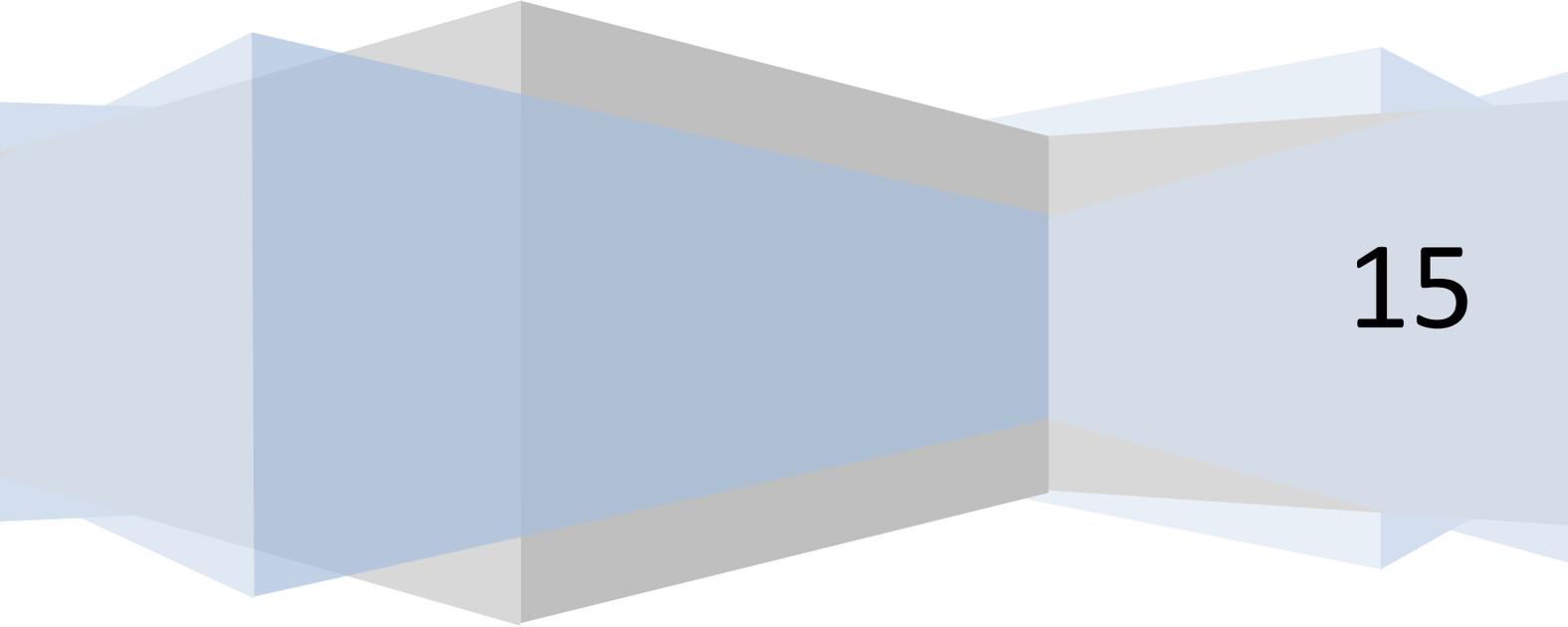


Beth Sholom Synagogue

# Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Journey

A Guide for the Perplexed



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## Who's Who in the B'nai Mitzvah Journey

*The Beth Sholom Synagogue community is here to support and encourage you on this journey. Here are some of the main support personnel through the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process, and a brief description of what their roles will be.*

### **Penina Hoffnung, Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator**

Roles:

- Ombudsman, your first stop to ask any question.
- Coordinator of tutoring.
- Reviewer of student progress.
- Guide and approver of Mitzvah and Journey to Adulthood projects.

### **Rabbi Ilan Glazer**

Roles:

- Your Guide through in-depth study of Torah portion, researching and organizing the D'var Torah.
- Spiritual counselor for any philosophical or theological questions the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student may have.
- Pastoral support for families throughout the process.
- Arbiter of ritual practice involved in the ceremony and celebration.

