



B'nai Mitzvah Information Guide

Rabbi David A Lipper, DD

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*These prices and policies will be in effect from
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Our Temple's Philosophy

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is one of many milestones along an individual's Jewish Journey. The words Bar/Bat Mitzvah literally mean son/daughter of the commandments. It is a fundamental rite of passage, not only for the young student called to the Torah but for his or her family. The experience of Bar or Bat Mitzvah can be spiritually uplifting – it can be transformative by deepening the entire family's knowledge, understanding and connection to Judaism and TBT. Temple B'nai Torah strives to partner with each family to help make the B'nai Mitzvah (B'nai is the plural) observance a meaningful stepping stone towards the family's ongoing commitment to Judaism and each individual's Jewish Journey.

Our goal is for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student to become educated about Judaism's ethics, traditions, and to feel comfortable in our synagogue's activities. Historically, Bar and Bat Mitzvah is the ceremonial occasion that marks the time when a young person is recognized as an adult in the Jewish community and is responsible for performing mitzvot (the commandments of the Torah). At Temple B'nai Torah, the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony takes place within our regularly scheduled Shabbat morning (Shacharit) worship service.

To enable you to focus on the most important spiritual elements of this very special simcha, the staff of Temple B'nai Torah works with you on the many different aspects of the occasion.

Preparing for Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Cantor David Serkin-Poole oversees B'nai Mitzvah training. All specific questions regarding training and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony should be discussed directly with the Cantor.

The process of preparing to be a Bar/Bat Mitzvah begins early at Temple B'nai Torah. We expect our youth to have attended and successfully complete four (4) years of Hebrew and Judaic studies, either at our Religious School or in another program that is approved by Cantor Serkin-Poole and the Director of Lifelong Learning.

Every student, as part of the Sunday morning curriculum, during the 2nd half of their 6th grade year takes a class taught by the Cantor. Here the students learn the art of chanting Torah and Hadtarah.

Each student must complete 6th grade and participate in our Temple's 7th grade class on Shabbat morning. We expect all B'nai Mitzvah students to fulfill all 7th grade attendance requirements. Director of Lifelong Learning, Debra Siroka, will work individually with students and their families if alternative educational arrangements are needed.

Each student is required to perform 13 hours of community service prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, in a Mitzvah Project of their own choosing. Rabbi Lipper will be monitoring their progress through monthly emails to the parents.

Finally, the Cantor arranges appropriate private lessons with him and/or the Temple's tutors. As the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah approaches, the student will meet with Rabbi Lipper for 6-8 sessions to prepare the D'var Torah.

We require our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students to attend at least two Shabbat or Holy Day services per month for the six months immediately prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Regular attendance in our 7th grade class usually satisfies this requirement.

As our "Philosophy" makes clear, Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a stepping stone in a life of learning Judaism and being Jewish. Therefore, we expect our students to continue with their Jewish education past their ceremony through to 10th grade (Confirmation) and OUR Temple High School and Youth programs.

Your Family's Participation

Preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a working partnership between the student, the family and the staff of Temple B'nai Torah.

In January of the 6th grade year, you will participate in a family meeting with other B'nai Mitzvah families and Rabbi Lipper. This is to enhance parental understanding of the details of the B'nai Mitzvah service and to build relationships among parents going through the experience in the same year.

Each family is expected to serve as ushers at least once during the year for services and provide morning snack for the 7th grade Saturday sessions.

Topics covered in parent component of B'nai Mitzvah Orientation

1. B'nai Mitzvah is a milestone for the entire family
2. Interfaith, Multifaith and Other Jewish Family Issues
3. Planning a Meaningful Party
4. Writing your Divrei Kodesh

(Class is mandatory for all families)

Sharing the Simcha with the Congregation and Your Family

The Friday night 7:30 PM Shabbat service before your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a special moment to worship and celebrate with our Temple community. Your child will participate in the service, and we encourage you to invite your out-of-town guests to join us that evening. You are the host of the Oneg Shabbat that evening. As such, you are welcoming both your own visitors and scores of worshippers from around the area. Home-baked goods such as brownies, lemon bars, as well as cookies show an appreciation of the congregation and our shared joy at your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

In preparation for the Shabbat morning (Shacharit) service, you will meet with both Rabbi Lipper and Cantor Serkin-Poole. Parents remarks must be short, no longer than 3 minutes per parent, concise, and reflective of your family's connection to sacred values this day.

