



Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guide

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Revised March 2017

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Introduction

Message From The Rabbi

Bar/Bat Mitzvah represents a wonderful milestone in the life of your family. There is probably no greater moment, aside from birth and marriage, than when your son or daughter is called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and is welcomed into the adult Jewish community. We hope it will be the beginning of a lifelong commitment to and participation in the religious life of our synagogue and people. It is a great occasion and we wish you a hearty Mazal Tov.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is about ritual maturity. It is about growing up as a Jew. It is about becoming a fuller member of the Jewish community. It is about moral responsibility, about connecting to Torah, to community, to God. As you begin the process, it is appropriate for you and your child to turn inward and ask yourselves, "Why are we doing this? What does it all mean?"

At Beth El, we take pride in our children becoming proficient service leaders, as well as capable Torah and Haftarah chanters. It is our greatest hope and expectation that the upcoming preparation and celebration you and your family are undertaking will have enduring and lasting significance. The seriousness and commitment required will help to shape the meaning of the celebration.

If you haven't already, please take this planning time to become familiar with our Congregation's prayer services. Accompany your child whenever possible to both Friday night and Saturday morning services, as well as daily morning minyan. You are part of a wonderful community here, and there is no better way to feel a part of it than by attending services regularly. This will also help you feel comfortable participating fully on your child's special day. There is no substitute for showing up.

We look forward to working with your entire family in the year to come. Please know that we will make ourselves completely available to you during this process. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns at any time during the journey ahead.

It is our fervent prayer that this experience will be one of many meaningful and fulfilling opportunities in the years that lie ahead. May this process be a source of blessings for you and your family, a moment that continues toward a life of meaningful Jewish adulthood, commitment, and participation.

Mazal Tov,

Rabbi Marcelo Kormis

Message From The Hazzan

Welcome to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program at Congregation Beth El! You are about to embark upon one of the most exciting processes in the cycle of Jewish life. Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the beginning of the transition from childhood into adulthood. The engagement in our services is one of the first public expressions of your son's or daughter's commitment to becoming a knowledgeable, functional, responsible Jewish adult.

It is our hope that becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah will serve as a stepping stone to an even more meaningful connection to Judaism within your home and our community. Some of the goals of our program include:

- Bringing families together as a community
- Demonstrating Jewish learning as a life-long process
- Empowering parents to learn with their children
- Sharing the beauty of Shabbat observance and traditions
- Involving families in mitzvah projects to help our world community
- Reinforcing basic Jewish literacy

We have seen that one of the lasting ways to imbue our children with strong Jewish identities is through music, in both learning and in prayer. May we continue to feel and experience the warmth of our voices joined as one with a common hope for the future of Judaism. May we learn and grow together to reach a greater understanding of the holiness that surrounds us and is part of us.

This is a memorable time in the life of your family and we are delighted to be sharing it with you.

May G-d grant you Hatzlaha uv'raha, success and blessing, in this holy endeavor.

Hazzan Brian Baruch Shamash

Learning

All Bar/Bat Mitzvah training shall be carried out under the auspices of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator, Hazzan Brian Shamash.

Foundation

The foundation for learning is built in the Religious School. The curriculum is structured to ensure the success of each and every student on the day they become Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Regular attendance allows each student to learn much of the material they will need to know. This saves time, tutoring costs and stress in the months leading up to the special day.

In addition, the best way to prepare for the various rituals and to be comfortable with the service is to simply be present on Shabbat morning. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students and their parents are therefore expected to attend a number of weekday morning minyan, Friday evening, and Shabbat services during the year preceding the simcha. This will give you time to understand the flow of services, as well as the ways in which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah families and other congregants participate. Please see the section “Religious School Attendance Requirements.”

Finally, during the week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students and parents attend the Monday, Thursday and Friday minyanim. The Torah portion read on those days is customarily the same as will be chanted at the Saturday morning service, and your child will have a chance to experience a real Torah reading before the big day.

You are part of a wonderful and welcoming community here, and there is no better way to feel a part of it than by attending services regularly.

Commitment

A series of tutorials with the student’s private tutor, the Rabbi, and the Hazzan is required. This process generally begins approximately nine to twelve months prior to the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and consists of weekly appointments.

It is imperative that students arrive on time for lessons. In those instances when a student cannot attend a scheduled lesson, the tutor should be notified as far in advance as possible. It is a synagogue policy that lessons will not be given during a student’s Religious School class hours. It is also a synagogue policy that a responsible adult accompany a student to private lessons. This gives every parent the opportunity to learn alongside their child and understand the process their child is going through. It also insures your child’s safety and comfort.

Overall Expectations

- Students will come prepared to each lesson with the Rabbi, Hazzan, and private tutor, and bring their instruction materials.
- Students will chant from the Torah.
- Students will chant the Haftarah.
- Students will achieve proficiency in prayers in advance of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, and continue with review until their actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.
- Students will prepare, according to their individual ability, additional Torah readings and prayers in Hebrew or English to be read or sung during the Monday, Thursday, and Friday weekday services, as well as the Friday night and Saturday morning services.
- Parents will participate in a family seminar to be led by the Rabbi. This will consist of several Sunday morning classes during your child's 7th grade year.

Family Seminars

The Rabbi leads a series of four required seminars for groups of Bar/Bat Mitzvah families. These seminars provide both excellent guidance on the major aspects of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah as well as an opportunity for you and your child to meet with the Rabbi and raise general questions. Both parents are strongly encouraged to join their children at the Family Seminars on Sunday mornings, usually in the fall of the 7th grade year.

Meeting with the Rabbi

In addition to the Family Seminars, you and your child will have several opportunities to sit down with the Rabbi in anticipation of your simcha, beginning approximately three months prior to the event. At that meeting, you will have the opportunity to discuss the religious significance of the moment as it pertains to you and your family, any concerns you might have, and focus upon the D'var Torah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah speech. Through regular consultations, the Rabbi will assist each student in the preparation of the D'var Torah, with a final review to take place two to three weeks before the big day.

