

Your Role as Parent

1. The Synagogue Service

Our Shabbat Morning services begin at 9:30 a.m. In an effort to shorten the length of the service, the optional Tallit Presentation is scheduled to begin before service at 9:25 a.m. so that the Prayer Service may begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. You may want to notify your family and friends and mark your invitations accordingly. If you are planning to include this optional Tallit Presentation, please be in your seats in the front of the sanctuary by 9:15 a.m. (Please refer to the Guidelines for Honors further in this Parent Handbook). You may wish to notify all guests that most students begin leading their portion of the service beginning at approximately 9:45.

2. Assignment of Synagogue Honors Coordinated with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator

Later in the year you will be assigned a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator. Your B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator will contact you about three (3) months prior to the service to schedule at time approximately two (2) months prior to the ceremony. This layperson volunteer will review with you the synagogue's guidelines regarding B'nai Mitzvah procedures, answer your questions and guide you in completing your honor forms. As the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, they will advise you about synagogue practice and custom and help you find appropriate ways to involve your loved ones in your simcha. They will help you complete the final version of your honors form for their approval, signature, and submission to the office. You should also add in your Honors Sheets the names of any other relatives who are members of the Congregation. The coordinator can also email you a copy of the form if that would make it easier. You can complete them electronically and email them back. Call your coordinator to arrange this.

You are responsible for contacting the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator at least four (4) weeks before your celebration for approval of your finalized honors sheet. You may still make changes after that time, if necessary. **All changes must be approved by the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator or the changes will not be processed by the office for inclusion at your simcha.**

Before the first meeting with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, you should have thought about how you plan to distribute your honors so you may bring any questions with you to that meeting. **PLEASE DO NOT TELL FAMILY OR FRIENDS THEY HAVE AN HONOR UNTIL IT IS APPROVED BY THE B'NAI MITZVAH COORDINATOR.**

3. Kiddush

It is traditional in our congregation for the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to host the congregational Kiddush and Friday night Oneg. Hosting the Oneg on Friday night and the Kiddush on Saturday for your simcha fulfills the mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim (hospitality).

The congregation has established the principle that whatever type of kiddush is held, all who worship that day are invited. Included in this handbook are the various menu choices. **Please note that the kiddush prices quoted are effective through July 2017.** A list of approved outside caterers is also included in this handbook if you would like to pursue other options.

The synagogue incurs separate maintenance and staff costs for the setup and cleanup of kiddushes and/or private parties that are held in the social hall/sanctuary. Fees are charged according to size and complexity of the setup. **This facilities fee is payable to Beth Shalom Congregation and is separate from the cost of the kiddush.**

4. Outside (non Sisterhood) Catering

Our social hall and sanctuary provide an ideal location for your simcha, be it an afternoon luncheon or a Saturday or Sunday evening reception. Please contact Judy Grinblat, our synagogue administrator, no later than three (3) months prior to your simcha to discuss your setup plans. Three (3) months prior to your event, you will need to set up an appointment with Judy to discuss your upcoming event and for her to guide you on synagogue policies and procedures that pertain to synagogue use. Then, at least two weeks prior to the event contact Judy to confirm the number of guests and review and to go over any questions you may have about your simcha.

If you choose to use a caterer the company must be approved by Beth Shalom. You must contact our Office Manager to inform her of the name and phone number of the caterer and the events that they are going to be involved with in the synagogue. The congregation maintains a list of approved Kosher caterers.

It is Beth Shalom policy that if you use a caterer for a Saturday Kiddush, that same caterer must also cater the Friday evening Oneg. This is necessary because once the caterer's mashgiach has prepared the kitchen, Beth Shalom Sisterhood may not have access.

A. Friday Night Dinner: Some families find that a lovely and easy way to begin the simcha weekend is by hosting local and out of town family at a dinner in the synagogue before evening services. Rabbi Grossman and her family are also traditionally invited, which provides a lovely way for her to get to know the extended family in an intimate setting before the big affair the next day. All food and drinks brought into the synagogue must be approved by Sisterhood or one of its paramashgiachs (kosher supervisors). All food and drink must be kosher supervised and labeled (hechshered) and sealed, or if prepared, must come from an approved kosher source. Food cannot be prepared at home and no serving equipment, dishes, or ritual objects like Kiddush cups can be brought from home. Please contact the office for more details.

5. Safeguarding the Dignity of the Service

Smoking, use of cell phones or pagers (except for emergencies), ipods and electronic games, coloring, writing and photography are not permitted at Beth Shalom during the Sabbath or on Holy Days. (Smoking in the building is prohibited at all times and on the grounds during the Sabbath and Holy Days). Please inform your guests. The insert "How to Be A Perfect Guest" found under the section "Prayers and Readings" can be inserted in your invitations or shared with your guests.