You may also have an “aliyah”, the act of being called to the Torah to recite the traditional blessings before the reading of the Torah. This is considered a great honor. And you will have the chance to select others for aliyot as well – members of your family, close friends, etc.

Note: We are inclusive and open community that encourages all family member’s to be engaged in worship. While certain prayers are specific to Jewish faith the Rabbi and Cantor will work with families to find appropriate and inclusive roles for all family members to participate.

The entire congregation of Temple B’nai Torah is invited to attend the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony and congregants are encouraged to participate. The first aliyah at the service will be given to congregants-at-large, as the Cantor and Rabbi choose.

After the Shabbat morning Service on Saturday, we welcome everyone who is present to join together for a light meal. Our policy is that the B’nai Mitzvah families are expected to host this light luncheon.

The lunch can be simple, relatively informal and need not cost more than your family can afford. You are responsible for hiring and arranging the menu with a caterer. Caterers who have worked at the Temple in the past are listed in the B’nai Mitzvah Vendor List (separate booklet). Some of them have created low-cost menus for you to consider.

Many families want to use the Temple Social Hall for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration on Saturday or Sunday evening. In general, we welcome such usage. We make the social hall available on Saturday or Sunday night on a first-come-first-served basis. If there is a pre-planned Temple-wide event that evening, we will not be able to schedule a separate party. *However, if you make a reservation far enough in advance and make a non-refundable deposit, we will guarantee not to schedule anything for that evening. There is a fee of \$500 to the Temple for use of the Social Hall on a Saturday or Sunday Evening.*

Sharing your Simcha with the Community

Putting the “Mitzvah” into B’nai Mitzvah

Celebrating a Bar or Bat Mitzvah gives a family and the student a unique opportunity to make a difference in the world around us. Every student is required to undertake a “Gemilut Chasadim” project. These projects are wide-ranging and are planned and carried out under the supervision of The 7th Grade Faculty and the Director of Lifelong Learning. There are many ways that we recommend families share their joy by engaging in acts of Tikun Olam (healing the world):

MAZON: MAZON is a Jewish response to world-wide hunger for Jews and non-Jews. We encourage each B’nai Mitzvah family to contribute 3% of the cost of the event to MAZON. Donation envelopes are available in the Temple Office.

JFS Food Baskets: The Bima is decorated with arrangements of silk flowers. If you would prefer food baskets on the Bima, you can order them for a charge of \$90 per family (tax deductible cost from JFS). Jane Deer-Hillman at JFS, 206-461-3240 can help you make arrangements. You can also make your own food baskets as centerpieces for your luncheon tables and donate them to the Jewish Family Service Kosher Food Bank. Or, you can make centerpieces with colorful socks, underwear, books, school supplies, or toiletries and donate them to the Seattle Jewish Coalition for Homeless People. If you would like other ideas of how to incorporate a mitzvah into your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please feel free to talk to the Clergy or Director of Lifelong Learning.

Compost and Recycling: 'Do not waste,' *bal tashchit*, is an important Jewish value. TBT composts all food waste and disposable dishes. If you choose to use disposable plates, cups, and utensils, please buy compostable ones or ask your caterer to supply them. Nestor can tell you where to find these.

Please ask your guests to dispose of all food waste, paper napkins, and disposable plates, cups, and utensils in the green compost bin. If you are using cans or bottles, please dispose of these in the blue recycling bin. Garbage, which we hope to minimize, can be thrown in the gray garbage bin.

Tzedakah Contributions: There are scores of organizations that would welcome a donation in honor of your simcha. The Temple also has many ways for you to contribute to your Temple community. (Mitzvah Corps, Social Action, Norm Greenbaum Camperships, Religious School Scholarships, Rabbi Mirel Judaica Collection, Meltzer/Newby Landscape).

Financial Obligations related to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Each family is billed a \$900 fee for the B'nai Mitzvah preparation experience. This amount does not cover the full and true cost of preparing your child for this simcha. It is significantly supported by the general income of Temple B'nai Torah (membership pledges and other donations).

