

Temple B'nai Abraham

B'nai Mitzvah Timeline Checklist

as of March 2022

Mazal Tov on your child becoming B'nai Mitzvah!

We are honored to accompany you on this journey as your child prepares to enter Jewish adulthood. Becoming b'nai mitzvah at TBA is a multi-year process. It is an opportunity for you, your child, and your entire family to deeply engage in Jewish learning while highlighting the interests and talents unique to your child.

We are committed to making this process warm, welcoming, and inclusive. We understand the importance of recognizing all expressions of gender in our temple youth, including children that identify as gender non-conforming: transgender, non-binary, and gender queer.

3 years prior:

- After being contacted by the temple office, parents will return the date information form and receive a date from the b'nai mitzvah committee. Please contact Mara Suskauer at MSuskauer@tbanj.org with any concerns. (Mincha service option will be explained. *There is an additional fee of \$1,800 for this service time*).
- Room for a kiddush or reception may be reserved with a deposit through Marcia Swaybill at mswaybill@tbanj.org.

3 years prior through the end of 7th grade:

- Continue JLP enrollment (**required**), Hebrew and prayer preparation.
- Be prepared to fulfill Shabbat ushering obligations coordinated through Debbie Meron dmeron@tbanj.org
- If your child has any special needs, please be in touch with Cantor Epstein, Rabbi Edwards, or Rabbi Vaisberg at this time.

1 year through 6 months prior:

- Cohort informational meeting with clergy, Emmy Atlas, and Melissa Weiner.
- If you are planning a private, off-site service, or an Israel trip, we will still be available to teach your child for their special day.

1 year prior:

- Emmy Atlas eatlas@tbanj.org and Melissa Weiner mweiner@tbanj.org will speak to the families at the 6th grade service to explain the 7th grade Mechina year at the JLP, including the mitzvah project/volunteer requirement.

6 months prior:

- The b'nai mitzvah fee of \$750 is due to the accounting office prior to beginning lessons. Contact Mindy Palin at mpalin@tbanj.org with any questions.

Approximately 6 months prior (for March - June dates) or 8 months prior (for September - February dates):

- You will receive an email from Cantor Epstein jepstein@tbanj.org with a link to schedule your child's initial meeting or click here:
<https://www.schedulicity.com/scheduling/TBANBH>
- During this meeting, your child will receive their Torah and Haftarah portions (Haftarah for morning services only) and begin their weekly tutoring sessions.
- Please note, extra months have already been added to ensure 6 months of preparation for all students despite any summer disruption.
- Summer lessons are strongly encouraged, most camps now offer virtual lesson times.
- After you have had your in-person initial meeting, please use Schedulicity to schedule your child's weekly 15-minute tutoring sessions with either Rena Casser morah18@verizon.net or Rabbi Max Edwards medwards@tbanj.org.
- Students will meet weekly with the cantor the final two months of preparation.
- Lessons are 15 minutes long, please be on time.

Throughout the 7th grade year:

You will be contacted by our b'nai mitzvah coordinator Emmy Atlas eatlas@tbanj.org to discuss your child's mitzvah project and to assist you with questions or concerns (aside from the actual service preparation) related to the overall b'nai mitzvah process.

4 months prior:

- You will be contacted by Clergy Assistant, Debbie Meron dmeron@tbanj.org to arrange an initial meeting with Rabbi Vaisberg dvaisberg@tbanj.org to begin the *d'var torah* (speech) process.
- After this family meeting, the student will continue to meet weekly with Rabbi Vaisberg until the *d'var torah* is completed. These weekly meetings are scheduled through Debbie Meron.
- If you still need a room for your reception, complete the required information form, agreement and deposit with Marcia Swaybill mswaybill@tbanj.org
- If you plan to take photos during the week of your b'nai mitzvah, please make an appointment for your photo session with Marcia Swaybill. <https://tbanj.org/bnai-mitzvah-photo-vendor-form/>

