. We encourage you to keep in mind the values you wish to teach your child, and to consider whether the type of party you are planning is consistent with those values.

* All Temple fees are subject to change each year. Please contact the Temple Office for the fee schedule in effect during the year of your child's ceremony.

Celebrating at TBA

At the very end of the *B-Mitzvah* ceremony, your child will lead the congregation in *kiddush* and *motzi*. Continuing your *simcha* at the Temple has the advantages of convenience and the right ambiance for this type of celebration. There are a variety of options available.

Your Party – celebrating the occasion:

It is also wonderful to celebrate your child's *B-Mitzvah* at TBA with a kidush, reception or luncheon. This can include catered and prepared hot and cold dishes, music, entertainment, and decorations. All should be arranged directly with your service providers.

We think so much of the idea of families celebrating at TBA that we do not release the Social Hall for other events until the *B-Mitzvah* families have the opportunity to reserve it. Upon written notification of your *B-Mitzvah* date, you will have 30 days to send in a 50% non-refundable deposit to reserve the social hall if you indicated that you intend to use the Temple for your reception. If you do not make the reservation at this time and later decide to use the Social Hall, please let the office know **as soon as possible**, to preclude the scheduling of another event for that weekend which may pose a conflict.

At least nine months prior to your date, you are required to sign a written agreement to reserve space. The TBA office will provide you with the form. The balance of the fees and the security deposit are due three months prior to your date.

Caterer

Regarding catering, please be aware that any event at which meat will be served must be handled by a certified Kosher caterer. Vegetarian or dairy events may be handled by any caterer, as long as the rules of biblical *kashruth* are observed (i.e. no shellfish, no pork products, no mixing dairy and meat). The caterer you select must be approved by the House Committee prior to the signing of a contract. The standard proof of insurance and a certificate naming Temple Beth Abraham as an additional insured will be required in addition to a security deposit. Caterers are required to broom sweep the premises and return the kitchen to the condition in which they found it. Please contact the office for greater detail about the catering process.

Facilities

The rental fee* for the Social Hall includes the use of the Temple's chairs and tables. Please submit a floor plan indicating the number of tables and the number of chairs at each table at least **two weeks** before the reception.

Decorations

Decorations must be freestanding. Please be advised that you are not permitted to attach anything to the walls, floors or ceilings of any of the Temple's rooms. The use of glitter and sparkles is strictly forbidden on the premises.

Music

Music is permitted for a reception, but please remember to adjust the volume so as not to disturb our neighbors.

* All Temple fees are subject to change each year. Please contact the Temple Office for the fee schedule in effect during the year of your child's ceremony.

A Final Note

Although this document attempts to answer many of the common questions and concerns that all families have about *B-Mitzvah* procedures, no doubt more questions will arise during the planning and preparation for your special day. The Clergy and staff want you to know that help is always available to you. Please feel free to contact us. We want to do everything possible to make this day meaningful for your family...

...and remember what it is all about...

This day can touch us as almost no other. This day can be a life-affirming, life-transforming experience. This day alone can bind us to our past...and prepare us for our future. Let us work together to let this day be all that it can be for each one of our *B-Mitzvah* children.

This complete *B-Mitzvah* Handbook, including the forms are also available on the TBA website at: <http://tba-ny.org/B-Mitzvah-resource/>

Suggested Reading List

Book recommendations for your family in preparation for child's *B-Mitzvah*:

- "Putting God On the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar Or Bat *Mitzvah*"
by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin
- "Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* Basics: A Practical Family Guide To Coming Of Age Together"
by Cantor Helen Lereman
- "The Complete Bar/*Bat Mitzvah* Book: Everything You Need To Know To Plan A Meaningful Celebration"
by Patti Moskowitz
- "The Jewish Book Of Why"
by Alfred J. Kolatch
- "Jewish Literacy"
by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin
- "*Mitzvah* Magic: Kids Can Do *Mitzvahs*"
by Danny Siegel
- "Tell Me A *Mitzvah*: Little and Big Ways To Repair The World"
by Danny Siegel
- "Tikkun Olam: Repairing The Word Through *Mitzvah*"
by Danny Siegel
- "Whose *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Is This Anyway Book"
by Patti Moskowitz

Appendix A: Glossary

Aliyah: *Torah* honor, "to go up."

