

# Bar/Bat Mitzvah Information Booklet



Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills



Living Judaism

# A Letter from Our Clergy

Dear Temple Emanuel B'nai Mitzvah families,

Mazel Tov! You are about to embark on a wonderful journey of exploration, learning, growth, and prayer with your soon-to-be Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. All of us at Temple Emanuel want to help make the upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah a meaningful and memorable experience.

We strive to create a collaborative environment in becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, in which every family will understand the child's responsibilities and privileges within the context of our community. The purpose of this handbook is to help you plan ahead so that decision making, event planning, and necessary preparations will make the whole process as seamless and enjoyable as possible.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will have a Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Hasadim Project (also known as the Mitzvah Project), and we will match your child with a Madrich Ruchani, a Spiritual Mentor. This mentor will help guide the student throughout the project, which includes helping him/her understand his/her Torah portion, writing a D'var Torah (Bar/Bat Mitzvah speech), discussing thoughts and feelings about prayer and God, monitoring attendance at services, and overseeing fulfillment of gemilut hasadim. It is our belief that your child's relationship with his/her mentor will help him/her understand the true significance of this important ceremony.

Temple Emanuel's staff and community are here to offer support, guidance, clarification, and encouragement throughout your family's journey. We are eager to help answer any questions and to provide valuable information and assistance along the way. Our hope is that your entire family will find great meaning in preparing for this once-in-a-lifetime moment. We look forward to seeing you at the synagogue, and contributing to all the beauty and significance of this milestone in your family's life.

L'shalom,



Rabbi Jonathan Aaron



Rabbi Sarah Bassin



Cantor Lizzie Weiss



Rabbi Adam Lutz

## What is the Meaning of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah translates to “son or daughter of the commandment.” Under Jewish law, pre-B'nai-Mitzvah-children are not required to observe the commandments, although they are encouraged to do as much as possible to learn the obligations they will have as adults. But at the age of B'nai Mitzvah, the child becomes obligated to observe the commandments. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony formally and publically marks the assumption of this obligation.

Although a child has a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony to mark this new stage in his/her Jewish life, the terms Bat Mitzvah and Bar Mitzvah are nouns which reflect this newfound status. A young person doesn't have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, he or she becomes one. In the modern world, and as reform Jews, the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony recognizes the beginning of the transition to adulthood and finding one's own Jewish identity.

# Bar/Bat Mitzvah Requirements

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah of your son/daughter may be scheduled as early as the fourth grade, after your family attends the second of two fourth grade B'nai Mitzvah Revolution programs. Parents who attend the fourth grade spring program will have priority in choosing a B'nai Mitzvah date. Basic requirements include the following:

- 1. Students are required to reach the expected education level prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.**
  - They must have a minimum of two years in a Jewish day school or religious school immediately prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year, and they must be enrolled in a Jewish day school or Temple Emanuel's religious school the entire year of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
  - They will be monitored for their proficiency in both Hebrew and prayers. If necessary, they can be enrolled in private tutoring sessions (at an additional cost), or they will be asked to postpone the date of the ceremony.
  - B'nai Mitzvah Revolution Family Education: Each B'nai Mitzvah family is required to attend all B'nai Mitzvah Revolution meetings, which occur twice a year beginning in the fall of the fourth grade through the spring of the seventh grade.
  
- 2. B'nai Mitzvah families must be in good financial standing with Temple Emanuel:**
  - B'nai Mitzvah families must be current with all financial obligations to the temple, and must pay in full for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah twelve months before the ceremony. Please see the letter from our Executive Director, Eric Reiter, and contact him to discuss any payment concerns or issues. (Eric@tebh.org)
  
- 3. B'nai Mitzvah ceremony, simple kiddush, extended kiddush, lunch party, and dinner**
  - The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony traditionally takes place at ten o'clock in the morning. If necessary, an afternoon service may be booked, with an additional \$350 fee. The length of the service varies, but it is approximately one-and-a-half to two hours long.
  - The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony includes a simple kiddush on the bima: a sip of wine for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah boy/girl and challah for everyone. If you wish to use one of our beautiful venues after the ceremony, you may schedule an extended kiddush or a lunch and/or dinner party. Please contact our Special Events Manager, Lia Fischer (Lia@tebh.org, 310.409.4644), as soon as possible to make these arrangements. All Temple Emanuel venue rentals are done on a first-come, first-served basis.
  
