

# B. Mitzvah Guidebook

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## INTRODUCTION

*Mazel Tov* on reaching this exciting time! We are honored to accompany your family in preparing for and celebrating this important milestone in the life of your family, Temple Israel, and the broader Jewish community.

Celebrating a young person becoming *B. Mitzvah* (a gender-neutral term for Bar/Bat Mitzvah) is the Jewish community's way of recognizing that an adolescent has learned enough and matured enough to take on more responsibility and to begin to take their place in the story of the Jewish people.

Our hope is that the process of preparation to become a *B. Mitzvah* is something in which your whole family can joyfully participate. In the broadest sense, the first steps towards becoming *B. Mitzvah* began years ago, with the creation of a Jewish atmosphere in your home in ways that are meaningful for your family, with a commitment to a Jewish way of life and to Jewish education, and through active connection with a synagogue, other Jewish organizations, and your network of family and friends. As your child approaches becoming *B. Mitzvah*, the process of preparation, both for your child and your family, will intensify.

There are few life-cycle events that are remembered for as long a period of time or celebrated as enthusiastically, as *B. Mitzvah*. Friends and family from far and wide may participate in person or online. Preparing for such an occasion may sometimes feel overwhelming. We hope that the information in this guidebook will help to minimize your stress and enable you to focus on the meaningful aspects of this special time in your family's religious life.

This guidebook is written to help parents understand the *B. Mitzvah* process and to assist the family in experiencing this *simcha*, this joyous occasion, as part of a Jewish community. It will provide basic information, answer commonly-asked questions, and give suggestions for involving the family in the overall celebration.

A guidebook of this nature cannot answer all of your questions, or explain every facet of the *B. Mitzvah* experience. We invite you to contact the clergy, educators, and office staff for additional information or guidance. Our lay leaders are also happy to help support you and your family. And you will be offered the chance to have a *B. Mitzvah* liaison, a parent who has celebrated a child's *B. Mitzvah* recently, to offer you help and advice as needed.

## JEWISH EDUCATION

The *B. Mitzvah* ceremony should be a milestone along the journey of Jewish education. We expect our children preparing for the ceremony to have been enrolled in the Temple Israel Religious School, a Jewish Day School, or another formalized Jewish learning program approved by our clergy, in order to tap into the timeless values of our Jewish texts and traditions and to build community through supportive peers and teachers. In the spirit of community and supporting classmates, we expect this journey to continue through the completion of the 7th-grade year which culminates in a *Siyyum* celebration. Moreover, we hope this journey will continue through the teen years and into adulthood.

### KITAH ZAYIN/SEVENTH GRADE

Temple Israel's program for 7<sup>th</sup> graders is meant to be a bridge between religious school and what comes next, which may include the Teen Leadership Program at TI (*Madrichim*), learning at Hebrew College ([Prozdor](#) or the [Teen Beit Midrash](#)) at Hebrew College, USY, and other programs of Jewish teen learning and service that your child may choose to participate in as an expression of their Jewish identity. The 7th-grade year helps prepare for becoming *B. Mitzvah*, through classroom learning and special projects.

### MORNING MINYAN

Temple Israel has a longstanding tradition of inviting our 7th graders and adult(s) in their family to attend *minyan* (daily services at which a minimum of ten Jewish adults are required for certain prayers) on Monday or Thursday mornings. This character-building, early-morning bonding time gives parents and their children the opportunity to help make a *minyan*, while gaining proficiency with the rituals of the Torah service, daily prayer, *tallit*, and *tefillin*. We invite you to join us when you can to help make up the minyan.

The *tallit* is the traditional prayer shawl worn at morning services each day of the week. On the four corners of the *tallit* are *tsitsit*, fringes, which serve as reminders to "walk in God's ways." *Tefillin* are small leather boxes containing Biblical texts, which are strapped to the arm and forehead during daily morning prayers, as reminders to take the Torah to heart. Morning minyan takes place in person in the chapel (with a Zoom option). The Torah service includes the opportunity for 7th graders to participate, sometimes taking an *aliyah* together with an adult. The texts and rituals offer us an opportunity to focus, begin the day in community, and approach the day with gratitude and renewed purpose.