Arrangements for photographs prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah should be coordinated with the synagogue office at least four weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The synagogue will tape the ceremony on a DVD.

- Gifts and food should neither be brought into nor removed from the synagogue on Shabbat.
- Prayer books and the *Eitz Chayim Torah and Commentary* Chumash should not be placed on the floor at any time.
- Smoking is not appropriate on the Sabbath.
- Photography is not appropriate on the Sabbath.
- Cell phones and pagers should be kept on quiet mode or be turned off so as not to disturb the service. Except for emergencies, no cell phones should be used in the building.
- Playing electronic games and drawing or writing are not appropriate on the Sabbath. Children can bring books or a quiet small toy. We also provide a Shabbat box of toys as well. Ask an usher if you do not see it.
- **When dressing for Shul, please consider those who suffer from allergies to perfume. Perfume fragrances can be found in shampoos, hairsprays, lotions, aftershave lotions, etc. We thank you for your cooperation.**

Please advise all men and boys to wear kippot (head cover) and all Jewish men to wear *tallit* (prayer shawls). The synagogue provides some tallitot and kippot. Girls and women may also wear kippot or other head coverings and tallitot in our synagogue. It is the policy of the synagogue that any one (male or female) coming to the bimah must cover their heads and that any anyone coming up for an aliyah, to hold, lift or wrap a Torah Scroll must cover their heads and wear a tallit. A wrap or shawl does not substitute for a tallit unless it has tzitzit. Fringes are not sufficient. All B'nai Mitzvah (male and female) will be expected to cover her head, with a kippah or other appropriate head covering, and wear a tallit at all times during the service. Anyone wearing a tallit is also expected to cover his or her head according to synagogue policy.

To preserve the dignity of the service, ushers may restrict leaving and entering the sanctuary during certain sacred moments of the service.

Please Note: Nothing is to be brought in or removed from the synagogue on the Sabbath including kippot, posters, centerpieces, food, etc. Please keep this in mind when making plans for the continuation of your celebratory activities after services.

6. Scheduling the Service

Beth Shalom assigns Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates for current members approximately three years in advance. These dates will be assigned as close to your child's Hebrew birth date as is possible, although adjustments will be made to accommodate special student needs. New members will receive

dates based on availability and qualification review by the Rabbi, Education Director and Religious Committee.

7. Children and Teenage Guests

You are responsible for your children and teenage guests. Children of all ages are always welcome to attend services. Upon request, Beth Shalom can arrange for babysitting for your guests ages 2-5 at a cost of \$50 for three hours for up to 6 children and \$100 for three hours for up to 12 children. **All babysitting must be arranged through the Beth Shalom office.**

We know that you want to have a dignified and inspiring service. Therefore, we request that you advise your guests, particularly the young friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, to observe the standards of synagogue etiquette. The proper place for children is in the sanctuary or in our youth oriented services and programs, not in the hallways. Friendly etiquette guidelines "How to Be a Perfect Guest" are included in the prayers and readings sections of this handbook as a template which you may choose to distribute to your guests. Synagogue etiquette also applies after services as well. Unfortunately, there has been some vandalism by children and teens after services. Therefore, please have students remain in the social hall where they can be supervised by their parents.

For guests up to age 12, Beth Shalom offers services such as Shorashim Shabbat, Shir Shabbat, our Family Learning Service and Torah Encounters. If any of these services are being held on the same Shabbat as your celebration, your guests are welcome to attend these services as well.

8. Inviting the 5778 (2017-18) B'nai Mitzvah Class

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah year provides an opportunity for the seventh grade class to bond and provides a Jewish peer group for your budding teenager. While many aspects of this year's program seek to encourage bonding, you can help by remembering to invite all the students in the class to the service, festive kiddush that follows and the party as well. While this is not a policy requirement, we believe it is in the best interest of all the students to be invited to each other's simchas to avoid hurt feelings and to help the students bond as a Jewish peer group. If space at your reception precludes inviting all the students, please consider including them in invitations to the service.

9. Scheduling the Party

B'nai Mitzvah parties should not be scheduled during Religious School hours. When scheduling, please keep in mind the sanctity of the Sabbath and plan accordingly. A festive Sabbath appropriate sit down luncheon reserved for your guests may be scheduled in Beth Shalom to follow the general kiddush for the congregation after services.