- 4. Ushering/Greeting Requirement:**
  - Temple Emanuel joins as a community to celebrate the simcha of B'nai Mitzvah; therefore, we ask parents to serve as ushers/greeters for at least one Bar/Bat Mitzvah service prior to their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.
  - To sign up for your preferred ushering/greeting date(s), please contact the B'nai Mitzvah coordinator, BnaiMitzvah@tebh.org.

# Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation Timeline

## **During Fourth Grade**

Your family will be invited to attend two B'nai Mitzvah Revolution programs during the fourth grade year. One will take place in the fall and one in the spring. Following the spring workshop, your family will receive an email in which you can select your first, second, and third choices for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Families who attend these programs will have priority in choosing their date. Please think about whether or not you wish to use our beautiful facilities for an extended kiddush, lunch party, or dinner party, because they are booked on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **Beginning in the Fifth and Sixth Grades**

Families are required to continue attending the fall and spring B'nai Mitzvah Revolution Workshops. Students will prepare for their B'nai Mitzvah by continuing their education in our religious school where they will further develop their Hebrew decoding skills, work on their Hebrew prayers, and continue to shape their Jewish identity.

## **One Year Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Students must be proficient in their knowledge of Hebrew and prayers. Each B'nai Mitzvah student will attend a Hebrew evaluation with Cantor Weiss. If necessary, they can be enrolled in private tutoring sessions (at an additional cost), or they will be asked to postpone the date of the ceremony.

## **One Year Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

All temple, religious school, and B'nai Mitzvah dues/fees are due twelve months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Current fees for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah are \$2050 (\$2400 for afternoon services). Please see the letter from our Executive Director, Eric Reiter, and contact him to discuss any payment concerns or issues, Eric@tebh.org, 310.409.4646.

## **Eight Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family (parents and student) will have a one-hour, personal meeting with the officiating rabbi (the rabbi who will officiate at the ceremony). The rabbi will discuss our B'nai Mitzvah procedures and the family's Bar/Bat Mitzvah expectations.

## **Seven Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Each student will start his/her B'nai Mitzvah training, specific to his/her Torah portion, with his/her B'nai Mitzvah instructor. These thirty-minute weekly sessions will include personalized, one-on-one tutoring during which the instructor will review Hebrew and prayers, and teach Torah and Haftarah. These sessions will continue for the next seven months.

## **Six, Five, Four, Three, and Two Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Each student will meet with his/her B'nai Mitzvah mentor five times prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These meetings will be personalized, one-on-one discussions for one hour per month. The mentor will help the student with his Mitzvah Project, which includes understanding his/her Torah portion, writing a D'var Torah, discussing thoughts and feelings about prayer, holidays, and God, monitoring attendance at services, and fulfilling gemilut hasadim requirements.

## **Four Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Each student may have a brief half-hour meeting with his/her officiating rabbi, to discuss the student's progress.

### **Three Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Each student should submit a high-resolution headshot photo, a short inspirational quote, and a biographical paragraph to our Religious School Coordinator (Karen@tebh.org). (For more details please see the flyer or contact Karen.) The photo and quote will be published in Temple Topics, and the biographical paragraph will be included in our temple blog. These will inform the community about the upcoming event and enable the community to become acquainted with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student. If both the family and the student do not wish to appear in Temple Topics or our temple blog, please tell Karen@tebh.org, 310.409.2950. Submissions received past the three month deadline may not be published.

### **Two Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family (parents and student) will have a final, one-hour, personal meeting with the officiating rabbi (the rabbi who will officiate at the ceremony).

### **One Month Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Bruce Rosen (brosen5555@aol.com, 310.459.2818) will contact you about decorating the bima. The clergy recommends that you decorate the bima with fresh fruit, which will be donated to those in need because after the ceremony. You may, instead, decorate the bima with fresh flowers, but you would arrange this on your own. Finally, if you prefer, you may choose not to decorate the bima, as the bima is beautiful as it is.

### **One Month Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

Each student will have four bima rehearsals with Cantor Weiss. The first three will be forty-five minutes to one hour long, for the student only. The fourth rehearsal is the final family rehearsal, explained below.