Two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the Rabbi will arrange a meeting to go over the ceremony, discuss honors and fill out the honors form (see appendix). If you have concerns before that meeting, please contact the office to make an appointment to meet with the Rabbi.

Studying with the Hazzan

Beginning approximately 9-12 months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child will begin weekly classes, learning sessions, small group lessons & regular checkups with the Hazzan.

At each session your child will review previously assigned material, and will leave with specific assignments to prepare with the help of their individual tutor.

Private Tutoring

While our Religious School program teaches the children the bulk of the skills they need to master for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each student has a unique Torah and Haftarah portion that requires individual preparation above and beyond the time that we have during Religious School hours. The amount of individual preparation will vary depending on the abilities, attitude, and parental support of each student.

Individual private tutoring on a weekly basis is customary and generally begins approximately nine to twelve months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Each week, progress will be evaluated and a specific goal will be established for the forthcoming week. Additionally, a private meeting with the Hazzan to assess/check-in will be scheduled approximately every four weeks.

To begin, each family and the Hazzan will together select an individual tutor for your child. Our synagogue's tutors are experienced and dedicated, and are an integral part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process. While the fee for a tutor is the responsibility of the family, we have tutors at all fee levels.

You and the tutor will arrange for the day and time of the tutoring. Our preference is for tutoring to take place here at the synagogue. Please confirm room availability with the Hazzan or front office.

Your child will be provided with a binder with all the required materials such as the Haftarah, Torah readings, and the brachot, as well as recordings (e.g., MP3 files) that your child can use for home practice. The tutor will work with your child to help them first learn the Haftarah and its brachot, and the brachot for an aliyah. After that is mastered, the tutor will help your child apply his or her knowledge of Torah trope to reading some of the week's Torah portion. The tutor will also help your child practice prayers chanted throughout the service.

PLEASE NOTE: In addition to the time spent with the tutor, you and your child should plan to set aside 15 minutes every day for practice.

If you are interested in having tutoring begin prior to a year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, please contact the Hazzan.

Individual Mitzvah Projects

The mitzvah in Bar/Bat Mitzvah is much more than leading the service. We expect that the student will look beyond the rituals and the party — to truly begin to take on the Jewish adult obligation of Tikun Olam — by initiating a Mitzvah Project. There are always needs in our community, throughout our area, and in Israel for helping others. The Hazzan is available to help guide you to an inspired mitzvah avenue for your family.

Some excellent examples of mitzvah projects and suggested resources can be found at <http://www.themitzvahbowl.com/mitzvah-projects/view-all-projects/>

Tallit and Tefillin

We encourage every Jewish man and woman, over the age of Bar and Bat Mitzvah, to wear a Tallit and Tefillin (when appropriate) during services. A Tallit is required when reading, carrying, or

holding the Torah. Students are taught to lay Tefillin in the classroom. Tallit and Tefillin should be obtained when Bar/Bat Mitzvah training begins. For your convenience, the Beth El Gift Shop has a large selection of Tallitot, Tefillin and kippot as well as other items you may want or need for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In addition, your child may register for gifts of his/her choice.

Students With Special Needs

We take great pride in making every Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony special, even while the participation of each student is basically the same. There are occasions, however, when special circumstances necessitate an adjustment in the student's participation in the worship service. We will do everything possible to work with each student – as an individual – with the ultimate goal of maximizing the student's self-esteem and sense of accomplishment. Please feel free to discuss, as early as possible, any concerns you might have with either the Rabbi or the Hazzan. This information will be held in the strictest confidence.

Parents' Jewish Education

Can parents learn along with their children? Absolutely! There is no better example you can set for your children than to demonstrate your commitment to life-long Jewish learning. For adults who want to engage in Jewish learning before your simcha date, Beth El offers a variety of classes. Please check with the synagogue office to learn what classes are currently offered or planned. It is a wonderful custom for family members to participate in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. Please contact the Hazzan if you wish to learn to read Torah and/or Haftarah, lead services, or just follow and sing along in services with more joy and understanding.

Post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah Education

While the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be focused on a single day, it serves as the gateway to a lifetime of adult Jewish experiences. As a community, we value very highly the continued participation of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah in all aspects of synagogue life. In particular, Beth El has a long-standing and beautiful custom of inviting the recent Bar/Bat Mitzvah to continue to read Torah and Haftarah and lead services — particularly on Shabbat anniversaries of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, at morning minyan, and on holidays. And, importantly, we rely on our teenagers to give back by serving as madrichim in the religious school, and as Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutors throughout their high school years.

After graduation from the Beth El Religious School at the end of the 8th grade year, we expect that students will continue their Jewish education at Merkaz, our local Hebrew high school, through the 12th Grade. We are very proud to have been part of Merkaz from its very beginning. The school attracts students from a number of area synagogues, challenging them to focus on their Jewish identity while providing wonderful social opportunities with other Jewish teens. Merkaz students regularly make honors lists in public school while devoting themselves to their Jewish studies and giving service to our community. They are better prepared, as a result, to continue to embrace their Jewish identity when they go to college. In addition, they develop emotional loyalties and intellectual tools that will serve them all their lives.

Ceremonies

Beth El follows the general customs and rituals of the Conservative movement. Within those very broad parameters, Beth El has developed our own minhagim (customs) as well. The outline below serves as a guide for both.

Students are welcome and encouraged to learn to lead as much of our services as they are able. In addition to leading the Torah service and Musaf on the Saturday of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student will lead parts of the service on the Friday morning immediately preceding. We also look forward to the student delivering the D'var Torah on both days. As outlined below, there is also involvement earlier in that special week and on Friday evening.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Week

Monday and Thursday Mornings 7:30 - 8:00 am

- Your child will read Torah. Parents will be called to the Torah for an aliyah on Monday or Thursday.

Friday Morning 7:30 - 8:00 am

- Your child will lead parts of the service and deliver the D'var Torah. During the school year a hot breakfast follows.

