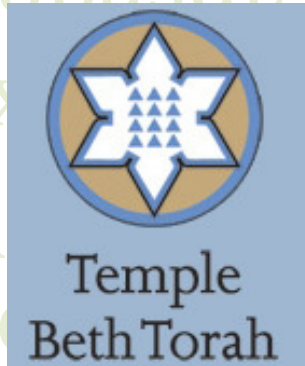


Bar & Bat Mitzvah Handbook

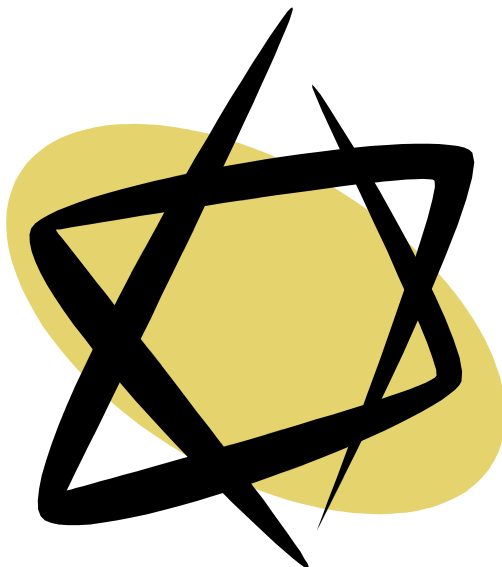
5774 / 2013-2014



Mazel Tov!

You'll be hearing this phrase of congratulations countless times in the months ahead, as your child becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah! Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a tremendous moment in Judaism; it is one of the major life cycle occasions which young people and their families dream about and think about for years in anticipation, knowing that it holds the potential to mark academic, spiritual and developmental transition. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not simply a life cycle event for the child; it can touch and transform each member of the family. And while we say "mazel tov" at each Bar or Bat Mitzvah, in truth, there is very little "good luck" involved in a wonderful Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. The spiritual and significant experience which lies at the heart of B'nei Mitzvah only is achieved through the hard work and commitment of the child, the parents and the B'nei Mitzvah staff. To help you embark on the right path, we have created this booklet. On behalf of my colleagues who join me as the B'nei Mitzvah staff, we look forward to working with you in the creation of an experience which will remain close to your hearts through a lifetime.

Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller



THE ORIGIN OF BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

The phrases “Bar Mitzvah” and “Bat Mitzvah” bear two distinct meanings: status and ceremony. As a status in Judaism they mean “someone subject to the mitzvot (commandments).” They convey the sense that a child has now come of age and is expected to carry out Jewish obligations on his or her own. Traditionally, this change in status from boy to man took place at age thirteen, and for girls it occurred at twelve. A boy became a Bar Mitzvah whether or not the ceremony was celebrated. Any Jew over the age of thirteen is a Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah. “Bar Mitzvah” and “Bat Mitzvah” are nouns; the verbs “Bar Mitzvahed” and “Bat Mitzvahed” are American inventions which are quite misleading and ought to be avoided. (See **Appendix A** for the Glossary of terms)

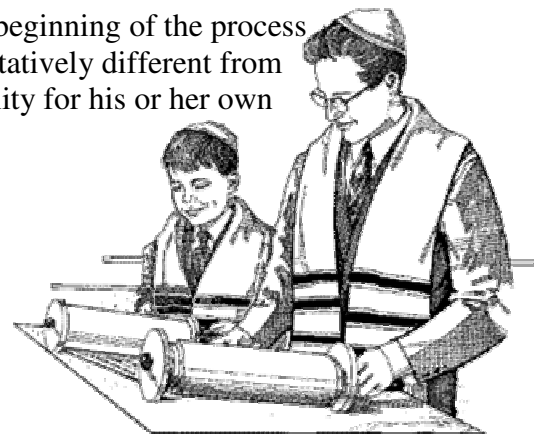
As a ceremony, Bar Mitzvah is fairly new in Jewish terms. Although the roots of the ceremony reach back to fifth century C.E. Palestine, the modern ceremony did not emerge until the fourteenth century. At that time a boy was expected to deliver a public discourse on some Jewish subject, after which a banquet at home climaxed the day.

