

F.A.Q. for B'nai Mitzvah

What is my child expected to do? Each student will be prepared to chant the Torah and haftarah readings and lead a selection of Hebrew prayers. Students also prepare a *d'var torah* (a short discourse on their Torah portion).

How many aliyot will my child have? Students will be prepared to read three aliyot.

How does the tutoring process work? Tutoring takes place for either six months or eight months, depending upon the date of your child's bar or bat mitzvah.

- Students whose dates are September through February receive *approximately* eight months of weekly private lessons, as July and August often present the special challenges of summer
- Students whose dates are in March through June will begin their weekly preparation *approximately* six months beforehand

What is the schedule for the final week? There are two special rehearsals:

Tuesday afternoon before the bar or bat mitzvah there is a complete run-through with the child (if a double, both children together) in the sanctuary.

Friday morning before the bar or bat mitzvah from 9:45 AM to 11:15 AM there is a complete run-through with the child and parent(s).

Ushering

B'nai Mitzvah parents have special ushering responsibilities. Opportunities to sign up for specific dates will be offered via an e-mail from the Ushering Chair approximately one year before your date. If a conflict arises for a date selected, **it is the parents' responsibility to secure a substitute.**

There are two obligations for ushering:

1. The academic year **before** the year during which the bar/bat mitzvah will occur, all parents will usher for one full weekend (one Friday night and one Saturday morning service). This is usually in the 6th grade/Vav year.

2. During the year **of** the bar/bat mitzvah, parents have an obligation to usher **again** at one Saturday morning service. This is usually during the *Makom* class (7th grade) year.

Shabbat Services – An Overview

What will we do Friday Evening? The B'nai Mitzvah family —parents and children— will be invited to ascend the *bima* and join in the chanting of the Kiddush.

What time do services begin on Saturday morning? Services begin at 10:00 A.M. Guests should be instructed to arrive by that time. Printing 9:45 A.M on your invitation is strongly encouraged.

What do parents do? Customarily the parents are called to the *bima* for the first *aliyah*. Parents must be prepared to chant the Torah blessings (Before and After) and say the *shehecheyanu*. You may use transliteration.

What are the customs regarding tallitot and kippot (yarmulkes)? All males in the congregation cover their heads. Jewish men should wear a tallit. Tallitot and kippot are not required for females, but are encouraged for those for whom it would be meaningful.

How can I honor other people? There are two aliyot besides parents, and in addition to those with an *aliyah*, the following are also honors:

- Grandparent(s) (or someone of that generation) usually participate in the generational passing down of the Torah from the ark during the Torah service
- one person as *hagbah*, the one who lifts the Torah
- two as *gelilah*, the ones who dress the Torah (only one may be a child)
- Younger siblings of b'nai mitzvah may also lead the congregation in *Adon Olam* at the end of the service

You can find many resources on the temple website, including PDFs of the honors sheet, the blessings, and MP3 recordings. Please consult: <http://www.tbanj.org/life-cycle/b%E2%80%99nai-mitzvah>

If you have any other questions or concerns, please reach out by phone 973-994-2290 or email to:

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