## **SHABBAT SERVICES**

Attending *Shabbat* as well as weekday services will help to prepare your family for the *B. Mitzvah service*. Familiarity with the pace and content of the service will make your own special *Shabbat* more meaningful. We hope that your presence at services will contribute to your spiritual practice and to your sense of connection with the community and the Jewish people. In addition to our main service in the sanctuary, Junior Congregation meets once or twice a month in the chapel and is a great learning option for our 6th graders.

## **FAMILY PROGRAMS**

All Temple Israel 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders, including those who attend Jewish day schools, are invited to participate with their families in several programs each year on Sunday mornings. Together, we will explore issues of Jewish identity and responsibility related to becoming *B. Mitzvah*. In addition, families will have a chance to make their own *tallit* and to learn how to put on *tefillin*.

## **INCLUSION**

An important goal of the *B. Mitzvah* year is to strengthen our children's understanding of the value of community. A student's sense of belonging in the group will lay the foundation for a meaningful transition to future Jewish involvement as teens, through *Prozdor*, USY (United Synagogue Youth), other Jewish youth organizations, and the synagogue in general, and as adults in the future. We rely on your help in building community by adhering to the guidelines that every student in the *B. Mitzvah* class (including day school students) receive an invitation to be present on Shabbat morning for your child's *B. Mitzvah* service. Sharing these special experiences with each other is an important part of the year, and incorporates the Jewish value of "love your neighbor as yourself." (Lev. 19:18) We know from experience that being excluded from a classmate's *simcha* can be painful. Our aim is to help our young people be welcoming, to be caring, considerate people, and to help build community together by including all the students from the class.

## B. MITZVAH LEADERSHIP

Traditionally, a *B. Mitzvah* publicly demonstrates a child's readiness and willingness to take on adult religious responsibility by taking part in the worship service and being called for one's first public *aliyah* to the *Torah*. The term *aliyah* means "going up" and refers to the act of going up to the *Torah* to recite a blessing.

At Temple Israel, the students' participation generally includes the following:

- **Chant the *maftir aliyah* from the *Torah*.** The term *maftir* is related to the word *haftarah*, meaning "conclusion" or "departing." It refers to the last few verses of the *Torah* portion which are repeated at the end of the reading. This set of *Torah* blessings is reserved for the person who is going to chant the *haftarah*.
- **Chant the *Haftarah* and accompanying blessings.** The *haftarah* is a passage from one of the Biblical books of the Prophets. Each *Haftarah* was chosen by the rabbis long ago to be chanted after the Shabbat or holiday *Torah* portion and to complement it through a thematic connection.
- **Lead the *kiddush* on Friday evening and *Shabbat* morning.** The *kiddush* is a prayer recited over wine on *Shabbat*, holidays, and other occasions of joy and celebration. The term comes from the word "*kadosh*," meaning holy, and the students will have some familiarity with these prayers through their studies at Religious School or Day School.
- **Prepare a *D'var Torah*.** Literally, "a word of *Torah*." The *D'var Torah* is an explanation, reflection, or lesson based on the words of a particular *Torah* text.

We recognize that no two children or families are alike, and we will work with you to adjust the amount of material your child learns accordingly. *B. Mitzvah* who have mastered these skills are encouraged to learn additional *Torah* readings and to lead other sections of the service. Studying and practicing are the obligation of the student, but the encouragement and support of parents, as well as teachers, are essential.

During the fall of the sixth-grade year, religious school students begin a weekly class in which they learn the *trope* (the system of symbols that indicate both the grammar and the manner of musical chanting of Biblical texts) and blessings for chanting *Torah* and *Haftarah*. Students in day schools sometimes attend some or all of this class as well. Students will have the opportunity to chant *Torah* at a special end-of-year celebration on *Shavuot*.

Individual *B. Mitzvah* lessons begin at least six months prior to the *B. Mitzvah*, with two more months allotted if there is an intervening summer. Students will be expected to practice daily, with parents checking in on their progress. *B. Mitzvah* lessons are scheduled in addition to regular Religious School classes.

Several months before their *B. Mitzvah*, students will meet with the Temple Israel clergy, who will work with them on preparing their *D'var Torah*. The clergy will provide resources and models to work from, and can provide these further in advance upon request.