- If there are two b'nai mitzvah families who wish to take photographs on Saturday morning, we suggest coordinating the timing of your photo session with the other family so that you are not occupying the same space at the same time.
 - **Friday afternoon sessions: 12:30 – 2:00 PM or 2:30 - 4:00 PM**
 - **Saturday 8:00 AM -9:30 AM. One B'nai Mitzvah family only**
- Order kippot through the Temple Sisterhood with Ethel Singer ethel4s@aol.com or Betty Rubin bchrubin@aol.com.
- All fees and paperwork for the reception (if in the Temple), photographer, caterer, etc. must be submitted (including kitchen, facility, deposit, fire permit, vendor proof of insurance, board of health certificate, etc) are administered through Marcia Swaybill mswaybill@tbanj.org.

2 months prior:

- Begin weekly lessons with Cantor Epstein jepstein@tbanj.org.
- Torah should be completed and Haftarah started by this time.
- The week to begin these lessons with the cantor will be noted in a personalized planner in your child's notebook and you will be reminded when it is time to switch from Rabbi Max/Rena to Cantor Epstein.
- You will be contacted by Emmy Atlas eatlas@tbanj.org to confirm whether your family plans to participate in Friday night services the weekend of your child's B'nai Mitzvah.

1 month prior:

- If parents are not speaking at the service, please select your Men's club or Sisterhood/The Women's Connection representatives.
- The invitees are arranged between the two families if there is a double b'nai mitzvah.
- Sisterhood provides bimah flowers, an Oneg Shabbat and a video recording of the service, and parents are expected to contribute to this fund. The breakdown of these fees are as follows: flowers - \$175; Video - \$100; Oneg - \$75.
- The mincha service involves an additional fee of \$1,800.
- Please note: The service will be live streamed via Live Control here: <https://venue.livecontrol.io/watch/tbanj> as well as on our TBA Facebook page.
- Plan your honors: the sheet is here [Bar/Bat Mitzvah Honors Form](#) and is due the week of the service.

2 weeks prior:

Check the current COVID policy on the home page of the TBA website, <https://tbanj.org/>; TBA is always receiving and reviewing the latest public health information and adjusts procedures accordingly to keep us all safe.

Covid Policy as of March 7, 2022:

- We request that all visitors and attendees to TBA be fully vaccinated or present a negative test. It is helpful if this documentation is submitted 2 weeks prior; it may also be shown at the door.
- TBA services and private events are now mask optional, however we strongly request that unvaccinated members and visitors wear a mask.
- All bimah guests and service participants must provide proof of vaccination; if a bimah guest is unvaccinated, proof of a negative test is required and masks are strongly encouraged.

1 week prior:

- Honors form is due to Debbie Meron. It may be filled out here: [Bar/Bat Mitzvah Honors Form](#)
- Parents, please brush up on your Torah blessings and Shehecheyanu, and share this sheet with anyone who has an aliyah:
<https://www.tbanj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/blessingswe.pdf>
You may also listen to the tunes for the Torah blessings here: [Audio Library](#)
- D'var Torah is due to Rabbi Vaisberg.

Week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

- Final rehearsal with parents on the bimah with Cantor Epstein, usually on Thursday afternoon.
- If you are having a Mincha service without Cantor Epstein present, the final rehearsal will be scheduled with either Rabbi Edwards or Rabbi Vaisberg.

3 days prior:

- Parent speeches (maximum of 350 words) are due to either Rabbi Vaisberg or Rabbi Edwards for approval (depending upon who is officiating at the service).
- Please submit any additional names to be read aloud in memoriam for the Mourner's Kaddish to the clergy.
- Please bring your kippot, a printed invitation, and any other items such as masks for your guests, to the temple office to be placed in the lobby.

Day of Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

- Arrive no later than 9:30 AM for a Shacharit (morning) service or 4:30 PM for a Mincha (afternoon) service.
- Bring tallitot, kippot, BOTH notebooks given to you by the cantor with all materials and your yad (if you are using your own).