Aliyot: Plural of *aliyah*.

Bima: The raised platform on which the service is conducted.

B-Mitzvah: The overarching term referring to the coming of age ceremony of a Jewish child or children.

B'nei Mitzvah: The plural of *Bar Mitzvah*. Can be used when referring to a *B-Mitzvah* for more than one child.

D'var Torah: "a word of *Torah*." A brief sermon, explaining one aspect of the week's *Torah* portion.

Gemilut Chasadim: "Deeds of loving kindness" All of the actions we take which help others. The sages say that *gemilut chasadim* is one of the three pillars on which the very existence of the world depends.

Haftarah: "completion" The reading of the section from the Prophets for a particular *Shabbat*.

Kippah: Is the Hebrew word for a headcovering. *Yarmulke* is the *Yiddish* word.

Kippot: Plural of *kippah*.

Maftir Aliyah: Is the last *aliyah* awarded each *Shabbat* morning. The person honored as *Maftir* also recites the *haftarah*. The *Maftir aliyah* is given to the *B-Mitzvah* child.

Simcha: Day of joy or happiness.

Tallit: Fringed prayer shawl worn by Jews past the age of *B-Mitzvah*.

Tallitot: Plural of *Tallit*.

Torah: The *Torah* scroll is written on parchment by a highly skilled and specially trained scribe. Hebrew on a *Torah* scroll is written without vowels. The text is chanted according to a prescribed pattern called *Trope*. The melody is memorized.

Tzedakah: The *mitzvah* of sacred giving, charity, or justice.

Appendix B: *B-Mitzvah* Date Request Form

Child's Name _____ Birth Date _____

Child's Gender and Preferred Pronouns _____

Our Ceremony will be:

B-Mitzvah *Bar Mitzvah* *Bat Mitzvah*

School District _____ Current Grade (Public/Private School) _____

Parents' Names _____

Address: _____

Evening Phone #: _____ Parent Email Address(es) _____

Cell Phone(s) #: _____

1. Type of Service

Reform Conservative

2. Time of Service

Shabbat Morning Other _____ [Please check with Rabbi]

3. Use of the Social Hall – Requires a non-refundable deposit 30 days after assignment of the date.

Yes (**Please circle:** Kiddush -or- Full Reception) No

___ Daytime ___ Evening

4. Other information or requests (e.g., special educational needs) _____

IMPORTANT NOTE - PLEASE READ AND SIGN

(No request will be accepted without your signatures)

By requesting a *B-Mitzvah* date we acknowledge receipt of the Handbook that contains the rules and obligations concerning *B-Mitzvah* at Temple Beth Abraham.

We understand that the failure of the parents and/or the learner to fulfill all obligations as outlined therein (or as same may be amended, modified or changed) may result in the postponement or cancellation of the *B-Mitzvah*, at the discretion of the Ritual Committee.

Signature of Parent

Signature of Learner

Signature of Parent

Date

Appendix C: *B-Mitzvah* Honors

As you can see from the following pages and forms, there are several different ways to honor your guests. All the honors listed are available to you whether or not you are sharing a date with another family, so you should fill in the entire “*Aliyot* List” form (Reform or Conservative) included in this appendix.

General guidelines:

Include everyone.

While every family is different, it has been our experience that people are very easily slighted. So, for example, if you invite one uncle to do something, you should invite all the uncles to do something. If you start asking first cousins, ask them all.

It’s always better to ask.

Even if you think that Aunt Sadie wouldn’t want to have an *aliyah* because she hates to speak in public, it’s always a good idea to offer her the option. If she says yes, you’ve made her feel great and avoided possible hurt feelings. If she says no, you’ve still made her feel great because you thought of her and it’s a win-win.

Don’t worry if you don’t have enough people to do everything.

You don’t need to use all the *Torah aliyot*, and you can honor someone more than once. For example, someone can be called to the *Torah* and also open the ark.

Make sure everyone is told in advance, what they are going to do.