## **MITZVAH PROJECTS**

Through learning about and doing mitzvot, your child will have the opportunity to choose ways to help further their Jewish identity, make their *B. Mitzvah* process more meaningful, and fulfill the essential Jewish commandment of improving the world around us. We know how powerful it is for young people to engage in Tikkun Olam, and are pleased with the ways that Temple Israel makes this a core component of our students' *B. Mitzvah* process. The students will spend time learning about mitzvot and having opportunities to do mitzvot as a group through a program we are calling the *Chesed* (lovingkindness) Corps. Many students also choose one or several mitzvah projects to do during their *B. Mitzvah* year.

One rubric that students can use for thinking about mitzvot is outlined in the Thirteen *Mitzvot* packet. Some projects may be a single experience while others are ongoing; some may be new and others familiar. The *B. Mitzvah* child will choose a series of projects that are meaningful and document them briefly through photos and/or descriptions.

You can help your child by participating in this process, helping them think through which issue or issues feel most relevant, and helping them find the time and resources to carry through the project or projects. We hope that many of these *mitzvot* will remain important to your child and your family for many years to come and that one way your child will continue to build on their Jewish identity is by remaining committed to social action and social justice.

## **GIVING T'ZEDAKAH**

Mitzvah projects can include volunteering one's time and talents and/or giving charity. The charity *MAZON*, for example, suggests that each of us donate 3% of the total cost of our celebration, in order to benefit food pantries and distribution programs locally and throughout the world. Some students ask on their invitations that contributions be made to a charitable organization that they have chosen. Help your child become a *tzedakah* hero!

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO THE B. MITZVAH**

There are many things you can do together as a family, in the months preceding *B. Mitzvah*, to help make the process more meaningful. Here are some suggestions:

### **LEARN ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S TORAH AND HAFTARAH PORTION**

Read the *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions in English, so that you can help your child understand them and brainstorm questions and ideas about how they connect to your lives. The *Etz Hayim Torah Commentary*, edited by our own Rabbi Laureate Harold Kushner, z"l, *JPS B'nai Mitzvah Torah Commentary* and *Text Messages: a Torah Commentary for Teens* by Jeff Salkin, *the Social Justice Torah Commentary*, *The Women's Torah Commentary*, and *The Jewish Study Bible* are all at the Temple. Resources online include Sefaria.org, JTS Torah online, Torah Sparks, BimBam.com, and Hadar.org.

### **LEARN TO READ TORAH**

In recent years, many parents have used the occasion of a child's *B. Mitzvah* as an opportunity to learn, or to sharpen, their own *Torah*-reading skills. Taking on this challenge reinforces for your children the message that you value the process that they are undergoing. We are happy to have siblings and other relatives and friends read as well. Please let the clergy know, well in advance, who may be interested and they will be thrilled to help!

### **TAKE ON THE MITZVAH OF TALLIT**

We are excited that our students have the opportunity to make beautiful *tallitot* in preparation for *B. Mitzvah*, that they can wear throughout their adult Jewish lives. As a proudly egalitarian community, we want to invite parents or grandparents of the *B. mitzvah* that have not yet taken on this *mitzvah*, to consider it. This celebration, a milestone for parents as well as the children, can be a great opportunity to begin doing so.

### **CREATE A PERSONALIZED BOOKLET**

Many families prepare flyers or booklets for *Shabbat* morning, to personalize the service for their family and friends. Such flyers may highlight the meaning of *B. Mitzvah*, explain some of the traditions of the synagogue, or list which family members will be honored on the bimah that morning. Contact the Temple office to see samples of flyers that have been used in the past. All written materials must be approved in advance by the clergy.

## THE SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE

The *B. Mitzvah* is a time of joy and celebration, not only for your family, but also for the Temple Israel community, of which you and your child are an essential part. It takes place when the *Torah* is read publicly, usually on *Shabbat* morning. Because the context of your celebration is communal, rather than private, there may be other life-cycle events celebrated that morning, such as a baby-naming or *aufruf*, when a couple is called up to the *Torah* for an *aliyah* prior to their wedding. Such events reinforce the lesson for your child that they are being embraced and welcomed by an entire community.