For this fee, you will receive the following benefits:

- ☆ The multi-session B'nai Mitzvah tutorial taught by Cantor Serkin-Poole.
- ☆ Materials needed for the class and for tutoring.
- ☆ Individual and small group tutoring with Temple-trained tutors, scheduled by the Temple office.
- ☆ Musical accompanist for the Shabbat morning Service.
- ☆ Custodial support for Friday night's Oneg Shabbat.
- ☆ Coffee, tea, punch or juice for Friday night's Oneg Shabbat.
- ☆ Paper goods for Friday night's Oneg Shabbat.
- ☆ Service programs prepared by the Temple staff for Saturday morning.
- ☆ Consultations with Cantor Serkin-Poole, Rabbi Lipper, and other Temple staff as needed.
- ☆ One Kitchen staff for Friday night's Oneg Shabbat.

For families who choose to use the Temple social hall for an evening party there is a facility rental charge of \$500. This is to be paid in full one month prior to the event. This covers use of the Temple Social Hall, tables and chairs, kitchen and china. We ask a \$150 non-refundable deposit (part of the complete charge) when you make your reservation for the Temple social hall. Please contact the Director of Administration to rent the facility.

Some families would like to host a Shabbat dinner before the Friday Night Service. The rental fee is \$250 and covers set-up, use of the kitchen and the rental of the china.

The B'nai Mitzvah family MUST be a Member in Good Standing (membership pledges & Religious School tuition must be paid up-to-date and all B'nai Mitzvah fees paid in full). The B'nai Mitzvah fee must be fully paid four (4) months prior to the B'nai Mitzvah. A family that has not paid these fees or is not a member in good standing, cannot have the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, unless that family has made alternative financial arrangements with our Director of Administration. Our goal is to provide a meaningful ceremony to all B'nai Mitzvah families. If you have any concerns or requests regarding finances or facilities, please direct them to our Director of Administration. All requests are kept in strict confidence.

What Kitchen Supplies are Available to Us?

The Temple provides:

- ✧ 20 rectangular tables for the food and beverages
- ✧ 24 round tables that seat 10 comfortably

The following can be used for a rental charge of \$75.

- ✧ 150 wineglasses
- ✧ 200 china dinner plates
- ✧ 100 china coffee cups and saucers or mugs
- ✧ 150 forks, knives, and spoons
- ✧ Assorted serving bowls, platters, utensils

Use of Temple kitchen items require hiring additional kitchen staff.

What Do You Need to Bring for Friday Night and Saturday Morning?

For Friday Night, you will host the Oneg Shabbat, an opportunity to socialize after the 7:30 PM worship Service. For the Oneg following the service, please bring 15 to 20 dozen cookies, brownies, lemon bars, etc. You will also need to provide lemonade & coffee/tea cream/sugar and paper goods.

On Saturday morning, for the kiddush preceding the luncheon, please bring:

- ✧ Challah (4 challot per 125 people)
- ✧ Grape juice (6 gallons per 125 people)
- ✧ Wine - if you choose to serve wine
- ✧ Two small challah for the Bima

Please deliver all food and other supplies to the Temple by 2:00 PM on Friday. All food should be marked with your family's name and the time it will be used (Friday night or Saturday morning). Food can be stored in the refrigerator in the kitchen on a space available. If a Saturday delivery is needed, please make sure that it occurs between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM.

The Rabbi will invite the entire congregation to share the Mitzvah of Hospitality when the service is ended. Please add an additional 40 to your caterer's count to cover congregants and 7th grade students who choose to stay.

The Shabbat Timetable

- ☆ Please arrive ½ hour before Friday night services begin.
- ☆ The B'nai Mitzvah students have the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles, chanting the Kiddush and participating in the service to the extent determined by Cantor Serkin-Poole. Other members of the congregation may also participate in the service and other celebrations may be commemorated (baby-naming's, wedding blessings, etc.).

The Shabbat morning service begins at 10:30 AM.

The Temple opens at 8:00 AM for photos or to bring food and reception items and a final walk-through with the Cantor which begins at 9:30 am.

At 10:00 AM, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student(s) meet with their Madrich(im) in the library while parents, siblings, and others greet guests in the foyer.

At 10:15 AM, the parents, grandparents, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student(s), Rabbi, Cantor, Madrich(im) and a congregational representative gather in the library to sign the B'nai Mitzvah certificate.

Other Temple Policies and Procedures

If the policies and procedures herein are not adhered to, at the discretion of the Rabbi or the Cantor, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be postponed or canceled.

Room Seating Capacity:

South Hall and North Hall with Oneg Hall - will seat 200 at tables or 300 standing.

The administrative staff will work with your family and/or your caterer to determine the amount of space you will most likely need, based on your reception plans.

