This document is located on our website:
www.mzion.org
Pray / Lifecycle Events
B'nei Mitzvah
B'nei Mitzvah Handbook for Class of 2025-26

קייק הר ציון
MOUNT ZION TEMPLE

B'nei Mitzvah Handbook

Jewish life cycle rituals provide us with a meaningful way of marking sacred time. They offer us a special avenue for learning and grant us a unique opportunity to bring family and friends together in celebration. All of us here at Mount Zion look forward to guiding you through this special time in the life of your family. Our goal is for you to experience a taste of Sinai through this process and that each student will look back with a deep sense of pride and accomplishment. We are here to guide you intellectually and spiritually through your learning for the ceremony and to help you along the way for the celebration. The entire Mount Zion family wishes you much *mazal* (good fortune) as you work towards this joyous occasion.

We have prepared this manual to help you begin your B'nei Mitzvah journey. Read it carefully as a family and refer to it as you move through the process. If you have questions at any time, please feel free to contact us.

Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker
Rabbi Esther Adler
Cantor Jennifer Strauss-Klein
Cantor Rachel Stock Spilker
Rabbi Heather Renetzky, Director of Congregational Engagement
Kate Tucker Sicher, Executive Director
Alisha Sawyer, Religious School Director
Abby Farber, Director of Youth &Young Adult Engagement

Revised: September 2025 / *Elul* 5785

PART I: Your B'nei Mitzvah — Page

The Development and Meaning of B'nei Mitzvah	2
Goals of the B'nei Mitzvah Year	3
Review of Expectations - *You will be asked to sign this form during your meeting with the Rabbi.*	4-5
Many Expectations; Two Requirements	6
A Note on Shabbat Service Attendance	6-7
Preparation for the B'nei Mitzvah	7-10
B'nei Mitzvah Role in the Shabbat Service	11
Family Participation: Honors and Responsibilities	12-13
B'nei Mitzvah Honors Form *Return the duplicate blue form provided to the Rabbis' & Cantors' Study two weeks before your simcha*	14-15
A Word About *Aliyot*, *Tallit*, *Kippah* and *D'var Torah; Parent's D'var Torah*	16-18
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Prayer Options (An Alternative to a *D'var Torah*)	19-20
Torah Blessings Copy Including Transliteration	21-22
Creating Community: Inclusion in Your Simcha (celebration)	23
Opportunities for Sharing Your Simcha (celebration)	24
Additional Information About the B'nei Mitzvah Service	25-26

PART II: Administrative Information — 27

A Guide for Planning Your Simcha (celebration)	28-29
Mount Zion Temple Bulletin Information Form and Sample Articles *Email the article and photo to the bulletin editor two months before your simcha*	30
B'nei Mitzvah Publicity for the American Jewish World and Sample Articles	31-32
B'nei Mitzvah Fee Information	33
Shabbat Morning Kiddush	34
Guidelines for Sponsoring an Oneg Shabbat	35
Soliciting Oneg Shabbat Contributions	36
B'nei Mitzvah Administrative Costs/Details *Return the form provided to the Executive Director at least 2 months before your simcha*	37
B'nei Mitzvah Administrative **Sample** Room Set-Ups	38
B'nei Mitzvah Administrative **Blank** Room Set-Up Form *Return the form provided to the Executive Director two weeks before your simcha*	39
Mount Zion Hebrew Congregation House Rules & Guidelines *Return the form provided to the Executive Director 3 months before your simcha*	40-41

PART III: Appendix — 42

Sample Letter to Guests Unfamiliar with B'nei Mitzvah	43-44
Glossary	45

THE DEVELOPMENT & MEANING OF B'NEI MITZVAH

When a Jew turns thirteen, they become Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah. *Bar* means "son," *Bat* means "daughter," *B'nei* means "children of," and *Mitzvah* means "commandment." Therefore, literally, this means one is a "son/daughter/child of the commandment" and now assumes the responsibility for their own Judaism. One does not "**have"** a Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah; one is <u>not</u> "Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvahed." One **becomes** a Bar/Bat/B'nei Mitzvah. It is a process.

The Shabbat service, when a student is called to the Torah for the first time, is when we celebrate this change in status with a special ceremony. By the date of the service, a person can feel proud of all that they have learned and accomplished. We try to schedule the service close to each student's thirteenth birthday, though one can celebrate being called to the Torah at any age after 13, including in adulthood. At Mount Zion, many B'nei Mitzvah lead much of our prayer service in addition to the primary act of being called to the Torah. The celebration that follows is an equally important aspect of this joyful rite of passage.

Historically, B'nei Mitzvah did not always have the same significance. One can look throughout the entire Bible and not find one mention of a Bar Mitzvah ceremony. Abraham did not "have" one; neither did Moses nor King David. But a thousand years after David, while the Temple in Jerusalem still stood, the age of 13 began to be associated with assuming religious obligations. Around the time that the Romans destroyed the Temple (70 C.E.), the Rabbis prescribed "at the age of thirteen one takes on the responsibility of the *mitzvot*" *(Pirkei Avot 5:21).* The only ritual we know of from this time period is that the father would recite the *Baruch sh'Pitarani* prayer: "Blessed is the One Who has now freed me from the responsibility for this boy."

The ritual observance of this coming-of-age ceremony was formed primarily in the Middle Ages. By the sixteenth century it became customary for the Bar Mitzvah to mark this transition by reading from the Torah and delivering a *derashah* (a *D'var Torah*/speech on the words of Torah.) In the 1800s the early leaders of Reform Judaism decided to replace Bar Mitzvah with Confirmation, a group ceremony at the age of 15 or 16 during which students confirm their commitment to Judaism, in order to extend Jewish education by a few more years. Eventually, the Bar Mitzvah ceremony was reintroduced for boys, along with Confirmation. The first Bar Mitzvah at Mount Zion was held in 1934. By the late 50s it was fully integrated into congregational practice.

In the 1800s, some families began to celebrate the coming-of-age of a daughter with a festive meal, at which the girl would deliver a talk on a Jewish theme. In 1921, the first Bat Mitzvah ceremony in the U.S. was held for Judith Kaplan Eisenstein, whose father, Mordecai Kaplan, founded Reconstructionist Judaism. The first Bat Mitzvah at Mount Zion took place around 1960.

Much has changed over the generations, and much has stayed the same. Today, becoming B'nei Mitzvah has come to be one of the primary milestones in the life of a young Jew. It is still a time of increased responsibility - a time to make a personal commitment to being Jewish. It is an opportunity to demonstrate that commitment publicly by reading from the Torah and leading the congregation in prayer and study.

Becoming B'nei Mitzvah is by no means the end of Jewish education. It is rather the beginning of Jewish learning on a higher level, a spiritual journey that will continue throughout one's life. At

Mount Zion, 7th grade begins Chai School, our program that continues through 10th grade confirmation and 12th grade graduation.

GOALS OF THE B'NEI MITZVAH YEAR

We hope that the B'nei Mitzvah year will be spiritually enriching and intellectually challenging. To this end we have established the following goals for the year. We ask your family to work hard together to achieve these goals and we will do all we can to help and support you.

The student preparing for B'nei Mitzvah will:

1. Become part of a caring and committed community of peers.
2. Learn to chant from the Torah, Haftarah, and *siddur* (prayer book).
3. Study the content of the Torah Portion and write a summary and *D'var Torah* with guidance from the clergy.
4. Learn to lead the congregation in prayer.
5. Explore the meaning of B'nei Mitzvah both personally and as it relates to the Jewish people.
6. Engage in Jewish study with your family leading to an increased presence of *Torah* (study), *Avodah* (relationship with God), and *Gemilut Chasadim* (acts of loving kindness) in your home.
7. Prepare for the B'nei Mitzvah service in an environment which is friendly, spiritual, and supportive, and which encourages students to seek increased involvement in the synagogue as they grow.

You will be asked to sign this during your meeting with the Rabbi.

Mount Zion Temple B'nei Mitzvah Program
Review of Expectations

Mazel Tov! Congratulations! You are now at a crossroads in your journey as a young Jew. As you are about to begin the intensive study which will prepare you to become B'nei Mitzvah, we want to review and clarify our goals and expectations for this process.

Please read this carefully and at the end of the form you and one of your parents/guardians should sign this form indicating you understand our expectations. If you have any questions, now is a good time to ask.

Our goal is to make this portion of your journey as positive and meaningful as possible for your whole family. ***You* can expect *us*** to guide you in your study, to be available and present for you as you learn and grow, to answer your questions to the best of our ability, and to accommodate your particular learning and family needs as best we can within the parameters and philosophy of our program and synagogue.

Our* expectations of *you have been outlined in the B'nei Mitzvah handbook you received at the sixth grade B'nei Mitzvah Orientation. Below is a summary of those expectations:

Kavanah / Intention… We will work with you on learning your Torah, Haftarah, prayers and blessings and *D'var Torah*. We will do our part to make sure that you succeed. If necessary, we will ask your family to hire a tutor to help (this is not unusual). Your job is to bring your full spirit to the task, and to work in cooperation with us.This can be very meaningful even though it can be hard work at times. On a practical level, **you will need to clear your schedule on Wednesdays and/or Sundays for tutoring.**

Classroom Attendance Students are expected to attend Hebrew and Judaic studies classes throughout the sixth grade year, and Chai School in the seventh grade year. The seventh grade year is called Gesher (meaning "bridge") and is the first year of Chai School, our 7-12th grade program. Gesher meets Wednesday nights 6:00-7:15 p.m. **We define regular attendance as no more than 7 absences in the sixth grade, and no more than 5 absences in the seventh grade.**

Service Attendance Regular attendance at worship services will make your B'nei Mitzvah day more meaningful and easier because the prayers will be more familiar. Students are expected to attend with at least one of their parents/guardians a minimum of:

One year before your B'nei Mitzvah date: **One service per month, Friday or Saturday**
Six Months before your B'nei Mitzvah date: **Two per month, one at least on Saturday**
Two Months before your B'nei Mitzvah date: **Three per month, two at least on Saturday**
One Month before your B'nei Mitzvah date: **Every Shabbat morning**

Gemilut Chasadim Project & Tzedakah Part of becoming B'nei Mitzvah is incorporating into my life the values and *mitzvot* of Judaism including the *mitzvot* of tzedakah and *gemilut chasadim*/acts of loving kindness. **Gemilut Chasadim Project:** In keeping with the mitzvah of B'nei Mitzvah, 7th graders are expected to choose a mitzvah and act on it by completing thirteen (13) hours of volunteer work with an organization of your choice. After each volunteer session, you will reflect on your experience with a journal entry (form provided) and, after completing your hours, you will create a presentation sharing your experience and information about the organization for which you volunteered. You will present your project in class and at the Chai School graduation in the spring. The **Gemilut Chasadim Project** packet and forms can be found on the 7th grade section of mzion.org. **Tzedakah:** We expect you to donate a portion of your gifts to a *tzedakah* group of your choice. This group's name will be printed in the Shabbat Morning insert on the date you become B'nei Mitzvah.