## DISTRIBUTION OF HONORS

The weekly *Torah* portion is divided into seven sections, or *aliyot*. Your child's *aliyah*, called the *maftir*, is an additional, eighth *aliyah*, which is reserved for the person who chants the *Haftarah*. You are invited to assign four of the seven *aliyot* to family members or friends. At Temple Israel, we follow the *teshuvah* (ruling) of the Conservative Movement's Committee on Law and Jewish Standards, which restricts the assigning of *aliyot* to individuals or to married couples. You may assign these honors to any member of the Jewish faith over the age of thirteen. While most honors around the Torah service are expressions of faith and reserved for those who are Jewish, please ask the clergy about ways for non-Jewish family members or friends to participate. Those of other faiths can open the ark at the beginning or end of the Torah service and can recite the prayer for our country. Interfaith couples can go up and stand together while the Jewish partner has an *aliyah*. We also have transliterated prayerbooks available and can announce pages in them by request.

Having an *aliyah* does not mean that one has to read from the *Torah*; it simply means reciting the blessings before and after a section of *Torah* is read. Cards with the blessings, in Hebrew and transliterated into English, are available from the office or website to assist honorees who wish to review the blessings. A recording of the blessings is posted on the Temple Israel website, #12 at this link: <https://www.tiofnatick.org/sing/torah-chanting/>.

If your family are "Kohens" or "Levis" (who trace their lineage back to Aaron and Moses and their families), please let the clergy know, as this will affect the order of *aliyot*. Otherwise, you will most likely give out the fourth through seventh *aliyot*. Generally, one or both parents take the seventh *aliyah*, right before the *b. mitzvah* is called to the Torah. You may also assign the following non-speaking *Torah* honors:

- Opening (and closing) the ark, which houses the *Torah* scrolls, at the beginning of the *Torah* service (one or two people);

- Removing the *Torah* from the ark;
- *Hagbah*, the act of raising the *Torah* and displaying it to the congregation after the reading;
- *Gelilah*, the act of rolling the *Torah* closed and dressing it after the reading;
- Opening (and closing) the ark at the conclusion of the *Torah* service (one or two people)
- Returning the *Torah* to the ark

You may also assign the "Prayer for Our Country" and the "Prayer for the State of Israel" in English (copies may be found on the Temple Israel website on the [B.Mitzvah page](#)). A strong Hebrew reader can be assigned the Prayer for the State of Israel in Hebrew. You may also choose to assign *Ashrei*, which is chanted in Hebrew, to a sibling or to one or more of your child's friends from the *Gesher* class. Please let them know in advance. A list of honors is included in this packet to help you plan.

The clergy are available to answer questions, and can review your list of honorees several weeks prior to the *B. Mitzvah*. You will need the full Hebrew name of each person whom you are honoring with a *Torah aliyah*, including the Hebrew names of their parents.

## **OTHER TYPES OF FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN THE SERVICE**

***Shehecheyanu*** – After your child's *aliyah* to the Torah, the parents and child will recite the *Shehecheyanu* blessing in which we thank God for having reached a special occasion. Parents often choose, write, or adapt an additional blessing for their child. We have a [Google Doc](#) with examples on the website. This should be short and sweet. Original blessings should be sent to the clergy ahead of time. We also have a [doc](#) with guidance (from a workshop by Rabbi Shira Shazeer) on writing your own blessings.

**Throwing Candy** – Following the *Shehecheyanu* blessing, candy is typically thrown at the *B. Mitzvah* by members of the congregation, as a way of wishing sweetness and blessing. The Temple provides the candy. You may assign a younger child or two the task of distributing the candy to the congregation.

You may wish to involve your family in other ways during the service, as well. Parents and family members who would like roles in the service, other than those described above, should make an appointment with the clergy well before the *B. Mitzvah*, to discuss.

## SHABBAT AT TEMPLE ISRAEL OF NATICK

In order to create and preserve the special atmosphere of religious celebration on *Shabbat*, we have a number of customs surrounding services. You may wish to let your guests know about some of these customs in advance.

