

Welcome

We are so pleased that you are part of our educational program at Temple Israel. Jewish education is a lifelong process, and it is our goal to help students and families learn and grow Jewishly with the support and encouragement of their Clergy, Educator, tutors, mentors and teachers. We hope that you will embrace this opportunity to grow spiritually as a family, and to strengthen your connection to Judaism and Temple. We hope to inspire you and to enrich your lives through participation in mitzvot, acts of loving-kindness, worship and Jewish study. We are here to be your guides on your lifelong Jewish journey. Please contact us at any time during the bnai mitzvah process and beyond if you have any questions or concerns.

Barb Gelb, Director of Education
(901)937-2776
Barbg@tmemphis.org
www.tmemphis.org

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Bar and Bat Mitzvah

The term Bar/Bat Mitzvah means "Son/Daughter of Mitzvah." According to Judaism, at the age of 13 an individual can now take on additional religious privileges and responsibilities. Mitzvot, literally "commandments," are the responsibilities of a Jew. Before reaching the age of Bar or Bat Mitzvah, children voluntarily perform mitzvot. Following Bar/Bat Mitzvah, mitzvot become obligatory. In this regard, the idea of fulfilling the commandments suggests accepting responsibility as an adult. This is sacred and deserving of celebration.

The central idea in Jewish tradition has been that young people "come of age" around the age of thirteen. It should be noted that even if no public ceremony takes place, a Jewish boy or girl becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at the appropriate age. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an important milestone in what we hope will be a lifetime of Jewish learning and living.

Although Bar Mitzvah has occurred for several centuries, Bat Mitzvah is a twentieth century development. The first recorded Bat Mitzvah was celebrated by Judith Kaplan Eisenstein in 1922. The practice did not become commonplace until the 1950s, first in Reform congregations and later in Conservative synagogues.

Torah

The Torah is the most precious possession of the Jewish people. It symbolizes the moment when God met the Jewish people at Mount Sinai and made a covenant with them. Torah can refer to the Five Books of Moses, the Scrolls, or the totality of Jewish learning.

The Torah also symbolizes all that the Jewish people hold sacred - stories, laws, history, and poetry. When a Jewish child reads from the Torah for the first time, he or she is enveloped in its heritage, in its power, in the awe and wonder of the relationship with God that began at Sinai. He or she is saying to the community, "I am now thirteen years old. I am ready to engage fully in the covenant with God by being responsible for performing the religious obligations of Jewish life."

The Torah scrolls are housed in the Holy Ark. Each of the scrolls contains the Five Books of Moses, the first part of the Jewish Bible. Each Torah scroll, called in Hebrew "**Sefer Torah,**" is handwritten by a scribe on parchment. A Torah scroll is often adorned with a silver crown and breastplate to show reverence for the treasure of wisdom that it contains. Jews show their respect for the Torah by standing when the Ark is open. The Torah is always handled with great care.

A portion of the Torah is read on each Sabbath. Every temple, or synagogue, will read the same Torah portion on any given week. Portion by portion, the Torah is read from beginning to end and then begun again.

Shabbat Morning Service

The morning service begins with the cantor leading the congregation in a Shabbat song. Following the song, our service continues in the prayer book with the **Barchu**, the formal “call to worship.” After the **Barchu**, we continue with prayers praising God for creating and sustaining the world and for giving the Torah to the Jewish people.

The congregation together recites the **Shema**, the Jewish declaration of faith in the Oneness of God. Immediately following the **Shema**, the congregation reads the **V’ahavta**. This prayer directs us to always love God, to teach our children the prayers and history of our people, and to follow God’s commandments and teachings by living an ethical life. This portion concludes with a prayer and song thanking God for delivering us from slavery in Egypt.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrant is then called upon to lead the congregation in saying the central prayers of our worship service, the **Tefilah**. On Shabbat it contains seven basic themes: Heritage, God’s Power, God’s Holiness, Holiness of the Shabbat, Responsibility of Worship, Thanksgiving and Peace. Following these prayers, we have a moment of silent meditation.

Thereafter begins the most significant part of the entire service, the Torah service. This section begins with a sermonette by the rabbi based on the portion of the week. Then the Torah is removed from the Holy Ark and is passed from generation to generation to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, in a gesture that symbolizes the passing of the tradition from one generation to the next. The rabbis, with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, lead a processional carrying the Torah scrolls around the sanctuary, allowing the congregation to acknowledge the Torah’s presence. The highlight of the Torah service is when the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reads a section of the Torah portion from the Torah Scroll. Before each segment of the Torah portion, people chosen by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family are sometimes given the honor to chant or read the blessing before and after the reading of Torah. This honor is called an **Aliyah**.

Next the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reads the Haftarah, a prophetic selection from the Hebrew Scriptures. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah then delivers a D’var Torah, which expresses a lesson they derived from their Torah portion. At this point the Torah is returned to the Ark, followed by the rabbi’s personal words to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and recitation of the **Priestly benediction**.