Friday Evening 6:00 – 6:45 pm

- On Friday evening, please be in the synagogue at 5:45 PM, fifteen minutes prior to the start of services. You should be seated in the front rows of the sanctuary. To the extent possible, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will lead much of the service. As much of the educational effort is necessarily placed on the Saturday morning portion of Shabbat services, final decisions about which parts of the Friday night service the student will lead may not be solidified until the end of the preparation process. Some students may participate in the Friday night service by leading the Kiddush, while others may take on the full service.

Saturday Morning 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

- On Saturday morning, please be in the synagogue by 9:30 AM. You should be seated at 9:55 in the front rows with your entire family. The ushers will assist members of your family and guests who may arrive late to find their seats.
- As the Torah service is about to begin, the Rabbi will call the parents and child to the bimah. You will be given the opportunity to present your child with a Tallit. Your child will recite the blessing for the Tallit, and you will place it on his/her shoulders. You will then return to your seats and your child will remain on the bimah leading or joining in the Torah service.
- During the ceremony, the child will again deliver the D'var Torah, and the Rabbi, Hazzan, and representatives of the synagogue will honor the occasion before the conclusion of the service.

Ritual Honors

Your simcha is simultaneously a family affair and a regular Shabbat service for the congregation. Some of the honors are therefore reserved for your family and guests, while others are reserved for the general congregation.

You may assign the following ritual honors to your family members and other guests. Because these particular honors are ritual actions performed on behalf of the congregation, those performing these honors must be Jewish, except as otherwise indicated below. For information about including non-Jewish family members, please see the appropriate section later in this guide.

1. Opening and closing the ark: One person is needed to open the ark when the Torah is removed, and again when it is returned. You may choose one person or two different people to have this honor.
2. Torah Carrier: You may choose one or two different people for the two processions. This individual must be over 13 years of age and physically capable of carrying a 40-pound scroll.
3. Keter & Rimmonim: Carrying the Torah's silver crowns during the processions around the sanctuary is a nice honor for younger siblings or small children.
4. Being called to the Torah for an aliyah: Reciting the blessings before and after the reading. The simcha family may assign up to four aliyot, including any for the parents. In addition to the four aliyot, one aliyah is reserved for your child. The three remaining aliyot are reserved for the congregation. Aliyot are honors for individuals over the age of 13, although a married couple is considered as a single unit and may share an aliyah if both spouses are Jewish.
5. Hagbah: Lifting the Torah after it has been read. This individual must be over 13 years of age and physically capable of lifting a 40-pound scroll above shoulder height.
6. Gelilah: Binding and dressing the Torah after it has been read and lifted. This individual must be over 13 years of age.
7. Prayer For Our Country: Read in English.
8. Prayer For Israel: Read in Hebrew.
9. Prayer For Peace: Leading the responsive reading in English.

Because it is a congregational honor to serve in any of the roles listed above and there are relatively few retained for the entire congregation, we cannot accommodate assigning more than one honor to any particular person.

Before meeting with the Rabbi prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, please complete the honors form. (Please see appendix.) The form asks for the Hebrew names and parents' Hebrew names of those receiving aliyot.

Special Family Honors

We encourage immediate and extended family, and even friends, to participate in a number of ways that have become customary at Beth El.

- The parents will present and hold the Tallit while the Bar/Bat Mitzvah recites the blessing for the first time, and then drape it around the shoulders of their child. Some assign this to grandparents. Parents may say a few words to their child before presenting the Tallit.
- Family members, both immediate and extended, are included in the invitation to rise for the recitation of the Shehecheyanu, the blessing of thanks for reaching this special occasion. Close friends who consider themselves family may also choose to participate. A copy of the prayer, in Hebrew, transliterated, and translated, is at the end of this section. We encourage you to distribute copies to family members in advance.
- Family members, along with the congregation, are encouraged to read Torah. Please consult with the Rabbi six months in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to make arrangements.
- Siblings, relatives, and friends may recite Ashrei, if the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not leading the prayer.
- Siblings and friends may join the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the bimah towards the conclusion of the service for Ein Keloheinu and/or Adon Olam.
- Parents and siblings of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may come up to the bimah at the end of the service when the blessings over the wine, the washing of hands, and Hamotzi are recited.

Non-Hebrew Speakers/Readers

The people you honor with aliyot should be able to pronounce the Hebrew blessings before and after the Torah reading. Please see the appendix for the blessings both in Hebrew and transliteration, as well as instructions on when to say each blessing. You may send copies of these pages to your honorees so they can review them in advance. There is a large card with the same blessings and transliteration on the reader's table during the Torah readings. You may also get an MP3 file of the Torah blessings from the synagogue website (bethelfairfield.org) to help with practicing the chant.

Non-Jewish Family Members

We honor the commitment that a non-Jewish parent has made in giving the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child a Jewish education. A non-Jewish parent is part of everything and should plan to attend all family meetings and seminars, and is welcome to ask questions and become involved in discussions. Additionally, there are a number of ways and times to include non-Jewish family in the service.

1. Offering brief words to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah before placing the Tallit on his/her shoulders.
2. Leading the Prayer For Our Country
3. Leading the Prayer for Peace.
4. Joining the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the Rabbi at bimah at the end of the service for the recitation of the blessings over the wine, the washing of hands, and Hamotzi.

D'var Torah

The learning and teaching experience of preparing and presenting the D'var Torah adds to the meaning and spirituality of the experience. Congregants look forward to hearing the words and thoughts offered by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah prepares a D'var Torah, or teaching (literally, "a word of Torah"), that is approximately 4 – 7 minutes in length. The student will present the D'var Torah to the congregation at the end of the Friday morning service and again prior to the Torah reading on Shabbat morning. This provides the child with an opportunity for leadership through teaching the congregation. The child will share their insights on the weekly reading based upon Jewish tradition.

The process of writing a D'var Torah will be addressed during the meetings with the Rabbi and other members of the staff. Please practice at home, encouraging the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to speak slowly and clearly.