- \*<sup>1</sup>Male attendees (whether Jewish or not) are asked to cover their heads with a *kippah*; female attendees are encouraged to do so as well. A *kippah* is a head covering worn during prayer and study, also known in Yiddish as a *yarmulke*.
- \*Jewish men above the age of thirteen are expected to wear a *tallit*. Jewish women are encouraged to do so as well.
- Attendees are expected to wear clean, neat, and modest clothing in the sanctuary, especially when called to the *bimah* for an *aliyah*.
- In observance of the Sabbath, please refrain from using cell phones/cameras while in or around the synagogue. (Please remember to put your cell phone or pager on vibrate.) Photos can be taken before the *B. Mitzvah*; please contact the office and clergy to schedule a time, typically on an afternoon the week before the *B. Mitzvah*.
- There is no smoking on the Temple property.
- Recorded or instrumental music is not permitted at Temple Israel at or following the main Shabbat morning service.
- If you choose to host a Saturday evening event at the Temple, the party should begin after Shabbat ends. If your *simcha* takes place during seasons when Shabbat ends late, you may begin your *simcha* before Shabbat ends provided: (1) some prayer element is worked into your celebration (*ma'ariv* and/or *havdalah*) and (2) all music (live or recorded), photography, and video, etc. begins only after Shabbat has ended. Please check with the office, clergy, or chair of the Ritual Committee for more details.

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<sup>1</sup> In the near future, we are hoping to arrive at fully egalitarian language around expectations of ritual garb. Please feel free to share ideas or feedback with the clergy.

## PLANNING YOUR CELEBRATION

### THE SEUDAT MITZVAH

Sharing our *simchas* in synagogue gives us the opportunity to feel the warm embrace of the Temple community. The meal is considered a *Seudat Mitzvah* (a “*mitzvah* meal”); the communal meal is an integral religious expression of the celebration. The community will celebrate your *simcha* with you at a *kiddush* in the Social Hall following services.

Each family is expected to sponsor a *Shabbat* morning *kiddush*, in honor of their child's *B. Mitzvah*. You may decide to host luncheons or evening parties in the Temple Social Hall. The information that follows is intended to help you in planning a *kiddush*, luncheon or evening party.

Please keep in mind that the Temple kitchen is strictly *kosher*, and any food served from the kitchen must be *kosher*. If you have any questions about this, please contact the clergy.

### TERMS RELATED TO KOSHER MEALS/EVENTS

**Va'ad HaRabonim of Massachusetts** – This is the Rabbinical board that certifies that food items are *kosher* and that the dietary laws are kept in restaurants, bakeries and butcher shops in this area. You will find their symbol on many packaged items in the grocery store. In addition, the *Va'ad* supervises *kosher* caterers who provide services to synagogues.

**Caterer** – *Kosher* caterers prepare food in their own commissaries, under the supervision of the *Va'ad*, or other Rabbinical authority. A list of approved caterers appears in this guidebook.

**Accommodator** – Accommodators use the Temple's equipment, and may provide services at Temple Israel functions if they are approved by either the *Va'ad HaRabonim*, or by the Temple Israel Ritual Committee. A list of approved accommodators appears in this guidebook as well.

### SPONSORING A KIDDUSH OR KIDDUSH LUNCHEON

**Kiddush:** The *Shabbat* morning *kiddush* is part of the communal religious service and is a communal event, open to everyone. It is the responsibility of the *B. Mitzvah* family to sponsor this part of the *B. Mitzvah* celebration. You have several options in planning this part of your celebration:

**The Congregational Luncheon** (for the standard number of Shabbat attendees, plus your guests): It is customary for *B. Mitzvah* families to invite the entire congregation to join their guests for a sit-down luncheon, making it possible for the community to celebrate together. Congregational luncheons are usually facilitated by a caterer or accommodator. **There is no fee for the use of the Social Hall when the entire congregation is invited to the luncheon.**

**The Stand-up Kiddush** (for the congregation, including your guests): This is the minimum kiddush that needs to be provided by the B. Mitzvah family. Should you choose not to host a congregational luncheon, a minimal *kiddush* would include *challah* (for the *bimah*), wine (for the congregational blessing), pastries, vegetables, hummus, breads, soft drinks, and coffee/tea. Temple Israel's Sisterhood can accommodate this *kiddush* for you, or a caterer can handle the arrangements. You also have the option of enhancing the stand-up *kiddush*, by adding additional food choices and alternatives. There is no fee for the use of the social hall if you are hosting a congregational stand-up *kiddush*.

**The Private Luncheon** (for your invited guests, only, in up to 3/5 (60%) of the Social Hall, with **payment of rental fee**): If you select this option, you are required also to sponsor a stand-up *kiddush*, as described above, for the rest of the congregation using no less than 2/5 of the Social Hall. Please speak to the synagogue office if you are interested in knowing more about how this possibility works. As this scenario creates literal and figurative divisions within our community, we try to avoid it if at all possible.