There are certain kinds of surprises that almost everyone dislikes. Being called to perform publicly with no warning is one of them.

Write legibly.

Please fill in the names on the appropriate *aliyot* list of all who are to be honored. For the *Torah Aliyot*, please include full Hebrew names (these may be written in English). See *Torah Aliyot* section on the next page for more information about Hebrew names.

The Honors:

Presentation of Gifts

The TBA family is very proud of your child and has gifts to present. This is done during the *B-Mitzvah* service. Since they do come from the congregation, it is appropriate to ask a Temple member to make the presentation. This person should refer to the Gift Presentation Guidelines (See Appendix I). If you have not invited a Temple member, the Clergy or Director of Education & Youth Engagement may also be asked.

Ark Opening/Closing

This occurs three times during a Reform ceremony and twice during a Conservative ceremony.

The honor consists of opening and closing the doors of the ark.

These people do not have to be Jewish. Therefore, this is the place to honor any non-Jewish family and friends.

Torah Passing

This is limited to the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents of the *B-Mitzvah*. Step-parents can also be included.

Torah Aliyot

Aliyah means “to go up.” (Plural is *aliyot*) One is called “up” to the *bima* to recite a blessing before the *Torah* is read. Then the reader will chant from the *Torah*. Then the one being honored recites the blessing after the reading.

The blessings both before and after the *Torah* reading may be spoken or chanted in Hebrew (reading from either Hebrew or transliteration) or in English. Please ask your guests to practice; while we certainly don't expect perfection, it is painfully embarrassing when individuals mangle the blessings.

At TBA, the public recitation of blessings is limited to those who are Jewish; therefore, anyone called to the *Torah* for an *aliyah* must be Jewish. However, if there is a non-Jewish spouse or significant other, they may be called to stand next to their partner by the *Torah*. Our goal is to maintain a distinction without making anyone feel excluded.

Reform: Your family may have a maximum of four *aliyot*. In the case of a shared date, each family still gets four *aliyot*. We generally invite one or two people up at a time, though we can allow up to four at a time. It does get a little crowded at the *Torah* table.

The first *aliyah* is for guests. This is often given to grandparents, though that is not a requirement. Remember that grandparents will be participating in the passing of the *Torah*, so you may choose to honor someone else with the *Torah aliyah*. The second *aliyah* is for older siblings of the *B-Mitzvah*. If there are no older siblings, this *aliyah* is also for guests. The third *aliyah* is for the parent(s). The last *aliyah* is for the *B-Mitzvah*.

Conservative: On *Shabbat* morning there are eight *aliyot* to the *Torah*. Your family may have a maximum of four *aliyot*. (The other four go either to the other family, in the case of a shared date, or to congregants). We generally invite one or two people up at a time, though we can allow up to four at a time. It does get a little crowded at the *Torah* table.

The first *aliyah* of the morning must be given to a *Kohain*, and the second to a *Levi*. If none of your family or guests are *Kohanim* or *Levi'im*, members of the congregation who are, will receive these *aliyot*. Your four *aliyot* will follow. If one of your family or guests is a *Kohain* or *Levi*, their *aliyah* is included in the four *aliyot* you are allowed.

If none of your family or guests are *Kohanim* or *Levi'im*, your four *aliyot* are usually arranged as follows. The first *aliyah* is for guests. This is often given to grandparents, though that is not a requirement. Remember that grandparents will be participating in the passing of the *Torah*, so you may choose to honor someone else with the *Torah aliyah*. The second *aliyah* is for older siblings of the *B-Mitzvah*. If there are no older siblings, this *aliyah* is also for guests. The third *aliyah* is for the parent(s). The last *aliyah* (*maftir*) is for the *B-Mitzvah*. As well, you have the opportunity to honor family members or guests by inviting them to lead one of the English readings listed on the *Aliyot* List - Conservative Ceremony form.

Reform and Conservative: Each person is called to the *Torah* by their English name and Hebrew name, if the person has one. A full Hebrew name consists of the individual's name plus the names of their father and mother. For example, our patriarch Isaac, who was the son of Abraham and Sarah, would be called *Yitzchak ben (son of) Avraham v' (and) Sarah*. If someone can't remember their Hebrew name, they might ask a parent or other older relative. You can also check a *ketubah* (marriage contract) or naming certificate. Rabbi Holtz would be happy to translate any Hebrew documents for you. Please do not invent a name. It would be much better to simply call the person in English.