### **Rose Ross, D'var Torah Coach**

Roles:

- Works with the student on the last stages of D'var Torah crafting.
- Coaching on presentation, 2-3 weeks before the final run-through.

### **Geo Poor, Synagogue Executive Director, Coordinator of Logistics and Finances**

Roles: Event planner and coordinator, covering catering, photography, decorations, music, point person about synagogue policies, rules and regulations of building use, and all expenses and financial arrangements.

### **Tutors:**

David Moinester, Allen Israel, Jerry Siegler, Janet Light, Dot Bilsky, and more...

## Bar/Bat Mitzvah Timeline

### 12 months prior

1. Begin attending Shabbat morning services weekly as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah family. As the year progresses, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrant will be called upon to lead several parts of the service, as practice towards the big day.
2. If you feel your child has special learning issues that would require extra preparatory time for his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah material, contact the Director of Congregational Learning to create a suitable learning plan.
3. Attend Bar/Bat Mitzvah family workshops.
4. Contact the Director of Congregational Learning to create a learning plan for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process and begin scheduling lessons.

### 6-9 months prior

1. All fees and dues to the synagogue must be current.
2. Create your guest list.
3. If you would like to include other adults in the Torah readings for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, contact the rabbi to coordinate this. People need time to learn the reading, so please do this with plenty of time to spare. The rabbi will be happy to provide a recording of the Torah reading and, if desired, a picture of the reading from the Torah scroll we'll be using on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
4. Reserve a caterer, florist, linens, photographer, videographer, and a hotel for out-of-town guests. Order your invitations. Please be sure to indicate that our morning service begins at 9:15 a.m. Remember that photographs and videos may not be taken on Shabbat.
5. Attend Bar/Bat Mitzvah family workshops.
6. Begin implementing the 13 Steps to Adulthood projects.

### 3-6 months prior

1. Contact the Executive Director regarding Kiddush luncheon, flowers and any special requests.
2. Order a tallit and tefillin set.
3. If you are going to have a pamphlet for guests unfamiliar with Jewish tradition, begin working on this now. Director of Congregational Learning has samples of how other families have done this for you to use as a guide.
4. Continue 13 steps to Adulthood projects.

### 6- 8 weeks prior

1. Order Kippot.
2. Mail Invitations.

3. Schedule a family meeting with the rabbi to discuss specifics of the service. Allow an hour and a half.
4. Begin thinking about honors distributions.
5. If you would like for the rabbi to be a part of your photography session, please make sure to arrange and confirm it via the rabbinic assistant. Then contact the Executive Director with your preferred date for a photo session.
6. Schedule the photo session with your photographer.
7. Create 13 Steps to Adulthood display/presentation.

#### **4-6 weeks prior**

1. Submit information and photo to the Hebrew Watchman. [hebwat@bellsouth.net](mailto:hebwat@bellsouth.net) . There is a nominal fee to publish a picture. The deadline for submissions is noon Thursday of the week prior to publication.
2. Parents should work on their remarks. These should be in the form of a blessing, and no more than 200 words. The blessing should concentrate on welcoming your child into Jewish adulthood, and, if possible, include some reference to the Torah portion.
3. Order candy (Optional). There is an optional custom of gently tossing candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah youth after s/he has finished chanting the blessings after the Haftarah in order to wish her/him a long and sweet life. Permitted candy may be purchased from the Beth Sholom office at a cost of \$20 for 100 pieces.

#### **2-4 weeks prior**

1. Contact the Executive Director and finalize all details including set up of the Social Hall.
2. Submit your Aliyot form to the office.
3. Contact the Executive Director with an estimated number of young children among your guests who will require babysitting through our Shabbat morning program. A donation to Beth Sholom would be appreciated for this service. Babysitting is available for Shabbat morning services only.
4. Schedule your final run-through with the rabbi.