Ushering You and your family are expected to usher at the B'nei Mitzvah service before yours. You will receive the pertinent information in advance.

Continuing Jewish Education We expect you to continue your Jewish education in our Chai School program or in another approved course of study. Our Chai School is fun and engaging. The seventh grade year, called Gesher, is taught by a skilled teacher and mentored by eleventh and twelfth grade teens. In the eighth and ninth grade years, you choose from a variety of elective courses. In the tenth grade year, you help decide the topics of study with Rabbi Spilker in preparation for the Confirmation service and for your life as a young adult Jew. In the eleventh grade year, you have the opportunity to travel to New York with Rabbi Spilker and your classmates. In the eleventh and twelfth grade years, you can participate in Chai School as a peer mentor and/or in a variety of unique learning opportunities, programs, leadership roles, and events.

We are very excited to take this journey with you, and feel confident that with all the expectations understood, it will be a smooth and enjoyable time. If you feel you need to discuss any of the above in depth with our clergy, please don't hesitate to let us know.

L'shalom,

Adam Stock Spilker, Rabbi
Esther Adler, Rabbi
Jennifer Strauss-Klein, Cantor
Rachel Stock Spilker, Cantor
Rabbi Heather Renetzky, Director of Congregational Engagement
Kate Tucker Sicher, Executive Director
Alisha Sawyer, Religious School Director
Abby Farber, Director of Young Adult & Youth Engagement

I have read and understand all of the expectations of the *B'nei Mitzvah* program. If I feel I cannot meet any of these expectations, I will make an appointment to discuss it with one of the clergy.

_____ Signature of student /date

_____ Signature of one parent and guardian / date

MANY EXPECTATIONS, THREE REQUIREMENTS

I. Required Years of Religious/Hebrew School

B'nei Mitzvah candidates are required to attend five years of Religious/Hebrew School at Mount Zion or its equivalent as determined by the clergy. Students must also complete the full seventh grade academic year even after their B'nei Mitzvah service. Regular attendance is mandatory. We define regular attendance as no more than seven absences in the sixth grade, and no more than five absences in the seventh grade.

II. Participation in Mount Zion's 6th Grade Family Programming

Mount Zion has developed a series of programs during the 6th grade year for the B'nei Mitzvah student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s). This series includes an orientation, an overnight retreat, a session on writing a D'var Torah, creating a tallit, and "Putting God on the Guest List." If an older student is preparing for B'nei Mitzvah, he/she will also participate in the year before becoming B'nei Mitzvah.

III. Shabbat Service Attendance

Shabbat service attendance is integral to B'nei Mitzvah preparation. See below for details.

A NOTE ON SHABBAT SERVICE ATTENDANCE

SHABBAT EXPERIENCE: A CONTEXT FOR THE SERVICE

Shabbat observance takes place both at the home and at the temple. We hope that the B'nei Mitzvah journey will enrich your family's experience of Shabbat in both places.

At Home: We encourage you to adopt a home practice of Shabbat if you do not have one already. This might include lighting Shabbat candles, having a Shabbat Challah, and saying Kiddush. For ideas about celebrating Shabbat at home, click here.

At the Temple: *Shabbat service attendance is integral to B'nei Mitzvah preparation*. By the time of the B'nei Mitzvah, we hope the whole family will feel at home in our sanctuary. The words, melodies, and choreography of the service should be familiar, and you should feel like a part of the worship community. The B'nei Mitzvah year is an opportunity for the whole family to explore their spirituality. Please plan to attend Shabbat services with your child. Our young people will better understand the value of being part of a worship community if we adults model it for them.

Post B'nei Mitzvah family members are encouraged to wear *kippot* and *tallit* in Shabbat morning services. Decisions about observance cannot be made once, but must be revisited through one's life for one's choices as a Reform Jew to be meaningful.

All B'nei Mitzvah students are required to attend services with their parent(s) at Mount Zion. While we hope you will attend out of your own interest and commitment, we are aware that some students need clear guidelines. Minimum attendance should include a combination of Friday night, Shabbat morning, and holiday services as follows:

1. **One year** before your date: **One service per month, Friday or Saturday.**
2. **Six months** before your date: **Two per month, one at least on Saturday.**
3. **Two months** before your date: at least **Three per month, two at least on Saturday.**
4. **One month** before your date: **Every Shabbat morning.**
5. **At the B'nei Mitzvah prior to your student's**: **Your family will usher.** This is an important part of community-building, and is expected. See page 26.

PREPARATION FOR B'NEI MITZVAH

I. SCHEDULE FOR GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL TRAINING AT MOUNT ZION

A. Group Training

1. **B'nei Mitzvah Orientation Meeting – Fall of 6th grade year:** We will discuss this important passage in the life of your family, including an overview of procedures and expectations. Many questions and concerns are addressed at this meeting to help make the months of preparation as smooth as possible.

2. **Family Overnight Retreat, Family Sunday Workshops, and *Tallit* (prayer shawl) Making** -- **During the 6th grade year -** Developed by lay leaders and clergy in 1999, this year-long program helps Mount Zion families focus on the meaning of the B'nei Mitzvah in the context of a class community.

3. **Sefer Seminar – 7-12 months before date:** Students with Torah portions in a given Book (Sefer) of the Torah (i.e. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, or Deuteronomy) will attend a Shabbat (Saturday) morning service together. Following the service, families will gather to present their creative presentations based on each student's Torah portion over Shabbat lunch. *You will receive a personalized email with detailed instructions and the date of your Sefer Seminar.*

B. Individual Training

1. **Family meeting with Rabbi** (approximately 12 months before date): Each family meets with one of the Rabbis to: 1) go over the B'nei Mitzvah schedule; 2) review the Shabbat service and the various honors to give out; 3) discuss the family presentation of the student's Torah portion at the *Sefer Seminar* (see above); 4) Sign the Review of Expectations Form.

2. **Scheduling Individual Sessions** (approximately 10 months before date): You will be contacted by the office to schedule individual 20-minute training sessions with the cantors via www.MyMusicStaff.com. At the first session, please let us know if you have additional people chanting Torah at the B'nei Mitzvah. Having additional chanters does not affect the number of verses the B'nei Mitzvah chants. We will add verses for the additional chanters.

3. **Torah Portion** (approximately 9 months before the date), when individual training sessions begin, the student will receive a printed copy of their specific Torah and Haftarah verses along with an emailed sound file of those verses. **Please bring all B'nei Mitzvah materials to these sessions.** At individual sessions, the Cantor will listen to your student's portion, determine assignments, and keep the student and parents informed of the progress. A log is kept to facilitate clear communication. **In no way does the weekly tutorial session replace the daily study at home.** If you will not be able to make a scheduled appointment with the Cantor, please use www.MyMusic Staff.com to cancel. If it is within 24 hours of the appointment time, lease email the cantors directly.

4. **Haftarah portion** (approximately 4 months before B'nei Mitzvah date): The student will switch from Cantor Spilker to Cantor Strauss-Klein to finish up the Torah verses and learn the Haftarah portion. The student will continue to polish the Torah verses and prayers and blessings.

5. ***D'var Torah* (sermon)** (2-3 months before date): Two or three sessions with the officiating Rabbi will be scheduled to work on writing the d*'var Torah* and answering final questions.

6. **Rehearsal – Day before service [Friday]** – The family meets with Cantor Strauss-Klein and the officiating Rabbi beginning at 10:00 a.m. on the Friday morning before the B'nei Mitzvah to rehearse. Students typically take the day off from school.

II. B'NEI MITZVAH MATERIALS

1. **Each student will receive a B'nei Mitzvah three ring binder.** If the binder is lost or destroyed, there will be a replacement charge. You may want to make copies of some of the materials and keep them in a safe place at home. ***Students should bring their Binder to every study session with the Rabbi or Cantor.*** The binder includes:

   A. Shabbat prayer book/*siddur*. *These are pages from the siddur/prayer book and should be treated with utmost respect.* The pages will be highlighted and notated, but should not be used for doodling, etc. **Shabbat morning prayers and blessings** can be downloaded from: http://mzion.org/lifecycle-events/barbat-mitzvah/.

   B. Torah Portion Booklet: This contains the Torah and Haftarah portions in Hebrew and English and will be used for chanting practice and *D'var Torah* preparation.

2. When the student begins to study with Cantor Spilker, they will receive a recording and printed text of their specific Torah and Haftarah verses. The Cantor will assign the student approximately 21 verses of Torah divided into 7 aliyot (sections) or fewer aliyot if others are chanting, and 5-7 verses of Haftarah. Even if others chant, the student will still chant approximately 21 verses of Torah.

Please Note: *The word "*aliyah*" refers to two things. 1. The Torah portion is divided into sections; each one is called an* aliyah (*plural*: aliyot.) *2. Individuals chosen by the family are called up to recite blessings before and after each* aliyah. *This blessing is also called having an* aliyah.

III. HOME STUDY

Daily practice at home is essential. Both repetition and attention to detail are crucial to this type of study. **It is expected that students will work on their chanting 30 minutes per day, every day, from the time they get their materials.** Depending on their proficiency, students can expect to spend 45 minutes per day during the last two months before their B'nei Mitzvah service.

It is highly recommended that students limit other extra-curricular activities during the final months prior to the service.

IV. HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD PRACTICE

The Rabbis and Cantors will advise families of their child's progress. While this is an occasion of increased independence, it is important for parents/guardians to work with their child to determine an effective practice schedule. You do not need to know Hebrew to help your child. You can be helpful by doing the following:

- **Listen** to the your child's progress from week to week. They can show you how far they have come - you can "hear" their progress in how much they read. Listen for clarity and diction.
- **Listen** for reading fluency. Is your child stopping to think before each word or are they moving comfortably through the text?
- **Speak** with the Cantors if there is resistance at home about your student's studying or progress. We want them to feel secure.
- **Listen** for confidence in the material. Watch their posture, their face, their manner. Do they appear satisfied with their progress or are they squirming and nervous?
- **Help** them organize and manage their time to be sure B'nei Mitzvah practice takes top priority along with school work.
- **Help** them time their study sessions. Make certain they are working for sufficient periods of time. To a 12 year old, 10 minutes of Hebrew study can feel like two hours!
- **Ask** your child to point to each word they are reading to make certain they are reading and not memorizing. This will also help you see the pace at which a student is reading. They do not ever need to memorize their Hebrew and should not consider this a goal.