The Temple does not have adequate space for a buffet and assigned seating for more than 200 people. When we have more than 200 people for the Shabbat luncheon, we set up plenty of additional chairs around the Oneg Hall. We have found that this works very well for all our families and worshippers.

Photographs: ***The Temple does not allow photos during the service.*** Photos may be taken prior to or following the ceremony. Arrangements may be made for picture taking during the final rehearsal (Friday morning) in consultation with the Cantor and Rabbi.

Video: We allow *one stationary video camera* mounted on a tripod at the rear of the sanctuary. No flood lights or flash are allowed during the service. Taping of the service should be done as unobtrusively as possible.

Videographers may not move around the sanctuary and film during the service. The video camera should be aimed entirely at the Bima throughout the service – not at congregants.

Kashrut: As a Reform synagogue, our dietary rules are: We prohibit the use of shellfish or pork products of any kind. We also prohibit combinations of milk and meat ingredients in the same dish and request that meat and milk items be served on separate tables. Please take care to follow these limitations in planning your menu. Food may be prepared by a caterer, at home, or at TBT.

Kitchen Staff: The Temple provides a staff member to oversee the kitchen on Friday evening. For the kiddush luncheon or an evening party, your caterer will need to bring in additional staff.

Wine: The Temple's policy is to serve no wine at all on Friday night. At Kiddush following services on Saturday, grape juice is always served. Each family may decide whether to also serve wine at the Saturday Kiddush. Any time that wine or other alcoholic beverages are served, *it is the family's responsibility to ensure that no minors partake of it.*

Parking: Any B'nai Mitzvah event that is likely to bring 150 or more cars (approx. 250 adults) into our parking lot will require additional parking. The Temple will make the necessary arrangements (we need at least 2 weeks notice) and the hosts will be required to cover the cost of this service. Shuttle buses from a centralized parking area are an appropriate alternative to a valet service. In any case, please alert your guests that no Temple parking is allowed on the residential streets surrounding the Temple. We appreciate your help in maintaining good relations with our neighbors.

B'nai Mitzvah celebrations that follow a Shabbat morning service must be over and all the guests gone by no later than 3:00 PM. Any evening celebrations must be over and the guests must be gone by 11:00 PM. Parties that last longer or that require our custodial staff to work past midnight for clean-up purposes will be charged an additional \$50 for each hour past midnight.

Caterers, DJs, Other Vendors: Any vendor employed by a B'nai Mitzvah family to work at the Temple must be approved by the Temple's Administrator. Such vendors shall be subject to all the rules and policies developed by the Board of Directors for use of Temple property.

Any caterer working at the Temple, whether cooking in the kitchen or simply providing food for an event, must file a *Certificate of Insurance* including coverage for property damage, bodily injury, food products and workers compensation. These certificates must be filed in the Temple Office at least two (2) weeks before the scheduled event.

In addition, *caterers must give a \$400 damage/security deposit to the Temple Office at least two (2) weeks before the scheduled event.* Should a caterer not provide the \$400 security deposit, the sponsoring Temple family will be billed this amount. This will be retained until completion of the event. The Temple reserves the right to deduct from the security deposit any costs for damages to its property or facilities or for extra clean up or losses. The Temple also reserves the right to charge for any damages or expenses in excess of the security deposit. Caterers may request that the Temple hold their deposit for future events.

Musicians or DJs hired for an event at the Temple must file Certificates of Insurance including coverage for property damage, bodily injury and workers compensation at least two (2) weeks before the event. The Temple reserves the right to charge either the vendor or the family for any damages or expenses incurred.

When a B'nai Mitzvah Family "Self-Caters": Families that self-cater should be prepared to hire serving staff or to ask friends or family members to take this responsibility. Please note that Temple Staff are not servers. They do not set place settings for a sit down meal and they do not bus tables. Families are also responsible for clearing the tables after the event.

What is the Temple's Policy on Appropriate Dress Code?

Appropriate Dress for the B'nai Mitzvah Celebration and 7th grade Shabbat service attendance. There are three primary values to consider when deciding what constitutes appropriate clothing for your child's B'nai Mitzvah celebration and their participation in our 7th grade Shabbat morning program:

- ☆ Comfort: Please consider clothing that is weather appropriate and comfortable for sitting up on the Bima above the entire congregation. Jewish worship services require a fair amount of movement-bending, standing and sitting, walking and carrying.
- ☆ Safety: This value primarily relates to appropriate shoes for carrying the Torah, walking up and down the stairs, etc.
- ☆ Celebration: Clothing should reflect the festive nature of Shabbat and the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony. Please consider purchasing several special "Shabbat" outfits for your child to wear on Saturday mornings to the B'nai Mitzvah celebrations of their classmates.