#### **1-2 weeks prior**

1. All room rental and kitchen supervisor fees are due.
2. Schedule a final family run-through with your rabbi. Allow 3 hours for this.

#### **THE WEEK OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

1. Bring candy, kipot and any additional wine you want served to the synagogue office no later than 2 p.m. on Friday.
2. Complete all deliveries by 2 p.m. on Friday.

## Guidelines for Distributing Honors

There are a number of ways you can honor family members with a part in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

1. *Aliyot*—being called up to the Torah to say or chant the blessing before and after a reading. There are eight total aliyot on a Shabbat morning, six of which are available for you to distribute to people you want to honor, but the first two are reserved only for people of a certain lineage. First—Cohen—This aliyah is reserved for a “Cohen” a man or woman whose father’s a Cohen. Second—Levi—This aliyah is reserved for a “Levi” a man or woman whose father’s a Levi. Third Aliyah—can go to anyone you want to honor. Fourth Aliyah—Our communal aliyah, any congregants or guests who want to be called up to mark something special in their lives; it cannot be reserved for your guests. 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Aliyot—Can be distributed to your guests. Please note: If there is another *Simchah* being celebrated in the congregation that week, one aliyah will be reserved for the other celebrating family. (See Part of the Community section for more details) Normally the 7<sup>th</sup> Aliyah is reserved for the parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. 8<sup>th</sup> Aliyah—Maftir—Reserved for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Two other honors considered Aliyot are:

Hagbah—Lifting the Torah so all can see what’s been read, then carrying it to a seated position.  
G’lilah—Rolling up the Torah and dressing it.

General Rules to Remember about Aliyot

- Aliyot should only be given out to people who can competently complete the task. They should be Jewish and able to comfortably recite the blessings in Hebrew. For Hagbah, they should be able to physically perform the task AND they should have experience doing this aliyah before. If there is any doubt about this, talk to the rabbi *before* contacting the person about the honor.
  - A person can only get one aliyah during this service.
  - Multiple people can be called up for aliyot, as long as they qualify for that aliyah (i.e. for the first aliyah everyone called up must be a Cohen or Bat Cohen.)
  - Children who otherwise do not qualify for an aliyah are welcome to go up along with a family member who does, though we ask that they not recite the blessings if they are before the age of bar/bat mitzvah.
  - If you do not have a Cohen or Levi among your family and friends Beth Sholom will make arrangements for someone to do those aliyot.
2. Other Honors during the service:  
Chanting Pesukei D’Zimrah—optional.  
Opening and Closing the Ark at the beginning of the Torah Service.  
Opening and Closing the Ark at the end of the Torah Service.  
Carrying the Torah at the Beginning of the Torah Service.

Carrying the Torah at the End of the Torah Service.

Holding the Torah during the Haftarah recitation.

Reading the Prayer for the Congregation on page 148.\*

Reading the Prayer for the Country on page 148.\*

Reading the Prayer for the State of Israel on page 149.\*

Reading the Prayer for Peace on page 149.\*

\*This honor may be given to a person who is not Jewish.

3. Candy Distributor—There is an optional custom of gently tossing candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah youth after s/he has finished chanting the Haftarah, in order to wish her/him a long and sweet life. Permitted candy may be purchased from the Beth Sholom office at a cost of \$20 for 100 pieces. The candy should be distributed by a designated person. This may be a good honor to give to a responsible child-- while the Torah is being paraded at the start of the Torah service.
4. Chain of Tradition—When the Torah scroll is taken out of the ark, it is physically passed from representatives of each generation of the family to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Celebrant. This is an optional piece of the ceremony. If you think this would be a meaningful ritual for your family situation, please discuss this with the rabbi.
5. There are other times to honor people throughout the weekend. Consider having a designee take parts such as Friday night Kiddush, Hamotzi or Kiddush on Shabbat morning, Hamotzi at the party, or a speech or toast at other meals.