- **Read** over your child's portion with them in English and help them understand what their Torah portion is about.
- **Help** them organize their materials. Have a B'nei Mitzvah bag or folder. A personal electronic device for listening to recordings is helpful and they should have it with them when they will be on an extended car or bus trip, vacations, camp, etc. Time away from regular study should be avoided if at all possible! The Rabbis or Cantors will gladly provide explanatory notes to schools regarding the need for students to continue practicing while on school trips.
- **Review** your child's written work (summary and *D'var Torah*). Make sure their work is proofread before they hand it in.
- **Have** a positive attitude yourself about this process and the experience of becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Enjoy this time with your student. Express to your child regularly and in a variety of ways why and how you are proud of them and why this is a meaningful part of their journey.

V. HEBREW READINESS AND ADDITIONAL PRIVATE TUTORING

From third through sixth grades, students in the Mount Zion Religious School Hebrew Program study the prayers and blessings they will lead at their B'nei Mitzvah (listed on page 11). It is expected that they will have achieved a proficient level of Hebrew reading readiness and fluency with these prayers and blessings by the time they begin tutoring with the Cantors, which enables them to begin their B'nei Mitzvah preparations with confidence. Students are evaluated periodically during the fifth and sixth grade years to gauge their progress, as well as the assessment a year out from the B'nei Mitzvah date. If a student is determined by either their teachers or the Cantors to be behind, supplemental tutoring from a private tutor will be recommended.

It is very important that any private tutors are working partners with our Cantors and are familiar with Mount Zion tunes and traditions. Our Cantors will help you choose the right tutor for your student and work toward an integrated approach in teaching and helping your student. Many students benefit from a private tutor at some point during their B'nei Mitzvah year. Seeking some additional support can add meaning and strength to this experience.

B'NEI MITZVAH ROLE IN THE SHABBAT SERVICE

B'nei Mitzvah takes place in the context of our regular Shabbat worship with the Rabbi, Cantor, and community. The B'nei Mitzvah student and family are invited to participate in special ways. These are described below.

Mount Zion is proud of the level of confidence and poise with which our B'nei Mitzvah lead the congregation in worship and prayer. We realize, however, that all students have differing strengths and abilities. We will modify expectations to meet your child's particular needs, increasing expectations for those who need more challenge and decreasing expectations when needed, and will work with you to ensure a successful outcome for your student. *Please let the clergy know early in the process if your child has special needs of any kind.*

Below you will find the prayers that many B'nei Mitzvah help to lead:

Friday Night Service:

V'ahavta
Kiddush

Shabbat Morning Service:

Barchu
Yotzeir Or
Sh'ma and *V'ahavta*
Mi Chamocha
Avot/Imahot
Gevurot
Torah Service: *Ki Mitzion, Sh'ma*

If preparation time permits:
Kedusha

In addition to the prayers, the B'nei Mitzvah:

- Leads the Torah processional/*hakafah*
- Gives a summary of the Torah portion
- Chants Torah and Haftarah portions (with their accompanying blessings)
- Offers a *D'var Torah*/speech about the Torah portion

Students who complete all of the above will be invited to lead additional prayers. Some students choose to sing an additional prayer as a duet with a Cantor or a family member. Please speak with the Cantors if you are interested in this.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION:
HONORS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The B'nei Mitzvah service is simultaneously an individual, family, and congregational event. Below are the areas in which the family participates. The Rabbi will discuss these with you at your family meeting, and you will be asked to turn in the Honors Form two weeks before your date.

1. Friday Night Honors:

Lighting of Shabbat Candles
Reading the Meditation (English) before the candle blessing

2. Shabbat Morning Honors:

Presentation of *Tallit*/prayer shawl to child before the service in the Board Room
Aliyot: reciting the blessings before and after the Torah reading sections.

Every Shabbat morning B'nei Mitzvah service has 7 aliyot. **The first one is assigned by the clergy** to a member of the congregation. Usually the B'nei Mitzvah does the final aliyah, the parents the one before, and family/friends do the other four.

Family members or friends, who are able, can chant sections of Torah
Ark Attendants (Total of 4)
Torah Passing from Generation to Generation (optional)
Lifting Torah
Dressing Torah
Parents' *D'var Torah* (pages 17-18) or Prayer options (see pages 19-20)
Kiddush and Motzi

3. Family Responsibilities (Details can be found in Part II: Administrative Info. of this guide)

Sponsor Shabbat evening Oneg (see page 35)
Provide and set up Shabbat morning Kiddush
Enlist two people to pass to congregants
Choose color(s) for Pulpit Flowers (cost is included in the B'nei Mitzvah fee)
Shabbat morning childcare, if desired. Names of providers will be given to you

4. Including Family Members Who Are Not Jewish

We are sensitive to the fact that many of our students have a parent/guardian or extended family members who are not Jewish. It is important to us that everybody feels comfortable, included, and joyous on your special day. This is very much a family milestone event. At the same time, we are mindful of the integrity of the Jewish tradition and the meaning of becoming B'nei Mitzvah: that is, a young person's affirmation of and commitment to being Jewish.

Therefore, there are certain honors which are appropriate to extend to non-Jewish family members, and others which should only be performed by Jews. The honors which can be given to non-Jews include:

- Lighting Friday Night candles
- Ark Attendants
- Accompanying a Jewish partner for their Aliyah
- Supporting the Jewish partner during Torah Passing (parents/guardians of B'nei Mitzvah only)
- Delivering a parent's/guardian's *D'var Torah*.

All B'nei Mitzvah parents/guardians who would like a refresher course in Judaism are encouraged to enroll in the Taste of Honey (Introduction to Judaism) class offered at the Temple every Fall.

We urge you to discuss any personal concerns with the Rabbi and to seek clarification of the reasoning for these role divisions. We want to work with you to make this a positive experience for all involved.

For a sample letter that explains the symbols and meanings of a Shabbat Service, see Part III: Appendix, pages 43-44. This letter can be sent in advance to your guests. (We do not hand this letter out with our Mount Zion Shabbat Card.)

Return this form to the Rabbis' & Cantors' Assistant two weeks before your B'nei Mitzvah.

B'NEI MITZVAH HONORS FORM

B'NEI MITZVAH DATE: _____

ENGLISH NAME: _____ **HEBREW NAME**: _____

The B'nei Mitzvah ceremony is a rite of passage, important not only to the B'nei Mitzvah, but to the entire family. Therefore, we are eager to provide many opportunities for family members to participate in the Shabbat morning service, while preserving the uniqueness of the B'nei Mitzvah student.

A. ALIYOT & TORAH HONORS - The highest honor that can be given is to be called to the Torah for an *aliyah*. The Torah service includes either three or seven *aliyot*.. Here an *aliyah* refers to the person reciting the blessings before and after the chanting. (Please refer to page 16 in the handbook for more details and information.) Please provide both the English and Hebrew names of those you are honoring, no more than three people per *aliyah* if possible. One of the rabbis will be happy to assist with Hebrew names. A Hebrew name consists of the person's name ben/bat/b'nei name(s) of the Jewish parent(s). Sample Hebrew Name: C*hannah bat Shmuel v'Leah.* While parents/guardians, grandparents, and close relatives are customarily given the honor of an *aliyah*, other family members and close friends may also be included. Please remind those coming up for *aliyot* to prepare well the Hebrew and chanting of the blessings to give honor to the Torah. Non-Jewish spouses are welcome to accompany Jewish spouses to be present for the honor without reciting the Hebrew blessing. Consult with the rabbis for any special circumstances or questions.

1. **This first *aliyah* (blessing) is assigned by the clergy.**

2. **Name and Relationship to B'nei Mitzvah**

English _____ English _____

Hebrew _____ Hebrew _____

3. **Name and Relationship to B'nei Mitzvah**

English _____ English _____

Hebrew _____ Hebrew _____

4. **Name and Relationship to B'nei Mitzvah**

English _____ English _____

Hebrew _____ Hebrew _____

5. **Name and Relationship to B'nei Mitzvah**

English _____ English _____

Hebrew _____ Hebrew _____

6. **Name of Parent(s)/Guardians(s)**

English _____ English _____

Hebrew _____ Hebrew _____

7. **Name of B'nei Mitzvah**

English _____ Hebrew _____

HAGBAH (Raising up Torah) _____ (Name & **Relationship to B'nei Mitzvah)**
(this person must practice lifting the Torah before the service)

G'LILAH (Dressing Torah) _____ (Name & **Relationship to B'nei Mitzvah)**

(continued on back)

B. OTHER HONORS: Please remember that you do not have to find different people for each honor. You can choose to use the same people or select others who will be attending. Due to the height of the ark, participants must be at least about seven years of age to open and close the ark doors. They do not have to be Jewish. **You may select only two people for beginning of Torah service and two for end of service (a total of no more than four people.)**

OPENING/CLOSING ARK _____, _____ _____, _____
(as we take out the Torah) (include names **and** relationship to B'nei Mitzvah)

OPENING/CLOSING ARK _____, _____ _____, _____
(as we put the Torah away) (include names **and** relationship to B'nei Mitzvah)

Shabbat morning kiddush cup distributors _____ and _____. At conclusion of service, they will pass out cups of juice and wine as guests enter social hall.

C. TORAH PASSING (optional): The Torah is symbolically passed from generation to generation down the line of your student's Jewish ancestry. Jewish grandparents are called forward along with the parents/guardians of the B'nei Mitzvah. If one parent/guardian of the B'nei Mitzvah is not Jewish, that parent's/guardian's role in the Torah passing should be discussed with the Rabbi. Please list those who will be included in the Torah passing starting with the eldest generation:

D. GRANDPARENTS: Please list here the names of all grandparents who will be in attendance at the service.

E. SIBLINGS are encouraged to say the short *kiddush* and *motzi* to begin the Shabbat morning *kiddush* after the service in Margolis Hall. Please list the names and ages of siblings who will participate:

F. SPECIAL MEMORIALS: Your student's presence is bound up in your family's past. Because those who came before your student are so deeply connected to the occasion of B'nei Mitzvah, we invite you to honor the memory of all loved ones during our *kaddish* prayer. Please list those close family members whose names you would like read prior to the saying of the mourner's kaddish.