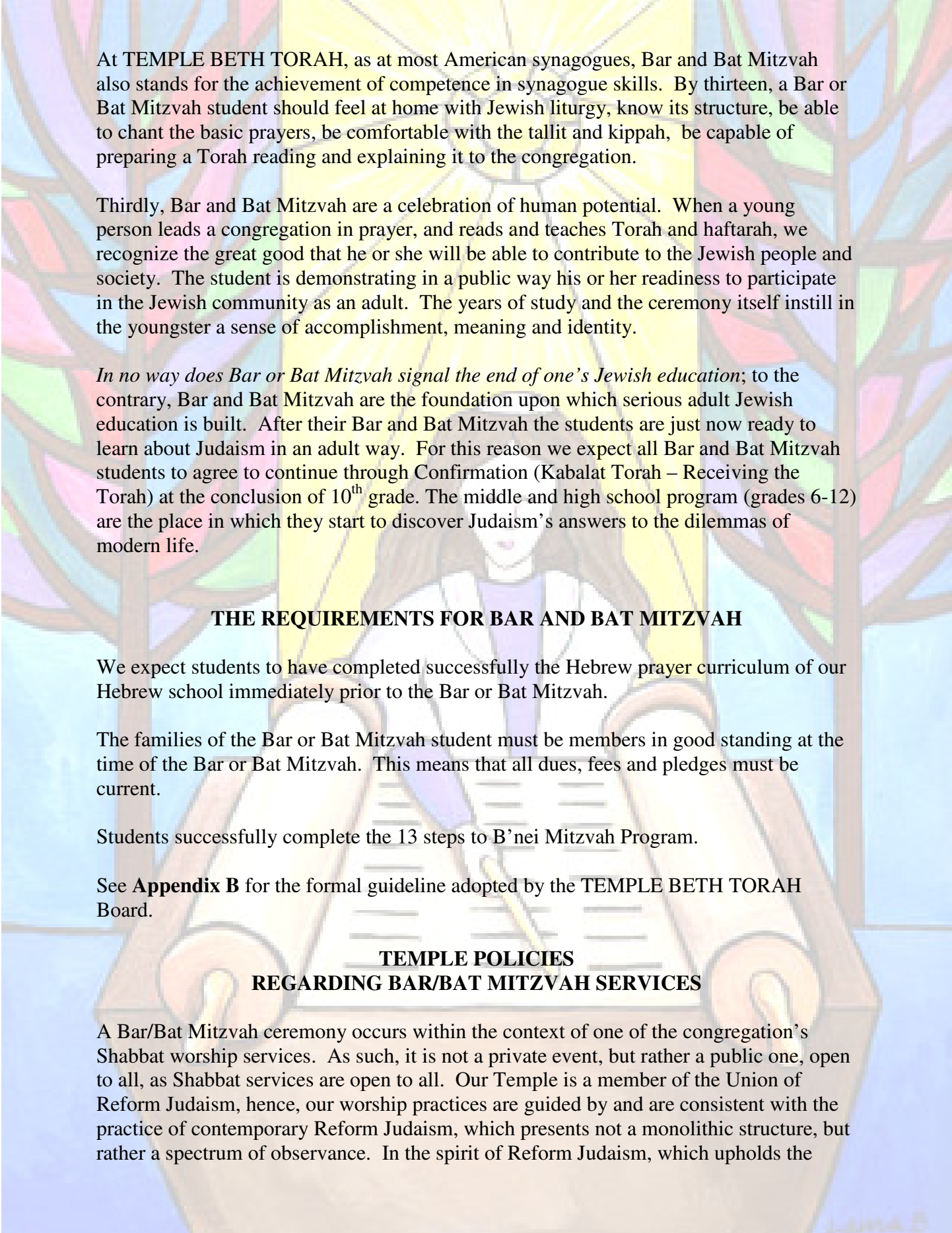
The ceremony of Bat Mitzvah for a girl was created in 1922 when Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan’s daughter, Judith, became the first Bat Mitzvah. Here is an excerpt of her experience, in her own words,

“The service proceeded as usual, through *shaharit* (morning prayers), and through the Torah reading...I was signaled to step forward to a place below the *bimah* at a very respectable distance from the scroll of the Torah, which had already been rolled up and garbed in its mantle. I pronounced the first blessing, and from my own *Humash* (Five Books of Moses) read the selection which Father had chosen for me, continued with the reading of the English translation, and concluded with the closing *brakhah* (blessing). That was it. The scroll was returned to the ark with song and procession, and the service was resumed. No thunder sounded, no lightning struck. The institution of bat mitzvah had been born without incident, and the rest of the day was all rejoicing.”

WHAT BAR AND BAT MITZVAH MEANS TODAY

In medieval times adulthood actually began at age twelve for a girl and thirteen for a boy. At these ages children could be married off, embark on their worldly work and live away from home. Nowadays no one seriously proposes that adulthood starts at twelve or thirteen. So in twenty first century America, Bar and Bat Mitzvah has taken on new meanings. First of all, Bar and Bat Mitzvah formally marks the beginning of the process of maturation that leads to adulthood. One’s teen years are qualitatively different from one’s childhood, because the child accepts increasing responsibility for his or her own decisions and has arrived at a new level of autonomous growth.





At TEMPLE BETH TORAH, as at most American synagogues, Bar and Bat Mitzvah also stands for the achievement of competence in synagogue skills. By thirteen, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah student should feel at home with Jewish liturgy, know its structure, be able to chant the basic prayers, be comfortable with the tallit and kippah, be capable of preparing a Torah reading and explaining it to the congregation.

Thirdly, Bar and Bat Mitzvah are a celebration of human potential. When a young person leads a congregation in prayer, and reads and teaches Torah and haftarah, we recognize the great good that he or she will be able to contribute to the Jewish people and society. The student is demonstrating in a public way his or her readiness to participate in the Jewish community as an adult. The years of study and the ceremony itself instill in the youngster a sense of accomplishment, meaning and identity.

In no way does Bar or Bat Mitzvah signal the end of one's Jewish education; to the contrary, Bar and Bat Mitzvah are the foundation upon which serious adult Jewish education is built. After their Bar and Bat Mitzvah the students are just now ready to learn about Judaism in an adult way. For this reason we expect all Bar and Bat Mitzvah students to agree to continue through Confirmation (Kabalat Torah – Receiving the Torah) at the conclusion of 10th grade. The middle and high school program (grades 6-12) are the place in which they start to discover Judaism's answers to the dilemmas of modern life.

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

We expect students to have completed successfully the Hebrew prayer curriculum of our Hebrew school immediately prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

The families of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah student must be members in good standing at the time of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. This means that all dues, fees and pledges must be current.

Students successfully complete the 13 steps to B'nei Mitzvah Program.

See **Appendix B** for the formal guideline adopted by the TEMPLE BETH TORAH Board.

TEMPLE POLICIES REGARDING BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICES

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony occurs within the context of one of the congregation's Shabbat worship services. As such, it is not a private event, but rather a public one, open to all, as Shabbat services are open to all. Our Temple is a member of the Union of Reform Judaism, hence, our worship practices are guided by and are consistent with the practice of contemporary Reform Judaism, which presents not a monolithic structure, but rather a spectrum of observance. In the spirit of Reform Judaism, which upholds the

values of equality of men and women in all religious matters, and the value of personal choice, we would encourage all B'nei Mitzvah to wear a Kippah and Tallit during their service, as well as any family members who will be on the bimah for an aliyah (see **Appendix C**) . All Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations are held on Shabbat mornings.

