

## F.A.Q. for B'nai Mitzvah

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Ushering

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

There are two obligations for ushering:

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

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

# Shabbat Services – An Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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