## A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is One Part of Our Community Shabbat

Above all else, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony marks the passage from the status of a child to one of a full adult member of the Jewish community. Your family's celebration demonstrates this by being one component of the congregational Shabbat worship and celebration. Shabbat Services are a time for the whole congregational community to gather. Your Beth Sholom congregational community is thrilled to host your family's celebration as part of its weekly Shabbat celebration and welcome your guests and family members for this occasion. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony has many reminders of the importance and role of community:

**Gifts**—As part of the ceremony the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrant will receive gifts from his/her congregational community.

**Hosting Kiddush**—It is the custom of Beth Sholom that families celebrating a Simchah, such as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah host the Kiddush Luncheon after services. You should count on 50 people beyond your guest list to attend the luncheon. (See Food and Kitchen Use)

**Simchah Sharing**—As a community with many members, there may be another family who has a life-cycle event that it is going to celebrate publicly on the same date as your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a baby naming, perhaps, or the announcement of an upcoming wedding. The Executive Director will advise you if there will be any other simchahs on the day of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration, and will work out a fair financial arrangement between the families for the Kiddush luncheon.

**Synagogue Events**—There will be other events happening at the synagogue the same day as your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. They could include:

Visiting guests, groups, or students not associated with your event.

First Shabbat of the Month—Starbucks Shabbat, an adult Jewish learning session from 9-10 a.m.

Second Shabbat of the Month—Mishpachah Monthly—a family learning session from 9-10a.m.

Second and Fourth Shabbat of the Month—Mini Minyan from 10-10:45, Trope Class.

Every Shabbat during the school year, the Beth Sholom Religious School holds sessions and Junior Congregation at 10:30am.

Babysitting is available from 9-11:30 am every week.

## Photography

**Scheduling Photo Shoots**—Please schedule all photo sessions with the Executive Director. We generally recommend photo shoots on Tuesday through Thursday from 8 am to 4 pm or on Friday between 8 am and noon, when staff is available to assist. Requests to schedule photography outside of these time frames will be considered on an individual basis and will depend upon the synagogue's ability to arrange for a staff person to be present to open the building.

**Permitted times for Photography**—Out of respect for Shabbat, pictures may be taken any time until 3 pm on Friday and then after sundown on Saturday evening. Photography and videography are not permitted during Shabbat, including Havdalah.

**Rabbi at Photo Session**—If you would like for the rabbi to be a part of your photography, please make sure to arrange and confirm your photography session with the rabbi's assistant. Beth Sholom cannot guarantee the rabbi can be present if you have not formally scheduled and confirmed it with the rabbi's assistant.

## Party Logistics

**Timing**—Please check with the rabbi for the time your party may begin. Out of respect for Shabbat, parties begin after Shabbat ends.

**Security**—For the safety and security of your guests, two security guards are part of every party at Beth Sholom. Please see the Executive Director for details.

**Decorations**—We encourage families to decorate to create a joyous atmosphere in the Social Hall. Please remember that decorations may not be attached to the walls, ceilings or light fixtures as they may cause damage.

**Centerpieces**—We suggest centerpieces that can be donated to various charitable organizations, or a donation card on the table showing monetary donations to such organizations.

**Flowers**—Flowers may be placed in the sanctuary at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family's discretion. Please request non-pollinating, no-order plants. If flowers are put on top of the ark, the florist must remove them by 3 p.m. on Tuesday, and schedule the removal with the Executive Director beforehand. There's a \$50 removal fee if Beth Sholom must remove the flowers.

**Balloons**—Balloons have in the past interfered with the security and ventilation system of the synagogue; so please be understanding and follow the rules for their use strictly. Balloons may not be left out on tables overnight. They must be stored in the storage closet after hours. Please make sure to use high quality mylar balloons, as balloons can sometimes deflate when left in non-heat or air-controlled spaces. Beth Sholom cannot accept any responsibility for balloons deflating when left in our storage closets. Please consult the Executive Director for details.