THE ROLE OF THE RABBI IN THE BAR AND BAT MITZVAH PROCESS

The Rabbi, as the spiritual leader of the congregation, has final responsibility for everything which takes place on the bimah. By virtue of the Rabbi's ordination, experience and office, the Rabbi is the most qualified to make decisions and set policy for Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. In partnership with the Educator, the Torah School Committee and the Ritual Committee, the Rabbi guides all Bar and Bat Mitzvah training either directly or through the Bar and Bat Mitzvah teachers and tutors. While the Rabbi will cooperate as fully as possible with you in the planning of your Bar or Bat Mitzvah, in the last analysis the Rabbi has the responsibility for determining what goes on in your ceremony. All participants, including visiting Rabbis, technically take part in the Bar or Bat Mitzvah at the Rabbi's invitation, although in general the Rabbi will do her best to accommodate your desires.

SCHEDULING OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH DATES

Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies have historically taken place on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays, the days on which the Torah is read. At TEMPLE BETH TORAH we celebrate Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies as part of the congregation's regular Shabbat morning ritual.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies may occur any time after the student's thirteenth birthday.

In order to provide families with ample time for preparing for their ceremony, you may request a date any time after your child turns eleven years old. Before a date is confirmed, it will be approved by the Temple Educator, the Rabbi, and the Temple office. The approval process includes a meeting between your child and the Educator at which s/he reads Hebrew prayers and Torah School attendance is reviewed.

Dates are assigned between August and the end of June, as close to the birthday as possible. Dates are not given for July, as that is often vacation time for the professional staff.



INTRODUCING THE B'NEI MITZVAH STAFF AND THE PROCESS OF B'NEI MITZVAH PREPARATION

Your child should be ready to begin B'nei Mitzvah training, thanks to the hard work and commitment of Hebrew teachers in the 3rd through 6th grades. Now their training begins with Temple Beth Torah's B'nei Mitzvah staff: Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller, educator Rabbi Jordana Chernow-Reader and Cantor Michael Anatole. Here is how the B'nei Mitzvah process progresses.

ONE YEAR PRIOR TO BAR/BAT MITZVAH: One year before your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, the Educator will schedule an appointment to assess your child's Hebrew reading fluency and skills. If necessary, a student may be referred to a private tutor to bring them up to level with an expected proficiency. Only after the expected level of proficiency is reached will Rabbi Jordana give approval for the family to proceed to the family meeting with Rabbi Lisa to begin the B'nei Mitzvah program.

EIGHT MONTHS PRIOR: Eight months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Temple office will schedule a family appointment with the Rabbi. At this meeting your student will demonstrate his or her prayer reading skills for the Rabbi. The student will receive a study notebook, and be given a Torah and haftarah portion. A general conversation will also take place at this time to address family questions regarding the service.

Following the meeting with Rabbi Lisa, you begin to schedule weekly tutorial sessions with Cantor Michael Anatole. The students should now begin to learn to chant Torah and haftarah portions with Cantor Michael, and to polish the prayers which are chanted. These meetings include reading from a Torah scroll on the bimah in the last few weeks.

Please be mindful of your appointments and considerate of our Cantor's time. If you miss an appointment without cancellation, your child loses one very valuable session.

FIVE MONTHS PRIOR: Weekly meetings with Cantor Michael continue; monthly meetings with Rabbi Lisa are now scheduled through Martha.

SIX WEEKS PRIOR: A parents' appointment with Rabbi Lisa to create the service Rabbi will guide you in, assigning aliyot, service honors, specific family requests or considerations pertaining to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

FIVE WEEKS PRIOR: Weekly meetings with Rabbi Lisa to begin writing drasha, and to fine-tune the service.

WEEK OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH: A rehearsal is scheduled for the family from 3:00- 5:00 p.m. on Thursday with Rabbi on the bimah. Parents must be present.

BRING TO REHEARSAL:

Tallit to be given to child;

B'nei Mitzvah notebook with photocopied service, Torah and haftarah pages;

Drasha- final draft, already approved by Rabbi Lisa, typed 14 pt. double-spaced;

Hebrew names of all people who will be called forward for aliyot; (a complete Hebrew name consists of a person's Hebrew name, ben/bat-- son/daughter—their parent's Hebrew names.);

Names of all others receiving honors; One copy of your program/handout.

In addition there are two more components to the B'nei Mitzvah educational program:

The “13-Steps to B'nei Mitzvah” Program

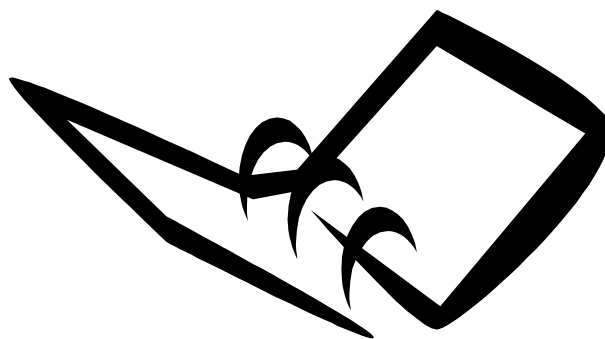
Our B'nei Mitzvah Program is built upon 13 Steps; 7 Required Steps, and 6 Personal Steps that you choose for yourself!