Presentations

Toward the conclusion of the Friday morning service, representatives from Men's Club and Sisterhood will present gifts to your child. On Shabbat morning the parents present a Tallit to their child (see above) and the Rabbi will present a certificate and gift.

Guests With Special Needs

The entrance to the synagogue through the front of the building is wheelchair accessible. Please contact the office in advance if you anticipate having guests who need to enter from the front. The ushers can provide large print siddurim to people with vision difficulties and hearing enhancement systems for those who may benefit.

Beth El's Gift Shop

Please remember that the volunteer-run Gift Shop sells Tallitot, Tallit clips, Tefillin, and yads (Torah reading pointers), as well as beautiful hand-made specialty women's headcoverings. Personalized kippot can also be ordered through the gift shop. All profits benefit Beth El. We encourage you to take advantage of their services and expertise.

What if I still have questions?

Whenever you have questions, please call the office at 203-374-5544, Rabbi Kormis at 203-374-5544, or Hazzan Shamash at 631-793-7726.

Sanctuary Etiquette

It is a good idea to let guests know in advance the length of the service and the appropriate decorum. If you expect many out-of-town guests who have not seen each other for a long time, we encourage you to arrange a reunion, such as a Friday night dinner, before the day of the simcha. It is very exciting for family and friends to get together for a happy occasion, and often difficult to restrain enthusiastic greetings during the service which may be disruptive to others.

If necessary, it is acceptable to quietly go in and out of the sanctuary during the service, except during a few parts of the service, when the ushers will keep the doors closed. These include:

- When the Ark is open
- During the Mourner's Kaddish
- During a D'var Torah (by the Rabbi or by anyone else) and other presentations
- During the Shema and the three subsequent paragraphs
- During the Amidah
- During the Haftarah and Torah reading

Additionally, people may not draw, write, or use cell phones or cameras at synagogue on Shabbat, and SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED on synagogue grounds at any time.

It is important to maintain the atmosphere of Shabbat both in the synagogue and on the grounds. We encourage you to share these guidelines regarding Shabbat observance *in advance* with your guests who may be unfamiliar with our customs and with those who may tend to forget.

Dress Code

Appropriate, modest dress by adults, teens, and all others is expected. To maintain the dignity of the synagogue, Beth El has adopted the following guidelines:

1. Girls and women may wear a dress or skirt of modest (knee) length. We require shoulders and midriff to be covered, and therefore strapless and "spaghetti" strap dresses, and tank tops are not appropriate. A Tallit may not serve as a shawl.
2. Boys and men are expected to wear a collared shirt and tie, and slacks or khakis. Those called to the bimah should wear a suit or sport jacket.
3. Jeans, shorts, and tee shirts are not permitted. Mini-skirts are unacceptable, as well.
4. Every male, including non-Jews, must wear a kippah during services, and women are welcome and encouraged to do so. In our tradition, covering one's head is a sign of our recognition that there is Someone "above" us who watches our every act.
5. We encourage every Jewish man and woman, over the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, to wear a Tallit and Tefillin (when appropriate) during services. A Tallit is required when reading, carrying, or holding the Torah. Tallitot are available for those who have not brought one.

Please share these guidelines with your guests in advance, so they will be comfortable with the clothing choices they have made.

Young Children

The presence of children in the sanctuary is a gift to our community and a reminder that not only are we growing, but that Judaism's future is in the room with us right now. How we treat them today affects their behavior as Jews tomorrow. Please welcome our children and give a smile to them and their families.

We have boxes of books and soft toys throughout the sanctuary, and your children are welcome to explore them. Quietly explain our rituals and sing or clap where appropriate. Children learn liturgical behavior by imitating yours. We recognize that time here can provide an opportunity to connect with friends old and new. This is a valuable part of the experience and we encourage you to enjoy each other's company surrounded by prayer and joy.

Please ask your guest to respect the quiet holiness of our service and keep the chatter to a minimum during special moments of reflection and prayer. They will be able to recognize many of these moments, as we will ask everyone to stand. All are welcome here, and we consider your presence a true blessing.

Celebrations

The most essential aspect of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the child's spiritual step forward to assume his/her role and responsibilities as a Jewish adult. The community's welcoming of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a Jewish adult is also important, and for that reason it is our custom and policy for the family to participate in and host the congregation at a celebratory meal, the Kiddush, immediately following the service.

Responsibilities for sponsoring the Kiddush include selecting and making arrangements for the caterer, menu, and style of service, as well as all the decorative aspects from centerpieces to the plates, flatware, table cloths, and so on. We urge families to keep this financial responsibility in mind when making plans for the simcha. Susan Mittag, our Executive Director, is available to help guide you with these decisions.

Also, following the Friday morning minyan prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah — in which your child will lead parts of the service and deliver a D'var Torah — a hot breakfast is served during the school year. Typically, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family will sponsor the breakfast.

For all celebrations in the synagogue, please note:

- The synagogue office MUST be contacted before scheduling any on-site appointments with party planners, photographers, videographers, DJs, florists, etc. No taping or photography of any kind may take place on Shabbat.
- Any caterer in the synagogue must serve kosher food and be approved by the Rabbi.
- Beth El usually has approximately 75 congregants at Shabbat morning services, in addition to your invited guests, who should be included in the number provided to your caterer.
- The appropriate blessings should be recited before and after meals. Benchers will be made available.

Parties or Other Celebrations

Any celebration in addition to the Kiddush is “icing on the cake” — your child's step forward into Jewish adulthood is what truly matters. There is no pressure to host a party beyond a Kiddush lunch. However, if you choose to have a party or other celebration, you may wish to consider:

- Saturday evening party (beginning with Havdalah or one hour after sundown)
- Party anytime on Sunday
- Sunday brunch for family and friends
- Friday night dinner for family and out-of-town guests
- Afternoon luncheon following Kiddush
- Family trip to Israel

Sharing S'machot

Beth El schedules only one Bar/Bat Mitzvah on a given Shabbat. However, other s'machot (simchas) such as baby namings and aufrufs (the calling of a bride and groom for an aliyah before the wedding) may arise on the same date as your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, adding to the joy of the occasion for your family and the entire congregation. Typically, they include a blessing at the Torah, the singing of a simcha song, and a few words spoken by the Rabbi.