### **The Week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

The week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student and his/her parents will meet with Cantor Weiss for a final, week-day, one-and-a-half to two-hour rehearsal. This will be a “shoe” rehearsal, and any last-minute questions will be answered at this time. Each student should be sure to bring his/her siddur, Torah and Haftarah material, D’var Torah (speech), completed honors sheet (see Honors, below), tallit, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah shoes. If you wish to have professional pictures taken at this time (as opposed to before or after the Saturday ceremony), arrangements should be made with Cantor Weiss.



# On The Shabbat of Your Ceremony

## Friday Night Service

On the Friday evening preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, both the student and the family are invited to participate in the Erev Shabbat service. The student will lead the congregation in a prayer, and the family is invited to bless the Shabbat candles. Families are welcome to invite guests to this service. We encourage each family to sponsor or co-sponsor a Friday night Oneg Shabbat. Please contact the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator ([tannaz@tebh.org](mailto:tannaz@tebh.org), 310.409.4640) if you would like to sponsor or co-sponsor an Oneg Shabbat.

## Shabbat Morning Service

A pianist will be at the service to provide musical accompaniment. Kippot and tallitot will be available for all guests, including those who will be called to the bima. Copies of the blessings in Hebrew, English, and English transliteration are also available. If you are interested in hiring the accompanist for your child's final rehearsal, please let Cantor Weiss know.

## Arriving at Temple Emanuel for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony

On the day of the ceremony, please arrive at Temple Emanuel no later than thirty minutes before services begin. Morning services begin at 10:00 AM and afternoon services begin at 4:30 PM. It is very important that all family members participating in the service arrive by 9:30 AM or 4:00 PM in order to prepare for this big event.

## Honors

We encourage your family to participate in the service by assigning special honors. These honors include the following:

- Ark opening and closing.
- Aliyot: blessings before and after the Torah readings. There are a minimum of three aliyot and a maximum of seven, excluding the aliyah of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah; all honorees given aliyot should be encouraged to recite the blessings in Hebrew.
- Hagbah (lifting the Torah).
- G'lilah (dressing the Torah).
- Reciting a prayer for our nation and for Israel.
- By the time of the family rehearsal, please provide the cantor with the names of those who have been given honors.



### **Photography during the Ceremony**

Photography and videography are permitted from the back of the sanctuary during the ceremony. Photographers and videographers cannot use a flash or spotlights. The sanctuary will be available an hour and a half prior to the ceremony. If you wish to take close-up photographs before an hour and a half prior to the ceremony, please contact the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator (Tannaz@tebh.org, 310.409.4640) to schedule an earlier sanctuary time.

### **Candy**

Throwing candy to celebrate the sweetness of the moment is a recent tradition. Families provide the candy. We recommend soft, wrapped candy which is available at Smart and Final. We also recommend that prior to the ceremony, you ask someone to put one piece of candy on the shelf underneath each sanctuary chair.

### **Parking**

Temple Emanuel provides assisted parking for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. If you have a full-party luncheon or dinner event, and have less than 209 guests, our Special Events Manager, Lia Fischer, will extend the assisted parking. Valet parking is required if you have 210 guests or more.

### **Gifts of Gratitude**

In lieu of personal gifts to the clergy, mentor, or instructor, we encourage you to consider making a contribution to any of the discretionary funds, or to Temple Emanuel's General Fund in their honor.



# Kiddush and Reception

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony includes a simple kiddush on the bima: a sip of wine for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and challah for everyone.

Please remember that venue reservations must be made well in advance for an extended kiddush, lunch, or dinner party, with our Special Events Manager Lia Fischer (Lia@tebh.org, 310.409.4644), because they are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **To celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, when does my child need to start religious school?**

Our response is always “now,” no matter the age of the child. Students who start earlier have an easier time learning Hebrew, have a better understanding of their Jewish identity, and develop deeper bonds with the community. That being said, we do require a minimum commitment of two years of formal Jewish education, either at Temple Emanuel’s religious school, or in a Jewish day school, in addition to enrollment in our religious school the year of the ceremony.

### **What does the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee include?**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee includes several meetings with the officiating rabbi (the rabbi who will officiate at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah) and the cantor and the mentor, and intensive training with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah instructor. Additionally, it includes use of the sanctuary, musical accompanist during the service, wine (for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah boy/girl) and challah (for everyone), sound and lighting, assisted parking in the underground garage, and security personnel.