The 7 Required Steps

1. **Torah School-** enrollment and participation in one’s Torah School class and our school community are the heart of becoming a B'nei Mitzvah- a commitment to learn and be connected to each other.
2. **The Family Mitzvah Project-** see page 13 for details
3. **B'nei Mitzvah Family Havurah-** Families participate in a family program which includes five, 2-hour sessions during the year prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Families come together to socialize, support each other, and to study in a way that deepens the B'nei Mitzvah experience for everyone.
4. **The Cantor’s Class-** Cantor’s 4-week program in preparation for B'nei Mitzvah is held on designated Shabbat mornings, 8:30 a.m.- 9:45 a.m.. Cantor focuses on synagogue skills, musical trope, Torah and Haftarah, and basic B'nei Mitzvah literacy. Parents are highly encouraged to attend too! There are perfect Shabbat mornings to stay, attend, and participate in Shabbat morning services (see #5!)
5. **12 Shabbat Services-** We recommend that most of these be Saturday mornings, 10 a.m.- 11 a.m., so that students can become familiar with the Shabbat morning ritual. Parents should accompany students to show support, to gain familiarity themselves, and as a model of Jewish observance. Students turn in attendance sheets to Rabbi Lisa.
6. **Tutoring-** As outlined under B'nei Mitzvah Preparation, page 6.
7. **B'nei Mitzvah Wax Museum-** A special class project that brings the most famous Jews of today and yesterday together for their parents and the rest of the Torah School to meet!

6 Personal Steps to B'nei Mitzvah (of your choice)

See **Appendix D** for the “6 Personal Steps to B'nei Mitzvah” with multiple options of projects to choose from. In general, these projects will involve students with Lifecycle and Holidays, Jewish Holiday meals, field trips to Jewish Museums, young adult literature, photography, videography, music, movies, Israel, the Jewish world, arts and crafts, and genealogy.



The Cantor's B'nei Mitzvah Class:

Cantor Anatole teaches a 4-week program in preparation for B'nei Mitzvah. This program is taught on designated Saturday mornings, 8:30 a.m.-9:45 a.m. Students should plan to stay, attend, and participate in 10:00 a.m. services. (Please dress appropriately.) The four week session focuses on review of prayers, synagogue skills, musical trope for chanting Torah and Haftarah, and basic B'nei Mitzvah literacy. Cantor Anatole urges parents to attend any or all sessions, and to attend the Shabbat morning service with your student, too.



A BAT/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE

There are two Shabbat services during which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and his/her family will participate: Friday night and Shabbat morning.

During the Erev Shabbat Service the family is given the honor of kindling the Shabbat candles and leading the congregation in reciting the Kiddush. The student participates by reciting some of the prayers in Hebrew.

Friday night, the family also sponsors the Oneg Shabbat by bringing pastries, challah, fruit and other goodies. The Temple office can assist you with instructions on how to set up the Oneg. You can also call other Temple members for assistance.

No two Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are exactly the same, because no two Bar or Bat Mitzvah students are the same and neither are their families. Nevertheless a typical Shabbat morning ceremony goes something like this:

At the beginning of the service, the Rabbi explains that the tallit is significant because of the fringes (tzitzit in Hebrew) attached to its' four corners, which are symbolic of all the mitzvot. It is our custom that a young person first puts on a tallit upon becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah, as a public statement that he or she has become subject to the mitzvot symbolized by the tzitzit. A family member is called forward to present the Bar or Bat Mitzvah with the tallit. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah then goes to the pulpit and begins to lead the congregation in the prayer service.

At the beginning of the Torah service, the child, parents, and grandparents, join the Rabbi at the aron hakodesh (ark). The Rabbi takes the Torah from the aron hakodesh and

passes it through the generations into the hands of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. In this simple ceremony a great tradition is illustrated – that the study of the Torah must be a continuous, unbroken chain from generation to generation.

Each parent is given the opportunity to deliver a speech to their child, speaking specifically about their Jewish identity and the values and traditions which are meaningful to the parent, as well as the parent’s dream for the continuing character and moral development of their child. One parent speaks at the beginning of the service, prior to the presentation of the tallit. The other parent speaks after the Torah has been handed through the generations and comes to rest in their arms. That parent may choose to hold the Torah or place it on the podium while they address their child. The congregation is seated to give full attention to the parent’s words.

The service resumes with a hakafah (Torah processional around the sanctuary.) The Rabbi discusses the portion of the week (d’var Torah), and then the aliyot are called up to bless and witness the reading. The next-to-last aliyah usually goes to the parents, so they are at the pulpit when their child receives the last aliyah as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

That last person to receive an aliyah is the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. He or she recites the opening benediction, reads the Torah, and then recites the closing blessing. The reading of the Torah in public is an ancient tradition, dating back to the third century B.C.E. The reading is for the instruction and edification of the people, and takes place in accordance with a fixed cycle of 54 portions each year. Every Shabbat has a special name taken from the first important word in the weekly portion.

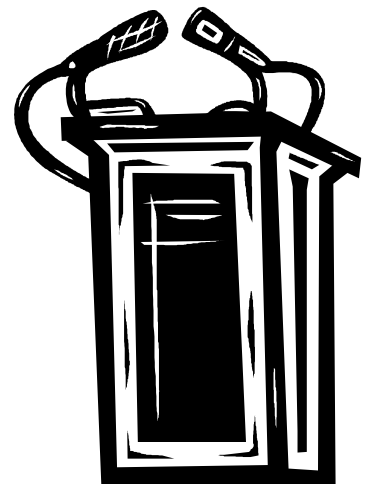
After the reading, the child blesses and reads the haftarah portion. The haftarah is selected from the Prophets, and is thematically related to an idea or ideas of the Torah portion.

Following the reading of the haftarah, the child delivers a drosha or sermonette, a short learned talk about the Torah portion. The speech also describes the student’s feelings about becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The drosha generally concludes with thanks for teachers and family members.

A representative of your choosing from the TBT Board of Directors or Torah School staff presents the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with gifts (see page 15). The Rabbi then charges the Bar or Bat Mitzvah to follow the precepts of Judaism and asks for God’s blessing on the young person. Rabbi concludes with the traditional priestly benediction,

*May God bless you and keep you;
May God look kindly upon you and be gracious to you;
May God bestow favor on you and grant you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26



The service then resumes and concludes shortly afterwards.

The service usually lasts about two hours.