There will be one Kiddush for everyone, regardless of the number of s'machot or guests. If a second simcha occurs on the same date, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family chooses the caterer and the menu. The other family will be required to pay for their invited guests or may want to co-sponsor the Kiddush. They will be directed to contact the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to work out the details.

Invitations

Some families have questions about whom to include on their invitation lists. A helpful rule of thumb is to determine whether the persons are an important part of your child's life, and who will best appreciate your child's efforts, religious accomplishments, and commitments. **Please note it is synagogue policy that each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student invites their entire Bar/Bat Mitzvah class.**

Program Booklets

Some families choose to prepare a program or pamphlet describing the synagogue, sanctuary and the order of service and sometimes listing the names of those given honors. This is optional and is the responsibility of the family to prepare and duplicate if desired.

If you want to design and provide a program with additional explanations of our customs, please submit a copy to the Rabbi before printing to verify accuracy. Please note that if you list honors on a program, there may be last-minute changes to the order of aliyot depending on congregational needs. Also, please only list the honors that are outlined for you on the Honors Form. If you provide kippot or programs, please provide an adequate number to the office by the Thursday before the simcha. The office will make sure they are placed appropriately on Shabbat morning.

Facilities

The Social Hall is a wonderful venue for celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah party. The synagogue has policies in place to address all aspects regarding use of the building covering conformance with Halakhah (Jewish law) such as Shabbat observances, kashrut, and maintaining the sanctity of the building; safety and security; and multiple demands for space allocation. Please check with the office for more information.

Tablecloths are available for rental from the Sisterhood for a small fee and refundable deposit.

Please note that sufficient supervision of the children must be provided. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah host family is responsible for any physical damage to person or property incurred by any guests.

Food

The simcha family must use a kosher caterer approved by the Rabbi. Please see our Executive Director, Susan Mittag, for the up to date list of approved caterers.

Music

In order to uphold the meaning and traditions of Shabbat, only Jewish/Israeli music appropriate for Shabbat and Jewish celebration is permitted. There can be no social dancing; only Israeli dancing will be permitted.

Flowers

Several common expenditures are optional. Among these are decorations such as flowers or food baskets to donate, personalized kippot, and event programs.

Families may supply floral arrangements or potted plants in the sanctuary and/or Social Hall for s'machot. For reasons of safety and visibility during Shabbat services, floral arrangements and potted plants in the sanctuary are limited to the base of the center reading table on the bimah. Floral arrangements and plants may not be placed in any other locations in the sanctuary.

Note that some types of flowers have a very pungent smell and can be overwhelming for the congregation. Please do not use Starglazer lilies, for example. Floral arrangements must be delivered before 2:00pm on Friday and may be removed from the building only after Shabbat.

Kippot

Personalized kippot may be ordered from many sources, including the Beth El Gift Shop or online. Many families order them, but this is purely optional. Please allow ample time for your order to arrive.

Photography

Please be sure that your guests are aware of these rules, so that there is no infringement of the spirit and atmosphere of Shabbat.

There are several ways to preserve the Bar/Bat Mitzvah memories for your family through photography, videos, taping, and other media. **However, no taping or photography of any kind may take place on Shabbat.**

Photography at your event occurring on a day other than Shabbat is generally unrestricted. To schedule a formal photography session in the sanctuary, please contact the office.

Bus Transportation

If you hire private transportation such as a bus or shuttle van for your guests, please make sure the bus company makes plans to park the vehicle away from Beth El without blocking the entrances or exits. Buses to pick up guests following services should arrive at Beth El no earlier than 12:15pm.

Deliveries

All deliveries to the synagogue (food, flowers, balloons, etc.) must take place before 2:00pm on Friday. Please check with the office for specific delivery times, especially if there are Jewish holidays during the week before your simcha. If you wish to provide kippot and programs to congregants and guests, you are encouraged to bring these by Thursday before the simcha.

Due to Shabbat observances, you may not carry out any items until after Shabbat is over. This includes leftover food, flowers, and other decorations.

Tzedakah

Jewish adulthood commands the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah, or charitable acts. Families are encouraged to find creative ways to make tzedakah an integral part of the celebration. Please feel free to speak to the Rabbi, Hazzan, or our Tikun Olam chairpersons for ideas. See also the section above about Mitzvah Projects.

Wall Of Life Plaque

We hope you will share your joy with the congregation and commemorate the simcha by purchasing a plaque for the Wall of Life in the synagogue hallway. Revenues from this endowment are used to help fund ongoing programs within the synagogue.

The Beth El Bulletin

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah is featured in the monthly synagogue Bulletin. Parents are responsible for submitting a photo (preferably a head shot) and a write-up on their child by the 10th of the month prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Read the Bulletin's Bar/Bat Mitzvah column to get an idea of standard format and tone. Please try to follow this format, making any modifications you wish:

_____ will be called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the Shabbat of Saturday, _____, for Parashat _____. _____ is the son/daughter of _____, grandson/daughter of _____, and brother/sister of _____.

_____ is a student at _____ School. He/she enjoys _____ (sports, hobbies, subjects at school). For his/her Mitzvah Project ... _____. Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah means... _____. _____ would like to thank... _____.

If your child writes the submission, please read and edit it for suitability to a family-oriented newsletter. Email to: smittag@bethelfairfield.org

Eligibility

The Beth El Executive Board and Education Committee have set forth the following guidelines and policies for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, taking into account our Conservative Jewish tradition, our own synagogue's practices, and parameters dictated by the size and nature of our congregation and facility.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is a meaningful and significant event in the life of a Jewish child and is held at a Congregational worship service from September through June. (Certain dates during those months will not be available in order to accommodate programming and clergy schedules.) The celebration of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Beth El is a privilege accorded only to members in good standing.

