

## **Appendix: Sample Content for a Paper Program**

### ***(Email Rabbi Caine for an Electronic Sample Program)***

Dear Family and Friends,

Thank you for celebrating (your child's) Bar /t Mitzvah with us. We are so honored to have our family, friends, and community here to witness and share our *simcha* (joy). As we celebrate Shabbat, we also rejoice and celebrate as (your child) steps into a new age of spiritual, moral, and religious maturity, awareness, and obligation.

#### **Appropriate Conduct**

Out of respect for Shabbat, the Jewish sabbath, there is no cell phone use, text-messaging, I-Pod use, camera or recording device use on the synagogue campus. Please turn these devices off. Doctors who are monitoring patients, or others operating out of necessity are asked to leave their phone on vibrate. If one must use their cell phone, we ask that you use that cellphone in the parking lot.

#### ***Kippah***

Jewish tradition teaches that covering one's head is a sign of respect before God and the Torah. As the Talmud says, covering one's head reminds us that God is "above us." *Kippot* (also called *yalmulkes*) are located at the entrance to the synagogue. Our congregation requires all men and boys to cover their heads when they are in the Sanctuary. Women and girls may also wish to wear a *kippah* or other head covering.

#### ***Siddur***

Two books are used during today's service. The prayer book (*siddur*) is the small blue volume. The large red volume labeled "Etz Hayim", used during the Torah service, enables the Congregation to follow the Torah reading. You are invited to follow along in both as the pages are announced. Because they are considered to be holy, out of respect for God we never place either of these books on the floor.

#### ***Tallit***

It is also our custom for Jewish men and women, if they wish, to wear a *tallit* or prayer shawl. This four-cornered garment is adorned with the *tzitzit* (special fringes) on each corner. The *tzitzit* remind us of the 613 commandments of God by which Jews are to live. The *tallit* has remained an inseparable part of Jewish worship for thousands of years. Wearing of a tallit is a privilege and mark of adulthood, which first occurs on the occasion of the Bar Mitzvah. (Your child) will be presented with his or her own *tallit* during the service.

#### ***Torah***

The Torah is the sacred and treasured writings of the laws, ceremonies, history, and values that the Jewish people have lived for three thousand years. These first five books of the Bible, which are also known as Hebrew scriptures or the books of Moses, consist of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The Torah is hand written using quill and ink on many pieces of parchment (usually sheepskin) that have been sewn together and then attached to rollers. The Torah reader uses a *yad* (a pointer shaped like a hand) to prevent touching, and hence damaging, the living scroll. The Torah is adorned with a mantle and ornaments, which express our love and honor for its importance.

#### ***The Shabbat Service***

Shabbat is the Hebrew word for the Sabbath. It is celebrated from Friday at sunset through Saturday after darkness falls. Shabbat is a holy day set aside for rest, prayer, time with family and friends, and the experience of peace and blessing. We do not use cellphones or take pictures on Shabbat, especially at synagogue.

We are celebrating together the morning, or *Shacharit*, service, which is divided into three parts. The first part is composed of prayers that are mostly silent meditations, punctuated by song and melody, which celebrate our gratitude for living in God's Creation and receiving God's Revelation. The central part of the service is the Torah Service, which re-enacts Revelation. Each week a different portion of the Torah is read and discussed. It takes a lunar year to complete the cycle of reading the Torah from beginning to end. The service is concluded with the

*Musaf* service, which includes silent meditation, the *Kaddish* or memorial prayer, and closing hymns.

#### ***Torah Service – Further Description***

During the Torah Service, one or more of the Torah scrolls are removed from the ark, escorted through the synagogue, and returned to a special table from which (your child) will read. As the Torah is carried through the Sanctuary, it is customary for Jews to touch it with the corner of their *tallit* or with the edge of their prayer book, and then kiss the cloth or the book as a sign of respect for the word of God.

During the Torah reading, family members who have had a special place in (the child's) life will be called to the *bimah* (platform) to chant the blessing before and after each section of the Torah is read. In Hebrew this honor is called *aliyah*, which means, "going up." Other family and friends will be called on for other honors. As a *Bar Mitzvah*, (the child) will chant the *Haftarah*, the weekly selection from the books of the Prophets.

After the *Haftarah* is read, the Torah is returned to the ark. (Your child) will deliver a speech, or *D'var Torah*, explaining his Torah portion and how it relates to his life. The Rabbi will add words about the Torah and the importance of the day. The service is concluded with the *Musaf* service, which includes silent meditation, the *Kaddish* or memorial prayer, and closing hymns.

#### ***End of Services***

After services are concluded, we will exit the sanctuary, and sing the *Kiddush* and *Ha-Motzi*, the traditional blessings over wine and bread.

#### ***Many Thanks...***

There are many people who have a difference to in (the child's) Jewish life and education. We particularly want to thank and the teachers at Hebrew school; Becky Henning, (the child's) Bar/t Mitzvah tutor; and also Rabbi Caine for his support and guidance to (your child) and our family.

We are truly blessed to have such amazing family and friends who are here today sharing this *simcha*. We appreciate that many of you have traveled long distances. We want you to know much each and every one of you means to us.