INCLUDING NON-JEWISH FAMILY MEMBERS

In keeping with the guidelines of the Reform movement, non-Jewish members of the family may participate in the service. Please advise the Rabbi at your initial meeting or during the tutoring process that there are non-Jewish family to include. At TEMPLE BETH TORAH we allow non-Jews to open the ark, and to dress the Torah and hold it during the recitation of the haftarah. Non-Jewish parents—according to their comfort level and its appropriateness-- are invited to give a speech to their child and to participate in the Torah passing from generation to generation. While it is appropriate for Jews only to be given an aliyah to bless the Torah, we show honor to the non-Jewish parent by inviting them forward to participate with a Jewish spouse who is blessing the Torah. On Friday evening, non-Jewish parents are given an English introduction to the candle-lighting or blessing of the wine, and the B'nei mitzvah child chants the Hebrew blessing.



FAMILIES WITH DIVORCE OR PARENTAL SEPARATION

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony can pose many challenges for a family when there has been a divorce or separation.

We hope that both parents will keep uppermost in mind the welfare of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child in all decisions. We prefer that decisions about aliyot and other honors, parental speeches and the se'udah (celebration) be made mutually and amicably. The Rabbi would be happy to assist and guide the families through these decisions. Compromises are needed to preserve the dignity and the joy of the occasion. When these decisions cannot be made peacefully, the Rabbi will make the decisions that are, in the Rabbi's judgement, in keeping with the spirit of the occasion and in the best interests of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

SUMMER B'NEI MITZVAH PREPARATION

When a Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony is held in August, September or October, much of the preparation will occur during the summer months. Please be sure to advise us about your summer vacation plans so we can schedule meetings which accommodate vacation and camp schedules while keeping the student on track. The Rabbi, Temple Educator, and Cantor coordinate summer schedules to insure a member of the B'nei Mitzvah staff is in town to work with students.



PREPARING FOR THE CELEBRATION

The Reception/Caterers

While you may choose to hold your reception (*seudah mitzvah*- meal of rejoicing) at any number of locations, (your home, a park, hotel, or restaurant,) we enthusiastically encourage you to hold your reception at Temple. To do so is to give life to the value that Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a religious and Jewish communal celebration. Utilizing the Temple social hall also allows you the opportunity to support the Temple. We strongly encourage that the party reflect, in nature, music, and atmosphere, that this is a Jewish celebration. Our Temple has a catering manager who works intimately with families to ensure that planning a reception is a positive experience resulting in a beautiful celebration. Please contact the Temple office to reserve the social hall, be put in touch with the catering manager, and find out about the caterers approved to use Temple's facilities. Fees and deposits shall be paid to the office one month in advance of the celebration.

Kashrut

Temple Beth Torah has adopted dietary rules to guide food service in the Temple kitchen, either by congregants or hired caterers. Our modified kashrut policy is found in **Appendix E**.

Photography or Videography During the Service

Still photography is not permitted during any worship service at Temple Beth Torah. We recommend that you take your pictures either before or after the ceremony. The Temple is opened an hour and a half before the service. You should plan to meet with your photographer early and you may take pictures up to twenty minutes before the service begins. The Rabbi is also usually available for pictures at the conclusion of the Kiddush.

We do not allow family members, who show up with cameras hoping to take pictures during the ceremony, to do so. To avoid embarrassment, you might want to advise the family of this policy.

Videotaping is permitted during the service. Video cameras, stationary on tripods, are allowed in the balcony of the sanctuary. Either a family member, friend, or a professional may videotape the ceremony, but we ask that he or she set up the equipment thirty minutes before the service. You must also make do with the available lighting; supplemental lighting is not allowed because it is distracting.

Preparing Your own Program booklet

Families prepare a program booklet which reflects the personality of their family; including the names of those given honors, perhaps readings which introduce what B'nei Mitzvah is about, some of the vocabulary found here in **Appendix A**, comments from parents or child upon their anticipation of this day. We are glad to assist you in preparation, and to supply Hebrew copies and English translations of the Torah and haftarah portions.



Invitations

We know that invitations are very important to you in planning your simchah. If any Hebrew wording will be included, *please* show your invitations to a member of the B'nei Mitzvah staff before printing.

While the Rabbi, Cantor, and Educational Director cannot attend every function, it is appropriate to invite them and their spouses to your celebration.

We strongly encourage each Bar/Bat Mitzvah to invite the members of their Torah school class to attend the service/reception. The B'nei Mitzvah experience is a celebration foremost of the Jewish community, recognizing the emerging Jewish identity of one of its young people. Too often, the sanctuary is filled with secular school friends, and a young person's Jewish peers are excluded from living a Jewish life cycle celebration. Additionally, the opportunity for Jewish peers to celebrate together enables them to build closer Jewish friendships with their Temple peers. Take care not to exclude Torah school classmates when sending invitations.

The Shofar Announcement

Well in advance of the service, the Temple office will ask you to submit an article and photo that will be published in the month of your ceremony. The deadline for the Shofar is about 4-5 weeks before the issue is published. So, the deadline for the October issue is around the end of August or first week of September.

Temple Gifts

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family asks a Temple Representative to be present at their child's service, in order to make a presentation to the child on behalf of the Congregation. This should be done 6 weeks in advance. You may select: 1) a current member of the Board of Directors; 2) a recent past Board member; 3) a past President; 4) a member of the Temple's professional staff; 5) a current Torah School teacher who is also a current Temple member. Please call the representative directly. If you need help, consult the Rabbi or Ritual Chair.

TZEDAKAH IN HONOR OF A SIMCHAH: A JEWISH TRADITION

If you want your child to really understand the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you should also take some time to plan the giving of tzedakah.

Donating 3% to a charity is common.