G. COMMENTS OR CONCERNS: We know that every family has their own particular needs and concerns surrounding the B'nei Mitzvah. The Rabbi(s) encourage you to speak directly with them in creating an uplifting and memorable Shabbat service for your student, your family, and the entire congregation. Please do not hesitate to note any concerns here or to contact the Rabbi(s) directly to address your specific needs.

H. SHABBAT EVENING CANDLE BLESSING PARTICIPANTS:

Reader - _____ Lighter - _____

(Reader/Blesser must be B'nei Mitzvah Age) (Lighter may be any age; does not need to be Jewish)

A WORD ABOUT *ALIYOT*, *TALLIT*, *KIPPAH* AND *D'VAR TORAH*

I. THE *ALIYAH*: BEING CALLED TO RECITE BLESSINGS OVER THE TORAH

The privilege of being called to recite blessings over the Torah is among the highest honors a Jew can receive. A blessing is recited before and after each section of the Torah portion is chanted. On Shabbat it is traditional to have seven *aliyot*. When choosing whom to honor, consider the following:

1. One or two Jews above age 13 can be called for each *aliyah*. If needed, three may be called. Please speak with the Rabbis if more are needed.
2. At least one of the individuals must be able to say or chant the blessings clearly and confidently in Hebrew. A copy of the blessings with transliterations is provided in this packet (see pages 21-22).
3. You may print the blessings from the Mount Zion website https://mzion.org/lifecycle-events/bar-bat-mitzvah/ to give to *aliyot* honorees. Your child can also help teach the blessings to honorees.
4. *Aliyot* honorees are called up by their Hebrew names. You will be asked to provide them on the honors form. If you have questions about Hebrew names, the clergy can help you.
5. Non-Jewish spouses are welcome to accompany Jewish spouses to the Bima for the Aliyah without reciting the Hebrew blessing.
6. Usually, the B'nei Mitzvah takes the final Aliyah, the parents/guardians take the one right before, and the others are given out to family or friends, reserving the first one for a member of the congregation.
7. Please advise those coming up for honors that **modest dress is appropriate.** "Business casual" is a good guideline. Please avoid shorts, short skirts, jeans, and sneakers, open toed shoes, and shoulders should be covered.

Please Note: *The word "*aliyah*" refers to two things. 1. The Torah portion is divided into sections; each one is called an* aliyah (*plural*: aliyot.) *2. Individuals chosen by the family are called up to recite blessings before and after each* aliyah. *This blessing is also called having an* aliyah. ***The first blessing* aliyah *is assigned by the clergy*** *to a member of our congregation as a way to include our membership and honor the importance of their witnessing our young people's entry as adults to the community.*

II. *TALLIT* AND *KIPPAH*

The *tallit*/prayer shawl is a symbol of the *mitzvot*, and wearing one links us to God and our Jewish ancestors. It is one of the privileges one earns upon becoming B'nei Mitzvah. Our students study about the *tallit*/prayer shawl and make their own in sixth grade and we encourage them to use this *tallit*/prayer shawl at their B'nei Mitzvah. Often students also receive a *tallit*/prayer shawl as a special gift from a loved one, or they choose to buy one themselves. In this case, a parent/guardian or grandparent may choose to wear the one the student made.

The *tallit*/prayer shawl is presented to the student by the family in the boardroom a few moments before the B'nei Mitzvah service. The student is expected to know the blessing, which can be found in their Prayer Packet.

At Mount Zion, wearing a *kippah* is a personal choice and is encouraged. Many choose it as a sign of respect for God or for identity as a Jew. Different styles are available for purchase at our Gift Shop. Some families choose to order personalized *kippot* to distribute to the congregation made for their child's B'nei Mitzvah.

III. *D'VAR TORAH*: SHARING YOUR WISDOM

Student's *D'var Torah*: The *D'var Torah* is an opportunity for the students to share their own analysis and interpretation of the Torah portion. The *D'var Torah* can be on any topic of the student's choosing as long as it comes from the Torah portion. It can come from any part of the Torah portion, not just the verses being chanted. The Rabbi will contact you about 2-3 months before the B'nei Mitzvah to begin working with your student. The Rabbi will discuss the content of the Torah portion with the student. **Parents/guardians or other adults should also work with the student on language usage, grammar, and proofreading.** If you feel your student needs more than two months, feel free to contact the Rabbi earlier.

IV. PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S *D'VAR TORAH* (OR PARENT'S PRAYER)

This is an opportunity for you to model Torah study for your student. It shows your student that Torah study is life-long, and valuable for all. It also personalizes the Torah for your student in a way s/he may remember for years to come. The Rabbi will discuss this with you at the family meeting, and a Sunday program during the sixth grade year will focus on how to write a *D'var Torah*. **Please email a draft with the Rabbi at least three (3) days before the B'nei Mitzvah**. If you would prefer, instead of a *D'var Torah*, you may recite one of the Parent's Prayers (following), or feel free to enjoy the service without speaking.

If you choose to write a *D'var Torah*, please remember these things:

- We feel it is important to focus on Torah, and its particular message to your student.
- Please consider your party to be the place to thank family and friends for sharing in your *simcha*, and keep your *D'var Torah* focused on a message of Torah. Your clergy and teachers already know you appreciate us, so there is no need to thank us publicly.
- Some people worry about "upstaging" their student, but delivering a good *D'var Torah* simply serves as a good example to your student.
- Any parent/guardian may write the *D'var Torah*, and any may present it. You may also write it together and/or split the presentation, but we ask that you do not write and present two separate *Divrei Torah.*
- Please give a draft of your *D'var Torah* to the Rabbis at least three days before your student's B'nei Mitzvah. If the Rabbis recommends changes, please make those changes in your final *D'var Torah*, or discuss them with the Rabbi.

HOW TO PREPARE A *D'VAR TORAH*

Step One: Study the portion. Read through the Torah portion several times.
Step Two: Make connections. Draw links between the Torah portion and the message you want to send to your student. It may be something that reflects his/her personality, or something you wish for your student or the world.
Step Three: Research. See if anybody before you (we have a long history of commentary) has discussed your topic. The Rabbi or your student can guide you.
Step Four: Write. Be direct and simple in your writing. Tell us what the portion says and how it is relevant to you and your student. You may address your *D'var Torah* to your student or to the congregation. Be brief (2 pages is generally a good length.)

Please think of this *D'var Torah* as an opportunity to take some message from the Torah portion and use it as a charge **to** your student. You are welcome and encouraged to be personal but to speak **to** your student as opposed to **about** your student.

PARENT(S) PRAYER
(An Alternative to a *D'var Torah*)

(This is one option for a parent's prayer).

What I wish for my (child/son/daughter),
I wish for all our children.

I wish for you to be a
person of character
strong but not tough,
gentle but not weak.

I wish for you to be
righteous but not self-righteous
honest but not unforgiving.

Wherever you journey, may your steps be firm,
and may you walk in just paths
and not be afraid.

Whenever you speak, may your words
be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build
and your heart preserve what is good
and beautiful in our world.

May the voices of the generations of our people
move through you
and may the God of our ancestors
be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people,
a rich heritage, to which you belong
and from that sacred place
you are connected to all who dwell on the earth.

May the stories of our people
be upon your heart
and the grace of the Torah rhythm
dance in your soul.

Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

PARENT(S) PRAYER
(An Alternative to a *D'var Torah*)

Adonai, O God of all humanity:

We lift our voices in gratitude that the Torah has come into the world through the Jewish people.

We lift our voices in gratitude for the ideals it teaches: justice; compassion; devotion; the partnership of mind, heart, and deed.

We lift our voices in gratitude that _____, today, takes his/her place among the people of Israel. We pray that he/she will do so with pride and joy.

And so we pray, _____, our son/daughter, may your quiet, inner strength help you continue to make good choices, even when they may not be popular with others--where you do what you think is right/just. Trust yourself.

May your own kindness and affection lead you to a life filled with people that love and appreciate you for who you are.

May your genuine inclination to help those less fortunate and your empathy and sensitivity make this world a kinder and gentler place.

May your old-soul wisdom, intelligence, and motivation lead you to work that you are passionate about and that gives your life meaning and purpose.

May you one day fully appreciate the extraordinary gifts/talents that you have been given—drawing, your artistic creativity, your delight in making others laugh.

May you continue your study of Torah and Judaism. May you always remember this extraordinary day and remember the generations that came before you and made it possible for you to stand here today as a Jew.

We are so proud of you _____.

Shabbat Shalom.

TORAH BLESSING

Blessing Before the Torah Reading

You chant:

בָּרְכוּ אֶת־יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ׃

Bar-chu et Adonai ham-vo-rach.

Congregation chants:

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Ba-ruch Adonai ha-m'vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.

You repeat:

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Ba-ruch Adonai ha-m'vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.

You continue:

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

Ba-ruch A-tah Adonai, Elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sher ba-char ba-nu mi-kol ha-amim,
v'na-tan la-nu et To-ra-to.
Ba-ruch a-tah Adonai, no-tein* ha-To-rah.

*Some lift the Torah scroll while saying the word "notein".

Blessing After the Torah Reading

You chant:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Ba-ruch A-tah Adonai,

Elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam,

a-sher na-tan la-nu To-rat e-met*,

v'cha-yei o-lam na-ta b'to-chei-nu.

Ba-ruch A-tah Adonai, no-tein* ha-To-rah.

You may move to the other side of the podium.

Please stand close to see the Torah. Thank you!

*Some lift the Torah scroll while saying the words "emet" and notein".

A recording of these blessings can be found on Mount Zion's website:

http://mzion.org/lifecycle-events/barbat-mitzvah/

CREATING COMMUNITY: INCLUSION IN YOUR *SIMCHA*

***To help build a sense of community and teach the value of* hachnassat orchim *(hospitality) we encourage families to*:**

1. Remember that our worship service and luncheon following service is open to the entire Temple community, not exclusively to invited guests. Please feel free to attend any Shabbat morning service even if you and your child have not formally been invited.

2. We encourage everyone to serve a Kiddush lunch. We recommend choosing a modest menu and décor. You may consider choosing an inexpensive menu for the kids. Pasta, sandwiches, or pizza can be served up in large quantity at low prices.