10. No Candy Throwing

The custom had developed at Beth Shalom to throw candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah after completion of the blessings following the Haftorah reading to symbolize our hopes for a sweet life. After an incident where the Bar Mitzvah was hit in the eye by thrown candy, in addition to problems with this custom in the past, such as young children being pushed or "run-over" by older children in a heated rush to grab the thrown candy, and the instances when the instructions to throw the candy gently, underhand were ignored, **the custom has been discontinued.** Candy may be offered to guests after the services, during

the Kiddush, and will **not** be thrown at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student. The candy must be kosher. A kosher lollipop can be presented to the student by a family member from the floor after the Haftorah blessings are completed.

In place of the Candy throwing we have developed a nice tradition that students present their classmates with a sign made out of (kosher) candy spelling out Mazal Tov (or a similar appropriate message). It has generally been the responsibility of the prior Bar/Bat Mitzvah student to make the sign for the next student in the same class.

11. Synagogue and Religious School Financial Obligations

A. Synagogue and Religious School Fees

In order to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Beth Shalom, the family must be in *good standing* with the synagogue. All synagogue dues and Religious School tuition must be paid up-to-date prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If you have any financial concerns, they should be addressed with the synagogue's Treasurer at least five (5) months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please refer to the synagogue By-Laws for our definition of *good standing*. A copy of Beth Shalom Congregation By-Laws will be provided upon your request to the synagogue office.

B. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation Fee

Each family is required to pay a fee of \$300 at the beginning of 6th Grade and \$300 at the beginning of the 7th grade Religious School year, to cover the additional administrative and program costs associated with the B'nai Mitzvah curriculum and preparation. This fee covers only a fraction of the actual costs incurred by the Congregation and Religious School for the B'nai Mitzvah program. The events associated with these costs are described in detail at the B'nai Mitzvah parent's Meeting and throughout the Religious School year. These costs include:

- The food and supplies needed for the Weekend Shabbaton
- The bus, food, and supplies needed for the trip to the Holocaust Museum
- A Social Action activity
- The 7th Grade Siyyum (Culmination Activity) Expenses
- B'nai Mitzvah student Workbook and Parent Handbook
- Other necessary administrative, supply and facility services associated with the B'nai Mitzvah class and programs.

12. Acts of Kindness

Please be mindful that the very behind the scenes commitment of the Religious Committee often goes unnoticed. Remember, the Religious Chairman, Torah Coordinator, floor managers and Gabbai, as well as the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinators are all volunteers who orchestrate the flow of the B'nai Mitzvah service, hopefully providing your family with a seamless, stress free service. A gracious personal thank you or acknowledgement is appreciated more than you know.

13. Ushering and Kitchen Responsibilities

During their B'nai Mitzvah year each family is **required** to usher at least two times for other families. All the ushering assignments are listed in this book under the section labeled Names and Dates. The B'nai Mitzvah family should call the usher families to remind them about their scheduled date. If an usher family is unable to usher on their assigned date it is their responsibility to find a replacement.

During sixth grade each family is **required** to assist at least two times in the kitchen for Saturday Kiddush. This helps Sisterhood keep the cost down for all B'nai Mitzvah and provides parents an opportunity to bond with other members and to see from the inside both what options are available for their own events and to gain an understanding of the work involved.

14. Other Information

A. Extended Family Involvement

Over the course of the year there will be several events to which you may want to invite members of your extended family (Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, etc.) or friends. Please provide their names and addresses on the provided form and bring to the Shabbaton in March so that your guests can receive invitations to these special events.

B. Bnai Mitzvah Class Gift Program

In lieu of our children giving each other gifts for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each family is asked to contribute \$180 for the Class Gift Program Fund. This fund will provide each child a gift of a \$100 Israel Bond and also gives the class the chance to determine a class gift for Beth Shalom and a variety of charities of their choice.

This program is a nice way to bond as a class and take the focus off the gift-giving aspect of the milestone. It is also much easier for the parents, as it is cheaper in the long-run and you do not have to run out and purchase a gift every week. Of course, if you are invited as a family or if your child has a "special friend" and wants to give gift on top of this, you may do so.

C. Tzedakah

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrates your child's entrance into Jewish religious responsibility in many ways. By means of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your student will express his or her involvement in Jewish religious life, but we also encourage his/her involvement in other areas of Jewish responsibility including the welfare of his/her People. We encourage your child to make a donation to a charity from their gifts. Every child is also expected to create and execute a B'nai Mitzvah project.

It is traditional to mark the attainment of the milestone of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah by offering a contribution to the synagogue in honor of or in the name of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Thus the ceremony assumes lasting significance by virtue of its association with an eternal institution and thus gratitude is properly expressed for the joy we feel on the achievement of Bar/Bat Mitzvah status.