Hagbah and Gelilah (Lifting and Dressing the Torah)

This honor is for two people, one to lift the Torah and one to dress the Torah. They should both be Jewish. In the case of a double *B-Mitzvah*, each family will honor two people leaving one thing for each person to do: lift, belt, cover and put the silver back on. Lifting involves holding the *Torah* by the wooden rollers and raising it over one's head. Dressing involves putting the belt, mantle and silver back on the *Torah*.

Aliyot List: Reform Ceremony

B-Mitzvah of: _____

Presentation of Gifts: _____

Open/Close Ark (start of *Torah* service)

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

Torah passing (parents, grandparents, great-grandparents...)

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

Aliyot

1st aliyah

English name _____	Hebrew name _____
English name _____	Hebrew name _____

2nd aliyah

English name _____	Hebrew name _____
English name _____	Hebrew name _____

3rd aliyah (Parent(s))

English name _____	Hebrew name _____
English name _____	Hebrew name _____

4th aliyah (B-Mitzvah)

English name _____	Hebrew name _____
--------------------	-------------------

Hagbah (lifting the Torah) _____ **Gelilah** (dressing the Torah) _____

Open/Close Ark (end of *Torah* service)

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

Open/Close Ark (*Aleinu*)

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

Aliyot List: Conservative Ceremony

B-Mitzvah of: _____

Presentation of Gifts: _____

Open/Close Ark (start of *Torah* service)

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

Torah passing (parents, grandparents, great-grandparents...)

1. _____ 4. _____

2. _____ 5. _____

3. _____ 6. _____

Aliyot

1st *aliyah* (*Kohain*, if you have one)

English name _____

Hebrew name _____

English name _____

Hebrew name _____

2nd *aliyah* (*Levi*, if you have one)

English name _____

Hebrew name _____

English name _____

Hebrew name _____

3rd *aliyah* (Parent(s))

English name _____

Hebrew name _____

English name _____

Hebrew name _____

Maftir (*B-Mitzvah*)

English name _____

Hebrew name _____

Hagbah _____

Gelilah _____

Open/Close Ark (end of *Torah* service)

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

English Readings

The Psalm for *Shabbat* (page 72) _____

A Prayer for our Country (page 148) _____

A Prayer for the State of Israel (page 149) _____

A Prayer for Peace (page 149) _____

APPENDIX D: TBA Facility Reservation Request Form

Event Date: _____ Date of Request: _____

Requested by: _____

Area: Social Hall Cocktail Area Sanctuary Chapel

FUNCTION

Sponsoring Committee / Organization / Family: _____

Address: _____

Person responsible: _____

Phone # (H) _____ (W) _____ (Cell) _____

Email _____

Start time: _____ End time: _____

Type of event: _____

Expected attendance: _____ Set-up required? _____

Food: _____

If catered, name of caterer: _____

Caterer's telephone #: _____

Special requirements: _____

DEPOSIT 50% Non-Refundable \$ _____

PERSONNEL REQUESTED: Rabbi: Yes No Cantor: Yes No

NOTE: THIS REQUEST IS APPROVED ONLY IF SIGNED BY REQUESTED TBA PERSONNEL AND OFFICERS. THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BEFORE CONTRACTS ARE SENT TO SERVICE PROVIDERS.

RABBI AND/OR CANTOR _____

HOUSE COMMITTEE CHAIR OR
AUTHORIZED MEMBER: _____

PRESIDENT OR
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT: _____

Appendix H: Ushering Guidelines - How to Be an Usher

Thank you so much for helping other b-mitzvah families by greeting congregants and guests at TBA! The following guidelines are meant to help you help us at services. We've tried to be complete, but if something unexpected comes up, use your best judgment.

Why

Ushers are particularly important when many of the worshippers are not familiar with our congregation. They may not know our customs, or even the layout of the building, and your presence will help put them at ease. Your presence will also tend to keep the level of decorum high. Believe it or not, ushers make the entire service run much more smoothly.