Special Ritual Items for your child's celebration: You may choose to purchase your son's or daughter's Tallit/Tallis, Kipah/Yarmelka (head cover), or Yad (Torah pointer).

Sometimes families will choose to order imprinted kipot/yarmelkas for the family, congregation, and guests to wear for the occasion. Since they are ordered from out of the Seattle area, please allow enough time to them to arrive so you will not be disappointed.

A kippah, tallit or yad can be purchased from TBT's Judaica shop. Special ritual objects can be a meaningful memento of the B'nai Mitzvah that can be used throughout the rest of your Jewish life.

Music & Entertainment

Temple B'nai Torah encourages our families to celebrate B'nai Mitzvah at the Temple. Our policy on entertainment follows:

There will be no music in the Sanctuary other than liturgical music unless expressly authorized by the clergy.

DJs, other musicians, comedians, or magicians will be allowed for celebrations that take place in the Social Hall. All such entertainers shall provide their own equipment. The Temple's organ, piano, or other musical equipment shall not be used. The entertainment program planned should be in good taste, sensitive to the synagogue setting.

B'nai Mitzvah Check-List

Have We Done Everything We Wanted?

At least four (4) years in advance:

- ☐ Begin Jewish studies and Hebrew instruction

Two (2) years in advance:

- ☐ Rabbi sets the date for the B'nai Mitzvah with the parents. Parents sign and return the B'NAI MITZVAH DATE ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT FORM

Parents receive first billing statement for B'nai Mitzvah fee.

- ☐ One (1) year to 9 months in advance:
- ☐ Rabbi Lipper and Cantor Serkin-Poole conduct a B'nai Mitzvah Orientation. Adults and students will learn simultaneously but in separate rooms. All the information you need to know as a parents in planning your child's special day will be presented during the session.
- ☐ If there is another B'nai Mitzvah on the same date, discuss sharing luncheon and oneg arrangements with that family.
- ☐ Inform the Temple Executive Assistant, if you want to use the Oneg Hall for an evening celebration.

Eight (8) months in advance:

- ☐ Family meets with Cantor to review expectations and requirements.
- ☐ B'nai Mitzvah candidate begins lessons with B'nai Mitzvah tutor.

Four (4) months in advance:

- ☐ Fully pay Temple pledge/fee commitments
- ☐ Establish guest list and begin preparing invitations.
- ☐ Begin making arrangements for an "additional" party if that is in your plans

Two (2) months in advance:

- ☐ Send out invitations
- ☐ Continue planning celebration or reception
- ☐ B'nai Mitzvah student begin meeting with the Rabbi
- ☐ Speak to Temple Executive Assistant about caterer and set up needs
- ☐ Order table decorations
- ☐ Purchase Tallit and order Kippot
- ☐ Make arrangements for photography
- ☐ Order cake, grape juice, cookies, challah, and other foods
- ☐ Decide who will have honors of the day and get necessary information for the honor

One (1) month in advance:

- ☐ Inform Temple Executive Assistant of number of people you expect
- ☐ Ensure that Caterers and DJs/Musicians submit Certificates Of Insurance

☐ Two (2) weeks in advance:

Make sure all security deposits are submitted to the Temple.

☐ One (1) week in advance:

- ☐ Check with Temple Executive Assistant if there are extra kitchen needs besides those identified earlier
- ☐ Discuss with Cantor who will have the honor of participating in the service
- ☐ Fax or deliver room set-up to Temple Office.

Friday before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

- ☐ Attend final rehearsal. This rehearsal is for the students only. (A parent must proofread program while students rehearse in sanctuary)
- ☐ Deliver food and challah to the Temple
- ☐ Arrive 20 minutes before Evening Service
- ☐ Remember MAZON

Saturday:

- ☐ Arrive at least one hour and 15 minutes prior to Service
- ☐ At exactly 1 hour before the service, family & service participants will have a walk-through with Cantor Serkin-Poole

Relax and enjoy this special day!

The Temple maintains a list of approved caterers and vendors to help you with your Simcha.

*B'nai Mitzvah Vendor List (separate booklet)
Please contact the Temple Office for this booklet.*

Building Floor Plan