**Catering Options:** The Temple offers several alternatives for arranging these options for a *kiddush* or luncheon:

- You may hire a caterer approved by the *Va'ad HaRabonim*. Your caterer is responsible for making sure that the Temple (kitchen, Social Hall) and grounds are clean and left in good condition after your function.
- You may hire an accommodator approved by the Temple. The accommodator who most often provides meals at Temple Israel is Phyllis Rotberg of Social Expressions, 508-561-8087.
- You may hire the Sisterhood of Temple Israel to prepare the "stand-up *kiddush*." The Temple office can provide you with the name of the Sisterhood volunteer who will coordinate this for you.

- You may prepare a dairy or *pareve kiddush* (food that contains neither dairy or meat products) or luncheon yourself, with the help of family and a Temple member who is familiar with the Temple kitchen, under the following conditions:
  - All cooking must be done on the premises and completed by Friday morning.
  - All food products must be approved by the *clergy* in advance.
  - All cooking utensils used must be Temple-owned, or brought in brand-new and not previously used, i.e. in original packaging.
  - All paper products, food, and flowers must be brought into the Temple by Friday at 12pm, prior to *Shabbat*.
  - All preparation time in the Temple must be scheduled with the Temple Administrator in advance.

The synagogue has a limited number of tablecloths and decorations that you may be able to use for celebrations held in the Social Hall. Please speak to the office staff for details.

You, or your caterer/accommodator, must speak to the office and provide a Social Hall room set-up diagram, at least two weeks before the *B. Mitzvah*.

### **AFTER YOUR CELEBRATION**

Sometimes parents look for a way to acknowledge those people who helped in preparing the family for *B. Mitzvah*, or those who added to the service in a special way. You may choose to thank the clergy or educators by contributing to their discretionary funds or to other funds at TI that are meaningful to your family. It is appropriate to honor others who have enriched your *simcha* with donations to a Temple fund or to another charity.

The *Torah* commands us to feed the hungry. Please consider donating any food left over from your celebration to those in need. This is a wonderful way of giving thanks for your *simcha*. Please inform the Temple office before, or immediately after the *B. Mitzvah*, so that arrangements can be made to have a pick-up at the Temple of any food you would care to donate.

In conclusion, we hope that this entrance into Jewish adulthood is a positive growing process for you and your family, and only the beginning of exciting things to come. We hope you will enroll your child in a combination of *Prozdor*, *madrachim*, USY, and/or other Jewish youth organizations and make it a point to continue to attend services and take part in Temple activities together. We look forward to accompanying you and your family on your Jewish journeys throughout this process and for many years to come. *Mazel Tov!*

## WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING HONORS ASSIGNMENTS

The following info is also in this [document](#) that you can copy, fill out, and share with the clergy

### FIRST ARK OPENING

\***Open curtain and Close curtain** (can be one or more people): \_\_\_\_\_

\*\***Remove the Torah** (Rabbi or family member): \_\_\_\_\_

### ALIYOT

You may honor four people with *aliyot* to the *Torah* (chanting the *Torah* blessings: words are [here](#) or [here](#) (with transliteration) and a [recording](#) is here), in addition to your child, who will have the *Maftir Aliyah* (which functions as the 8th aliya, and is a special aliyah for the person who will chant *Haftarah*). Please provide Hebrew names for these four honorees, in the form: Moshe Beryl Ben (son of) Avraham David v (and) Esther Feygeh or Sarah Shayna bat (daughter of) Avraham David v (and) Esther Feygeh. If your family and your honorees include Cohens or Levis, or if you are interested in gender neutral ways to call people up, please speak to the clergy. For the Hebrew names below, put the honoree's name after "Hebrew name" and their parents' Hebrew names after "ben/bat." The four honorees can be individuals or married couples-- for married couples, there is an extra line provided for an additional Hebrew name in parenthesis.