When

Here are the typical times of each service, and the time by which we need you to arrive. Please double-check to find out which type of service you are ushering.

- **Conservative: Service begins at 9:00 a.m.**
Please arrive by 8:30 a.m.
- **Reform morning: Service begins at 11:00 a.m.**
Please arrive by 10:30 a.m.
- **Reform afternoon: Varies by time of year.**
Please check with the Rabbi. Please arrive 30 minutes prior to start.

What

A note on how to dress:

Please remember that this is a religious service and a celebration. As such, we ask that you dress appropriately. Imagine you are a guest at the *B-Mitzvah*.

Before the service begins:

There will be a plain-clothes security agent outside the front door. Their job is to vet both guests and congregants, and to unlock the door. If they ask you why you're at TBA that morning, just say that you are the b-mitzvah usher that week.

While guests are arriving, we suggest that you stand at the top of the stairs, overlooking the lobby. We have signs directing folks to the coatroom, the elevator or up the stairs, but if they look lost, you'll be able to offer guidance.

Once they are upstairs, please greet them, and direct them to the sanctuary (both Conservative and Reform b-mitzvahs usually happen in the sanctuary). You can let them know that the *kippah* bin and the tallit rack are in the lobby.

If you are ushering a Reform morning service, please remember that there is a Conservative service taking place in the chapel. Any sounds in the upper lobby carry clearly into the chapel. Please direct early-arriving guests to congregate anywhere but the lobby.

During the service:

We ask that you stay near the top of the stairs or lobby until 20 minutes after the service begins. At that point, please move to the sanctuary. If there are two ushers, one can stay in the lobby and the other can go into the service.

The “lobby” usher’s job is direct people into the sanctuary, and point them to available seats. Tell latecomers what page we’re on, and direct them to available seats.

Please note: if the congregation is standing, ask them to wait to enter until the congregation sits down.

The “inside” usher’s main job is keep an eye on the friends of the b-mitzvah and quiet them down if they are being disruptive. That generally presents itself as constant, audible talking, but might also include the flicking of kippot off of heads, or occasionally some pushing and shoving. We are not expecting perfect behavior, but we do not want the kids’ behavior to distract the b-mitzvah. If asking them to stop talking does not work, tell them that they should go to the Learning Center (first room in the lobby, across from the coffee bar). The entire service is streamed to the TV and speakers in that room. They can talk all they want and still see their friend.

If you are the only usher, you will be most helpful inside the sanctuary.

Make sure that no one is being disruptive. “Disruptive” can fall into several categories:

Young children: a little bit of noise is acceptable; sustained noise is not. If a baby is crying or a child won’t stop talking, and the parent doesn’t take the child out, please approach them and suggest that they do. You may offer them the Fran Friedman Learning Center where the service can be heard and watched on a monitor. If you’re not sure about whether or not to act, look at the Clergy. They’ll probably already be trying to get your attention.

Phone/Camera: unbelievable as it seems, there’s almost always someone who doesn’t understand that a religious service is not a photo opportunity. If you see someone pull out a phone/camera, or if you see a flash go off, please ask the guilty party to refrain from taking pictures.

Teenagers: They are the biggest challenge, but are generally manageable if you maintain a visible presence. Don’t allow them to cram themselves into a row. If they’re not participating, hand them prayer books. If they’re talking, ask them to stop. You have not only the right, but also the obligation to ask them to leave the sanctuary if they will not stop being disruptive. However, keep an eye on where they go. One of the ushers should periodically check the bathrooms to make sure everything is okay.

Teenagers can also be disruptive if they choose to sit in the lobby and talk. Their noise carries into the sanctuary. Please direct them to the Fran Friedman Learning Center where they can converse quietly without causing any disruption. Please check up on them.

Finally, keep an eye turned toward the Clergy. They may be signaling you to help with discipline, etc.

Do you have all of that? Don’t worry; it’s really not that difficult. Mostly it’s common sense. But of course, if you have any questions, or suggestions for things we’ve left out, please don’t hesitate to call Rabbi Holtz or Cantor Fogelman. And again, thanks for your help.