Every child:

- Must be enrolled in, and attending, our Religious School or a Jewish day school at the time of his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.
- Must successfully meet all class and service attendance requirements.
- Must have completed at least four (4) years of religious education (i.e. beginning in 3rd grade), except as otherwise permitted, and have reached their 13th birthday according to the Hebrew calendar.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony represents neither the beginning nor the end of a Jewish child's religious education. It is therefore **required** that after the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, children continue to the end of the year and then complete their religious education through 8th grade graduation. We also have every expectation that students will continue their Jewish education at Merkaz through the 12th Grade.

Religious School Attendance Requirements

It is customary in our Religious School that children begin in kindergarten, and participate in every scheduled class and group activity through graduation. To fulfill the curriculum and enable each child to get the most out of his/her religious education, the following are also required. Please note these are now included in the Religious School Handbook, applicable going forward from (and shall not be retroactive before) the 2017-2018 school year.

Gimel (3 rd Grade)	(coming soon)
Dalet (4 th Grade)	(coming soon)
Hei (5 th Grade)	5 Shabbat mornings; 3 Friday nights
Vav (6 th Grade)	6 Shabbat mornings; 3 Friday nights; 2 weekday minyanim
Zayin (7 th Grade)	16 Shabbat mornings; 5 Friday nights; 3 weekday minyanim

Shabbat happens all year round! Although Religious School ends in May, for those students still needing to meet their Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirements, services attended through July 31 will be credited to the current academic year, and those after August 1 for the upcoming year. Parents and other family members are strongly encouraged to attend all services along with their children.

Please note also:

ALL STUDENTS: 10 Holiday and Special Events per year at Beth El

Holiday and Special Events include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Yom Kippur afternoon (Jonah) | • Sukkah raising | • Cantor's Concert |
| • Yom Kippur evening (Minhah/Ne'ilah) | • Sukkot | • Simhat Torah |
| • Yom HaShoah | • Havdallah | • Shavuot |
| • Tashlich | • Rosh Hodesh | • Purim Carnival |
| • Sunday morning Minyan | • Purim Megillah reading | • Pesah Seder |
| | • Tisha B'Av services | • Yom Haatzmaut Friday night dinner |
| | • Shabbat Under the Stars | |

Students who satisfy the attendance requirements above will receive a "Synagogue Tefillah Award" and a gift at the end of the year at an awards ceremony and recognition at their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At Beth El, we strive to provide meaningful opportunities for your child to learn and identify with their Jewish heritage and participate in our beautiful Jewish traditions. We look forward to your support in achieving this goal.

Financial Obligations and Misc. Expenses

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee is charged to cover facility and staff expenses the synagogue undertakes to make your special day possible. This fee is billed automatically in the 7th grade, and includes learning materials, Trope Trainer (Torah/Haftarah Learning Software), meetings with the Rabbi, learning sessions and check ups with the Hazzan, access to our Torah iPad practice lab devices, sanctuary use for practice/photography sessions, and social hall use for Saturday Kiddush. It does not include private tutoring, catering, facility rental, decorations, or other optional expenses. Each member family will be responsible to pay a **Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee of \$825**.

Additionally, the Shabbat morning Kiddush is a Se'udat Mitzvah, a meal celebrating a life cycle milestone, and is essentially a continuation of our morning worship. (That's why we say Kiddush over wine and Hamotzi over bread in the sanctuary before going into the Social Hall.) Just as we worship together during the service, we celebrate together as a single congregation at the Se'udat Mitzvah that follows. Therefore, there is an obligation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to provide the Shabbat Kiddush that immediately follows the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, even if a separate celebration is planned. Please see the "Celebrations" section for details.

Following the Friday morning minyan prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah — in which your child will lead parts of the service and deliver a D'var Torah — a hot breakfast is served. It is customary but not required for the family to honor the occasion by sponsoring the breakfast.

Please note:

- Any caterer in the synagogue must serve Kosher food and be approved by the Rabbi.
- Approximately 75 congregants routinely attend Shabbat morning services. When providing a number to your caterer, please include these Beth El members.

Beth El's Social Hall is a wonderful venue for celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah party. Facility fees for a private event include tables, chairs, maintenance fees, and use of the kitchen. They do not include tablecloths (available from the Sisterhood for a small fee and refundable deposit) or catering.

- Saturday afternoon luncheon: \$1,000.00
- Saturday night, or Sunday day or night: \$1,300.00

All financial obligations of the member family to the synagogue, including Religious School tuition, are required to be on a current basis three (3) months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Of course, matters of this nature will be held in the strictest confidence.

If you have concerns regarding any financial obligations, please speak with our Executive Director, Susan Mittag. Please note these fees are current as of March 2017, and are subject to change in subsequent years.

The following are some specific fees that you may incur.

Requisite Expenses

Please note use of the Kiddush Room or Social Hall does not include food/catering. Any caterer in the synagogue must serve Kosher food and be approved by the Rabbi. *Fees current as of March 2017.*

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee \$825
 - Family Seminars with the Rabbi included
 - Individual meetings with the Rabbi included
 - Learning sessions and check-ups with the Hazzan included
 - Learning materials included
 - Trope Trainer (Torah/Haftarah Learning Software) included
 - Access to Torah iPad practice lab devices included
 - Sanctuary use for regularly scheduled service included
 - Sanctuary use for practice/photography sessions included
 - Kiddush Room use for Friday morning minyan included
 - Social Hall use for Saturday Kiddush included
- Catering of Saturday Kiddush _____ (varies)
- Tallit and clip for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah _____
- Tefillin for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah _____

Customary Expenses

- Catering of Friday morning minyan breakfast \$180
(For up to 36 guests incl. congregants, \$5 pp thereafter)
- Plaque on the Wall of Life, in honor of the simcha \$350
- Bimah flowers _____ (approx. \$100-\$300)

Optional Expenses

- Kiddush Room use for Friday night dinner \$250* (max 50 people)
(Social Hall may be available for an extra fee)
- Catering of Friday night dinner _____
- Music (as approved) at Friday night dinner _____
- Music (as approved) at Shabbat Kiddush _____
- Donation to Beth El in honor of Rabbi and Hazzan _____
- Printed invitations _____
- Program booklets _____
- Personalized kippot _____
- Photographer _____
- Facility rental (private event) _____
- Catering (private event) _____

Conclusion: Mazal Tov!