Beth Shalom's Tree of Life adorns our lobby wall. Many families have purchased a leaf in honor of their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A Tree of Life leaf order form is included in this handbook. Please contact the Rabbi's Assistant at the synagogue office to assist you with this purchase in your child's

honor.

Generations back, a family would express appreciation to God for coming to enjoy a *simcha* (happy occasion) by inviting the poor of the neighborhood or village to join in the repast. In our socially stratified society, we express this same sense of thanksgiving through donations that the family may make to any number of worthy food pantry or hunger charities. For example, the Jewish Federation offers the opportunity to sponsor bimah baskets and it has become a modern custom to donate 3% of the cost of your Seudah Simcha (celebratory meal) to Mazon, an organization that fights hunger in the Jewish community and beyond.

D. Tallit and Tefillin

It is customary, by Jewish law, that you provide your child with a tallit and a pair of tefillin. The tallit is worn by both boys and girls during morning services and when leading the prayer service Friday night. Head covering is also obligatory for everyone (adults and children, both male and female) going up to the bimah.

Tefillin is worn only during daily services. Students celebrating a Sunday or weekday Bnai Mitzvah must wear tefillin. All others are encouraged to have tefillin, which will be used during Sunday Morning School Services and will be useful post-Bnai Mitzvah during youth programs, synagogue trips, and weekday and Sunday services.

In the spring of the 6th grade year, Rabbi Grossman will lead a special Bnai Mitzvah family class about the significance of and how to wear tallit and tefillin. If possible, please purchase tefillin for your student by then. A discounted order form is available for tefillin purchase at the back of this binder. You are encouraged to bring family tallitot to this class and to share their significance. Congregational tallitot will also be available for use.

E. Dressing for the Simhah

Please consider your child's comfort when choosing clothing for services. To best accommodate the wearing of a microphone, girls' dresses should have sleeves. Sleeveless dresses should have straps and a jacket. Please remember that Beth Shalom strives to be a fragrance free environment so please refrain from perfumes, etc., and ask your guests to do likewise.

F. Board Members on Bimah

If you would like a specific board member on the Bimah during your B'nai Mitzvah please contact the Congregational President.

G. Programs and Kippot

Any programs, kippot and other materials prepared for your special day must be provided in sufficient numbers to be available to the entire congregation. Programs should be submitted to your Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator at least a week in advance to check for accuracy and approval and must be delivered to the office before noon on Friday preceding your B'nai Mitzvah.

15. Jewish Life after Bar/Bat Mitzvah

A. Kadima for Grades 6-7 and USY (United Synagogue Youth) for Grades 8-12

In addition to our formal education program, we offer a comprehensive program of informal youth activities called **Kadima** and **USY**. These two organizations for Jewish youth are sponsored by Beth Shalom Congregation and are both affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. Kadima (for 6 – 7 graders) and USY (for 8-12 graders) offer the youngsters a meaningful relationship with Judaism through a broad-based program of religious, educational and social and recreational activities within the atmosphere of a Jewish way of life. 8th Graders are eligible to attend regional events only with Kadima, but are welcome at all local USY events.

Through Kadima and USY membership, your children may express their identity as Jews and experience a sense of belonging not only to a particular chapter or synagogue, but the Conservative Movement and worldwide Jewish community.

B. Education

We at Beth Shalom consider your child's continued Jewish education to be a matter of the greatest importance. Your child's continued education should be the subject of serious discussion between you and your student during this Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. Beth Shalom offers innovative Hebrew High School classes for grades 8-10 that meet once a week which include interactive learning that is aimed at providing your child a strong foundation for their Jewish life as college students and adults. The Hebrew High Program also includes a once per semester field trip to different Jewish sites around both greater Baltimore/D.C and beyond. After Hebrew High, the clergy and staff of Beth Shalom are happy to work with any student who seeks continued Jewish Education.

C. Participation in Services After the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Year

The Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony recognizes the beginning of an individual's participation in the Jewish community of taking on adult roles and responsibilities. We at Beth Shalom are committed to your child's continued involvement in services beyond the day of the simcha.

Please encourage your children to participate and continue to bring them to services. Students may continue to serve the congregation as Torah and Haftarah readers and prayer leaders. We especially encourage students to come and read Torah and Haftarah (as available) on the anniversary of their simcha and to sign up to receive an aliyah to mark the occasion (also as available). In addition we are beginning a Torah Corps program to encourage students to continue participation at Beth Shalom through readings of Torah and Haftarah (both in the main service and in youth services), leading services when the Cantor is not present, and in several other ways.

Dr. Louis Nagel will be working with our volunteer leaders who coordinate the various readings and service leading. Please be in touch with him to have your child take advantage of these opportunities to grow.