The service continues with a prayer for those who are ill, called the **Mi Shebeirach**. This is followed by the **Aleinu**, also called “the Adoration.” We pray for the speedy arrival of the Messianic Age when war, bloodshed, and cruelty will be overcome and peace and love will prevail.

After the **Aleinu**, one of the rabbis recites the names of the Temple Israel members and relatives who died at this time in years past. As well, the names of the Temple Israel members who died during the past week and month are mentioned. The congregation then rises to recite the **Mourner’s Kaddish** as a way of remembering them. This powerful and moving prayer is connected with mourning, but contains no mention of death. Rather, it is a glorification of God, a positive reaffirmation of faith at time of deep bereavement.

Our service concludes with persons special to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah being called upon to lead us in **Kiddush** and **Motzi**, the prayers recited before partaking of wine and bread.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Time Line

January prior to bnai mitzvah year that starts the following October – January 2011

Family Shabbaton – half day Saturday learning retreat with Rabbis and educator. Parent(s) and student are expected to attend. Siblings may participate.

7- 8 months (29-32 weeks) before:

Intake appt. with family and Director of Education. Parent(s) and student attend together and are expected to have reviewed the Torah portion for a basic understanding of what it is about. Here are links to finding torah portions and summaries:

<http://urj.org/learning/torah/schedule/>

<http://urj.org/learning/torah/summaries/>

Student and parents meet with Educator to:

- determine Torah and Haftarah verses;
- determine # of aliyot
- talk about essence of day, fears, hopes, etc.
- go over basic schedule and get information about availability, vacation/camp plans if applicable

After intake appointment:

Cantor Kaplan makes the written materials packet as well as the cd of the torah or haftarah. Student will receive this material at first appointment. There are always copies of these materials at Temple.

Zane Kay uses the information from the intake meeting to set up all the appointments. Every student will have sixteen-twenty weeks of one on one tutoring with Cantor Kaplan or Rabbi Bauman. Appts. are 30-40 minutes.

Families will begin to think about mitzvah project. All students are expected to do a mitzvah project that involves some kind of action by the student. Projects can be done alone or with other students, and can include raising funds, collecting items as well as volunteering in a variety of capacities. Families are encouraged to participate with the student in the project as well. The Education personnel can help guide the mitzvah project.

Weeks 28-22

Prayer Preparation

For the first 6 weeks attend prayer workshops on Thursdays from 4:30-5:30 to become fluent in leading the prayers. If, after 6 weeks, more time is needed, student will continue.

Weeks 24 – 5

Torah/Haftarah preparation begins

The student meets once/week with the Cantor and teen tutor in a one on one session to work on Torah. (this is in addition to Thursday prayer meetings)

Week 16

The D'var Torah/Speech... At this time students will begin the d'var torah process. Students will begin studying their torah portion and writing ad'var torah. (speech) Speech will be finished by 6 weeks prior to ceremony. This is a two fold process.

Step one: Student studies torah with a "torah teacher" or Rabbi for two sessions. During these sessions the student delves deeply into the meaning of the portion, studies different interpretations, and comes to understand how Torah is studied.

Step two: The teacher and student come up with the basic ideas and for the d'var torah and write an outline which gets passed on to the "writing coach". The writing coach contacts the student and they arrange times to meet to write the d'var torah. Writing coaches are volunteers and may have individual styles. The d'var torah should be finished by week 6.

Week 12 – UPDATE – Parents will be informed as to whether the student has been making progress at a rate that will allow them to read/chant all their torah and/or haftarah. Adjustments will be made.

Weeks 5, 4, 3, 2:

Mentoring

Student meets with Mentor in the sanctuary or chapel to go through the entire service, learn when to sit, stand, take the Torah out, ask the congregation to rise, etc. At the first meeting, they are given their materials in the appropriate format that they will need on the bima.

Weeks 3,2,1:

Rabbi Greenstein's Class, usually Wednesdays 4-5 p.m.

Students practice with the Torah in the sanctuary in front of peers. They chant their portions and blessings and give their d'verei torah, and offer each other support and feedback.

Saturday morning of the bar - mitzvah, 9:00 a.m.

Preparation - all those with honors are given instructions. Everyone participating in the service MUST arrive by 9:00 a.m. The bar/bat mitzvah begins at 10:00 a.m.

After the big day

Ongoing Jewish education occurs through our religious school, confirmation, participation in MeFTY and graduation. Students are expected to continue to take part in our programs and we hope families will make an effort to strengthen their bond with Judaism and Temple through participation in services, educational programs, mitzvah projects, etc.

Doubling: Students who share a bnai mitzvah utilize the process above as if it were an individual bar/bat mitzvah until the mentoring sessions where they must practice together.. They can share a torah teacher and, under certain circumstances, may choose to write the d'var torah together.

Final note: In order to successfully complete the bnai mitzvah program, students should be attending Religious School AND Hebrew School (or a Jewish Day School) from 5th grade on. Students who have not been attending regularly may have difficulty completing the program and may require additional, outside tutoring. During the bnai mitzvah year, students are expected to participate in our 7th grade religious school program.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who makes the program?