Soon your child begins preparation for one of the great days in his or her life. We hope that you find this guide helpful as you plan for a truly memorable milestone for your child.

May blessings always abide with you, your children
and all of your loved ones at all times.

AMEN

Appendices

Event Planning Timeline

Learning & Ceremonies

Celebrations

5 th grade	Introductory meeting with Rabbi & Hazzan. Receive Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.	
6 th grade	Learn Torah trope and Shabbat morning prayers and blessings.	
12 months prior:	Select private tutor with Hazzan. Plan Kiddush & celebration with private caterer. Set tutoring schedule.	Estimate number of guests. Choose type of event, according to family preferences and budget. Reserve location for private celebration.
9- 12 months prior:	Begin attending weekly classes, learning sessions & regular checkups with Hazzan. Begin weekly tutoring with private tutor. Begin daily 15 min. practice. Begin Mitzvah Project.	Reserve Social Hall for private celebrations, incl. Friday night. Select & contract with caterer, DJ, photographer. Provide deposits as required. Decide if you will offer other events or meals over the weekend for visiting guests.
6 months prior:	Begin Family Education Seminars with Rabbi. Consult with Rabbi if you wish family members to read Torah.	Develop guest list with current addresses. Select and order invitations. Decide on decorations, centerpieces, sign-in boards, favors, etc. Arrange accommodations for out-of-town guests.
3 months prior:	Ensure financial obligations are in order. Submit Kiddush and building-use forms. Student meets with Rabbi re: D'var Torah.	Finalize menu for Kiddush and any private events. Make arrangements for clothing for family members. Order kippot, flowers, Tallit, decorations, and favors through gift shop. (optional)
2 months prior:		Address and mail invitations (include directions & hotel info). Create candle-lighting ceremony. (optional) Coordinate sequence of ceremony, ritual, meals and entertainment at your event.
1 month prior:	Finalize & email D'var Torah to Rabbi. Meet with the Rabbi to fill in honors form. Schedule sanctuary rehearsals with Hazzan. Hazzan brings student to the bimah to chant from the Torah and Haftarah. Meet with Beth El office review and document event details.	Confirm all arrangements with service providers. Develop seating plan for private party. Arrange for local transportation of out-of-town guests. If a Jewish holiday falls during the week before the simcha, discuss delivery dates with Beth El office. Make arrangements with Beth El office for taking photographs in Sanctuary.
Week prior:	Final rehearsal in sanctuary. Drop off personalized kippot and programs at Beth El office. (optional) Arrive by 7:30am Monday & Thursday: Child reads Torah, parents have aliyah at minyan. Arrive by 7:30am Friday: Child delivers D'var Torah at minyan. Arrive by 5:45pm Friday for evening service.	Confirm final guest count with caterer. If you have ordered flowers for the synagogue, confirm that delivery will occur before 12pm on Friday. Assure that your child is well-rested, and that stress is minimized for all family members. Take photographs at synagogue. (optional) Adjust seating plan as needed for private celebration.
DAY OF SIMCHA	Arrive with family by 9:30am for Shabbat morning service. MAZEL TOV!	Enjoy!
Week after	Pick up any floral arrangements or decorations.	Relax.

NOTE: These are guidelines and may vary with circumstances.

Honors Form (Kibbudim)

Please submit form to Rabbi at least 2 weeks in advance.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH of _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

OPENING AND CLOSING THE ARK: (English names)

Removing Torah (page 168): _____ and _____

Returning Torah (page 183): _____ and _____

ALIYOT TO THE TORAH: (May be an individual or a married couple.)

A. English name/s: _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

B. English name/s: _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

C. English name/s: _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

D. English name/s: _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

E. English name/s: _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Honors form continues on next page.

CARRYING, LIFTING, DRESSING, AND HOLDING THE TORAH:

Torah Carrier: _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Torah Carrier: _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Hagbah (Lifting): _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

Gelilah (Dressing & holding): _____

Hebrew name: _____ ben/bat _____ Kohen/Levi?

READINGS: (English names)

Prayer for the Country (English, page 177): _____

Prayer for Israel (Hebrew, page 178): _____

Prayer for Peace (English, responsively, page 178): _____

Aliyot Instructions

Provide a copy of these instructions to five individuals or married couples (including parents and your child) who will receive aliyot. We encourage every Jewish man and woman, over the age of Bar and Bat Mitzvah, to wear a Tallit and Tefillin (when appropriate) during services. A Tallit is required when reading, carrying, or holding the Torah. (For aliyot, women are not required to wear a Tallit.)

You will be called up to the Torah to recite the Hebrew blessings before and after the reading. The card on the reader's desk has the blessings both in Hebrew and also transliterated into English letters. Nevertheless, we **STRONGLY** recommend that you review the blessings in advance. The blessings are on the following page in Hebrew and English transliteration. A great video of how to have an aliyah at is available online at <http://j.mp/AliyahHowTo> or at <http://j.mp/TorahBlessings>.

When you are called by your Hebrew name for your aliyah, walk up to the shulchan (reader's table) and stand to the reader's right. You do not need to bring a siddur with you. (Women may want to if not wearing a Tallit.)

The reader will point to the spot in the Torah where the reading will begin. Touch this spot with your tzitzit (the long fringe on the corner of your Tallit), and then kiss the tzitzit. If you are a woman who is not wearing a Tallit, you will be given the Torah binding to use to kiss the Torah.

Roll the Torah closed with both hands (one hand on each etz chayim, or spindle), and recite the first blessing while holding onto the rollers.

After the blessing, let go with your left hand. Roll the right side of the Torah open. Throughout the reading, hold onto the right etz chayim and follow the reading.