3. Invite the entire B'nei Mitzvah class and 11th/12th Grade Mentors to the luncheon.

4. Luncheons *at the Temple* include those who regularly attend Shabbat morning services. They are the community which is welcoming your student as a Jewish "adult," and they enjoy celebrating with you. We recommend you add 20 to your total guest list. The Rabbi or Cantor will announce this open invitation at the Kiddush. If you are having arranged seating, you might consider writing "Mount Zion Congregant" or "Congregational Guest" on the place cards.

5. If you choose to have a family slide show, please consider showing it during an evening party. If during the luncheon, it will need to be without sound or dimmed lights as background.

6. The Temple can provide assistance if these recommendations cause financial hardship. You may speak confidentially to the Rabbi or Executive Director.

7. We can provide a contact information for your child's class, youth advisors, teachers/tutors, and clergy. All of your child's classmates and Gesher Mentors should be invited to the service and luncheon.

8. Invitations to the "celebration" or party: If your family chooses to have a party, we ask on behalf of the seventh grade community that you be mindful of who is invited. **If you are inviting a significant number of the class (more than 1/5th), please consider inviting the whole class, and it is helpful to be clear in your invitations whether the party if "kids only" or if the whole family is invited.** Please do not invite any guests to the party only.

9. Consider using Uniongrams or WRJ (Women of Reform Judaism) thank you cards to thank your friends and family for sharing your *simcha*. Each card represents a contribution to the Youth, Educational and Special Projects (YES) Fund of the WRJ, serving the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY), assisting Rabbinic students at the Hebrew Union College-Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), and supporting special innovative projects (such as funding an Israeli nursery school.*)* ***Uniongrams and thank you cards are available in the Mount Zion Gift Shop.***

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING YOUR *SIMCHA*

We urge you to enhance your joy by helping others during this exciting time in your lives. Some ideas:

◆**GREAT SOCIAL JUSTICE WEBSITE**: www.areyvut.org Look under "Bnai Mitzvah" for a program bank of things 13 year olds have done to bring social action to their service.

◆**MAZON** is a national Jewish organization that works against world hunger. Mount Zion is a "MAZON Congregation." As such, the Board of Trustees recommends that all of our congregants support MAZON's efforts to end hunger by contributing to it 3% of the cost of your life-cycle events including your B'nei Mitzvah reception. Brochures entitled "MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger" can be ordered from their website www.mazon.org. Please let the Rabbis know if you plan to donate to MAZON.

◆**TZEDAKAH CENTERPIECES:** There are many ways to design table centerpieces decoratively in a way that relates to *mitzvot* and social justice: food baskets can be taken to local food shelves; books make wonderful centerpieces and can be donated to the Mount Zion Library; teddy bears, dolls or toys can be taken from your tables to local hospitals. If you have flowers as centerpieces, you may take them to Sholom Home.

◆**NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY –** The NACOE offers suggestions for your Gemilut Chasadim Project.You can choose to organize a one-time event or do ongoing activities. You can also link your project to a theme or holiday. Find out more: http://nacoej.org/project-ideas-and-materials

◆***KIPPOT* –** Danny Siegel, known affectionately as "Mr. Mitzvah" refers to *tzedek*/justice related *kippot* on this website: www.mayaworks.org. These *kippot* will not only wow your guests but will also help support the women who make them in remote villages of Guatemala. Order very early.

◆ ***FRIENDS OF YEMIN ORDE*** **-** https://www.yeminorde.org/donate/bnai-mitzvah-projects/
Your contribution can fund special programs that help the at-risk youth. Help purchase care packages for lone soldiers, school supplies, school clothes and shoes, exercise equipment, field trips, and more. Call 202.237.0286 for information about projects and activities where your support is needed.

If you have additional ideas you would like to share, please let the clergy know so we might pass them along. These types of choices add lasting meaning to the simcha, which extends far beyond the immediate family and community.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE B'NEI MITZVAH SERVICE

I. FULFILLING THE OBLIGATION TO GIVE *TZEDAKAH*

In honor of the occasion, and as a part of their learning, B'nei Mitzvah students are expected to give money to *tzedakah*/charity. The recipient and the amount are to be determined by the student with guidance from parents/guardians. It is customary to give in multiples of 18, representing "*chai*" / "life." We will print the recipient organization's name in the Shabbat Card.

II. PHOTOGRAPHY

To preserve the sanctity of the Shabbat service, **no pictures may be taken during the service**. We ask that all photographs, with or without flash, be *completed following the service or at least one half hour prior to it*. If you would prefer, arrangements can be made for photographs to be taken in the sanctuary at another time.

III. PULPIT FLOWERS

Pulpit flowers for Shabbat evening and Shabbat morning services are sponsored by family members (i.e. grandparents, parents/guardians, or other family). The cost is included in the B'nei Mitzvah fee.

IV. ONEG SHABBAT RECEPTION AND SHABBAT MORNING KIDDUSH

We have provided thorough guidelines (see page 34 for Kiddush and page 35-36 for Oneg Shabbat). Please review this information.

V. SHABBAT MORNING CHILD CARE

The temple provides child care on Friday night. You may wish to provide child care during the Shabbat morning service as well. Please indicate on the form on page 37. Contact the Executive Director for details.

VI. CARD/GIFT BOX

We encourage folks not to bring cards or gifts on Shabbat. For those who bring it, you may want to provide a closed box with an opening for cards and ask a friend to monitor and collect these cards to keep them safe.

VII. SHABBAT CARD

A personalized Shabbat Card is made for each B'nei Mitzvah. It includes information from your Honors form, as well as a brief explanation of the B'nei Mitzvah service and an introduction to our congregation. You will be given a copy to proofread on the morning of your rehearsal.

VIII. APPROPRIATE DRESS

As *shlichei tzibur,* representatives of the congregation in leading prayer, it is important to show *kavod*/respect in our preparation of prayers and in our dress. Any time one is on the bima, two values should be reflected: honor to the congregation (*k'vod hakahal*) and modesty (*tzniyut*).

- **Modest dress is** "business casual." Please avoid shorts, short skirts, jeans, sneakers, and open toed shoes, and shoulders should be covered.

IX. THROWING CANDY

It is a custom to gently toss candy at the B'nei Mitzvah to symbolize the sweetness of the moment. This is optional, and we will provide appropriate candy which the Rabbi will distribute to the first three rows in the sanctuary.

X. PUBLICIZING YOUR SIMCHA

The temple bulletin will publish a photograph (school pictures work well), and a brief biography about your child. You will be notified when it is time to email the bulletin editor, Teresa Matzek, at tmatzek@mzion.org a brief article about your student and a photo (see page 30 for a form and samples.) Please note that the bulletin is posted on our website and may be viewed by the general public. If you would like to have your student's B'nei Mitzvah announced in the *American Jewish World*, the community Jewish newspaper, see pages 31-32 for instructions and samples.

XI. USHERING FOR SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE

Ushering for the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony before yours is one of the responsibilities that comes with being part of a community. It is required of all families, including the student.

- Arrive 45 minutes before the Shabbat service.
- Help the family of the B'nei Mitzvah, as needed.
- Have one family member stand by the door and welcome worshippers.
- Assist in distributing prayer books.
- Be aware of any excess noise (kitchen or otherwise) and help maintain decorum during the Shabbat service.
- Please keep all three sanctuary doors closed once service has begun.
- If Kiddush cups are passed out following the service, please encourage congregants to move to the perimeter of the room so that all may exit the Sanctuary.
- After the service, please close all three sanctuary doors during the Kiddush luncheon.
- Enjoy the service – you will be leading next!

Part II: Administrative Information

A GUIDE FOR PLANNING YOUR SIMCHA

The following is a "typical" timetable for preparing for the celebration on your B'nei Mitzvah day. However, other external events may require you to do things earlier than indicated. For instance, if the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony is in the spring, you will be competing for caterers, hotel party rooms and hotel rooms with weddings, graduations and proms. Early Fall has also become a popular time for weddings. Regardless, the sooner you make your arrangements, the more likely you are to get your first choice and there will be less to worry about later! Contact the Executive Director if you would like a list of caterers and other vendors used by previous B'nei Mitzvah families.

ONE AND A HALF TO TWO YEARS

- You will receive the date of your B'nei Mitzvah
- Please check the Temple calendar for service start times as they may vary

ONE YEAR: PLAN BROAD OUTLINE

- Food – Decide if you want to have a caterer. You should book them as far in advance as they allow. You may also prepare your own food (Temple kitchen is available) or a combination.
- Music – Decide if you want music at a luncheon or party; arrange for musicians if desired.
- B'nei Mitzvah Parents'/Guardians' orientation meeting with Rabbis & Cantors (*you'll receive an invitation*)
- Student receives prayer packet and Torah/Haftarah portion booklet
- B'nei Mitzvah fee due
- Assessment with one of the Cantors
- Family meeting with the officiating Rabbi

SEVEN - NINE MONTHS

- Students begin formal B'nei Mitzvah preparation in a Sefer Seminar on Shabbat morning
- Begin making guest list; include B'nei Mitzvah class, teachers/tutors, clergy, & Gesher Mentors
- Student begins weekly tutoring
- Student receives Torah/Haftarah portion recording

SIX MONTHS

- Arrange for photographer
- Make hotel/motel reservations for out-of-town guests or arrange for host families
- Event Coordinator will call you to discuss your luncheon, party, or room needs.
- If you are ordering invitations, order them for delivery 6-8 weeks in advance. Simple invitations can be printed in 2 or 3 days. Or, design hand-designed invitations and have them printed.
- Contact information for sending invitations will be sent to families.
- Should you and your child elect to wear a *tallit*, it is wise to begin looking for one early. There are many options for purchasing a *tallit* or having one made.

FOUR AND A HALF MONTHS

- Confirm arrangements with caterer and, if necessary, have caterer send forms to Event Coordinator
- Remind caterer of food restrictions (see House Rules and Guidelines on page 40-41)
- Review guest list

THREE MONTHS

- Contact information for sending invitations will be resent to families.