Appendix I: Gift Presentation Guidelines

Congratulations! You are being accorded the honor of presenting *B-Mitzvah* gifts on behalf of the congregation during the Saturday worship service. We have prepared what we hope are helpful guidelines for your presentation. If you're still unsure about something, don't hesitate to call Rabbi Holtz.

When does the presentation occur?

We present the gifts at the end of the service.

What should I wear?

Normal *Shabbat* attire is appropriate.

What are the gifts I am presenting?

There are four gifts:

1. **The *Tanach*, (Bible)**, which has been personally inscribed to the student by both the Rabbi and Cantor.
2. ***Kiddush* cup**, engraved with the student's Hebrew name and date of their *B-Mitzvah*.
3. **Gift Certificate from URJ/RootOne** towards a trip to Israel on a URJ High School summer program.
4. **Membership and Benefits to The Jewish Museum** in New York City.

What should I say?

The most important thing to remember is "be brief." While this is an important moment, it is not the focal point of the service. **Please keep the entire presentation under two minutes in length.** This is more than enough time to make an effective presentation.

Both your place in the service and the amount of time for the presentation – under two minutes – have been carefully allocated to seamlessly fit within the overall service and to propel the service forward.

You might offer a word or two about your relationship with the *B-Mitzvah* child. A personal touch is certainly appropriate and encouraged, but please try to do so in a way that relates to the Temple and the purpose of the gifts.

For instance, you might choose to mention an attribute of the child that relates to their involvement in Jewish communal life and tie that into the congregational gifts. It would not be appropriate to talk in the abstract about the child's prowess on the soccer field or ski slopes.

Your personal words should not overshadow the primary purpose of the presentation, which is to present gifts from the congregation.

Say something about each of the gifts. For example, when presenting the *Tanach*, you could say "This book has been the focus of Jewish tradition for centuries. I hope that you will find it meaningful throughout your life."

Say "*Mazal tov!*" and then a handshake, or hug and kiss are appropriate. Don't forget to congratulate the parents as well. That's all there is to it!

Thank you for accepting this honor on behalf of the *B-Mitzvah* family and the Temple. Feel free to call with any questions.

Appendix J: Preparation

B-Mitzvah at TBA is part of a lifelong process of religious education which begins at birth and which extends through High School and beyond. The foundation of *B-Mitzvah* instruction is laid throughout the education process. As part of our Religious School Curriculum, we teach our students how to read Hebrew, pray as a community and encourage them to formulate their own relationship with God. To that end we expose them to the prayers that they will participate in during services at TBA and around the world. When they begin their *B-Mitzvah* studies we also begin to put an emphasis on becoming *bima* ready with the prayers that they either lead or hopefully participate in during *B-Mitzvah* services.

Seasons

Students in the 6th and 7th grade attend our pre- and post- *B-Mitzvah* program on Wednesdays. Classes are grouped according to *B-Mitzvah* dates. These groups are designated as Seasons - Winter, Spring or Fall followed by the year of your child's *B-Mitzvah*. Your child will move through each part of the *B-Mitzvah* process with their Season regardless of what kind of *B-Mitzvah* they are having. Cantor will assign you, along with your Season, a date for your initial group meeting with the Rabbi at which time *B-Mitzvah* folders including *Torah/Haftarah* booklets will be handed out. Following that meeting, you will need to schedule a meeting with the Rabbi during which your child will discuss the *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions and pick which sections they would like to chant. It is your responsibility to make these appointments.

Preparation

Preparing for a *B-Mitzvah* happens in four steps:

- 1) Prayer Class (10 weeks during our pre- and post- *B-Mitzvah* program on Wednesdays)
- 2) Trope Class (10 weeks during our pre- and post- *B-Mitzvah* program on Wednesdays)
- 3) Private Tutoring (20 minutes/week outside of Religious School until the *B-Mitzvah*) with Cantor
- 4) Continuing to attend Religious School:
 - i. 6th graders attend classes on Sunday mornings and Monday afternoons
 - ii. 7th graders attend classes on Monday evenings and Wednesday afternoons

Prayer Class

Your child will spend 10 weeks during our pre- and post- *B-Mitzvah* program on Wednesdays with their Season studying the prayers.