**Catering**—Please consult with the Executive Director to discuss approved caterers.

**Kitchen Use**—is included in the Social Hall rental. You and/or your caterer (with proper kitchen supervision) may cook the food for your event.

**Kashrut**—Beth Sholom maintains the tradition of Jewish dietary laws, *Kashrut*, by which we make even the basic act of eating a sacred practice. Because we are a kosher institution, we ask you to adhere to the following guidelines. Feel free to ask the rabbi any questions you may have about *kashrut* and our kitchen rules; the rabbi will be pleased to guide you.

- All food products brought into the synagogue must be kosher.
- No cooked or baked food may be brought into the synagogue from private homes or unauthorized sources, or from open packages, to be served at Kiddush or another event planned for your *simchah*.
- Freshly baked goods may be brought in only from bakeries approved by the rabbi.
- Packaged goods with the kosher symbols (see attached list) are acceptable. As there may be other kosher certification symbols, please check with the rabbi if you don't see it on the attached list.

- Note that the letter “K” which is not imbedded in a symbol is not considered kosher unless the rabbi approves it.
- Verification of all products, regardless of package markings, must be made with the rabbi or kitchen supervisor before they are used in the Beth Sholom kitchen.
- No utensils or appliances may be brought into the synagogue unless they are brand new in original sealed packaging or approved by the rabbi. Our kitchen is well equipped to handle nearly all food preparation.

**Deliveries**—All food must be delivered to the synagogue by 2pm on Friday. The synagogue will receive deliveries but the staff can't inventory, check for damages, or be responsible for losses in connection with these deliveries.

Out of respect for Shabbat, leftover food, utensils, and/or decorations may be removed from the kitchen after Shabbat concludes on Saturday evening. All items will be available for pick up on Tuesday following your ceremony after 9 am, unless you have made special arrangements with the Executive Director at least one week prior.

## Journey to Adulthood Project

Bar /Bat mitzvah isn't a ceremony or a party—it's a demonstration of your journey to maturity. It's a passage to adulthood. Each person's journey is a little different. As part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process at Beth Sholom, you will get to design part of your own Journey to Adulthood project, (JTA), based on your interests, passions, talents, concerns, strengths and weaknesses.

This project is designed to make your Bar/Bat Mitzvah truly and uniquely yours, and a hands-on way to mark your passage to a new stage in your life. Your team—from Beth Sholom, your parents and you will design a list of tasks for completion by the day of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. On the day of your *simchah*, you will present your JTA tasks and accomplishments in a display or presentation.

Here's a real life example taken from a Bar Mitzvah boy, Jamin, from another synagogue, Shir Tikvah:

Jamin's 13 Bar Mitzvah Tasks to Move Towards Adulthood:
1. Take over lawn mowing
2. Take a babysitting class
3. Learn basic bike maintenance and repair
4. Cook family meals
5. Learn woodworking
6. Raise money for a social justice issue (Hunger Relief)
7. Learn about high school options
8. Do business with adults x10 (e.g. call to reschedule orthodontist)
9. Earn money and contribute to OSRUI tuition
10. Plan an activity for our Chavurah
11. Participate on Shir Tikvah's membership committee (talk with children of perspective members)
12. Present information on Bar Mitzvah to younger Shir Tikvah kids
13. Bar Mitzvah (Read Torah, and lead congregation)

The content and direction of the JTA project will be developed by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah youth, together with her/his parents at the Family Education workshops dedicated to that purpose.

## Educational and Community Goals and Expectations

1. Enrollment and participation in a Jewish Educational program.
2. Participation in a series of B'nai Mitzvah workshops the year of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
3. Continuation with your Jewish learning beyond the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. This is not the end of the journey; it is but one awesome moment along the way.
4. Attendance at Shabbat services for the year prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
5. A commitment to manage your time so you can practice with tutors and practice independently for the ceremony, research and write your D'var Torah, complete an individual project and a mitzvah project. Be aware that the time commitment will become progressively more as your Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony gets closer, so try not to get involved in too many other extracurricular activities as the date approaches.
6. A commitment to continue to participate in the life of your community.
7. Demonstration of taking on a new mitzvah on a personal level through a mitzvah project.
8. Demonstration of taking a deeper level of self discovery, responsibility and growth through a personal Journey to Adulthood project.
10. Synagogue membership in good standing.