TEN WEEKS

- Determine final guest list
- Address envelopes or send out electronic invitations.
- Email Mount Zion's bulletin editor, Teresa Matzek, tmatzek@mzion.org, the bio and photo (see page 30)

EIGHT WEEKS

- Rabbi meets with student to begin writing *D'var Torah*
- Mail or email invites, include info about hotels or host family arrangements & directions
- Complete plans for meals, either with caterer, your own cooking, or the assistance of friends
- Using your list of *aliyot*, give instructions to those being honored

SIX WEEKS

- Arrange for Shabbat morning childcare, if needed. Contact the Event Coordinator

FOUR WEEKS

- Notify Event Coordinator to sponsor an Oneg Shabbat (see page 35) and setups.
- Order centerpieces for reception, if desired

THREE WEEKS

- Meet with the Event Coordinator to discuss final arrangements and facility logistics
- Make up packet of local information for out-of-town guests
- Plan seating arrangements and make place cards if you plan to use them
- Send article to American Jewish World if desired

TWO WEEKS

- Return Honors Form to Rabbis' and Cantors' Assistant
- Practice in sanctuary with Cantor during regular lesson times

THE FINAL WEEK

- Immediate family "dress" rehearsal with Rabbi and Cantor (usually held at 10:00 a.m. the Friday before the B'nei Mitzvah service)

MAZEL TOV!

Email the student's bio and photo to the bulletin editor's email at tmatzek@mzion.org two months before your *simcha*.

MOUNT ZION TEMPLE BULLETIN INFORMATION FORM

Students: Please **compose an article about yourself** to appear in the temple bulletin, using the below bullet points as a guideline. Articles should be approximately 100 words. (Sample articles below).

You will be notified when it is time to email a bio and **a photograph as a jpg or a pdf**, to the bulletin editor, Teresa Matzek at tmatzek@mzion.org.

- **English Name of Student**
- **Date of B'nei Mitzvah**
- **Hebrew Name of Student**
- **Name(s) of Parent(s)**
- **Name(s) of Grandparent(s)**
- **Names of brother(s)/sister(s)**
- **School you attend and Grade**
- **Major interests in school courses**
- **Major interests in extracurricular events**
- **Awards/Offices held**
- **Hobbies, Sports, Career Goals, Something you would like to do in the future (not career)**,
- **What was your Mitzvah Project? Why?**
- **Something you have learned through becoming a B'nei Mitzvah**
- **Who are you donating a portion of my gift money to?**
- **Any other items of interest you want to share?**

MOUNT ZION TEMPLE BULLETIN SAMPLE ARTICLES

Talia Gore
April 29, 2023

Talia Daniela Fischman Gore is the daughter of Tracy Fischman and Paul Gore. She has a younger brother, Jacob. She was lucky to get special years with all grandparents – Kenneth Fischman, Natalie Fischman, and Ki Ki and Warren Gore – before they passed away. Talia is a seventh-grader at Hidden River Middle School in St. Paul. Talia loves ultimate frisbee, dogs, singing, and hanging with her close friends and family. Talia is also a member of her school's debate team. Talia will donate a portion of her bat mitzvah gift money to St. Paul-based Hallie Q. Brown Center, which provides an array of social services, fosters and promotes personal growth, and builds community leadership.

Charlie Grams
August 5, 2023

Charlie Grams (Cain Reuben) is the son of James and Heather Grams. He is the grandson to Jeff and Lori Marks and Tim and Michael Ann Grams. Charlie has one older sister, Alli and two younger siblings, Julie and Benny. Charlie is going to be an 8th grader at Black Hawk Middle School this fall. Charlie loves to play tennis, the guitar, work on puzzles, and go on walks. Charlie is currently in Boy Scouts. Charlie will be donating a portion of his Bar Mitzvah money to Feed Our Starving Children.

Please be advised that your child's B'nei Mitzvah picture will be placed in the bulletin which is posted on the Mount Zion website and may appear in the public domain.

B'NEI MITZVAH PUBLICITY FOR THE *AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD*

If you would like your student's photograph and a brief write-up to appear in the *American Jewish World*, follow these instructions.

If you would like your student's photograph and a brief write-up to appear in the *American Jewish World*, follow these instructions.

Announcement

- **At least one month prior to your date:** The American Jewish World is published on the first Friday of each month. Questions, contact American Jewish World at 612-824-0030 or community@ajwnews.com.
- BE SURE to include date of B'nei Mitzvah in the announcement
- Include phone number to call if there are any questions on spellings, etc.
- Only include locations of where grandparents live IF THEY ARE LIVING; deceased relatives must be preceded by "the late."

Photo

- Submit a QUALITY photo. Digital images should be large enough for print production (1-2 Mb). Or photos, either black & white or color, can be mailed.
- If you want photo returned, send self-addressed stamped envelope with it.

E-mail

- E-mail announcement and photo to: community@ajwnews.com.
- If you want to attach a Word document, that's fine, just also be sure to copy and paste text into email as a backup if there are problems with the attachment.
- In email subject line, write "B'nei Mitzvah Announcement" with the date of the B'nei Mitzvah.
- Attach photo as either a JPEG or a TIFF file with a resolution of at least 300 dpi.
- If sending photo by mail and emailing announcement, please state on e-mail that photo is coming by mail, and with photo include the date of B'nei Mitzvah with a note stating that announcement will be sent by e-mail.

Fee (One year subscription is $45)

- For active subscribers, there is a $10 fee for submitting a photo along with a B'nei Mitzvah announcement.
- For non-subscribers, there is a fee of $45 which includes a one-year subscription, a photo, and a B'nei Mitzvah announcement.

Format

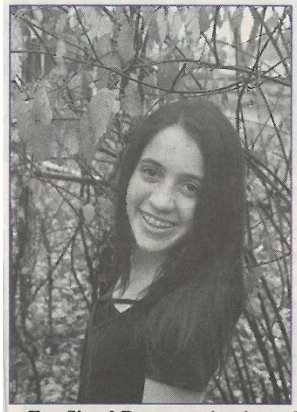
- When writing announcement, try to follow those printed in the paper, or refer to this sample:

> Alena Ann Simon, daughter of Kent Simon and Karen Gjerstad and sister of Jane, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah Saturday at Mount Zion Temple. She will also participate in Friday evening services. Alena is the granddaughter of Mary Gjerstad and Eugene Gjerstad, Bloomington, and Anita Simon, New York, N.Y., and the late Michael Simon.

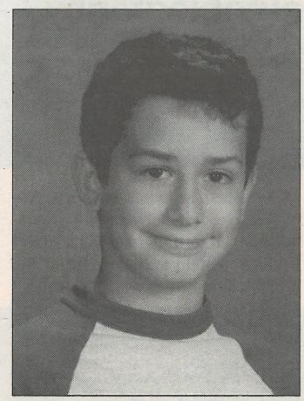
B'NEI MITZVAH PUBLICITY FOR THE *AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD*

SAMPLE ARTICLES

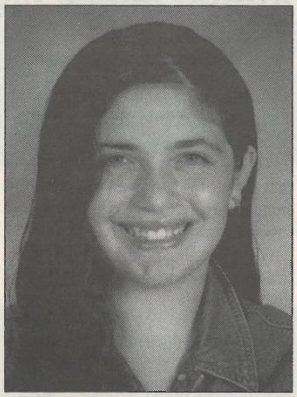
B'nai Mitzva



Eve Siegel Passman, daughter of Pam and Jon Passman and sister of Abe and Jordan, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzva on Saturday, Feb. 18 at Bet Shalom. Eve is the granddaughter of Dianne and Leighton Siegel, St. Paul, and Marjorie and Donald Passman, Madison, Wis.



Max (Chanoch Lev) Schibel, son of Dan and Lisa Schibel, and brother of Elly Schibel, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzva on Saturday, Feb. 18 at Mount Zion Temple. He is the grandson of Don and Judy Schibel (Virginia, MN) and Ira and Peggy Denenholz. He is the great-grandson of the late Jeanne and Howard Schibel, the late Sam and Helen Corwin, the late Eli and Bernice Budd, the late Leonard and Bea Denenholz, and the late William and Mae Tanick.



Isabella Josie Hall, daughter of Dawn and Larry Trimarco and Mark and Danielle Hall, and sister of Madeline and Avery, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzva Saturday, Feb. 11 at Bet Shalom Congregation. She will also participate in Friday evening services. Isabella is the granddaughter of Marilyn and Larry Reich, New Hope; Tina Hall, St. Paul; and the late Judith Carroso. She is also the great-granddaughter of Ester Begam, Golden Valley, and the late Israel Begam; and the late Beatrice and Ned Reich.

B'NEI MITZVAH FEE INFORMATION

I. REQUIRED FEES

A. B'nei Mitzvah Fee - $855

This fee supports the costs of:

Individualized student and family education
B'nei Mitzvah program materials
Shabbat morning accompanist
Shabbat bima flowers

B. Oneg Sponsorship Fee - $250

See page 35 for full details.

II. DISCRETIONARY FEES

C. Hall Rental

The hall fees apply to luncheons or dinners. They include:

- ☐ Dishes, silverware (not dishwashing), tables and chairs
- ☐ Set up and clean-up of the room but does ***not*** include catering.
- ☐ If an external caterer is used, the Kitchen Supervisor's job is to advise the caterer on proper use of the dishwasher, coffeemaker and other equipment; ensure that there is no breakage or theft; assist caterer in locating additional utensils, etc., the caterer may need and make sure the caterer fulfills all contractual obligations.

1. **Margolis Hall - $35.00 per table of 8 (seats up to 250)**
   This is the hall at the back of the sanctuary.
2. **Johnson Family Social Hall - $35.00 per table of 8 (seats 125)**
   This is the lovely hall on the second floor with a full catering kitchen.

This per table fee includes white linen tablecloths.

D. Recording Options

A $100 fee is charged for a recording of the Saturday morning services.

E. Shabbat Morning Kiddush

Your caterer or the Kitchen Supervisor is responsible for setting up the Kiddush table on Shabbat morning. You should designate family members or friends to help serve the wine at the Kiddush immediately following services.

F. Security and Supervision

Security (off duty police) are required when your luncheon and/or evening event has 50 or more kids attending or at the Executive Director's discretion, for any concerns in the community that might warrant extra monitoring. The family pays for security for the luncheon hour at $150.

G. Shabbat Morning Child Care

If you wish to provide child care for children younger than 7, please contact Gabby.

Updated 09/25

SHABBAT MORNING KIDDUSH

Because the B'nei Mitzvah ritual is held in the context of a public Shabbat service where other congregants regularly attend, all B'nei Mitzvah families are asked to offer a *kiddush* table on Saturday. The blessings over the wine and *challah* will be recited at the Kiddush table immediately following the service.