Those students having their *B-Mitzvah* in the Reform tradition will learn the following prayers from Mishkan T'filah:

123	Friday night <i>Kiddush</i>	Chant
handout	<i>Tallis</i> Blessing	Read
228	<i>Yotzeir</i> chatimah	Read
230	<i>Ahavah Rabah</i> chatimah	Read
242-244	<i>Avot V'Imahot</i>	Chant
246	<i>G'vurot</i> chatimah	Read
364-365	In this scroll	Read
368	Opening <i>Torah</i> Blessing	Chant
368	Closing <i>Torah</i> Blessing	Chant
372	Opening <i>Haftarah</i> Blessing	Chant
372	Closing <i>Haftarah</i> Blessing	Chant
374	<i>Y'hal'lu</i> top line of Hebrew on page	Read
604	Saturday Morning <i>Kiddush</i>	Chant

Those students having their *B-Mitzvah* in the Conservative tradition will learn the following prayers from Siddur Sim Shalom:

312	Friday night Kiddush	Chant
handout	<i>Tallis</i> Blessing	Read
115B/156B	<i>Avot V'Imahot and G'vurot</i>	Chant
142	Opening <i>Torah</i> Blessing	Chant
142	Closing <i>Torah</i> Blessing	Chant
147	Blessing after the <i>Haftarah</i>	Chant
187	<i>Adon Olam</i>	Chant
315	Saturday Morning <i>Kiddush</i>	Chant

Trope Class

Learners having a Reform *B-Mitzvah* will spend 10 weeks during mid-week Religious School with their Season studying trope. They will be learning the system for chanting *Torah* using the *V'ahavta* as a guide and then apply the system to their own *Torah* portion.

Learners having a Conservative *B-Mitzvah* will learn the system for chanting *Haftarah* while applying it to the Blessing before the *Haftarah* and their own *Haftarah* portion. Depending on how many learners there are in the Season who will be having a Conservative *B-Mitzvah* will determine whether the student learns *Haftarah* trope in a group or independent situation.

Individual Tutoring

After completing the prayer and trope classes, your child will continue in our pre- and post-*B-Mitzvah* program on Wednesday afternoons and Monday evenings with the Religious School curriculum. In addition to this, your child will begin private lessons. These lessons are 20 minutes/week and will be scheduled by the Cantor's assistant. During these sessions, they will review the prayers learned during prayer class to make sure that the child remains *bima* ready.

Learners having a Reform *B-Mitzvah* will also continue to apply what they learned during trope class to their *Torah* portion. When they have completed studying the *Torah* portion, they will begin to work on their *Haftarah* portion. The tutor or Cantor will also instruct your child to add the *Barechu* and *Shema* to their studies.

Learners having a Conservative *B-Mitzvah* will also continue to apply what they learned during trope class to the *Haftarah* portion. When they have completed their *Haftarah* portion they will begin to work on their *Torah* portion (*maftir*). The private tutor or Cantor will also instruct your child to add the *Barechu*, *Shema/V'ahavta*, and *Shema/Echad* for *Torah* service to their studies.

Learners having a Reform Afternoon *B-Mitzvah* will also continue to apply what they learned during trope class to the *Torah* portion.

These sessions are meant to be check in sessions for your child so that we can hear what they have been working on during the week, evaluate and make corrections where needed and assign the next section.

These lessons will continue until two weeks prior to your child's ceremony. Over the course of the last two weeks before the *B-Mitzvah*, there will be two rehearsals (Bima rehearsal with the Cantor and a Dress Rehearsal with the Rabbi).

D'var Torah

Approximately ten weeks before the *B-Mitzvah*, while still privately meeting with the tutor or Cantor, your child will also begin working on their *B-Mitzvah D'var Torah* with the Rabbi. The central part of the *D'var Torah* is your child's discussion of the *Torah* and/or *Haftarah* portions. It is also an opportunity for your child to express feelings about the day and the ceremony, their *Mitzvah* Project, and about becoming a *B-Mitzvah*. It is your responsibility to make these appointments.