THE FAMILY MITZVAH PROJECT

A FAMILY TZEDAKAH MITZVAH PROJECT MAKES A SUPERB WAY TO PERSONALIZE YOUR SERVICE. Raising money for a worthy project or donating your time to a needy cause are excellent ways to teach your children by example the values of our religion. Sometimes the project can be mentioned on the invitation itself; for example, "Instead of gifts, we ask that donations be made to the Jewish National Fund."

The Bar or Bat Mitzvah and family might consider: working at a convalescent home or homeless shelter; assisting people with disabilities; helping animals or protecting the environment; collecting cans of food; planting trees in Israel for your guests; and so on. For more suggestions, please speak with the Rabbi Educator or the Social Action Committee.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH IN ISRAEL

Your family may be considering having a Bar or Bat Mitzvah in Israel. This will truly be a highlight experience and a lifelong memory! The Rabbi and other Temple families will be able to recommend travel groups to work with.

But what does an Israel Bar or Bat Mitzvah entail? The extent will be your child reading three verses of Torah, and reciting the blessing over the Torah. Temple Beth Torah's goals for your child are far more extensive, by way of prayer preparation and leadership

development; we see our role as preparing a praying Jew for life, not simply a one-time Torah reader.

So students who have their B'nei Mitzvah in Israel still participate fully in the B'nei Mitzvah program as delineated in this handbook. The family selects a Saturday morning, shortly after their return from Israel, when their child will be on the bimah, to jointly lead worship with the Rabbi and Cantor. The child will not read the Torah portion which was prepared for the Israel trip, but may choose to learn the haftarah reading for that specific Saturday morning, since there is no haftarah requirement for the Israel Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In this way, our young people are welcomed as B'nei Mitzvah within their home congregation, and have the opportunity to demonstrate the Hebrew skills they have spent many years acquiring.

THE DAY OF THE SERVICE

Shabbat Morning Ushers

If you have prepared your own program booklet, you may wish to ask two young people or adults to greet congregants as they enter the sanctuary by handing out programs. Because guests have a propensity to stand in the lobby and visit, please designate one or two adults who, at 9:55 a.m. will politely and firmly invite people to enter the sanctuary and be seated so that services may begin.

Sign-in Books/Photographs

You may set up sign-in books and photograph displays inside the social hall before services so that they are available for signing after services, or arrange to have them put in the lobby after services. Signing in as guests arrive before services often creates a waiting line and makes starting the service on time problematic.

The Shabbat Morning Kiddush

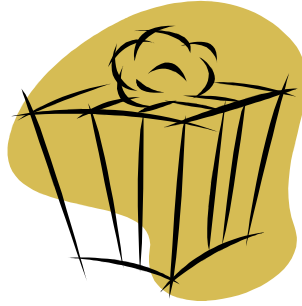
Following a Shabbat morning service, a kiddush takes place in the lobby, whether or not the reception is at the Temple. This makes a clear statement that all those who were part of the service that morning, your guests and others, are part of the community celebrating Shabbat together. The B'nei Mitzvah family gathers around the kiddush table with the Rabbi and Cantor and all recite the blessings over the wine/juice and challah.

The B'nei Mitzvah family supplies the challah and wine/juice. We ask that you provide dark kosher wine and white grape juice, which are to be poured in small plastic cups before the service, refrigerated, and then served by friends who you pre-designate as congregants leave the sanctuary. We ask that enough white grape juice is supplied for minors (which includes 12 and 13 year olds, and middle-school age teens,) as well as adults who should not drink alcohol. Please inform those who will be serving the juice/wine to indicate to minors that they should be partaking of the light-colored juice, rather than the wine.



Gifts

We have a gift table in the foyer of the synagogue that can hold your guests' gifts. Gifts should not be brought into the sanctuary itself. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah should open gifts in the privacy of the home; opening them at the Temple is in bad taste. You should appoint someone to be responsible for transporting gifts from the Temple to your home.



THE BAR OR BAT MITZVAH CEREMONY: AN OPEN INVITATION

At TEMPLE BETH TORAH we have regular Shabbat morning worship, and your Bar or Bat Mitzvah occurs within the context of that service. All services at TEMPLE BETH TORAH belong to the entire community and not to any one family. No one should feel excluded from a Shabbat morning service just because a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is taking place. For example, your Bar or Bat Mitzvah might coincide with another couple's celebration of their fiftieth wedding anniversary. In such a case the couple might be honored in some way.

IN CONCLUSION

It is the sincere desire of your Rabbi, Cantor, Education Director, staff, faculty and Temple Board of Directors, that your Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony helps you rejoice in the coming of age of your child. It's our prayer that the preparation for this event will permanently enrich your child's knowledge of Judaism and motivate him or her to pursue Jewish studies enthusiastically. We hope that each child, and your whole family, will be drawn closer to God, Jewish tradition, and the people of Israel.

To make sure this happens, we urge you to let this Bar/Bat Mitzvah service inspire you to a deep and lasting affiliation with Temple Beth Torah.



APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

ALIYAH: During the Torah service certain congregants will be called up to the pulpit (bimah in Hebrew) to bless the Torah before and after its reading. *Aliyah* literally means “going up.” It is a special honor to receive an aliyah, usually reserved for those especially close to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

BIMAH: This refers to the raised platform area in the front of the sanctuary. Some people call it the pulpit.

CHAZZANUT: This is the ancient art of Hebrew chanting. The cantor (*chazzan or chazzanit* in Hebrew) is skilled at chazzanut, and knows both traditional and modern ways to chant the prayers, Torah and haftarah.

CONFIRMATION OR KABBALAT TORAH: Confirmation is a ceremony created by the Reform movement in which young Jewish adults confirm their allegiance to Judaism and the Jewish people. At TEMPLE BETH TORAH Confirmation occurs in the tenth grade and coincides with Shavu’ot. *Kabbalat Torah*, receiving the Torah, is the Hebrew translation of this word.

DROSHA OR SERMONETTE: During the ceremony your child will deliver a short sermon based on the Torah portion. In this explication of the weekly Torah reading we try to demonstrate a wrestling with the text and an understanding of one of its many messages.