You are responsible for providing:

- Two loaves of *challah*, whole, not sliced (3 if you are expecting a large crowd)
- Two bottles of wine (sweet, red) – one bottle of wine is approximately 30 servings
- Two bottles of white grape juice – one quart of white grape juice is approximately 30 servings
- Sweets: 3 to 6 dozen, depending on how many people are attending. You may use leftovers from Friday night's oneg if there are enough.
- The food and supplies you bring from home should be put in the kitchen clearly labeled with your family's name and "Saturday morning *Kiddush*." You may bring everything on Friday if you choose. *Oneg* food, to be used Friday night, also goes in the kitchen and should be labeled with the family's name and "Friday evening *oneg*."

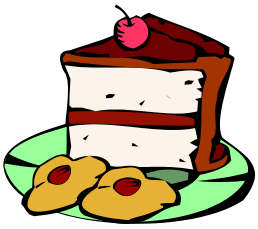
NOTE: The caterer is responsible for ensuring the *Kiddush* is set up following service. Please assign two people to hand cups of wine and juice to guests as they exit the Sanctuary. If you have close to 200 guests, *Kiddush* will take place from the Bima. Check with the Event Coordinator.

If you have any questions regarding the *Kiddush*, please contact the Event Coordinator.

Updated 09/25

GUIDELINES FOR SPONSORING THE ONEG SHABBAT

The Oneg Shabbat is a wonderful way to celebrate a special occasion such as your child's B'nei Mitzvah.



Oneg sponsorship consists of two things, a contribution of $250 (which covers kitchen and serving staff, white linen for all tables, decaffeinated coffee, tea, punch, punch cups, napkins, sugar/sweetener, creamer, and clean up) **and** providing 36 dozen (432) high-quality pieces of baked goods such as cookies, bars or bite-sized pastries. You have an option to have Mount Zion provide your oneg baked goods for an additional fee of $250. Please speak with the Event Coordinator about this option.

You do not set up the oneg! The Temple handles set-up and clean up.

Some sponsors wish to provide optional extras such as cheese, candy, personalized napkins, and fresh flowers. You are, of course, welcome to supply any extras as you see fit. Decorated cakes, cheese, etc. should be ready to serve when brought to the kitchen.

All items need to be in the kitchen by Friday 3:00 p.m. on the day of the event. When you bring baked goods, place them on the counter in the kitchen and be sure to label everything with name, "B'nei Mitzvah Oneg Shabbat," and date of event. Please mark items clearly gluten free, dairy free, and nut free.

Please be sure you have enough baked goods for the Saturday luncheon.

Updated 09/25

A Little Help From Your Friends: Soliciting Oneg Shabbat Contributions

If a Friend or Relative is Organizing the Oneg Via Email

On Saturday (MONTH, DAY, YEAR), (NAME of B'nei Mitzvah), will be called to the Torah as a (B'NEI) Mitzvah. On Friday Evening (MONTH, DAY), the (NAME OF FAMILY) Family is responsible for the treats at the Oneg Shabbat following the Friday Evening Service. Families are asked to supply 36 dozen cookies or bars or enough for 120 people. Oneg Contributors can also bring a cake (equals three dozen cookies or bars), fresh fruit (easily edible like strawberries, grapes, pineapple chunks) or nuts. Please clearly mark items gluten free, dairy free, and nut free. Are you able to help out the (NAME OF FAMILY) Family and contribute something?

Let me know if you can help and what item you will contribute.

All contributions need to be delivered to the Main Kitchen behind Margolis Hall at Mount Zion Temple by Friday at Noon. Please be sure to label all contributions for (NAME OF FAMILY) Oneg.

Thanks very much for considering this mitzvah!

NAME OF ORGANIZER

If the Family is Organizing the Oneg Via Email

On Saturday (MONTH, DATE, YEAR), (NAME of Bat/Bar Mitzvah), will be called to the Torah as a (B"NEI) Mitzvah. On Friday Evening our family is responsible for the treats at the Oneg Shabbat following the Friday Evening Service. Families are asked to supply 36 dozen cookies or bars or enough for 120 people. Oneg Contributors can also bring a cake (equals three dozen cookies or bars), fresh fruit (easily edible like strawberries, grapes, pineapple chunks) or nuts. Please clearly mark items gluten free, dairy free, and nut free. Are you able to help us out and contribute something?

Let me know if you can help and what item you will contribute.

All contributions need to be delivered to the Main Kitchen behind Margolis Hall by Friday at Noon. Please be sure to label all contributions for (NAME OF FAMILY) Oneg.

Thanks very much for considering this mitzvah!

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME

Reminder Email Sent One Week Before

Just a reminder that you graciously offered to contribute something to the Oneg on Friday (MONTH, DAY). Please remember to deliver the item to the Main Kitchen behind Margolis Hall at Mount Zion Temple, 1300 Summit Avenue by Friday at Noon.

Please be sure to label all contributions for the (NAME OF FAMILY) Oneg. Please clearly mark items gluten free, dairy free, and nut free.

Thanks again for being so generous!

ORGANIZER OR PARENT/GUARDIAN

Two Websites You Can Use to Organize Oneg Contributions

www.lotsahelpinghands.com www.carecalendar.org/

10/20/2009, compiled by Judi Marshall, Caring Community Chair
Updated 09/25

Please fill out and return this form to the Event Coordinator 2 months before B'nei Mitzvah service.

B'NEI MITZVAH ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS/DETAILS

STUDENT'S NAME _____B'NEI MITZVAH DATE _____

SEE PAGE 32 FOR DETAILS OF B'NEI MITZVAH FEE INFORMATION

ASSOCIATED COST/CHOICE	REQ. FEE	DISC. FEE	DUE DATE	PAID
B'nei Mitzvah Fee (non-refundable)	$855		1 year before BM Date	
Friday Dinner ___ Yes ___No _____ Margolis Hall _____ Johnson Social Hall		$35 per table of 8		
Sponsoring Oneg Shabbat _____ Family also provides 30 dozen or 360 pieces _____ Baked goods provided by Mount Zion for additional fee		$250 $250	1 month before BM Date	
Shabbat Morning Service held in _____ Sanctuary				
Video Recording Options for Shabbat Morning Service Live Stream Service ___ **Yes** ___ **No** *A link will be sent to you the week following the B'nei Mitzvah so you can download a copy of the service.*		$100		
Saturday Lunch First 2 tables free to include the Mount Zion community.		$35 per table of 8		
Saturday Childcare ___ Yes ___No		$120	One month in advance	
Security for luncheon hour		$150		
TOTALS				

As soon as you have selected your caterer, notify the Event Coordinator so proof of insurance with the caterer and other practical matters can be clarified.

Updated 09/25

Please read this carefully, sign and return the duplicate gray form provided to the Event Coordinator at least 3 months before your *simcha*.

MOUNT ZION TEMPLE
HOUSE RULES AND GUIDELINES

1. Wine or beer may be served or consumed at the temple with the prior approval of the Executive Director. In order to serve wine or beer at your event, you must obtain a "one day or one event" insurance rider through your homeowner's policy or personal insurance. **Proof of coverage must be provided at least seven (7) days before the event or alcohol will not be permitted.** No distilled spirits will be permitted.

2. In keeping with Jewish tradition and out of respect for some members of our Mount Zion community, the kitchen has the following rules: **No shellfish - such as crab, shrimp or lobster** - may be prepared or brought into the temple kitchen or served at the temple. **No pork products, including ham, sausage and pepperoni**, may be prepared or brought into the temple kitchen or served at the temple. Only vegetable shortening, vegetable margarine and butter are permitted in preparation of food in temple kitchen. **Meat and milk may not be served together, and must be kept on separate buffet tables.**

3. Anyone employed by lessees to perform any services in connection with an event using temple property and/or facilities must be approved by and be acceptable to the Executive Director. Such vendors shall have permission to use the facilities and property of the temple, shall be subject to all the established rules and regulations. Vendors and /or caterers **must file with the Executive Director certificates for Personal Liability Insurance (property damage and bodily injury). Caterers must also file certificates for Food and Products Liability Insurance**. Such certificates must be on file at least 2 weeks before an event for first time vendors or caterers. Any vendor not complying with this requirement will not be permitted to enter the building or use any of its facilities.

4. **All caterers and/or lessees preparing their own food utilizing temple facilities must retain the services of the temple's Kitchen Supervisor**, whose fee will be billed along with the room rental fees. Caterers may deliver supplies only at a time authorized by the Executive Director.

5. All linens, including napkins and dishtowels must be furnished by the lessee or his/her caterer. Tablecloths are available for rental through the temple.

6. All property of the lessee or his/her caterer must be removed from the temple facilities within 24 hours after the event, unless express permission to the contrary has been obtained in advance from the Executive Director. Items not removed within time limit of these rules may be disposed of by the temple, and any costs involved, including labor, shall be paid by the vendor or contractor. Please consider donating leftover food.

7. Immediately after each event, all garage, recycleable items, and compostable items must be removed from kitchens, lobbies, auditoriums, etc., and placed in the designated containers. Dry paper and dry rubbish may be placed in the temple's containers for removal by temple, but must be stored neatly with the container covers properly positioned. Please re-use any materials that can be saved and recycle all aluminum and paper in the bins in the kitchen lot.

8. Each decorator or florist shall be responsible for the timely dismantling and removal of all materials, equipment and fixtures furnished by them, so as not to interfere with the clean-up and removal operations of other vendors. All clean-up and removals shall be completed within time limits stated in these rules. Please consider donating flowers.

9. All facilities in the social halls and kitchen must be handled carefully and all equipment, including the refrigerators, ranges, coffee urns, dishwashers, sinks, cabinets, table tops and counter tops must be cleaned inside and outside, above and below after use. Floors of all kitchens used must be wet mopped after each affair. Floors in all other areas must be dry mopped, and all spills, stains, deposits and scuffs removed carefully. Carpeted areas shall be cleaned of visible foreign material. Any damage to carpets, floors, furniture or construction shall be reported to the Executive Director or staff by the contractor or vendor using the space, whether caused by employed personnel or host's guests.

10. The lessee and/or caterer will be held responsible for any loss of equipment, breakage, or damage to equipment, physical property, dishes, glassware or silverware and will be billed for such loss, breakage, or damage.

11. The use of thumb tacks, nails or adhesive tapes on the walls or fixtures of the temple facilities is prohibited. This includes the pews in the sanctuary. No decorations, posters, or banners may be displayed without express prior permission. All table decoration ideas must be approved by the Executive Director. **No confetti-type decorations may be used!**

12. The musical instruments belonging to the temple may be used only by the temple's musicians or those approved by Mount Zion Temple. Electronic equipment is available and fees are negotiable.

13. A copy of the invitation to all events must be sent to the Executive Director at least 6 weeks in advance of the event.