After the reading, touch the spot in the Torah where the reading ended with your tzitzit or the Torah binding. Then kiss the tzitzit or binding, roll the Torah closed, and recite the blessing after the Torah reading.

Stay on the right side of the reading table and remain there until the next person called to the Torah completes the same cycle. Return to your seat after the next person finishes the blessings.

Torah Blessings

Before the Torah reading, touch the fringe of the Tallit to the spot shown to you by the reader.
You then kiss the fringe and say:

Bar'chu et Adonai ham'vorach.

The congregation will respond with the following line. Repeat it, then continue with the following:

Baruch Adonai ham'vorach le'olam va'ed.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam, asher bachar banu meekol ha'amim venatan lanu et Torato.

Baruch atah Adonai, notein haTorah.

After the Torah reading, again, touch the spot shown to you by the reader and kiss it before reciting:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam, asher natan lanu Torat emet, vechayay olam natah betocheinu.

Baruch atah Adonai notein haTorah.

בְּרָכוֹת הַתּוֹרָה

BLESSINGS AT THE READING OF THE LAW

Before the reading of the Law:

בְּרָכוּ אֶת יי הַמְּבָרָךְ.

Borchu et Ah-doh-nai hahm-voh-rach

בָּרוּךְ יי הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Ba-ruch Ah-doh-nai hahm-voh-rach l'oh-lahm vah-ed

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל
הָעַמִּים, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ,
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Ba-ruch ah-tah Ah-doh-nai, eh-lo-hey-nu meh-lech
ha'oh-lahm, ah-sheh bah-char bah-nu mee-kohl
hah-ah-mim, v'nah-tan lah-nu et toh-rah-toh,
ba-ruch ah-tah Ah-doh-nai, no-tayn ha-toh-rah

AFTER READING THE LAW

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרָת
אֱמֶת, וַחַי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Ba-ruch ah-tah Ah-doh-nai, eh-lo-hey-nu meh-lech
ha'oh-lam, ah-sheh nah-tan lah-nu toh-raht eh-meht
v'cha-yay oh-lam nah-tah B'toh-chey-nu.
Ba-ruch ah-tah Ah-doh-nai, no-tayn ha-toh-rah.

Hagbah Instructions

Provide a copy of these instructions to one person who will lift the Torah at the end of the Torah readings. All men and women who receive this honor must wear both a head covering and a Tallit.

Open the scroll until 3 columns are visible. Grasp the atzei chayim (wooden spindles) and pull the Torah toward you until it is approximately halfway off of the shulchan (table). Using the edge of the table as a fulcrum, push down until the Torah is completely vertical. Lift the Torah and turn around to display the open scroll to the congregation. Hold it there for a few seconds as the congregation chants "V'zot haTorah....", then sit down in the designated chair while holding the Torah upright.

The person doing Gelilah will grasp the atzei chayim (or spindles at the top of the Torah) and help you to roll it shut. Keep the Torah steady as the Gelilah binds it with the strap and places the cover and breastplate over the Torah.

Return to your seat after the Torah is dressed.

Gelilah Instructions

Provide a copy of these instructions to one person who will dress the Torah at the end of the Torah readings. All men and women who receive this honor must wear both a head covering and a Tallit.

The Hagbah will lift the Torah scroll and display it to the congregation while the congregation chants, "V'zot haTorah..." When the Hagbah sits down with the Torah, grasp the atzei chayim (the spindles at the top of the Torah) and roll it shut.

When it is rolled tightly, bind it with the strap provided by the Gabbai in the front, which is the side of the Torah that opens (the side facing the lifter). Merely stretch the fastener around the scroll and secure the velcro. The Gabbayim will give assistance if needed.

Place the cover over the Torah, keeping the front of the cover to the front of the scroll. Place the breastplate over both wooden atzei chayim (spindles), the yad over the right spindle, and a crown over each spindle. The Gabbai will guide you.

Return to your seat after the Torah is dressed.

Glossary

Aliyah (plural: aliyot): Going up to the shulchan (reading table) to say blessings before and after the Torah reading.

Ark: The cabinet where the Torah scrolls are kept.

Aufruf: The occasion of a bride and groom receiving an aliyah on the Shabbat before the wedding.

Ba'al Kri'ah: Torah reader.

Benchers: Book or pamphlet including the grace after meals that often includes additional songs.

Bimah: Raised platform in front of the Ark.

Chumash: Book of weekly Torah readings interspersed with associated Haftarah readings.

D'var Torah: Speech or sermon explaining the significance of the weekly Torah portion.

Gabbai (plural: Gabbayim): A person who calls people up to the Torah for aliyot and checks the reader's pronunciation and chanting, correcting any mistakes in the reading. This is also the name for the synagogue volunteer who helps with the organization of services, such as identifying the people called up for aliyot.

Gelilah: The person who binds or dresses the Torah at the end of the Torah service.

Hagbah: The person who displays the open Torah to the congregation at the end of the readings.

Kippah (plural: kippot): Skullcap or small headcovering required for all men and boys in synagogue as a sign of respect; optional for women. Yarmulke in Yiddish.

Maftir: An additional Torah reading.

Misheberach: Prayer for the welfare of a person, whether due to illness or due to meriting a special blessing because of being called up to the Torah for an aliyah. Often said when a person is called to the Torah as part of a life-cycle celebration, such as a naming, aufruf, or Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Hamotzi: Blessing over bread

Se'udat Mitzvah: A meal associated with a commandment, usually consumed after a religious ceremony or celebration. Considered to be a continuation of the service.

Shaliach/Sh'lichatTzibbur: Prayer leader.

Siddur: Prayer book.

Simcha (plural: s'machot): A celebration; a joyous occasion.

Tallit: Prayer shawl worn by Jewish men over age 13, and by some Jewish women; plural: Tallitot.

Tefillah: Prayer, religious services.

Tefillin: Black boxes with leather straps binding scriptural passages from the Torah on the arm close to the heart and on the head.

Trope: Cantillations or inflections when chanting from the Torah, Haftarah, and other applicable scriptural readings.

Tzitzit: Fringes on Tallit