D’VAR TORAH: Literally this means “a word of Torah.” In the Torah service the reading is introduced by a paragraph or two describing the Torah reading and explicating it.

HAFTARAH: Following the reading from the Torah a passage called the haftarah is read from the portion of the Hebrew Bible called the Prophets (*nevi'im* in Hebrew). Usually some literary or thematic connects the Torah portion and the haftarah.

KIDDUSH: Kiddush is both a prayer and an act. As an act it is the sanctification of Shabbat usually done with wine. “Kiddush” is also the prayer over wine in which Shabbat is hallowed. In an extended sense of the word it includes the Shabbat morning reception which begins with the kiddush prayer over wine.

KIPPAH: This head covering (also known in Yiddish as *yarmulka*) is a sign of modest reverence for God. In a Reform synagogue the wearing of the *kippah* and the *tallit* is optional.

PARASHAH: Also called the *sidra*, the parashah is the Torah portion read and studied during the service.

SIDDUR: The Hebrew word *siddur* means “order,” and it is applied to the weekday and Shabbat prayer book, for that prayer book contains the order of prayers. In the Reform movement the prevailing *siddur* is the *Gates of Prayer*.

SE’UDAT MITZVAH: Sharing a meal with the community as a way to celebrate is rooted in Jewish tradition. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah feast was declared a *se’udat mitzvah*, a meal celebrating a commandment, in the sixteenth century. The *se’udat mitzvah* is a traditional way to perform a mitzvah by celebration to prevent it from being minimized. The feast is a joyous way of emphasizing the religious significance of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service.

TALLIT: This is the prayer shawl worn by Jewish adults in fulfillment of the commandment in the Torah, “You shall attach *tzitzit* (fringes) to the four corners of your garments.” The fringes are knotted in such a way that they remind the Jew of all the commandments in the Bible. Both *kippot* and *tallitot* are available in the rack as you enter the sanctuary.

TORAH: The Torah really has two meanings. In its broadest sense it refers to the entire body of Jewish law, lore and teachings. In its narrowest sense, it refers to the scroll on which are written the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Every Shabbat a consecutive portion of the Torah is read and studied.

APPENDIX B

TEMPLE BETH TORAH BAR AND BAT MITZVAH GUIDELINES

(Adopted by the Board of Directors)

- I. The student needs to demonstrate Hebrew readiness, proficiency in prayers, attend Torah School grades 3-6, and Hebrew instruction immediately prior to Bar or Bat Mitzvah. If the student's ceremony takes place after the seventh grade, he/she must nevertheless be enrolled in Torah School.

- II. Successful completion of Bar or Bat Mitzvah training shall include:
 - A. Attendance is mandatory.
 - B. All assignments must be completed.
 - C. Rabbi shall determine the Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate has fulfilled all requirements and is prepared for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony.
 - D. For one year prior to the ceremony the students shall attend twelve Shabbat services.
 - E. Students may not have Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremonies until they are thirteen years old. This allows us to give equal treatment to boys and girls.
 - F. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah date shall be determined in consultation with the Rabbi.
 - G. The family of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah must be members in good standing of TEMPLE BETH TORAH at the time of the ceremony.

APPENDIX C

ALIYAH Reciting the Torah Blessings At Temple Beth Torah

- A. The act of going up to bless the Torah is called an *aliyah*, which means “ascending,” in both the physical and spiritual sense.
- B. The Rabbi and Cantor will call up the person doing the *aliyah* with the Hebrew phrase for “please rise:” *ta’amod* for a woman, *ya’amod* for a man and *ya’amdu* for a couple. This will be followed by their Hebrew names.
- C. Step up to the lectern to the reader’s right. The Torah reader will point to the word or line where he or she will begin the reading. Take the edge of your *tallit*, the *tzitzit* (fringe), or *siddur* (prayer book), and touch the margin next to the line to be read. Kiss the tallit or siddur. Next, recite the Torah blessing for “before the reading” from your siddur or the side of the lectern. It is all right to speak the blessing if you are not comfortable chanting it. The blessings are transliterated on the card on the side of the lectern.
- D. After the Torah verses are read in Hebrew recite the second blessing (“after the reading”). Move to the other side of the lectern until the *aliyah* following you has finished the second blessing. Then return to the congregation. If you are the last *aliyah*, ascertain whether your help is needed for dressing the Torah before returning to your seat.

APPENDIX D

6 PERSONAL STEPS

6 Personal Steps to B'nai Mitzvah (of your choice). The 7 required steps and 6 personal steps make a total of the "13 Steps to B'nai Mitzvah." We have included several topics for you to choose from and have listed some sample activities from these categories. Please select six of these activities to do to complete the personal steps. We have also included resources to help you complete these tasks. You are welcome to use these resources or to find other sources to complete these steps. Please let us know if there are other topics or activities you would like to do to for your personal steps.

The topic for these steps are: Jewish lifecycle, Jewish Holiday meals, field trips to Jewish Museums, Jewish young adult literature, art projects (including photography and videography), Jewish music, Jewish movies, Israel, the Jewish world, and genealogy.

Choose six activities to do and place a copy of these completed steps in your notebook.

Types of activities you can do to fulfill these steps:

Make a "radio broadcast" about a trip to a Jewish Museum
Write a "newspaper article" about Jewish lifecycle event
Write a short play about a Jewish theme
Create a piece of Jewish artwork
Cook a Shabbat dinner for your family; take a picture of this dinner and write up the recipes you used
Write up your family tree include a narrative about the role Judaism played in each person's life
Listen to a piece of Jewish music and write a review of it
Write a song about a Jewish holiday, prayer or memory
Paint of picture of what Judaism means to you
Read a Jewish book and write up a short review of it
Design a tallit or kippah
Describe your favorite Jewish food memory and write a story about why this is important to you
Review of work of art by a Jewish artist
"Visit" a place in Israel and write a travel review of it

Make a "radio broadcast" about a trip to a Jewish Museum

Suggestions for field trips to Jewish Museums in Los Angeles:

The Skirball Museum <http://www.skirball.org>

The Museum of Tolerance/Holocaust Museum <http://www.lamoth.org/visitor-information>

The Zimmer Museum (for young children) <http://www.zimmermuseum.org>

Sample Questions to answer:

Which museum did you visit?