14. Final arrangements for set-up of the social halls and other party details must be made with the Executive Director at least three weeks before the scheduled event. Call 651-698-3881.

15. **Security (off duty police) is required over the luncheon hour,** or at the Executive Director's discretion for any concerns in the community that might warrant extra monitoring. The family will be charged for one hour at the hourly rate of $150.

16. Mount Zion Temple is a smoke-free building.

17. Mount Zion Temple is not responsible for losses or damage to clothing or other personal effects.

18. The temple and its facilities must be left in the same condition as found.

19. Lessees are responsible for supervision of children and younger guests. They are not free to run around the building unsupervised. Childcare may be arranged through the Event Coordinator and is available at an hourly rate/fee.

20. There will be overtime charges if parties extend beyond time specified or past the regularly scheduled staff hours.

21. All financial obligations to the temple (fees, etc.) must be met within 30 days after the event.

I have read the *House Rules and Guidelines* and I will abide by said rules and regulations. I understand that I am responsible for any damage to temple property.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Print Name: _____

Updated 09/25

Part III: Appendix

SAMPLE LETTER TO GUESTS WHO ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH B'NEI MITZVAH

To be sent in advance, not handed out with Mount Zion's program the day of the event

Date

Dear Family and Friends,

We look forward to your presence as student's name becomes B'nei Mitzvah on date, and hope that the following information will help you to better understand the ceremony and its importance to student's name.

What is B'nei Mitzvah?
All religions and cultures have their "rites of passage," the time when a young man or woman moves from childhood to maturity, a sacred initiation.

Bar Mitzvah (for young men) and Bat Mitzvah (for young women) are the stepping stones from childhood to adulthood in Judaism. Traditionally held soon after the 13th birthday, a B'nei Mitzvah ceremony confirms a young woman's/man's ability and responsibility to perform *mitzvot*, the commandments of Jewish life. It is also the ceremony at which we affirm student's name's commitment to Judaism and his/her willingness to embrace the traditions and make them his/her own. Bar Mitzvah literally means "son of the (community which celebrates/observes God's) commandment(s)." Bat Mitzvah literally means "daughter of the (community which celebrates/observes God's) commandment(s)."

Bar and Bat Mitzvah have certain parallels in Christianity. It is similar in some ways to Christian confirmation, when a young person expresses commitment to his/her faith and to living by the values of his/her tradition. At Mount Zion, a young person affirms this individually with Bar or Bat Mitzvah and then as part of a community with a Confirmation service at the end of 10th grade.

The Sanctuary:
The Holy Ark (*Aron Hakodesh*) is the central feature of every synagogue. The sacred Torah scrolls are kept in the Ark. The word "Torah" literally means "instruction" and usually refers to the 5 books of Moses written on the scrolls (each contains the same text). The Ten Commandments are represented on the wall above the Ark. The first two words of each law are written in Hebrew.

The Eternal Light (*Ner Tamid*), a light burning at all times in front of the Holy Ark, is a reminder of the *Menorah* (7-branched candelabra) in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, symbolic of the Divine Presence and the light of the Torah. The hanging lamps are structured to represent the light of knowledge, shaped as ancient oil lights.

The Hebrew words on the podium at the center of the *bima* (similar to the altar) are translated as "Mitzvah is a lamp; Torah a light", from Proverbs 6:23.

The Services:
In consideration of your fellow worshipers, we request that all congregants and guests refrain from using products for the purpose of adding fragrance (e.g. lotions, perfumes, colognes) when you come to services. This will enable those who have severe allergies or chemical sensitivities to worship with our community.

As you enter the sanctuary you will receive a *Siddur* (prayer book). Our Mount Zion Siddur contains poetry, teachings, transliterations, and explanations, in addition to ancient prayers. Many of the prayers are translated into English. The book opens from right to left, the way Hebrew itself is written.

You may notice the wearing of caps, called "yarmulkes" in Yiddish, or "*kippot*" in Hebrew. Wearing a *kippah* (singular) is a custom, and a means of showing respect for God. You do not need to wear a *kippah* for services. However, if you would like to, there are *kippot* (plural) available at the entry to the sanctuary. Some Jewish adults will also wear prayer shawls, called "*tallit*", during the Saturday morning service. The *tallit* originated from the Torah: "Speak to the children of Israel and bid them to affix fringes to the corners of their garments (so) that you

may look upon it and remember all the Commandments of the Lord" (Numbers 15:38). Thus the *tallit* is worn to remind us to observe God's commandments.

The services follow a prescribed course, beginning with introductory prayers and the call to worship with our affirmations of faith including the *Shema* (statement of the unity of God), *Amidah* (the central prayers), and finally, concluding prayers that include the Kaddish (prayer of remembrance). Saturday morning services also include reading from the Torah.

The Rabbi is the spiritual leader of the congregation, much like a priest or minister. The Cantor (*chazan*) was also known in ancient times as "*Shaliach Tzibur*" which means "the delegate of the congregation." The main role of the Cantor, a full clergy person, during the service is to lead the singing of the prayers. You will notice that there are times when the Cantor will sing and the congregation will respond by singing, other times when only the Cantor will sing, and still other times when everyone sings together. This is all part of the Jewish prayer dialogue.

You may leave and enter the synagogue quietly at will during the service, except when the Ark is open or during the Torah and Kaddish reading. Photography and videotaping are not permitted during the services.

Friday evening service:
Since the Jewish day is measured from sunset to sunset, the Sabbath arrives on Friday evening. This service welcomes Shabbat as if she were a queen or a bride. The Friday evening and Saturday services are the central weekly service in Reform Judaism, regardless of whether there happens to be a Bar or Bat Mitzvah that particular week. Student's name will participate in the Friday evening service as well.

Saturday morning services – which includes the B'nei Mitzvah's participation:
Upon becoming a B'nei Mitzvah student's name may now wear the *tallit* (prayer shawl), be called to read from the Torah, and lead the congregation in worship. In addition, he/she is now expected to assume specific adult responsibilities, continue his/her formal Jewish education through Confirmation and maintain active involvement with the congregation.

At every Shabbat morning service, a section from the Torah (the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) is read. Each week, Jewish congregations all over the world read the same passage, linking us to all Jewish people. The congregation stands when the *Aron* (ark), containing the Torah, is opened, and when the Torah is lifted. As we carry the Torah around the sanctuary, congregants customarily turn and face the Torah as a sign of respect. Some people kiss the Torah or kiss the prayer shawl or prayer book then touch the Torah. The Torah is central to the service because it is the foundation of Judaism. The Torah service is the emotional center of the Saturday morning service, symbolizing the giving of the teachings of our tradition to Moses on Mount Sinai.

The Torah itself is a scroll handwritten by a scribe with quill on parchment. Reading from the Torah is an art form, since it is written in ancient script without vowels or punctuation. The Torah is chanted using a unique trope (musical incantation), that student's name has learned in preparation for this day.

Because Torah is so important, everything involved with its reading calls for ceremony. There is music and procession. Blessings are recited before and after the reading of each section by individuals honored with an *aliyah* ("to go up"). This is a special honor bestowed upon Jewish adults, and today, student's name will be called upon to recite these blessings for the first time. For anyone coming up for honors modest dress is appropriate (for boys/men: shirt, tie, dress pants, and dress shoes; for girls/women: skirts that come to the knee, covered shoulders, dress clothes, and dress shoes - no jeans or sneakers).

He/She will also read a Haftarah portion, which is a selection taken from the prophetic books of the Bible. It is chanted with a different chant (cantillation or trope) than the Torah portion, and must be learned separately. Historically, the Haftarah passages were read at times when Jews were forbidden to read or study from the Torah itself. The Haftarah portion is chosen because of its thematic relationship to the week's Torah portion.

Your presence as student's name becomes B'nei Mitzvah will add to the celebration and meaning of this day for all of us.

We encourage you to ask questions to deepen your understanding of our religion, customs, and traditions.

GLOSSARY

Aliyah (plural, aliyot) literally means "going up". This refers both to a) the sections of the Torah that are chanted **and** to 2) the ascent to the bimah to say the blessings over the reading of the Torah.

Bar is the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word "*ben*" which means "son".

Bat is the Aramaic and Hebrew word for "daughter".

Bima is the word for the raised platform in our synagogue where the service is conducted.

B'nei Mitzvah is the plural form of Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Divrei Torah is the plural form of the phrase *D'var Torah*, which literally means a word of Torah's teachings. Divrei Torah are sermons and lessons which spring from Jewish texts.

Haftarah is not, as it sounds, "half-a-Torah". Rather, Haftarot (the singular of which is Haftarah, which means "conclusion") are comprised of certain Biblical sections that are read after the Torah potion on Shabbat and Festival mornings. These readings, which almost always come from the books of Prophets (Nevi'im), are connected to the Torah portion by either a key word or a theme.

Kippah, also known in Yiddish as yarmulke, is the traditional Jewish head covering worn in order to show respect for God. While Reform Judaism maintains that the wearing of a kippah either in everyday life or in prayer is not a religious obligation, many Reform Jews do choose to do so.

Kabbalat Shabbat is the service on Friday evening for welcoming in and receiving (kabbalah) the spirit of Shabbat.

Kiddush is the prayer for the sanctification of Shabbat and the wine. Kiddush also can refer to the meal following the Shabbat morning service, a "kiddush luncheon."

Mitzvah, which is often understood as "good deed", carries with it a stronger sense: a mitzvah, literally, is a commandment from God or a "sacred obligation." Therefore, when Jews perform deeds of love and righteousness, it is not only because they are good, but because God commands us to do them.

Oneg Shabbat literally meaning, "joy of Shabbat," refers to the celebration after Friday night services.

Siddur is the Jewish prayerbook.

Simcha means joyous celebration.

a Shabbaton is a Jewish weekend retreat focused on learning and study.

Tallit is the ritual prayer shawl which is adorned at its four corners with tzitzit, fringes. Jews are commanded by God in the book of Numbers [15:39] to wear the tallit in order to remember God's commandments.

Torah, which means "teaching" are the five first books of the Bible, also known as the "Five Books of Moses" and the Pentateuch: Genesis (Beresheit), Exodus (Sh'mot), Leviticus (Vayikra), Numbers (Bamidbar), and Deuteronomy (D'varim). Torah may also refer most broadly to the entirety of Jewish law and teachings.

Tzedakah is the Hebrew term for "righteousness", a theme often employed when Jews involve themselves in works of charity and tikkun olam, repairing our world.