## Learning Goals

Synagogue Skill Acquisition: Includes *davenning* (worship) skills, chanting Torah, and Haftarah, familiarity with the prayers of the Shabbat morning service, in depth research and discussion about your Torah portion, and crafting a *D'var Torah* (Sermon).

Demonstration of deeper understanding of mature Jewish identity formation: Personalized 13 Tasks to Adulthood.

## Glossary

*Aliyah*—ah-lee-YAH “ascension” *Aliyot* “ah-lee-YOAT” is the plural form. The honor of being called up to say the blessings before and after a Torah reading or some other ritual task associated with the Torah reading section of the service.

*Bat Cohen* “baht koe-HEN” The daughter of a Cohen, a woman whose father is descended from the priestly line who served in the ancient Temple. In more traditional denominations there are special rules and aliyot reserved for people with this ancestry.

*Bat Levi* “baht le-VEE” Literally “Daughter of a Levi”, a woman whose father is descended from the tribe of Levi who served in the ancient Temple. In more traditional denominations there are special rules and aliyot reserved for people with this ancestry.

*Cohen* “ko HEN” Literally “Priest” a male descendant from the priestly line of the tribe of Levi, who served in the ancient Temple performing sacrifices and other rituals.

*Davenning* “DAH-veh-ning” Yiddish for connecting to God through prayer.

*D’var Torah*, sometimes also referred to as the “Davar”—literally means “A word of Torah” or “A bit of Torah”. It refers to an oral teaching or explanation of something in the Torah portion of the week, a teaching or a sermon. During a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, it is often the Bar/Bat Mitzvah who presents the D’var Torah of the day.

*G’lilah* “G-lee-LAH” Literally “rolling”. The ritual task of rolling up the Torah scroll and covering it again with its cover and all its ornamentation after the reading and hagbah have been completed.

*Haftarah* “Haf-ta-RAH” or popularly “Haf TOH-rah” Literally “Additional.” The recitation, usually with a special chanting trope, of a selection from either the Prophets or Writings sections of the Jewish Bible. The Haftarot (plural form) are set and linked to specific Torah reading dates. The Haftarah is related to the Torah reading in some conceptual way and is read after the Torah is read in a Shabbat service.

*Hagbah* Literally, “lifting” The ritual task of lifting and presenting the Torah scroll that has just been read to the assembled congregation.

*Hamotzi* “Hah-MO-tzee” The blessing said before eating bread.

*Kashrut* “Kahsh-ROOT” Literally, “proper” the Jewish dietary laws, keeping Kosher.

*Kiddush* “Kee-DOOSH” (Modern Hebrew pronunciation or “KI-dish” (Yiddish pronunciation) The blessing said before drinking wine.

*Levy* “Le VEE” Literally a descendant from the tribal line who served in the ancient Temple. Some of the tribe were designated *Kohanim* or priests, those who were not were involved in musical rituals or as guardians of the temple. In more traditional denominations there are special rules and aliyot reserved for people with this ancestry.

*Parshah* “Pahr-SHAH” , Literally: “Portion”, also *Parshat HaShavua* “Pahr-SHAHT ha-shah-voo-ah”  
Literally: Portion of the Week. The section of the Five Books of Moses or Torah that will be read during a particular week.

*Simchah*—Joyous or happy occasion or event.

*Torah* “Toe-RAH” Literally “Teaching” The first five books of the Jewish Bible, also called the Five Books of Moses or the Pentateuch. A new section of the part of the Bible is the focus of each week. Each week culminates with a chanting of that week’s designated Torah portion on Shabbat morning.