What are three things you learned from the museum?

What questions do you have after visiting the museum?

Would you recommend a friend visit the museum? Why or why not?

What was your favorite part of the museum?

What is one thing you would like to change about it?

What was your overall impression of the time you spent at the museum?

Write a “newspaper article” about Jewish lifecycle event

Jewish Lifecycle events are:

Baby naming/Bris,

Bar/bat mitzvah,

Confirmation

Jewish wedding,

Funeral,

Shiva minyion,

Sample questions to answer:

Write about how the event made you feel,

Was there a ceremony, if so what was it like? Who lead the ceremony?

Was there music at the event? If so, what did it make you think about?

What was the most memorable part of this lifecycle event?

What was your favorite moment of the event?

If you could add one thing to this lifecycle event, what would it be?

I would describe this event lifecycle event with these three words...

Design a tallit or kippah

Look at a variety of tallit or kippot (plural of tallit and kippah).

Ask your family members to look at their tallit or kippot.

When you are at services, notice the variety of tallit or kippot members of the congregation are wearing.

Go online to explore websites of places that sell tallit or kippot such as the Skirball Center <http://www.skirball.org> or Gallery Judaica <http://www.galleryjudaica.com>

Sample question to think about:

Ask your family members about their tallit or kippah. Did someone buy it for them?

Did they pick it out?

Why did they pick out the one they did?

What is their favorite part of their kippah or tallit?

When looking online, what did you notice about the tallit or kippot?

Is there a trend to the ones you like?

Why do you think you like that style or color combination?

Draw or sew your own tallit or kippah. Include your finished product and a short explanation of the process you used to design it.

Cook a Shabbat dinner for your family

Take a picture of this dinner and write up the recipes you used.

Sources for recipes to cook for Shabbat dinner:

A friend or relative

Entrée to Judaism: A Culinary Exploration of the Jewish Diaspora By: Tina Wasserman

How to Cook Everything: 2,000 Simple Recipes for Great Food By: Mark Bittman

The Jewish Holiday Cookbook By: Joan Nathan

California Kosher: Contemporary and Traditional Jewish Cuisine By: Women's League

Adat Ariel

Take a picture with a camera or smart phone

Sample questions to answer:

What was your favorite part of cooking Shabbat dinner?

What was the most difficult part?

What dish did your family enjoy the most?

What is one thing you will do differently next time you cook Shabbat dinner?

How did cooking Shabbat dinner change the way you felt about the Shabbat your family spent together?

Write up your family tree; include a narrative about the role Judaism played in the lives of four of the people on the family tree

There are many different ways to make a family tree. Look online for samples such as websites like ancestry.com or Google “family tree”

Sample questions to ask about the role Judaism had for the different members of the family:

Did this person learn Hebrew?

Did this person have a bar/bat mitzvah?

Was this person able to celebrate Jewish holidays?

Did this person face any anti-Semitism or difficulties because they were/are Jewish?

What was this person favorite part of being Jewish?

Did this person have any special Jewish ritual objects?

If so, where are these ritual objects now?

Listen to a piece of Jewish music and write a review of it

Today, there are a wide variety of Jewish musicians who write Jewish music and interpret Jewish prayers and texts. Listed below are a few Jewish artists.

Debbie Friedman
Dan Nicolas
Rick Recht
Michael Isaacson
Josh Nelson

Go onto “You tube” and type in the names of any of these artists. Listen to a few of these songs these artists have written. Select a piece of music that you like, dislike or find meaningful.

Sample questions to answer:

Why did you select the Jewish musician you chose?

Was did you pick that pick of music?

What do you like about it?

What do you dislike about it?

How does this piece of music change your interpretation of the prayer or text?

What does this music make you think about?

How does it make you feel?

It is something you would like to learn how to play? Why or why not?

What is your overall impression of this music and the artist who wrote it?

Review of work of art by a Jewish artist

There are numerous famous Jewish artists who have used their Judaism as a basic for their art. Explore the web or library to see some of the work by these artists. Pick your favorite work of art and write a review of it.

Famous Jewish Artists:

Mark Chagall

Yaakov Agam

Maricy Gottlieb

David Oppenheimer

Sample questions:

What did you learn about this artist?

How did they incorporate their Jewishness into their art?

Based on this piece of art, how do you think this artist felt about being Jewish?

Why did you pick this piece of art?

How does this artwork make you think about being Jewish differently?

If you could ask this artist a question, what would it be?

Sample Mitzvah Projects:

Read 36 books to kids before bar/t mitzvah. These can be Jewish and non-Jewish books

Raise money for a cause that is important to you

Create a lasting contribution to a place that is important to you

Volunteer your time at a school or library

Donate your time to “family to family,” “food share” or other volunteer opportunities

APPENDIX E

TEMPLE BETH TORAH DIETARY RULES

In keeping with the spirit of Biblical kashrut (dietary laws) and Jewish tradition, the following rules shall be adhered to by everyone using Temple Beth Torah facilities:

1. No trefe (forbidden) foods (e.g., pork, shrimp, shellfish, catfish, all other fish that do not have both scales and fins) shall be served.
2. No serving of dairy products and meat (including poultry) products simultaneously.
3. Dairy products may be served in a first course before a meat entrée is served, or as a dessert following a meat entrée, provided there is a one-hour separation between serving these courses.

If you are in doubt about anything, contact the Ritual Committee Chair or the Rabbi.