#### **Aliyah #4**

English Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_

(Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_)

#### **Aliyah #5**

English Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_

(Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_)

#### **Aliyah #6**

English Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_

(Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_)

**Aliyah #7** (most often parents take this aliyah) English Name/s:

\_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_)

**Maffir Aliyah (your child)**

English Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ *ben/bat* \_\_\_\_\_

**Hagbah** (*lifting the Torah*): \_\_\_\_\_

(The person lifting the Torah should have a reasonably strong back and ideally have done this honor before. The person can also practice at the temple earlier in the week (or at their local temple), or even earlier in the services with an usher or volunteer in the chapel. [This video](#) explains how to lift and dress the Torah)

**Gelilah** (*Wrapping the Torah*): \_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer for Our Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer for the State of Israel in English:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ashrei** (*could be the 7th grade class, or a sibling, or whatever kids are there that morning and interested...*): \_\_\_\_\_

**SECOND ARK OPENING**

**\*Open curtain and Close curtain** (Can be one or two people): \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Replace the Torah** (*Rabbi or guest*): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*Please note:** our ark has an interior light (on a dimmer) that is automatically illuminated when the curtain is opened, and then slowly shuts off when the curtain is closed again. While illuminating a light in this fashion on Shabbat is permitted by Conservative Jewish authorities, those who avoid all electricity on Shabbat may prefer an alternate honor. If you have questions, please consult one of the rabbis.

\*\*Removing and replacing the Torah are a procedural act which on most weeks is done by one of the rabbis or the president, but we've included this as a possible honor, if you'd like to have a family member or friend do this.

Honors that non-Jewish relatives or friends can take part in include opening/closing the ark, and reading the prayer for the country (or for Israel). In addition, an interfaith couple can be called up for an aliya, with the Jewish partner chanting the blessing and the non-Jewish partner standing with their spouse. Please feel free to speak with the clergy about other ways to involve non-Jewish loved ones in your ceremony.

## PLANNING GUIDE

This timeline was drawn up several years ago by parents of *B'nai Mitzvah* who had gone through the process. It is meant to be a helpful guide, but please note that not everything on the list may apply to your particular child or family, and some items on the list may have a range of times in which they might take place.

### **2 - 3 Years Before B. Mitzvah**

- *B. Mitzvah* date is assigned – tell family & friends to save the date!

### **1 - 2 Years Before**

- Attend Family *B. Mitzvah* Programs
- *B. Mitzvah* student begins to study *trope* and blessings.
- Begin the process of planning the party portion of the *simcha* - venue, caterer, entertainment, etc.

### **1 Year Before**

- Initial meeting with the *B. Mitzvah* liaison to discuss all aspects of the service including prayers, preparation, honors, tutoring, etc.
- Consider attending the service which correlates to the Torah and *haftarah* portions your child will chant for their *B. Mitzvah*.
- Attend Family *B. Mitzvah* programs (for children & parents).
- Meet with caterer, musician, florist, photographer, etc. as necessary.

### **9 - 12 Months Before**

- Attend Shabbat services regularly
- Choose the *Mitzvah* project, and work on the 13 *Mitzvot*.

### **7 to 8 Months Before**

- Private *B. Mitzvah* lessons begin
- Reserve hotel rooms for out-of-town guests
- Pick out *tallit*.

### **6 Months Before**

- Family meeting with one of the clergy.
- Finalize guest list

#### **4 Months Before**

- Order invitations
- Order *kippot*

#### **2 - 3 Months Before**

- Begin filling out the honors form, including Hebrew names
- Send out invitations
- Arrange for flowers for bimah, discuss rental of silk flowers with the office
- Meet with clergy to discuss D'var Torah
- Make sure all vendors have submitted an insurance certificate & vendor agreement
- Shop for Apparel (suit, dress, shoes, etc.)

#### **1 Month Before**

- Finalize menus with caterers, confirm details with vendors.
- Submit draft of D'var Torah to clergy
- Schedule time for photos

#### **2 Weeks Before**

- Submit a list of honors, parent blessing, and program wording to clergy.
- Submit final setup for Social Hall to office
- Complete clothing alterations.

#### **Week Of:**

- Dress rehearsal & photographs (often on Thursday before *B. Mitzvah*)
- All supplies dropped off before noon on Friday

#### **Day Before / Day Of :**

- Gather together items needed Saturday morning: List of honors; parent blessing; binder of blessings/ *haftarah*/ Torah/ *D'var Torah*
- Relax, take a deep breath, and enjoy the moment. *Mazel tov!*