### **May we reschedule our Bar/Bat Mitzvah date?**

If you can no longer keep the requested scheduled date, please contact the B’nai Mitzvah Coordinator immediately, so that we can do our best in making any necessary changes (pending new date availability). Please note that changing your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date will also change your child’s Torah portion, Haftarah portion, D’var Torah, and any specific prepared readings related to the original Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

### **May we reschedule an appointment?**

Once again, please contact the B’nai Mitzvah Coordinator as soon as possible if you need to reschedule any appointments with the officiating rabbi, cantor, mentor, or B’nai Mitzvah instructor.

### **When do we meet with the officiating rabbi (the rabbi who will officiate at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah)?**

Parents and student meet at least twice with the officiating rabbi: eight months prior and two months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. (See timeline, above.)





### **When does my child start working with the B'nai Mitzvah instructor?**

Each student attends weekly half-hour training sessions with the instructor starting seven months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. (See timeline, on previous page.)

### **When does my child work with the B'nai Mitzvah mentor?**

Each student has five personal, one-hour meetings with his/her mentor, starting six months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. (See timeline, above.)

### **What does my child need to bring to the final family rehearsal?**

The week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student and his/her parents will meet with Cantor Weiss for a final, week-day, one-and-a-half to two-hour rehearsal. This will be a “shoe” rehearsal, and any last-minute questions will be answered at this time. Each student should be sure to bring his/her siddur, Torah and Haftarah material, D’var Torah (speech), completed honors sheet (see Honors, above), tallit, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah shoes. If you wish to have professional pictures taken at this time (as opposed to before or after the Saturday ceremony), arrangements should be made with Cantor Weiss.

### **Does Temple Emanuel provide decorative flowers on the bima the day of the ceremony?**

The temple does not provide flowers, but you can arrange for your own flowers. The clergy recommends fruit on the bima as a decorative option. Bruce Rosen will contact you about bima decorations, but please feel free to contact him, if you prefer. (See timeline, above.)

### **May the family schedule additional food/celebrations after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony?**

Yes, there are several choices, including:

- Extended kiddush in the courtyard and foyer.
- Extended kiddush in the social hall.
- Lunch party in the social hall.
- Dinner party in the social hall.

Please contact Special Events Manger Lia Fischer (Lia@tebh.org, 310.409.4644) as soon as possible to make these arrangements, as they are rented on a first-come, first-served basis. (See Bar/Bat Mitzvah Requirements, above.)

Should the family make a gift of gratitude to the officiating rabbi, cantor, mentor, or instructor?

***In lieu of personal gifts to the clergy, mentor, or instructor, we encourage you to consider making contributions to any of the discretionary funds or to Temple Emanuel’s General Fund, in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.***

# Contact Us

Rabbi Jonathan Aaron, Senior Rabbi  
RabbiAaron@tebh.org 310.409.4638

Rabbi Sarah Bassin, Associate Rabbi  
RabbiBassin@tebh.org 310.409.4656

Rabbi Adam Lutz, Rabbi Educator  
RabbiLutz@tebh.org 310.409.2951

Cantor Lizzie Weiss, Cantor  
CantorWeiss@tebh.org 310.409.4642

Eric Reiter, Executive Director  
Eric@tebh.org 310.409.4646

Karen Porper, Religious School Coordinator  
Karen@tebh.org 310.409.2950

Tannaz Lavian, B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator  
BnaiMitzvah@tebh.org 310.409.4640

Lia Fischer, Special Events Manager  
(B'nai Mitzvah Party Venue Reservations/Rentals)  
Lia@tebh.org 310.409.4644



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Host your Bar or Bat Mitzvah at  
**Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills**

Stunning premier event spaces in the heart of Beverly Hills



Make sure your next special event fulfills its most memorable potential. Whether you are hosting a bar or bat mitzvah, wedding, engagement party, bris, or important meeting, the premier venues at Temple Emanuel will accommodate your individual needs and preferences. All religious, secular, social, and civic events are welcome.

For more information, or to schedule a private tour, contact Lia Fischer: [Lia@tebh.org](mailto:Lia@tebh.org), 310.409.4644.



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