Many families choose to make a program welcoming family and friends, listing honors and publishing the Hebrew and English of the Torah and Haftarah portions. The program is not required, but if you choose to do so, the Education department will provide you with the Hebrew and English texts. We also have samples of programs if you are interested in seeing what else has been done. If you do not do a program, we will provide a handout that explains the ceremony, Temple, and Shabbat, as well as a handout with the Hebrew and English text.

Does the Bar/Bat mitzvah have to wear/buy a tallit?

This is an individual choice. Some people buy a special tallit at the Temple Judaica shop or in Israel; others are given one that has been handed down in their family; and others choose not to wear a tallit.

Can non-Jewish family members have honors?

There are many honors that can be extended to different family members. You will be given a form to fill out regarding these honors and if you have any questions, the Director of Education will be happy to guide you.

Do we have to wear/order special kippot/yarmulkes?

You are not obligated to wear or purchase kippot for your ceremony, but if you choose to do so, you may. If you do not wish to do so, Temple can provide kippot for those interested in wearing them.

Who sits on the bima for the service?

The members of the clergy sit on the bima, as well as the bar/bat mitzvah student, and a member of the Temple Board of Directors. In addition, parent(s) or grandparents may also choose to sit with the student. This is your choice.

Do we have to participate in the Friday night service the night before?

Bnai mitzvah families are invited to attend the Friday night service and are extended the honors of lighting the candles and leading the kiddush if they desire. They are not required to attend and we will ask you to let us know a few weeks before the ceremony.

Are there options for families to celebrate Shabbat on Friday night at Temple?

Many families choose to have Shabbat dinners immediately following services, or to sponsor a kiddush in honor of the bar/bat mitzvah. Please contact Sharon Nickol at 937-2797 to discuss this.

Do we have to have our luncheon at Temple?

It is not required to have a luncheon at Temple, or at all. This is an individual decision. Temple will contact you 12 months prior to your ceremony to determine whether you would like to hold your celebration at Temple. At that time you can also discuss different options for the luncheon, a kiddush and/or an evening celebration.

Can we request certain melodies?

We want the service to be as special to you as possible. Please call the Cantor's office to discuss the melodies that are meaningful to your family.

Is there a role for siblings in the service?

Younger siblings are traditionally called up to lead the kiddush and motzi, and often serve as ushers. Older (post-bnai mitzvah) age siblings are often given the honor of an aliyah, raising or dressing the Torah, etc. These are individual family decisions.

Sanctuary Guidelines

We encourage those who worship with us to participate fully in services, and to conduct themselves in a manner befitting respect for the *Torah*, our religious leaders, and our fellow congregants. In this spirit, we provide the following guidelines for worship:

Please help us:

- ◆ Turn off all cell phones and pagers while attending services
- ◆ Families with young children are requested to be responsible for them throughout services
- ◆ Out of respect for the sanctity of our services, please refrain from conversation
- ◆ **Please do not eat, drink or chew gum in the sanctuary**

Entering and leaving the Sanctuary: Please restrict movement in and out of the Sanctuary during the service. We request that you avoid leaving and entering the Sanctuary when:

- ◆ The Ark is open
- ◆ The congregation is standing
- ◆ The *Torah* and *Haftarah* are being read
- ◆ The Rabbi gives the sermon or a *Bnai Mitzvah* student gives the *Dvar Torah* (explanation and interpretation of the weekly portion)

To our students: The synagogue is a place of worship. We request your assistance in creating an environment that helps us create a positive prayer experience. There should be no talking other than in a prayer response. If a student is behaving in an unacceptable manner, the parent(s) will be called.

B'nai Mitzvah Preparation Fees

To support the special instruction your child will receive throughout the preparation process, all families pay a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee. This one-time fee includes all preparation and tutoring, as well as materials. This fee is billed when you receive your date before your scheduled date and must be paid at the time your student begins the preparation process (approximately 9 months in advance of the date). Families must also be current in all financial obligations to Temple.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fact Sheet

We are excited about the opportunity to work with you and your family during this special time. Please do not hesitate to call if we can ever be of service or answer any question.

Facility Usage Timeline:

12 months	Reserve facilities at Temple for Luncheon and any other event of interest
12 months	Discuss your ideas for a wonderful simcha with Jeff Manis
6 months	All deposits are due
6 months	Inform Executive Office of all approved vendors to be using Temple
1 month	Final count and final payments due

Fees and Costs:

Bnai Mitzvah Fee	\$1000*
Sponsor Friday Night Oneg	\$400 OPTIONAL
Sponsor Kiddish	\$200 OPTIONAL Friday or Saturday
Use of E/W Hall	\$8 per person (minimum \$800)
Use of Scheidt Family Center	\$6 per person (minimum \$600)

*** Fee can be paid in payments to be paid up by Bnai Mitzvah Federation Scholarship may be available**

Event Options:

Friday Night Dinner
Saturday Luncheon
Saturday Night Dinner/Party

Karen Snyder will contact you 12 months prior to your event to schedule a discussion meeting.

Karen Snyder, Administrative Assistant 937-2761
Jeff Manis, Executive Director 937-2765

karens@timemphis.org
jeffm@timemphis.org

